



Image: Veteran's Park
Combined Worship

Better Together

*Issue No.4,
September, 2025*

Veteran's Park Combined Summer Worship

On Sunday, August 10, 152 members from House of Prayer, Woodlake, Oak Grove, and Richfield Lutheran churches gathered at Veteran's Park for our annual collaborative worship service. We greeted old friends and met some new ones too. We were reminded again that we are one body in Christ. Following worship, fellowship and refreshments kept the conversations flowing. Thanks to all who participated, attended, and made the service possible. Together, we raised \$816 for Lutheran Disaster Relief. We're already looking forward to next year!

PASTOR'S ARTICLE

What's In a Newsletter

If it exists, I am not aware of a repository of ancient church newsletters – I'm talking the really old ones from the first century. Can you imagine reading the outreach activities of the church in Corinth? What were the Thessalonians doing at 9:30am on a Tuesday morning? What was the worship schedule for the church in Galatia? And where are the pictures of the Ephesian youth gathering?

When we think about a time before the printing press, the idea of a newsletter printed on paper and distributed to people might seem absurd, yet to those of us who have been connected to churches for the majority of our lives we might have a hard time imagining how the church would communicate without a newsletter.

As Woodlake and House of Prayer churches continue our collaboration, our staff and leadership teams are exploring the ways we are better together. This has meant sharing resources to provide ministry staff (see RALY) or combining ministry activities (see last year's shared music ministry) and recently combining our newsletters to have one shared newsletter that communicates the same information to both of our congregations in a unified voice.

The Better Together Newsletter may include different information than you have seen historically, but at its core the intention is to share the story of what God is doing in and through our two churches. If there is information you'd like to see in the newsletter, reach out and let us know. If there are aspects of the newsletter you consistently skip over, let us know that as well.

As we continue to collaborate as churches, we see God doing new things in and through us all the time. That can be reflected in the tools we use for communication as well – and communication always works best when the loop is complete (aka, you provide feedback to what you are experiencing).

Thinking about how God is stirring in and through our congregations, Isaiah 43:19 keeps coming to mind for me, "Look! I'm doing a new thing; [says the Lord] now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it?" and that verse makes me wonder, "can you imagine a time when church newsletters were considered a 'new thing'?"



Pr. Eric Luedtke

SHARED MINISTRY TEAM ARTICLE

Your Shared Ministry Team

*Cindy Hanson
Caity Wright
Cindy Jacobs
August Schauer
Orv Holland
Brent King
Karen Amezcua
Kristi Gay
Muriel Holland
Kim Houle
Andry Jurcich
Tim Riley
Scott Dahlquist
Heidi Thomas
Betsy Paradise
Gary Nix
Laurie Nix*

What is SMT?

(Shared Ministry Team)

The Shared Ministry Team meets monthly to thoughtfully plan and support the vitality of our collaborative efforts, ensuring they are sustained with care and intention.



Cindy Jacobs

Greetings from the Shared Leadership Team! My name is Cindy Jacobs and I am serving as the Vice President at House of Prayer.

The Shared Leadership Team met on August 21st to give updates on the work the task forces. We began our meeting with a quick check-in on how we all are feeling as we delve deeper into this journey. While some of us are feeling like we're finally moving forward in the right direction, others are feeling like it's moving too fast. And I suspect that if this is how we are feeling, then perhaps some of you are having mixed emotions, too. We'd love to hear from you if you have thoughts you'd like to share about our collaboration journey. We recognize that some things will feel rushed, and other aspects of our joining will feel long-overdue.

The following ministry teams gave updates on their most recent conversations and meetings:

1. The Dream Team (Vision and Planning) have identified 3 key areas for future consideration when other teams are meeting and making decisions:

- Community Collaboration; so that our Outreach and Justice work is always responsive to the needs of our community.
- Vibrant Worship; so that all experiencing our shared worship will encounter Christ, be transformed by Jesus, and thrive in ways that are meaningful and relevant to our congregation and the community.
- A Place to Grow; so there is something for everyone of all ages, from birth to retirement and beyond and a learning culture is fostered for life.

2. The Shared Staffing Team developed and posted a job description for the Shared Director of Worship & Music. They are happy to report that some really good candidates have applied. They also report that the two churches will begin having joint staff meetings starting in September. This will help to ensure that both churches have consistency in communications and aligned works.

3. The Shared Worship Team has met twice. They are reviewing applicants for the Shared Director of Worship & Music and are developing an interview plan. They will meet with worship consultant, Mark Slaughter, to vision what shared worship might look like and a timeline to implement shared worship.

4. The Project Plan team has put together a wonderful working document for documenting works, plans, progress and timelines for the various task forces and committees. Since it's a live document, every team can enter their reports and questions and all groups can access updates in real time. It's an essential component to any project plan, and the architects put a lot of thought and time into it.

5. The Finance Team is meeting every couple of weeks. As they began to review the two church budgets, it became immediately apparent that standardizing a chart of accounts was priority number one. This will help to align all expense lines and create a commonality in budgeting. The team went line by line through the expenses and incomes to identify and define the commonalities. The next steps will be to compare actual calendar year numbers with the budgeted expectations and to target efficiencies. It's really good, investigative ground work.

Other teams have not yet met, or will be having meetings in the coming weeks, so we know we will have even more updates and our next Shared Leadership Team Meeting in September.

If you have any questions, or have a passion for any of the areas that the focus groups are working on, please let us know! We'd love to have your help, input and, as always, your prayers for our continued work toward unification.

Blessings and Peace,

Cindy

UPCOMING EVENTS: THE DETAILS

Welcome/Rally Sunday, VEAP Birthday Bags & Potluck Sunday, September 7th @10:00am - Woodlake Lutheran Church

Join WL & HOP at Woodlake for a joyful morning of worship, food, and fun on Sunday, September 7 at 10:00am. It's the perfect way to reconnect, welcome new friends, and launch into a new season of ministry together.



- Bring your lawn chairs for the morning's outdoor worship service. In the event of inclement weather, all activities will be moved indoors. There will be a bouncy house for the kids, lawn games for all ages, and even a surprise animal guest!
- Stay for the potluck lunch and fellowship. Hot dogs, beverages, condiments, plates, cups, and flatware will be provided. We ask families with last names: A-L to consider bringing cold salads or fruit; M-P to consider bringing chips & dip; Q-Z to consider bringing desserts.
- Help assemble VEAP Birthday Bags. Please bring cake, frosting, candles, bags, fun party favors to worship. A Thrivent Action Grant will supplement supplies. Help make birthdays special and bring a smile to a child's face!

Contact Rachel Larson (rlarson@hoplc.org) or Heidi Thomas (heidit1109@live.com) with questions.

Fall Worship Schedule

Sundays Beginning September 14th

Our two churches will offer the following worship opportunities. You're welcome at all! At House of Prayer:

- Traditional Worship at 9:30am in the Sanctuary & via livestream
- ReFuel Coffeehouse Worship at 11:00am in the Parish Hall & via livestream

At Woodlake:

- Blended Worship at 10:00am in the Sanctuary & via livestream (Modern Worship has been placed on an indefinite pause.)
- Matins at 8:30am on Wednesdays in the Chapel

Veggie Table with VEAP

Tuesday, September 16th @4pm-6pm - Season's Park Apartments

All are welcome to come out for the last Veggie Table event of the year. Meet our neighbors at Season's Park, help distribute fresh produce from VEAP, and meet friends from HOP & WL. In August, Veggie Table volunteers served 69 households with 111 adults, 78 kids and 10 seniors. For questions, contact Christine Barneson at cmillerdance@gmail.com. Come join the fun!



Minneapolis Area Synod Senior Band FREE Concert

Thursday, September 25th @ 1:00pm at House of Prayer.

Come enjoy the 'Promise of Living!' The 70-minute program includes a mix of popular music legends and sacred arrangements performed by the 80-member wind band. If you can't make it in person, the concert will be livestreamed on HOPs YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@houseofprayerlutheran-rich9999>. Coffee and cookies following the concert. Contact Cara Wright at cwright@hoplc.org with questions.



Fall Coat Drive for Richfield Public Schools

Donations collected through the end of September RALY is hosting a coat drive for Richfield Middle and High School this fall! Help keep students warm by bringing winter coats sizes youth M - adult XL to House of Prayer or Woodlake Lutheran's coat rooms near "Coat Drive" signs. Questions? Contact Rachel at rlarson@hoplc.org.





RALY RECAP

Spark'Dwell. Summer Stretch Part 2. Valley Fair.

Near and far, RALY went on adventures and made new friends while partnering with Oak Grove and Diamond Lake Lutheran Churches to share in the fun!



Youth Outing to Valley Fair with Diamond Lake Lutheran



Summer Stretch Part 2 with Oak Grove Lutheran



Service Trip to Spark'Dwell

Want to see more? Visit [instagram.com/raly55423](https://www.instagram.com/raly55423) for daily posts from the trip!

This summer, nine high schoolers from RALY and Diamond Lake Lutheran drove to North Carolina! Alongside new friends, we gardened, painted, fixed bikes, prepared food, and danced in the name of "being the spark" we hope to see in the world, inspiring those around us to do the same! Here are some of our favorite moments:



Lunch on Pilgrimage Day



Dinner at Taste of the Triad



Maddie running the fryer at the Block Party



Huge smiles during the Block Party at The Dwelling



Arthur fixing up bikes at Cycle Recycle



Tae'jon & Nick AKA Cowboy with personalized candles



Arthur's Group Filling Blessing Boxes AKA Free Little Pantries



Niyana at Senior Service's 1970s Prom!



FALL CALENDAR

SEPT 3

Youth Trip Ice Cream Social

6:30 - 7:30pm | Woodlake

Share stories and debrief what we learned with family and friends over ice cream! RSVP Requested.

SEPT 7

Rally Sunday

10am | Woodlake

Worship, eat a picnic lunch, pack birthday kits, and play lawn games or in a bouncy house!

SEPT 10

RALY Wednesday Kick-off!

6 - 7:30pm | Woodlake | Weekly Wednesdays

Youth grades 6-9 join us for a cookout plus camp style worship to kick off the year!

SEPT 28

Ignite with Diamond Lake

5 - 7pm | Woodlake | Monthly Events

Join RALY and Diamond Lake youth 9-12 grade youth for pizza dinner and a "birthday bash"

OCT 11

Morris Nilsen Trunk or Treat

3 - 6pm | Morris Nilsen Funeral Chapel

Stop by, say hello, and help pass out candy at our trunk or treat spot, right near the DJ booth!

**Want to register
for RALY or
RSVP?**



Scan the QR Code,
go to
linktr.ee/raly55423
or email Rachel
(rlarson@hoplc.org)



THANK YOU FROM RAINBOW WARDROBE

This summer, WL & HOP supplied over 50 bags of donations Twin Cities Rainbow Wardrobe to support their mission: to empower everyone to live their most authentic life by dressing in a way that truly reflects who they are. Thank you to everyone who donated and visited the Wardrobe!

House of Prayer Lutheran Church
7625 Chicago Avenue South
Richfield MN 55423

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612-866-8449
office@woodlakechurch.org

Pr. Micah Pearson
Pr. Neal Cannon

Fall Worship Schedule

Starting September 14th
One blended worship service
10:00am at Woodlake

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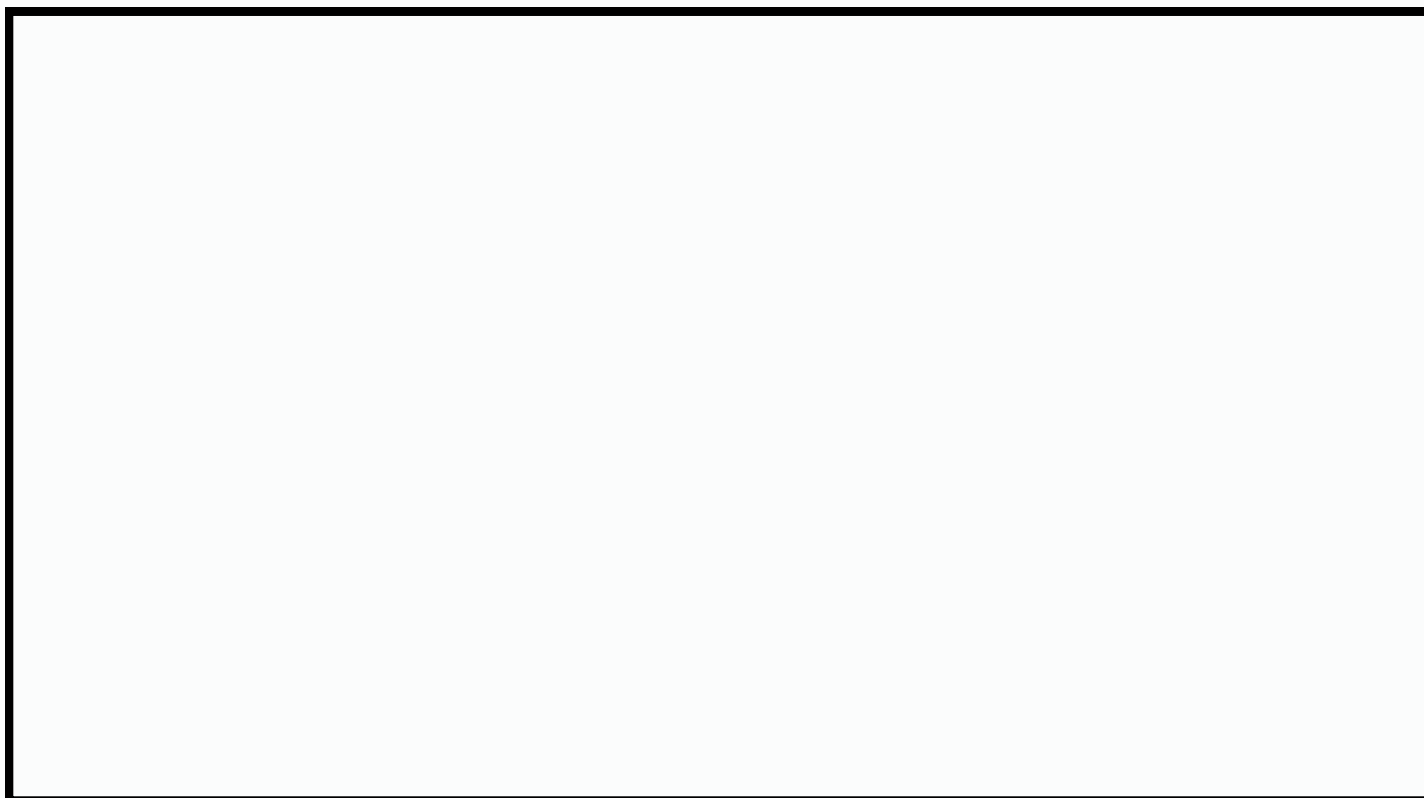
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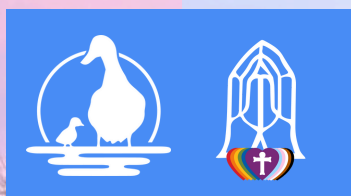
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