



EXCELSIOR
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Loving Beyond Ourselves

Shorelines Newsletter

November and December 2020



November Sermon Series

This year has been a struggle for all of us in different ways. A global pandemic has upended us; a global protest around racial justice has unsettled us; a national election has unnerved us. Add to that our personal challenges and changes, it's no wonder that so many of us are exhausted and stressed in a way we never have before. Scripture is full of challenges, grief, and setbacks. What can it teach us about our own losses and emotions? This month, we want to focus on the need for us to listen and understand one another's struggles, even when they are different from our own. How do we choose to open ourselves up to what others are experiencing and feeling? What does empathy for others look like? For ourselves? How can scripture infuse our thinking and feeling? Join us in worship as we seek to grow in our empathy for all of God's children.

November 8: **It's Okay to Not Be Okay.** Pastor Brooke leads worship as we reflect on the presence of lament in scripture and the need for it in our own lives.

November 15: **The Power of Listening.** Rev. Brett Heerwald, the lead staff chaplain at St. John's Hospital in Maplewood (and Pastor Brooke's brother), will join us to guest preach.

November 22: **It's In Our Bones.** Jordan Harper leads worship, as we explore Jesus' call to radical solidarity and the nature of our relationships with others

Worship online | Sunday mornings | 10:00 am

PASTORAL UPDATE

"I got out of bed on two strong legs.
It might have been otherwise.
I ate cereal, sweet milk, ripe, flawless peach.
It might have been otherwise.
I took the dog uphill to the birch wood.
All morning I did the work that I love."

This is the beginning of one of my favorite poems, *Otherwise* by Jane Kenyon. She describes a fairly ordinary day, filled with nothing extraordinary, and yet all of it is extraordinary. So many simple aspects that really are gifts.

So far this morning, I woke up well-rested and healthy. It might have been otherwise.

I enjoyed a hot chai latte and a warm slice of rhubarb pie. It might have been otherwise.

My son asked me to read to him before he got on the bus. It might have been otherwise.

I was able to send my four kids off to school where they will be greeted by loving, caring adults. It might have been otherwise.

I have a closet of clothes that I can choose from to wear each day. It might have been otherwise.

I finished my sermon early. It certainly might have been otherwise!

I spoke with congregation members planning events for the good of our community. I chatted with our staff, who brighten my day. I had another cup of hot tea in my office. I read and planned and wondered about peace and gratitude and Advent and dreams and hope. I too, get to do work that I love.

It all might have been otherwise.

These next two months, I invite you to ground yourself in the specific details that remind you of your blessings. I encourage you to pay attention to all the little things that could be otherwise. Perhaps you will join a small group where we'll be paying attention to the presence of hope or the coming light of Christ.

Perhaps you will practice gratitude each day. Perhaps you will invite a friend or neighbor to join you for online worship. Perhaps you will read more poetry. Perhaps you will limit your calendar to make room for ordinary days that remind you it could be otherwise. Perhaps you will move slower and listen more deeply to the world around you, the people around you, the creatures around you. May this be a season of gratefulness and simplicity for you and yours.

With deep gratitude,

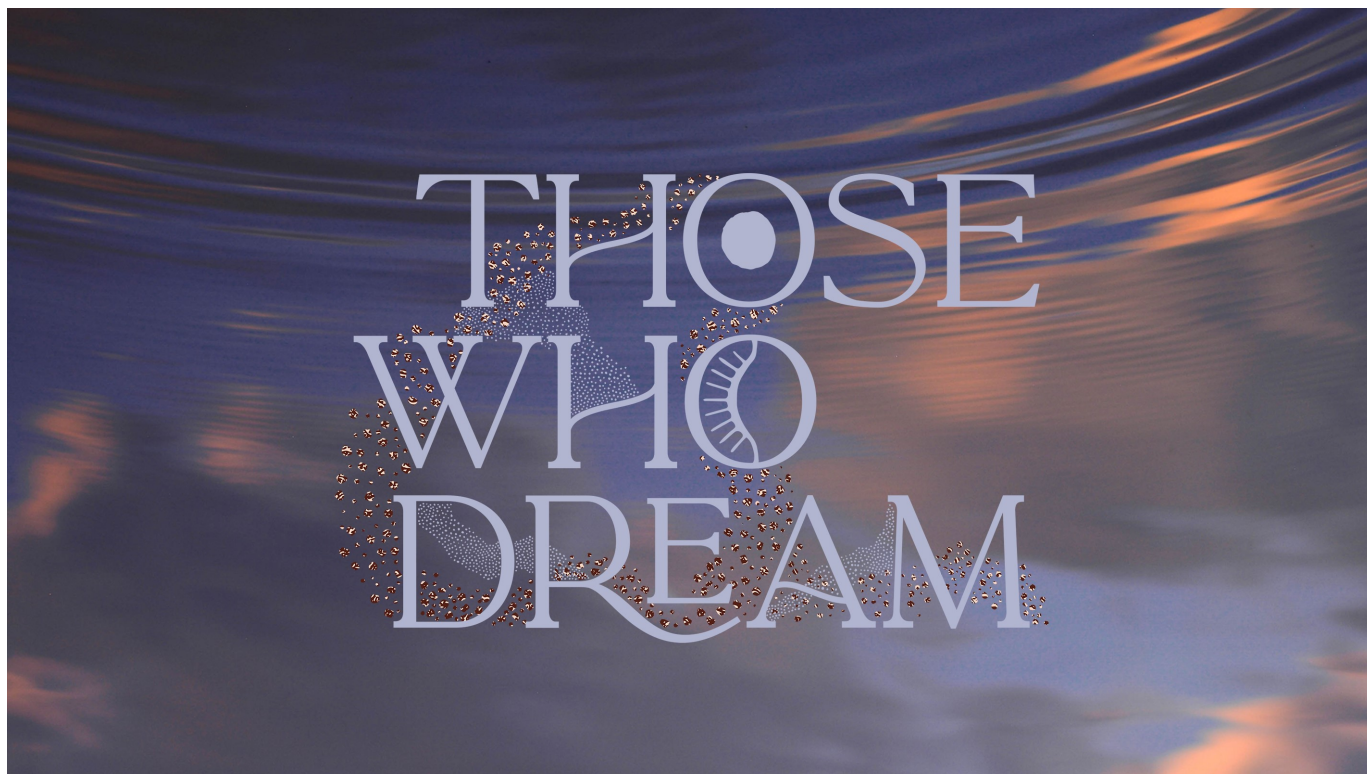
Pastor Brooke

Rev. Brooke Heerwald Steiner



Pastor Brooke Heerwald Steiner
Lead Pastor

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 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.



December Worship Series - Those Who Dream

Psalm 126 says, “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.” What does it look like to live as those who dream? Prophets, psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God’s dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God’s dreams and pray they shape our reality.

This Advent season is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It’s for those who dream of comfort and those who have given up on their dreams. It’s for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God’s dreams for our world. For those who dream...

November 29:	...Keep Awake	Mark 13: 24-37
December 6:	...Prepare the Way	Mark 1: 1-8
December 13:	...Sow Joy	Luke 1: 46-55
December 20:	...Are Not Alone	Luke 1: 26-45
December 24:	We Are Those Who Dream	Luke 2: 1-20

STANDING FOR JUSTICE



Confronting Whiteness An Imperative for Loving Beyond Ourselves True of False

In the US, white is viewed as normal.

In the US, white people hold most of the political, institutional and economic power.

Since this country's inception the belief in white superiority has prevailed.

White people in the US have privileges based on their whiteness.

How do we confront our Whiteness in an effort to fight racism? EUMC's Anti-Racism offers the following 6 steps. Don't wait – Start today!

1. St. Luke Dialogue - Join 22 EUMC members the third Monday of each month in the St. Luke Dialogue on the practice of dismantling racism in predominately white communities. It is on zoom at 7pm. Contact Jane Pole (mpole73@gmail.com) to sign up and get the zoom invitation.
2. Read the Word of The Week in EUMC's weekly email. Think about the reflection questions and click on the link for further learning.
3. If you are a member of a small group at EUMC and would like to have an Anti-Racism Team member help explore issues related to racism, contact Jordan Harper (jordan@excelsiorumc.org).
4. Go to EUMC's website (www.excelsiorumc.org) Social Justice page for links to:
 - A White Privilege Challenge
 - YouTube video "Deconstruction of White Privilege" with Dr. Robin DiAngelo

Sign up for the special Social Justice Ministry email for updates and action in our Social Ministry work. Visit EUMC's website (www.excelsiorumc.org). Click on CONNECT, then Social Justice to subscribe.

Remember: We cannot profess that we are *Loving Beyond Ourselves* unless we begin to understand how we contribute to the racism in our country that has caused so much pain and suffering to others.

SERVING OTHERS

Teacher Appreciation Gifts

The Outreach team sponsored a Teacher Gift Packing event in October and assembled 120 appreciation bags for teachers at Excelsior Elementary School! Thank you to all who came out and helped make a small difference for our teachers who are putting themselves at risk to care for and educate our children!



New EUMC Banner

As you drive by the Church on Highway 7 you will notice a new banner. *United Methodist Stand Against Racism* was purchased by the Social Justice Ministry team as a part of their anti-racism effort in our community.

New Building for Simpson Shelter

Did you know Simpson Housing Services has plans to build a new building on their current site with short term beds and longer term apartments? The new building will contain 70 beds and 42 apartment units. While the building is under construction, current guests will be served at a commercial location near where Simpson currently stands. Details can be found here:

<https://www.simpsonhousing.org/2020/07/14/announcing-simpson-community-shelter-and-apartments/>



Thanks to your continued financial support, EUMC has been continuing to donate \$750 each month to cover the meal costs for the guest staying at Simpson Shelter. When it is safe to do so, we will re-start our home-cooked meal donations.

Contact Jane Pole (701-400-8754) or Jill Jewell (952-688-8245) with questions about EUMC's Simpson ministry.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

ICA Foodshelf

We continue to hold our ICA Food Shelf on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. It inspires us to see all the donations, both financial and in-kind, from our church community and the impact it has on our families. During the month of October we served 27 families.



ICA Turkey Give Away Saturday, November 21 9:30 - 11:30am

The Outreach team is partnering with ICA to distribute Turkey dinners for Thanksgiving to those in need in the community. Your food donations make a difference! Monetary gifts are welcome too. A \$20 donation will provide a turkey dinner for families in need. Visit www.icafoodshelf.org/turkey.

His House Christmas Gifts

We are partnering with His House to get Christmas gifts to children in the community. More information to come. If you are interested in helping or donating toward this project please contact Jordan at



Resource West Warm Wear

Thank you for your generosity! Churchwide we collected 33 jackets and as many mittens, gloves and hats. Your donations will keep many people warm this winter.

The Rumm that wasn't

Due to Covid-19 the Spring 2020 rummage sale was canceled. This was to be UMW's last sale. Items that had been collected were distributed to His House and WeCan, and some items were sold on-line. The proceeds of the Rumm have always been given to area charities that serve women, children and families. This year UMW has minimal funds to distribute.

Despite the pandemic, UMW would like to support the good works of the charities it has supported over the years. If you would like to continue the UMW tradition, follow the link on the church website (www.excelsiorumc.org), click on CONNECT- Rummage Sale. You will find a list charities and contact information. This information is also available to pick up at church. Please send your donation directly to the charity. Your donation is tax deductible.

Thank you everyone for your consideration. Excelsior UMW

ADULT STUDIES & CONNECTIONS



November Small Group Notes on Hope

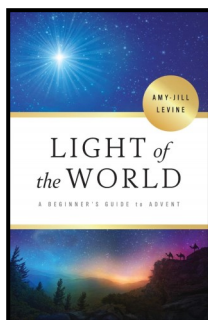
November 10, 17, 24 at 2pm and 7pm

Join us as we explore the topic of hope. We'll look at a few characters in the Bible along with the book *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope* by Anne Lamott. Together we'll investigate what hope is and what it means to have it. We'll compile a resource of examples and sources of hope that will sustain us through the challenging struggles in our lives. Contact Pastor Brooke to sign up.

Advent Bible Study Light of the World

December 1 - 22 at 2pm and 7pm

We will look at the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. Our guide will be author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine as we read her book and watch short videos she's created. In this study, she traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. These stories open conversations around connections of the Gospel stories to the Old Testament, the role of women in first-century Jewish culture, the importance of Mary's visitation and the revolutionary implications of Mary's Magnificat, the census and the stable, and the star of Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt. Contact Pastor Brooke to sign up.



Sarah/Lydia Circles

New meeting time! We will meet the second Thursday of each month in the church lobby.

Thursday, November 12, 1:30 to 3pm

Thursday, December 10, 1:30 to 3pm

Social Distancing will be observed. Bring a beverage and wear a mask. All are welcome!

-JoyceIn Hughes

Cover Girls Book Club

The Dutch House by Ann Patchett
Monday, November 23 at 3pm in the Annex

This book is about a grand old house called the Dutch House and the family who lived there. At the end of WWII, Cyril Conroy bought the Dutch House. The main two characters who are his children, Maeve and Danny, grew up in this interesting house with their father. The siblings fall from wealth to poverty after their mother leaves and their father marries another woman. The book reads like a fairy tale. It covers five generations of these two quirky main characters, who eventually discover they are only comfortable with each other and how that relationship affects their lives. Patchett has written an engrossing and warm-hearted story that is hard to put down with unforgettable characters. Judy Myers will lead our discussion.



Everyone is welcome!

Cover Girls will take a break in December and will return in January.

– Sue Judd

Esther Circle Fall Events

Ornament Making for Excelsior Giving Tree
Tues, Nov. 10th at 6:30pm

Join us as we make simple beaded ornaments for the Excelsior Giving Tree program. We'll meet inside, socially distanced. For those who want to participate by making ornaments from home, contact Jill Jewell - 952-688-8245.

Decorate Giving Tree on Main Street in Excelsior
Tues, Dec. 1 at 6:30pm

We will meet at church and then drive into downtown Excelsior to decorate our tree. Afterwards, we'll gather in the heated annex for cocoa and social time!

YOUTH MINISTRIES



Confirmation

We are enjoying the start of Youth Group and Confirmation this fall! We've had 10 students attend our first few meetings and connected all our Confirmation students with mentors for the next two years. We also had some of our students help during our Teacher Gift Packing Event! If you or your student are interested in joining us, please contact Jordan Harper at jordan@excelsiorumc.org or 312.866.5878.

Upcoming Events

- November 15- Buy a pie, feed a family! 3 - 4pm
- November 21- ICA Food Shelf Turkey Giveaway, 9:30 - 11:30am
- November 23- Mentor event (TBD Zoom or in-person), 2pm
- November 25- No Youth Group

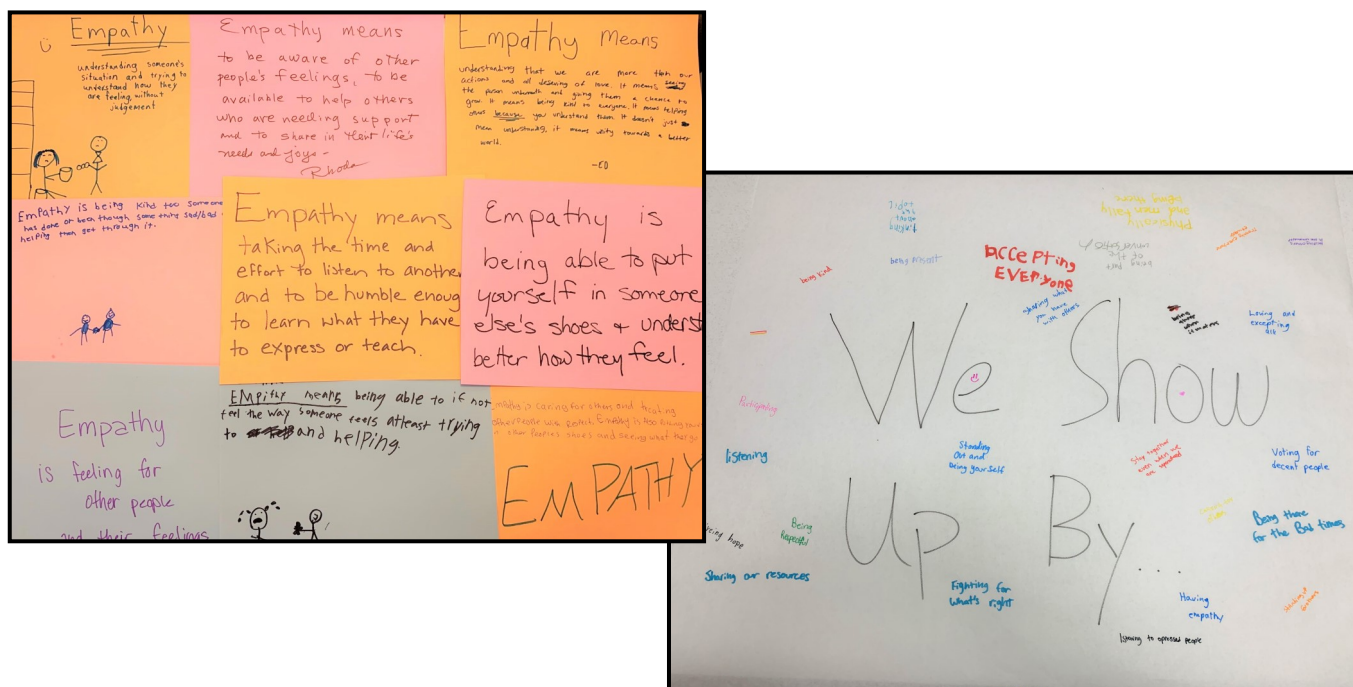
Buy a pie, feed a family!

We are partnering with the ICA Food Shelf to raise money for turkey dinners for families in need. **Every \$20 we raise provides a full turkey dinner for one family.**

If you would like to support a great cause and enjoy some delicious desert, pies can be purchased for \$20 at the church on **November 15, from 3 - 4pm**. Apple, pecan and pumpkin pie are now available for preordering. All are welcome to purchase pies on the 15th without a preorder. Delivery is available upon request. Contact Jordan at jordan@excelsiorumc.org to order or for more information.



YOUTH MINISTRIES



In October, the Youth Group talked about Prayer as a faith practice. As we listened to Brooke preach on outrage, showing up, and empathy, we looked at how each one of these topics relate to our prayer life. The students put their commitment to showing up and their take on empathy into the art shown here. How do you think of these topics? How can you incorporate them into your prayer life?

Trunk or Treat Fun

The families of 30 children enjoyed treats and activities at our annual Trunk or Treat event.
Thank you to all who made this event possible!



LEADERSHIP TEAM

"Never let a good crisis go to waste." was credited to Sir Winston Churchill near the end of World War II where an unlikely alliance was forged between himself, Stalin and Roosevelt, that led to the formation of the United Nations: an opportunity formed in the midst of a crisis.

The pandemic has pushed all of us to think in different ways. In September, 114 of you filled out a survey that is helping us made decisions moving forward. Some key takeaways:

- Over 50% identified as being over the age of 61
- 73% do not have children in their household
- 62% considered themselves or someone in their household "high-risk" for Covid-19
- 95% have worshiped with us online since live streaming began

Almost 60% of responders would not feel comfortable attending worship in-person until there was a viable vaccine

Top priorities named: expanding outreach and social justice ministries, expanding children and family ministries, improving external communication, improving building areas that equip children & hospitality ministries.

One main reason for the priorities questions was to provide input for our goal-setting activity. For the next 12-18 months, we have identified these top 3 areas as our priorities:

1. Children's Ministry – looking for ways to invite & engage, equip various age-groups, identify needed building updates.
2. Connections –strengthen relationships outside of worship, intentionally intergenerational, consider various formats.
3. Virtual Worship and Collaboration – plan and prepare for sustainable & effective online worship moving forward (even post-Covid), build our online community and digital tools, support access for all ages.

Leadership will next work on formulating specific actions to implement in order to achieve these goals.



Virtual Worship

We continue to worship virtually each week. At the January 26th Leadership Team meeting, we will review the situation and evaluate, if possible, when we might begin to phase in in-person Worship services. At present, the Bishop and Annual Conference are encouraging churches to continue with online worship and maintain groups of 10 people or less when gathering in person.

Trustees

The solar panel project continues to make progress as the team is finalizing contract details and schedule.

SPRC

We will hold a EUMC charge conference via ZOOM at 11:45am on November 25th following worship to review and approve Pastor Brooke's salary for 2021.

Finance

Income was down in September but overall we maintain positive cash flow for the year to date. Stewardship drive is planned for November so start considering now how you might best support the ministries of our faith community in 2021. None of this can be done without you.

- John Peichel
Communications, EUMC Leadership Team

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report

2020

	September	Year-To-Date
Operating Fund Income	\$19,352	\$348,071
Offering Income	\$19,123	\$345,058
Income - Other	\$229	\$3,014
Operating Fund Expenses	\$37,523	\$301,915
Net Operating Income	\$(18,172)	\$46,157
Net Operating Income-Last Year	\$(1,664)	\$2,238
All Funds Cash Balance	\$500,962	
Less Designated Fund Balances	\$410,805	
Unrestricted Cash Balance	\$90,157	

Thank you for your continued financial support! We are in the final quarter of 2020, and are on track to close the year with a balanced budget.

The past few months have seen giving for our ICA satellite food shelf, our Free Little Pantry, Simpson Shelter, Social Justice ministries, Housing Help, Teacher Appreciation Gifts, 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

Monday, November 16 at 6:30pm

Monday, December 14 at 6:30pm

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

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.



Facebook by searching for Group
"Excelsior United Methodist Church"

Excelsior UMC November Gratitude Challenge

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 A favorite "treat" I am thankful for	2 A compliment I am thankful for	3 A friend I am thankful for	4 A song I am thankful for	5 A possession that I am thankful for	6 A book I am thankful for	7 A group activity I am thankful for
8 A favorite smell I am thankful for	9 A holiday I am thankful for	10 A second chance I am thankful for	11 A moment today that I am thankful for	12 A neighbor I am thankful for	13 A teacher I am thankful for	14 A place I am thankful for
15 A day of the week I am thankful for	16 A vacation that I am thankful for	17 A sound I am thankful for	18 A question I am thankful for	19 Something happening soon I am thankful for	20 A word I am thankful for	21 A sport I am thankful for
22 Something about me I am thankful for	23 A type of weather I am thankful for	24 Technology I am thankful for	25 Someone at church I am thankful for	26 A time of day I am thankful for	27 A community worker I am thankful for	28 A bible story or verse I am thankful for
29 A gift I am thankful for	30 A family tradition I am thankful for					

SHARE & LISTEN

Pick a time of day that you think you could commit to a month-long gratitude challenge. If you miss a couple, do 2 or 3 on one day. If a month is too long, choose to do some the week of Thanksgiving.

Leave the sheet somewhere handy so you see it. The dinner table or the refrigerator might work for you.

Have fun! If you are doing this as a family, remember to be good listeners and sharers. If you are doing this on your own, consider checking in with a church friend once a week. You will discover new things! Celebrate your accomplishment.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Sunday Worship at 10:00am Currently Online

More information:
www.excelsiorumc.org

Love thy grumpy Neighbor
Love thy of a different opinion Neighbor
Love thy scared Neighbor
Love thy chain sawing Neighbor
Love thy troubled/angry Neighbor
Love thy angry by Fear Neighbor
Love thy judgemental Neighbor
Love thy anxious Neighbor
Love thy struggling Neighbor



Prayer Stations

