



# EXCELSIOR

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*Loving Beyond Ourselves*

## Shorelines Newsletter

May and June 2021



### May Sermon Series

Every week, Pastor Brooke ends worship with a benediction, a blessing. This month in worship, we will be looking at each phrase of that blessing in detail and the scriptures that echo it. It is a powerful act to bless others, and to be blessed. What does that blessing do for us? For others? Join us in worship to discover the meaning behind this blessing, and others in your life.

May 2: You Have Been Blessed  
May 9: To Bless Others  
May 16: God Calls You by Name  
May 23: God Challenges You  
May 30: God Dwells Within You

Psalms 23  
2 Corinthians 9  
Isaiah 43  
Romans 12  
John 14

Worship online | Sunday mornings | 10:00 am

# PASTORAL UPDATE

Last month, there was a flurry of attention on Minneapolis and Minnesota. Being the center of global news and attention raised the tension in the air during the Derick Chauvin trial and jury deliberations, which was already high. I personally followed the trial closely, checking Twitter and the news several times each day for weeks. I went through a variety of emotions throughout the trial and then certainly as a result of the verdict: anxiety, worry, stress, hopelessness, relief, hope.

It became very clear throughout the prosecution's case just how many people and witnesses it took to paint the picture of injustice that had occurred. This was the biggest takeaway for me. As awful as the video of the murder of George Floyd was, the testimony and actions of everyday people reminded me of the power of being a witness to another's life. There were a handful of eye-witnesses, who did the very thing Jesus asks of all of us. They saw someone in trouble, and they did not pass by. They stopped. They filmed. They called the police. They yelled out. They were powerless to stop the death of George Floyd, but they had power in their witness. They saw something awful and refused to look away. Because of them, the prosecution had a strong case.

What if we saw this trial as another challenge and reminder for us to witness to one another's lives? When someone else is in pain, in mourning, in a struggle, can we stand next to them and witness it alongside them? We may not be able to change it, but we can bear witness to it.

We can act as witnesses in small and big ways. Video taping an encounter for accountability is a way to witness. Climbing into a literal witness stand is a way to witness. When a family member or friend gets an unwanted diagnosis, sitting with them in their grief and pain is a way of witnessing. Watching someone struggle with addiction isn't pretty, but if we don't look away, we can be their witness.

Walking alongside someone struggling with mental health isn't comfortable, but it is a way of witnessing. The trick is to witness without judging and evaluating. It can be hard to witness without minimizing the pain to make ourselves feel better. But witnessing another person's life and struggles is not about what we want to be true, it is about what is true for them.

When we witness what others go through and experience, whether it's racism or cancer, it makes it valid. It makes it more real. It is powerful. It is a way of saying to them, "I see you. What you are experiencing matters to me."

May we commit ourselves to the practice of being witnesses for one another. Even when life is not pretty or easy, may we not look away. May we not cross the street. May we realize the power we have in simply attending to one another's pain and struggle.

In 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](http://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.



## June and July Worship Series: Courage

Our vision statement proclaims that we want to be known as a courageous Christian community. What does courage look like in Christianity? What does courage look like for us in this time and place? Scripture is full of stories of people being courageous in a variety of ways. It doesn't always look like skydiving or speaking in front of 1,000 people. Courage can be found in small actions and conversations that we do each and every day. We will look at the early church in Acts to gain wisdom into our own acts of courage.

June 6:	Courage to Act	Acts 8
June 13:	Courage to Change our Minds	Acts 11
June 20:	Courage to Listen	Acts 15
June 27:	Youth Sunday	
July 4:	Courage to Witness	Acts 26
July 11:	Courage to Seek Truth	Acts 28

## Reopening to in-person worship!

The Leadership Team decided on April 22 to prepare for a return to in-person worship on **Sunday, June 13** with one service at 9am, which will also be livestreamed. No separate childcare will be provided, but families are welcome to attend worship together. On **Sunday, June 20** we will add a second worship service: a 10:30 am Family Friendly service created with our youngest members in mind (all ages welcome).

Leadership feels that we can safely worship approximately 75 people in the sanctuary while we practice social distancing and wear masks. The Bishop has not changed the Conference recommendation of virtual only as of April 22, but we are actively getting ready for that day. There are many logistics still to finalize. We appreciate your flexibility and grace as we navigate these waters together. Leadership will keep you informed in the weeks to come.

June 13	9am Traditional worship, in-person & livestreamed
June 20	9am Traditional worship, in-person & livestreamed 10:30am Family-friendly service, in-person



# STANDING FOR JUSTICE



On April 25, we welcomed guest preachers Natasha and Thaddeus Johnson. They shared a message on microaggressions and how we, as allies, can work to avoid them. Following worship, they hosted a Q & A on ZOOM where no question was off-limits. Race can be a tricky thing to talk about, and they wanted to create space for us to ask whatever would be helpful in our work to being better advocates. Some highlights of what they shared:

- Even without diversity of race in our congregation, we can have diversity of thought.
- We can support agencies that help children stay out of the system—Project Innocence, pre-trial diversion organizations, the Legal Defense Fund through the NAACP.
- There is a cumulative nature to being disenfranchised that exists across all systems: education, food deserts, court system, policing, housing, transportation, employment, etc.
- You are never powerless to help! 4 things you can offer: food, money, your voice, your time.



## Reparations

You may have heard the word “reparations” in the news lately. It often refers to actions by the US government or slaveholders to restore both freed African slaves and any African American for opportunities blocked, lost, or outright stolen to accumulate family wealth and financial and social equity with White Americans.

For the past 25 years, Rep. John Conyers Jr, MI, has introduced at every session of Congress a bill for a congressional study of slavery and its lingering effects, as well as establishing recommendations for “appropriate remedies.”

Social media often focuses on African slavery as a thing of our distant past; since contemporary White Americans did not own African slaves, we are not responsible for the wealth gap between Black and White US populations. These postings fail to mention the ongoing predations committed against African Americans by White dominated institutions.

To learn more, we commend to you this article by Ta-Nehisi Coates where Coates walks the reader through post-slavery examples of White-on-Black crime in an on-going case for reparations.

“The Case for Reparations,” Ta-Nehisi Coates, [The Atlantic](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/), June 2014

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>



# SERVING OTHERS

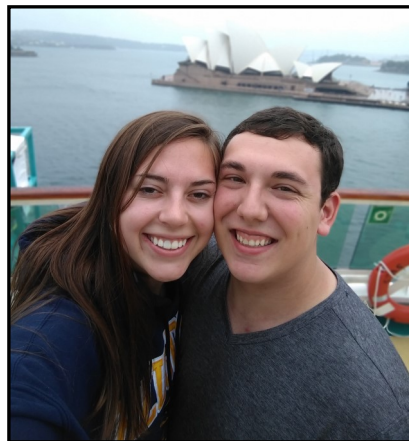
## Volunteer Spotlight - Sarah Peichel

Many of you may know Sarah Peichel well—she's been attending our church since she was three years old. Sarah has helped out with most everything at some point: Simpson Shelter, highway clean up, Vacation Bible School, Sunday school teacher, camp counselor, community lunch. Currently she is on our marketing and website teams, working to refresh and update our digital presence and branding. During the day, Sarah works as a Marketing Coordinator for Virtual Radiologic. When she's not working, you're most likely to find her doing home renovation projects. Sarah's fiancé Andrew and her just bought their first home and are doing a complete DIY home renovation (with help from family and friends). Her favorite hobbies are playing saxophone, crafting, and traveling.

**What she enjoys about serving:** "I enjoy being part of a community that has similar passions and holds the same values as me."

**Why serving is important to her:** "The people of Excelsior UMC are an amazing support system and it's important to me that the church has the resources available so that others can build their own community here. Especially during a time of virtual worship, our online presence plays a huge role in how we engage current members and present ourselves to potential members."

**What she's looking forward to in the next year:** "I'm most looking forward to finishing house renovations, wedding planning, and the possibility of eating State Fair cheese curds again!"



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



**Bob Sherman**

Bob lives in Deephaven and is the father of five grown children, Taylor, Kate, Leigh, Jeremy, and Ale, and the grandfather of three, Abby, Bobby and Malby. He is a social justice advocate, and likes to help others. His hobbies include exercising, especially Nordic skiing, and sea kayaking. He travels to Scotland every year to kayak, hike and bike in the West Highlands and Hebrides islands.



**Jennifer Brady-Johnson and Bob Johnson**

Jennifer and Bob live in Medina and are the parents of three children: Emma, age 23; Colin, 22, and Nick, 18. Jennifer works as an occupational therapist with special needs students at a school in New Hope, and is working on a doctoral degree in occupational therapy. She enjoys playing with her dog, running, being with family and friends, and the outdoors. She has run the Boston, New York and Chicago marathons, all after age 50. Bob is a project manager with DesignWise, an interior design company serving the hospitality and commercial industry. He enjoys working on home projects, playing guitar, cooking, reading, and biking. He recently started brewing his own beer.

# BUILDING COMMUNITY



## MN Food Share Month

Thank you to all who donated toward March Food Share Month! Together we raised over \$1,000 to provide food to those in need in our community.

In addition to Food Share Month, we served 58 families at our satellite Food Shelf here at the church, giving out a total of 2,735 pounds of food in the month of March! We've also partnered with the main ICA campus to receive extra items to put in our Little Free Pantry, which is serving more people than ever. Thank you to all who have donated money or items to stock our

## Pop-up ICA Food Shelf Volunteer Opportunity

Help distribute food to those in need! ICA is hosting Spring Pop Up Distributions every Friday starting April 9 through May 28. Pop Up locations may vary. To sign up visit their website at [icafoodshelf.org](http://icafoodshelf.org) and click on Volunteer.

## Brooklyn Center Donations

EUMC stepped up to serve those affected in Brooklyn Center by the recent police shooting, donating a car full of groceries and essentials for Pastor Brooke to take to our partner church, Brooklyn United Methodist.



## Outreach Team

The Outreach Team would like to thank our outgoing Committee Chair, Ann Marsh, for all her leadership and service to the community. Now filling her role are Co-Chairs Rebecca Marten and Denise Foote. We also welcomed two new members to our team in March and invite anyone interested in joining our team to contact Jordan at [jordan@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:jordan@excelsiorumc.org).



# ADULT STUDIES & CONNECTIONS

## Sarah/Lydia Circles

Sarah/Lydia Circles next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 13 at the church at 3pm. Bring a chair and mask and please be flexible. We plan to meet outside, weather permitting, or inside in the Narthex.

We're always looking for new people to attend. Hope you can join us! If you have questions, contact

Kristie Lester: [kjlester@mchsi.com](mailto:kjlester@mchsi.com) or 612.251.6709

Joyceln Hughes: [joycelnhughes@gmail.com](mailto:joycelnhughes@gmail.com) or 612.802.7105



Esther Circle gathering on April 15

## Esther Circle

Wednesday, May 19 at 5pm at the Arboretum

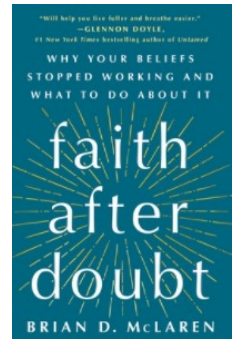
Esther Circle plans a "bring your own" picnic and walk at the Arboretum on Wednesday, May 19 at 5 PM. Circle members with memberships will help those without with entrance fees. All are welcome!

Contact Jill Jewell with questions, 952.688.8245.

## Tuesdays at Two Book Study: *Faith After Doubt*

Meeting virtually on Tuesday afternoons 2-3pm  
May 4-June 8

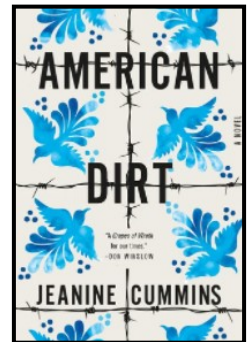
More and more people are leaving the church or uninterested in the church. Brian McLaren wrote this book for those who feel like their beliefs don't work anymore, for those who are spiritually curious but turned off from religion, or those who just have doubts and questions about faith they want to explore. Join this non-judgmental group for meaningful conversation and dialogue. Invite a friend or family member to join us who would add to the conversation! Contact Pastor Brooke to sign up: [brooke@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:brooke@excelsiorumc.org).



## Cover Girls Book Club

**May Book Club-** Monday, May 24 at 3pm.  
*American Dirt* By Jeanine Cummins

Lydia Quixano Perez lived in Mexico City where she ran a bookstore. Javier, a member of the drug cartel which has overtaken their city, comes into her store to buy some books. Because of this interaction and what follows, Lydia's, her son Luca's and her husband's lives are changed forever. She and Luca are forced to flee and are transformed into migrants running for their lives. This is an emotional and thought provoking book of fiction about what it means to be a migrant and running for freedom and safety. Cummins has written a compelling international story of the migrant experience in our times. Sue Judd will lead our discussion.



## June Book Club

Date and place will to be determined. We will be picking our interesting and fabulous books for next year. Everyone is welcome!

~ Sue Judd



# YOUTH MINISTRIES



## Youth Update

We have had a busy few months with the Youth Group! Confirmation and Youth Group have been meeting every other week at the church, as we discuss the roots of the Christian faith and how it changed over the course of its first few hundred years. Our next few lessons will be covering the leaders of the Reformation, and the start of Methodism in particular. So far this year we have partnered with Mount Calvary Lutheran Church to pack medical supplies for Global Health Ministries, learned about microfinancing and chosen who to invest our Easter Offering Loans in and rented out a movie theater to watch *Raya and The Last Dragon*.



Global Health Ministries event

## Upcoming Opportunities

**May 22:** We are partnering with Can Do Canines to host a Puppy Shower Drive Thru to benefit assistance dogs. If you are a student in 6-12 grade, we invite you to join us. You can contact Jordan at [jordan@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:jordan@excelsiorumc.org).



**June 27:** Youth Sunday, we'll be in charge of the Sunday Service and will plan and create worship during our Wednesday sessions.

## Summer Service Week: July 19 - 23

We are partnering with Mount Calvary Church for a week of service this summer. We will begin at Mount Calvary, bus to Gethsemane Lutheran in North Minneapolis to work for a few hours each day, then bus back to Mount Calvary for our worship elements of the camp.

We are still planning the details, but the trip will cost \$120 per student. Scholarships are available to help cover this cost. Please contact Jordan if you're interested.

## Upcoming Events

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

May 5:	Youth Group at EUMC/Confirmation at 6-7:30pm	(Dinner Provided)
May 19:	Youth Group at EUMC/Confirmation at 6-7:30pm	(Dinner Provided)
June 2:	Youth Group at EUMC/Confirmation at 6-7:30pm	(Dinner Provided)
June 11:	Youth joining EUMC Social Justice Ministry Meeting at 11am	

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

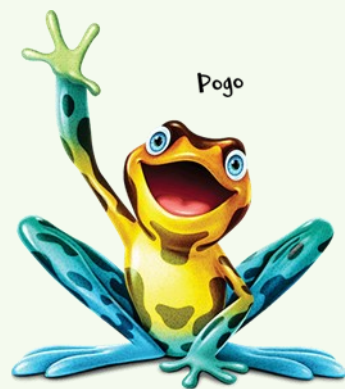
## Join us for Fun with Food on Saturday, May 8th at 11am

The spring rain got me thinking about Noah, and I thought we should try building our own arks out of graham crackers and frosting! All families are invited to join us at the church to test out your carpentry and culinary skills and build arks and rainbows. Contact Kallie at [Kallie@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:Kallie@excelsiorumc.org) with questions. We look forward to seeing you there!



## Save the Date for VBS!

Vacation Bible School will be held the evenings of August 2-5. Our theme is **Treasured**, where kids will discover they are priceless to God. Mark your calendars and join us for games, arts and crafts, Bible stories and songs, and much more!



## Easter Egg Hunt was a big success!

We had beautiful weather and a fantastic turn out for the Easter Egg Hunt on April 3. There were more than 80 children from the church and neighboring community in attendance, plus parents and grandparents!





# LEADERSHIP TEAM

For the second year EUMC celebrated the resurrection of Christ on Easter morning virtually. We never envisioned that a year ago, nor did we understand all the changes that would need to take place as we continued to worship, do fellowship, educate our Confirmation youth, do community outreach and lead Excelsior United Methodist virtually. The Leadership Team is entering into the second year of this newly visioned structure and we give thanks to all who shared their time and talents last year and welcomed three new members to the team for 2021.

In February we thanked Kurt Jewell, Glenna Cheney and Lynn Hughes for their service. Then in March we welcomed John Fischer (Trustee Rep), Julie Newell (Finance Rep) and Ann March (Ministry Rep) to the team. Here is an overview of the items we have accomplished and the work that lays ahead.

## Finance:

We closed the 2020 year with a surplus to the budget. We also finalized the 2021 budget which was then presented at the Charge Conference on February 29, 2021. That budget was approved by the Leadership Team. Financial updates will be presented in the Shorelines and the Financial Reps are working on a new format. You can always contact them if you have questions.

## SPRC:

Kallie Stroh has been onboarded and we celebrated Jordan and Jennifer's one year as staff members.

## Trustees:

Working on Sanctuary updates to support online streaming when we go back to in person worship. We worked with two bids for video equipment and lighting. The new cameras/video equipment has been installed however the lighting is on backorder as of the end of April. Solar panels work has not begun yet.

## Ministry:

Discussed the continued excellent work from the Outreach Committee in assisting the food needs of the community. Community Lunch will start up in August and the Food Shelf and Little Pantry are being used often. The Children's Ministry Team is holding VBS at the beginning of August. Congregational Care Team and Adult Studies could use more volunteers.

We are setting up a new website with a logo update to go live in June.



## COVID Updates:

We discussed a strategy to reopen so we will be prepared when the Conference changes the guidance from virtual only. There are many things to consider such as vaccination of our staff and members, ability to offer childcare, number of people the sanctuary can hold practicing 6 ft social distancing, wearing of masks and many more. The Leadership Team set a target date of June 13 to open to in-person worship. We know we will all need to remain flexible as we move into this phase. What works one week may not work the next.

## Feasibility Study:

Leadership Team has decided to move ahead with the potential building upgrades that were presented at the Church Conference in February of 2020 just prior to the Covid shut down. Leadership Team has interviewed two firms and agreed to a contract with Horizon Stewardship to do a Feasibility Study that will begin in May.

~ Kristie Lester

Communications, EUMC Leadership Team



# TREASURER'S REPORT

Thank you for so graciously supporting our church! We are off to a great start in 2021, with a strong number of pledges and donations in our first quarter. With your help, we hope to continue this pace the rest of the year. Further, we received forgiveness on our Federal PPP loan, giving us additional funds to further our mission in 2021 and beyond.

In addition to our church's growing programs, in March alone we supported:

- EUMC's ICA satellite food shelf
- EUMC's Free Little Pantry
- EUMC's Social Justice ministries
- Simpson Shelter
- Housing Assistance to those losing their apartments
- Easter Giving toward Kiva loans
- March Food Share Month (ICA)

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 have a pledge to fulfill, or would like to donate to support the mission of the church, please visit [excelsiorumc.org/donate](http://excelsiorumc.org/donate). You may also mail checks to the church.

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.

Thank you,  
Jordan Harper (Treasurer)  
Julie Newell (Finance Co-Chair)  
Chuck Welle (Finance Co-Chair)

The upcoming Leadership Team meetings are scheduled for

Thursday, May 20 at 6:30pm

Tuesday, June 22 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](mailto:brooke@excelsiorumc.org) x103

**Youth, Community Engagement Director,**  
**Financial Treasurer:** Jordan Harper  
[jordan@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:jordan@excelsiorumc.org) x106

**Children's Director:** Kallie Stroh  
[kallie@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:kallie@excelsiorumc.org) x111

**Office Administrator:** Jennifer Specia  
[office@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:office@excelsiorumc.org) x100

**Property Manager:** Steve Colby  
[steve@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:steve@excelsiorumc.org) x110 (off Mondays)

**Music Director:** Gail Fisk  
[gail@excelsiorumc.org](mailto: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](http://www.excelsiorumc.org)**

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



## Sunday Worship at 10:00am Currently Online

More information:  
[www.excelsiorumc.org](http://www.excelsiorumc.org)



Easter donations to Kiva will help three women in Rwanda, Samoa and the Congo.



Members of the Leadership Team meeting virtually.