



EXCELSIOR

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Loving Beyond Ourselves

Shorelines Newsletter

March and April 2021



Lenten Sermon Series

What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? When the song we've been singing, the life we've been living, the road we've been cruising, comes undone? What if this is not the end we fear it will be?

In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us, for we long to be changed. We will explore stories of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, and expectations—stories where God meets us in the spiraling and our unraveling plans turn us into something new.

March 7: **An Unraveled Identity**

March 14: **Unraveled by Conversion**

March 21: **Unraveled by Uncertainty** ** Guest preacher Rev. Jennifer H. Anderson

March 28: **Unraveled by Wounds**

**Reverend Jennifer Anderson is appointed to extension ministries as a Navy Reserve Chaplain. Her current orders are to First Naval Construction Regiment (1NCR) in Port Hueneme, California, where she drills quarterly with her command. She resides in Savage, Minnesota where her full-time work is mom to Thaddeus—one of Minnesota's greatest kinders!

Worship online | Sunday mornings | 10:00 am

PASTORAL UPDATE

For many people, Lent is the season to "give something up." Common things to give up are coffee in the morning, meat on Fridays, sleeping in on Saturdays. Some take a more difficult approach by trying to give up complaining, gossiping, or selfishness. I once tried a very weak approach to Lent by saying I would give up adding sugar into my tea. I lasted only about a week, when I decided that God didn't really want me to drink bitter tea! I could be faithful AND drink sweetened tea. (At least that's my rationalization for that failed Lenten practice.)

Needless to say, Lent is a difficult season for me. My mood doesn't always match the season—I don't always feel reflective and repentant when it rolls around. Advent is the opposite—I always feel like I'm waiting for something, anticipating the future. That's an easy season for me to practice and connect with, deep in my bones. But Lent is different. I'm very much a person of "more." The more books on my nightstand, the better. The more projects I'm working on, the better. The more sugar, the more activities, the more plans I have, the better. Not very Lent-ish.

I will admit that my first thought when Lent came around this year was, we've already given up so much! We've been submerged in Lent for a year, not just 40 days. What more could we do? What more do we need to give up?

But I think the spirit behind Lent isn't to give something up because it's that time of year. I think the spirit behind it, whether you give something up or not, is to pay attention to how hard it is to let go. How hard it is for us to strip down to necessities. To live and rest in the "less" part of life rather than always in the "more." To practice giving things up to see what happens. Jesus certainly gave up quite a bit during his ministry and his life, and he challenges us to do the same.

What do we discover when we let go? Who do we discover? What gifts lie beneath the clutter that fills our lives? Sometimes I know why something is important or meaningful before I do it. Other times, I find that I need to just do the thing and then discover later the meaning behind it and the importance. Lent is that for me, every single year.

I pray that this Lenten season will be one where you can practice letting go—of clutter in your life, of expectations for how life is supposed to go, of habits that drag you down—to discover anew the presence of God and the gifts that lie in a more simple, bare life. May you find that less really can be more.

In gratitude,
Pastor Brooke

Rev. Brooke Heerwald Steiner



Pastor Brooke Heerwald Steiner,
Lead Pastor

NEW MEMBERS



Welcome to our newest members, Lynn and John O'Neil. They are lifelong Methodists and both originally from the area. They recently moved back to Lake Minnetonka from New York City.

John is an attorney and the global leader of the Investment Funds Group at the firm Kirkland & Ellis. He is on the national board of Susan G. Komen and on the local board of The Constellation Fund. Lynn runs the household (and John).

They have two young adult children back at home with them and are expecting two babies via surrogacy in early June. Lynn's parents live full time with them in their Lake Minnetonka home, and they all love the multi-generational living environment. We are delighted to have them join our faith community!

WORSHIP



April 2 Good Friday worship at 7pm

Join us for a reflective worship experience. Pastor Brooke will share a meditation, we'll hear the difficult but important Scripture words that tell the story, and our musicians will share poignant music.

April 4 Easter worship at 10am

Join us as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. The story of new life and God's promises has never been more needed or more relevant. Pastor Brooke will share a message, our musicians will lead us in music (including the Hallelujah chorus!), and we'll have some interactive pieces from our congregation members.

April Worship Series

April 11– The staff of the Minnesota Annual Conference are creating a worship service for us this week. Our new resident bishop, Bishop David Bard, will preach on looking for signs of resurrection when we have doubt and despair.

April 18– Native American Ministry Sunday. The Minnesota Annual Conference's Commission on Native American Ministry will lead us in worship as we learn about this important Sunday.

April 25– Social Justice Sunday, featuring guests Dr. Thaddeus Johnson and Dr. Natasha Johnson. Hosted by our Social Justice and Anti-Racism teams, the Johnsons will speak in worship and then join us for a time of community conversation over ZOOM. Read more on page 4.

Join us for virtual worship every Sunday morning at 10am. You can access the livestream by going to our website (www.excelsiorumc.org) and clicking on the Live Stream link, or going to our Facebook page to watch the videos. If you need help accessing the worship services or could use a iPad, please let us know and we will be in touch. For an update to virtual worship, see page 10.

STANDING FOR JUSTICE



EUMC Invites Special Guests March 8th & April 25th

Thaddeus Johnson, a former police officer, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology. **Natasha Johnson** is Director of the M.I.S. program in Criminal Justice Administration, Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology and Public Management & Policy. Both are faculty members at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Georgia State University in Atlanta.

Thaddeus and Natasha will be welcomed by our Anti-Racism team as special guests during March and April. Our connection started in a chance meeting by Chris Stone seated next to the Johnsons on an airplane. In learning about our Congregation's Anti-Racism work they offered an opportunity for conversations with us. They have been married for 12 years and both have been in a PhD program. Natasha graduated from GSU in May 2019 and Thaddeus graduated in August 2020. We are excited about their willingness to spend some time with us given their very busy schedule.

- **March 8th** they will join our Anti-Racism Team and interested members of the Social Justice Ministry Team on Zoom to begin our dialogue.
- **Sunday, April 25th** they will participate in our Worship Service with a video message and after the service will be a part of the Social Justice Ministry's *Conversations that Matter* via zoom. Mark this date on your calendar to welcome these special guests.



Click on the link to learn more about them and their work- [Natasha & Thaddeus Johnson - The Andrew Young School Podcast \(gsu.edu\)](https://www.gsu.edu/podcast/natasha-thaddeus-johnson-the-andrew-young-school-podcast)

Conversations That Matter

Criteria of a "Just Healthcare System."

Sunday, March 14 at 10:45am. Zoom meeting after the worship service.

Discussion Leaders: Ken Engelhart, MD and Anne C. Jones, RN, Vice-Chair of HCA-MN.

Sponsored by EUMC's Adult Learning Social Justice teams.

SERVING OTHERS

Volunteer Spotlight ~ Denise Foote

Meet Denise Foote. Denise is the mastermind behind our Little Free Pantry and is a member of our dynamite Outreach team. She first got the idea for the free pantry at a church she saw in Florida. Denise thought it would be perfect at our church. She is also the Vice President of UMW and serves on our funeral committee. When she's not working the food shelf or restocking the pantry, you're most likely to find her at home cooking or reading. Denise and her husband Doug started attending Excelsior UMC in 1998. They are parents to five boys: Haydn (24), Logan (22), Calvin (21), Declan (19), and Keegan (15).

- **What she enjoys about her current volunteer roles:** "I can't bear the thought of anyone not having enough food! I love to feed people, so this helps me to do that in a small way. The people on the Outreach Committee inspire me, because they're all hard working and have huge hearts."

- **Why this work is important:** "It makes me sad that there's a need for the food shelf and pantry, but all kinds of people need help. Because of the pandemic more and more people have food insecurities. We provide a welcoming, nonjudgmental place that people can come to get food and other items like diapers. Diapers are expensive! Our church family specifically is so generous and kind by donating supplies and money. I love being part of a church with people that are so service oriented!"

- **Why this work is important:** "The clients! One of our clients died of a heart attack recently and I cried with her when his wife told me. He was a very friendly man and I miss seeing his smiling face. A few weeks later his wife made us homemade chicken enchiladas as a thank you for having the food shelf."



Denise Foote (L), Sandy Stromberg (R)



Simpson Shelter

Simpson Shelter shared the good news that all their shelter guests and volunteers have been offered the Covid vaccine through Hennepin Healthcare. They continue to house guests and offer both lunch and supper through a catering service that is contracted through May 2021. We'll keep you informed when we are able to resume our monthly meal service through EUMC.

Check out their webpage for current shelter supply needs including a way you can purchase on Amazon and have items shipped directly to the shelter. <https://www.simpsonhousing.org/ways-to-help/give-supplies/>

Jill Jewell (952-688-8245) and Jane Pole (701-400-8754) are EUMC's Simpson meal coordinators.

BUILDING COMMUNITY



ICA Food Shelf: 2020 Impact

Thanks, in part, to our congregation's generosity, the ICA Food Shelf in Minnetonka had a tremendous impact on those in need during 2020. Below are some of their numbers for the year.

2020 Year-end Food Program: By the numbers	
# of Food Services	14,690
# of Households	2023
# of Individuals	5507
Incoming pounds	1,504,543 lb
Outgoing client pounds	1,178,179 lb

MN Food Share March Campaign

During the month of March, people throughout Minnesota come together to raise funds and collect food for their local food shelves. Traditionally the time of year when food shelves' inventory was lowest, the March Campaign has become the largest grassroots food and fund drive in the state.

Please join ICA, along with Excelsior UMC, to raise funds and collect food for neighbors facing food insecurity in our community. We need your help. Every dollar donated during March will be proportionally matched, so your donation will go even further!

To donate, please send check to the church or donate online at excelsiorumc.org/give and



Nina Stark



ADULT STUDIES & CONNECTIONS

Esther Circle

Monday, March 22 from 6:30 - 8 PM at church

Esther Circle will assemble Spring/Easter activity bags for families in our local community.

Thursday, April 15 from 6:30 - 8 PM at church

Esther Circle is planning a socially distanced potluck and recipe exchange. Bring a dish to share and the recipe for some yummy food and fun socializing.

New members are always welcome! Contact Jill Jewell for additional information, 952-688-8245.

Women from Esther Circle packed 200 snack packs for use in the church's food pantry, ICA giveaway, and other local food shelves.



Sarah/Lydia Circles

We will continue to meet via Zoom. We would love to have you join us! If you're not already on our email list, please contact Joyceln Hughes at 612.802.7105 or joycelnhughes@gmail.com.

Thursday, March 11 at 7pm
Thursday, April 8 at 7pm

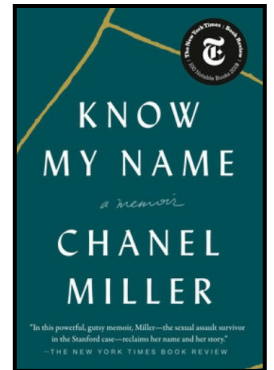
We look forward to seeing you!

Cover Girls Book Club

March Book Club- Monday, March 22 at 3pm

Know My Name by Chanel Miller

Miller writes her autobiography account of her sexual assault at Sanford college in the back of a fraternity house. Her assault was well publicized, and she became known as Emily Doe to the world. The reader will be moved and changed by her story of pain and strength as she writes about her background, her isolation before the trial, the trial that results in her attacker sentenced to only six months in a county jail, and her openness to healing from her ordeal. The author is an extraordinary and gifted writer who will give testament to the human cost from her attack, and her book gives hope to other victims of sexual assault. Kristie Lester will lead our discussion. This is a Zoom meeting.

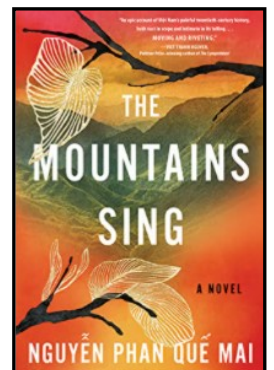


April Book Club- Monday, April 26 at 3pm

The Mountain Sings by Nguyen Phan Que Mai

This historical fiction novel is a four generational epic tale about the Tran family during a century of Vietnamese history. The author is a poet from Vietnam, and this is her first novel written in English. The narrative describes the human cost and survival during the Vietnam war, as told by the Grandmother

and Granddaughter of the Tran family. Nguyen Phan Que Mai writes a very gripping tale with poetic descriptions of the characters as told from the point of view of the Vietnamese people. Kay Erickson will lead our discussion. This will be a Zoom meeting or outside if nice weather



Everyone is welcome!

~ Sue Judd

YOUTH MINISTRIES



Confirmation Name that Christian

In March, our confirmation class is learning about early church leaders. We're studying those who took the Jesus movement from its humble beginnings to the tradition it is today. Along the way, we're learning about people who spent their lives studying and teaching the Christian faith.

Can you name this famous Christian?

- Early Christian theologian and philosopher
- A bishop of the church in Africa
- Taught that the Bible was composed in such a way that, as beginners mature, its meaning grows with them
- Wrote the first Christian memoir, *Confessions*

Find the answer on page 11.



Buck Hill

We had 9 students and parents join us in February for a trip to Buck Hill for skiing and tubing, and had a blast! The weather was a little rocky, but did not bring down our spirits as we enjoyed an afternoon together. As things slowly open up, we're grateful to have events like this to look forward to moving forward. Hope you can join us!

Upcoming Events

Join us for games, study, and dinner every other Wednesday night! For more information, please contact Jordan at jordan@excelsiorumc.org. All students grade 6-12 are welcome to join us!

- March 3: Youth Group/Confirmation at 6-7:30pm
- March 7: Zoom Parent Meeting at 11am
- March 17: Youth Group/Confirmation at 6-7:30pm
- March 21: Volunteering Event at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church
- March 31: No Youth Group (Spring Break)

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Welcome Kallie Stroh!



We are excited to welcome Kallie Stroh as our newest staff member. Kallie is our Director of Children's Ministries and she is mom to two boys, Jackson (4th grade) and Aaron (2nd grade). They recently moved back to Minnesota from California after six years. The kids especially love spending time with their cousins and are enjoying being closer to family. Kallie's hobbies include writing (she's written a couple of books and has started entering some writing contests for fun), reading (they are working their way through all of the Goosebumps books—total of 120 and counting!), crocheting, playing games, and walking their 1.5 year old maltipoo named Rosie. Kallie is not a coffee drinker, but loves English Breakfast tea or iced chai from Starbucks.

When Covid is over, they are looking forward to exploring more of Minnesota and visiting friends. They hope to travel more too—making up for a trip to Disneyland they had to cancel last year and making a road trip to visit the boy's dad, who still lives in California.

She's looking forward to meeting you and working with our children and their families. "My favorite thing about Children's Ministry is watching the relationships between kids and caring adults grow. My hope is that all of the children find church to be a safe and fun place where they can learn about God and themselves and build friendships with people of all ages."

Family Sledding Event

Several families enjoyed a fun afternoon of sledding and hot cocoa at Lake Minnewashta Regional Park in February. We were blessed with perfect sledding weather, which was a welcomed change after the long cold stretch. It was great to see familiar (half-covered) faces in person, and a nice opportunity to meet Kallie, our new Children's Ministry Director, and her boys, Jackson and Aaron. We look forward to the days where families gathering together in person is once again the norm.



LEADERSHIP TEAM

This Lent's sermon series, "Unraveled: Seeking God When Our Plans Fall Apart", prompted me to reflect on the past year as we dealt with so many changes in our plans as well as how we think and do ministry. Volunteers, activity leaders and committees have been constantly asking in what ways can we answer God's call given the realities that surround us. Our Leadership Team discussions, actions and decisions hope to in some way help answer these questions as we work together to support the vision and mission of our church. Here are some of the highlights and how we are looking forward:

We met virtually on December 14 and January 26 where we continued to focus on how to make progress on our three main priorities:

1. **Children's Ministry** - we are so excited to welcome Kallie Stroh, EUMC's new Children's Director, along with her two boys, Jackson and Aaron. This completes a much needed addition to our staff both now and as we prepare for the future.
2. **Connections** - in the last two months we have supported a letter from the Minnetonka Coalition for Equitable Education about social justice and equality issues. We also entered into a partnership with the Wesley Foundation at the University of Minnesota and Peter Cleaveland has recently joined their board. A EUMC Discovery class has been held virtually and new members are joining.
3. **Virtual Worship** - we are making progress in planning upgrades to the sanctuary that will support continuation of our current virtual worship as well as options for future live streaming. We are grateful for the generosity of time and talent that makes these next steps possible.

Worship

We continue to monitor and follow the guidelines of Minnesota Annual Conference who takes input from the State of Minnesota as we discuss and plan for returning to in person worship and other activities. At this point, we have no firm date or plans but will communicate in advance as soon as a decision is made. In the meantime, we encourage everyone to keep practicing all of the safety measures even as more and more people receive vaccinations.

Financials

We wrapped up 2020 in a very good position. Even though giving was below expectation, we also were able to manage expenses and put money into our emergency account. On February 28, 2021, we will present the 2021 budget. Just a reminder, we



welcome you to still submit or update your estimate of giving any time during the year which helps with making priorities and decisions regarding the churches finances.

Scheduled charge conference for February 28, 2021 at 10:30am virtually to review and approve the 2021 budget and vote on the nominations for 2021 leaders of committees and ministry teams.

Trustees

Our project to install solar panels continues to make progress as we work through design and schedule details with the installer. We will keep providing updates as they become available. We look forward to serving as an example of environmental stewardship in our community.

We continue to make progress on updating our website and EUMC branding details that will improve our ability to communicate and connect virtually.

In closing, what is your new plan for 2021 when life presents the unexpected? How could that new plan include ways for you to get involved in the vision and mission of our faith community? May each of you have a meaningful and transformative Lenten season!

~ John Peichel
Communications, EUMC Leadership Team

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report		
	2021	
	January	Year-To-Date
Operating Fund Income	\$90,644	\$90,644
Offering Income	\$90,460	\$90,460
Income - Other	\$185	\$185
Operating Fund Expenses	\$32,475	\$32,475
Net Operating Income	\$58,170	\$58,170
Net Operating Income-Last Year	\$106,105	\$106,105
All Funds Cash Balance	\$551,662	
Less Designated Fund Balances	\$432,368	
Unrestricted Cash Balance	\$119,254	
Long Term Mortgage Balance	\$413,224	

Thank you for your continued financial support! We ended 2020 with a budget surplus of over \$34,000!

The past few months have seen giving for our ICA satellite food shelf, our Free Little Pantry, Simpson Shelter, Social Justice ministries, Housing Help, Christmas Gifts, a Winter Clothing Drive, and more! Our congregation continues to step up and support the needs in our community. Thank you to all who have given toward these ministries!

If you would like a full set of our monthly Financial Reports, or have any questions related to the church's finances, please contact one of the leaders of our finance team.

~Jordan Harper, Glenna Cheney, and Chuck Welle

The upcoming Leadership Team meetings are scheduled for

Thursday, March 25 at 6:30pm

Thursday, April 22 at 6:30pm

Can you name this famous Christian?



Saint Augustine

OUR PURPOSE

Loving Beyond Ourselves

OUR VISION

To be known as a nurturing, inclusive, and courageous Christian community.

OUR MISSION

Sharing God's love by building community, serving others, and standing for justice.

STAFF

Church Phone: (952) 474-5471

Pastor: Rev. Brooke Heerwald Steiner
brooke@excelsiorumc.org x103

Youth, Community Engagement Director,
Financial Treasurer: Jordan Harper
jordan@excelsiorumc.org x106

Children's Director: Kallie Stroh
kallie@excelsiorumc.org x111

Office Administrator: Jennifer Specia
office@excelsiorumc.org x100

Property Manager: Steve Colby
steve@excelsiorumc.org x110 (off Mondays)

Music Director: Gail Fisk
gail@excelsiorumc.org x109

Organist/Keyboard: Jane Kuhn

Nursery Care: Tricia Sweeney

Custodian: Kevin Krotze

VISIT

Office & Church Building Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 11am-1pm

Check website for updates

Friday CLOSED

www.excelsiorumc.org

Find a current calendar, weekly emails, information on events, and other resources.





881 Third Ave, Excelsior MN 55331

Non-Profit Organization
Permit No. 39
Excelsior, Minnesota
U.S. Postage Paid

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Sunday Worship at 10:00am Currently Online

More information:
www.excelsiorumc.org



Family Sledding Event

