

# NEWSLETTER

BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP  
Sundays at 10am

SHORELINES  
SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2021

# PASTORAL UPDATE



Last month, a small group of us read *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters* by Priya Parker. We discussed it over tea and food, which met my criteria for any good gathering! Parker is a global facilitator who works to help activists, elected officials, corporate executives and educators alike create meaningful and transformative gatherings. In her book, she outlines some key points for everyday gatherings that you and I may host at our homes, businesses, neighborhoods.

I wanted to read it this summer as things were opening back up to reflect and have more intention around the gatherings that we so missed during Covid. The discussion revolved a lot around how do we get people to connect in meaningful ways? What is the purpose behind our gatherings? Most of us plan a gathering around form and function. A meeting happens with white boards and a conference room. A birthday party happens with cake and ice cream. Worship happens with hymns and a sermon.

It made us reflect on all sorts of gatherings that we have—from church worship and committee meetings to neighborhood barbeques and family birthday parties. A wonderful thing about Parker's view is that she gives a lot of power upon all of us. Depending on how an event is structured, each of us have the power to create space for new ideas, intimacy, and self-reflection. All it takes is some purpose and intention.

- A few of her recommendations:
- Do not be a chill host. Take the lead and shape the gathering the way you want. It requires structure, direction and someone to be a leader.
- More is not necessarily better. Limiting the group size is sometimes critical to accomplishing the purpose of the gathering.
- Cause good trouble. In her TED talk, Parker says that human connection is threatened by unhealthy peace just as it is with unhealthy conflict. The best gatherings involve some heat and risk.
- Use “pop-up rules.” Since people come from a wide variety of backgrounds, don't assume everyone lives by the same etiquette. Instead, install rules specific for that occasion: *no one is allowed to share their occupation or first one to check their phone foots the bill.*

When I think about Jesus, I'm pretty sure he did all of these things. He ministered with purpose and made clear what he wanted to happen when he gathered with others. Only the twelve disciples were invited to the Last Supper. Jesus often caused trouble and increased the heat. He reverted most rules that existed in his day—he spoke to women, he ate with tax collectors, healed on the Sabbath.

How might we do the same? How might our gatherings, however small or ordinary, be a place of connection and transformation? Jesus was able to do this in every day places and with every day people—so can we.

In gratitude,  
Pastor Brooke

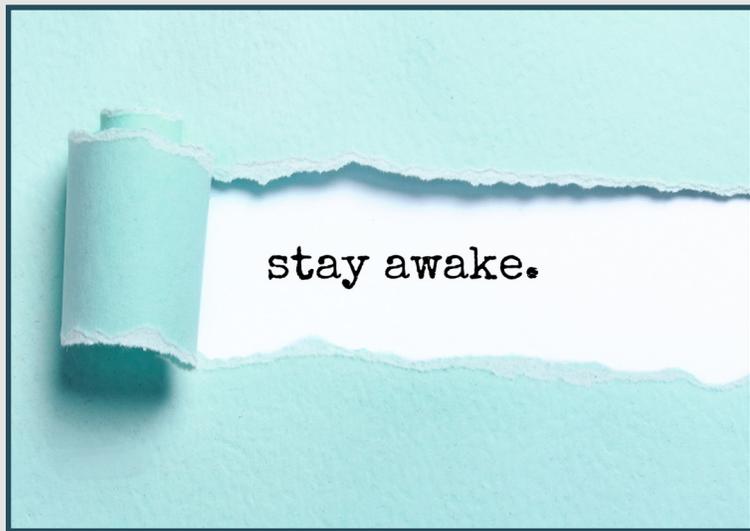
**BROOKE HEERWALD STEINER**  
LEAD PASTOR

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BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



# CURRENT SERMON SERIES



Before Jesus went off to pray, he told his disciples to stay awake. Several times after, he reminded them to stay awake. Still, each time they fell asleep. Jesus asks us to stay awake—to our community, to the brokenness, to the beauty, to the world. We will be using the book *Staying Awake: The Gospel for Changemakers* as our guide. The book is written by Rev. Tyler Sit, a United Methodist Church planter of New City Church in Minneapolis, a church led mostly by queer people of color. Rev. Sit wrote this guide for all of us to stay awake to the ways we can transform our inner beings as well as the wider world around us.

**September 12:** Staying Awake to Awe (worship)

**September 19:** Staying Awake to Our Lives  
(prayer)

**September 26:** Staying Awake to Empire  
(centering marginalized voices)

**October 3:** Staying Awake to Others-Family Service  
(World Communion Sunday)

**October 10:** Staying Awake to the Movement  
(leadership development)

**October 17:** Staying Awake to the Future  
(planting)

## OFFICE HOURS

M-TH 9am-1pm  
F Closed

# FAMILY SERVICE

Sunday, October 3 all ages will be present in worship for interactive, intergenerational worship. Due to the success of our summer family worship services, we will be continuing to hold monthly intergenerational worship. On these Sundays, there will no formal Sunday school and all ages are encouraged to participate in worship.



**Blessing of the Animals**  
**September 18 at 11am**



*Excelsior*  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH

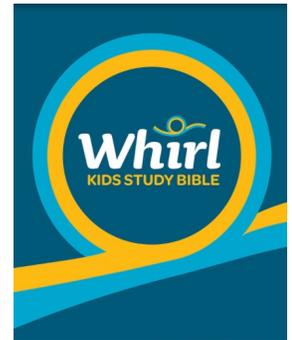
# BUILD. COMMUNITY



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

### Bible Presentation- September 26

Students in grade 3 and up will receive . If your child would like to receive a Bible, please contact Kallie or Jordan and join us for worship! Whirl Story Bibles for children ages 4 to 7 years old are also available. Contact Kallie to get a copy.



### Vacation Bible School

We had a great week of Treasured Vacation Bible School in August, with 28 kids in attendance! Students spent the week singing songs, watching skits, participating in interactive Bible stories, eating delicious foods, doing lab experiments, creating art, and playing game - all while learning they are priceless to God!





## YOUTH MINISTRIES

### Back to School

We are excited to start Sunday School and Confirmation back up in September! This year we'll be having combined Sunday School for grades 6+ each Sunday during worship. We'll also have several fun and service events throughout the year. Our 8th and 9th graders are able to join the confirmation process, which lasts two years and consists of attending Sunday School and fulfilling a few service requirements. They are also paired with a mentor throughout their journey.



### Register for Sunday School/ Confirmation

If you are interested in joining us for Sunday School, Youth Events, and Confirmation this year, **please click the registration link on the youth page of the church website.** You can also contact Jordan for the form. We do need a completed form for every student this year, so we can update our permission forms and have accurate information.

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### Upcoming Events

- September 12: Rally Day and Sunday School Starts
- October 3: Family Church Service and Service Event\*
- October 10: Sunday School and Family Pumpkin Patch trip after church
- October 29: Valley Fair Halloween Haunt Trip
- October 30: Trunk or Treat at Church

**\* Service Event on October 3-** Stay after church with your mentor and family to help make appreciation gifts for local teachers!

## Staying Awake Small Groups

Join a group of others to reflect, share and connect over the current worship series. Copies of *Staying Awake The Gospel for Changemakers* are available in the church office for \$15. Groups will meet weekly in September and October.



Tuesdays, Sept. 14 - Oct. 19 at 2pm in person with Pastor Brooke. Email [brooke@excelsiorumc.org](mailto:brooke@excelsiorumc.org) to sign up.

Thursdays, Sept. 16 - Oct. 21 at 6:30pm on ZOOM with Jeffrey Johnson. Email [mnarborguy@gmail.com](mailto:mnarborguy@gmail.com) to sign up.



## Sarah/Lydia Circles

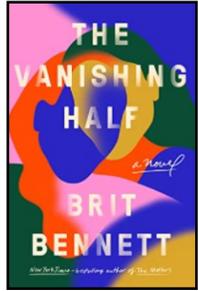
Sarah/Lydia Circles next meeting is September 14 at 7pm in the church Fireside room. We'll plan upcoming 2021-2022 events so stay tuned for more information concerning our October and beyond meetings. New attendees are welcome!

Want more information? Email or call Joyceln Hughes ([joycelnhughes@gmail.com](mailto:joycelnhughes@gmail.com) or 612-802-7105).

## Cover Girls

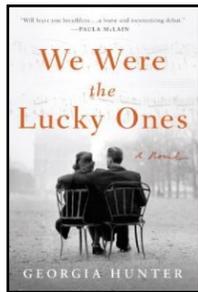
*The Vanishing Half* by Britt Bennett  
Monday, September 27 at 1pm at EUMC

The novel is a multi-generational family saga set between the 1940's and the 1990's. It follows the lives of two identical twins, both light skinned Black girls, who ran away from home at sixteen. They take two different paths; Desiree married a very dark-skinned Black man and Stella lives her life passing as a white girl married to a white man. The story weaves back and forth between their lives and their daughters.



*We Were the Lucky Ones* by Georgia Hunter  
Monday, October 25 at 1pm at EUMC

Hunter's fictional story is based on her research of WWII and on the real life stories told by her relatives of escaping Europe during the start of WWII. It is an unforgettable story of three generations of the Jewish and Polish Kurc family who scattered around the world to escape the horror of the Holocaust. The author writes a gripping emotional novel of courage, love, and luck to survive their ordeals of the war.



## Esther Circle Fall Events

Saturday, September 18  
Esther Circle will help prepare food and serve at Community Lunch.

Thursday, October 21  
We will pack meals at Feed My Starving Children at the Chanhassen location from 7 - 8:45pm.

All women of the church are invited to Esther events!

Contact Jill Jewell ([JLL.jewell@gmail.com](mailto:JLL.jewell@gmail.com) or 952-688-8245) to get on our email list or for more information on these and future events.



## LEADERSHIP

How do you define SUCCESS?

As fall begins, many of us think about starting things anew. Perhaps it is a carryover from our younger years when September marked the time for us to return to school, often to a new building, new teachers, new classes—all of which required us to adjust our daily schedule and get ready.

As we work to return to “normal” activities, some of us wonder what the new normal for church will be. How do we define success for our church? Is it Sunday attendance, balanced budget, community outreach, mission projects, the numbers of children/youth/new members? As church adapts to a new era, so too must our understanding of what constitutes success.

During our August meeting, the Leadership Team focused on strategic planning and began the discussion with creating lists:

- Successes
- Misses
- Hopes & Dreams

Worth celebrating was the length of our success list! The ways in which we achieved our mission during the past 18 months was impressive. Not only did we survive during this time, but we thrived. From dynamic virtual worship to a new family service, from installing solar panels and updating landscaping, from growing our food ministries through the Free Pantry and ICA food shelf, from a record number of kids at our Easter Egg Hunt and VBS to creating a new anti-racism team and partnering with other congregations around pressing issues, we were busy! We named close to 30 successes we experienced.

We did realize that one area to grow in was our communicating of all of these things. We often hear, “I didn’t know that!” when talking about an important ministry effort (even Leadership Team members have been known to say this). We realize that our biggest misses during this time were the limitations of not gathering in person. We were not short on brainstorming dreams and hopes for the future, including a capital campaign this fall.

As we wrapped up our August planning meeting, we identified the following focus areas for our congregation and leadership team:

1. Sunday experience - both in-person and live streaming; (including Sunday School, music and family friendly services)
2. Staff & Volunteers - prioritize activities that support our Mission & Vision
3. Small Groups - supporting existing and new activities for all ages

Community Outreach - supporting existing and new ministries

We are truly blessed with abundance of opportunity to carry out the God’s plan. Let us know how you define Success for our church, our community and our world...

God Bless,  
The 2021 Leadership Team

# SERVE. OTHERS



## OUR COMMUNITY

Thank you to everyone who supported our Backpack Giveaway and Community Lunch! We served more than 50 people and were so excited to be back sharing a meal with our neighbors. Students came and received backpacks, notebooks, folders, and tons of other supplies. We also had several items left over that will be offered throughout the school year to those who need them.



## Free Little Pantry

Our Free Little Pantry continues to serve anyone needing food or essentials, 24/7. If you'd like to donate toward this project, please consider donating to the church and marking "Free Pantry". The list of needs changes often, so financial donations are the easiest way to keep the pantry filled with the most needed items!

## Volunteer Opportunities

If you'd like to volunteer for our upcoming community lunch or our food shelf, or would like more information about upcoming volunteer opportunities, please contact Denise Foote. EUMC's ICA Food Shelf can always use more volunteers on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, from 1:30-5pm.

### Mark Your Calendars

- September 18: Community Lunch
- September 21: Simpson Shelter Dinner
- October 16: Community Lunch
- October 30: Trunk or Treat



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

If you watched virtual worship this past year, you were often greeted with the lovely voices of Jason Fleck and Jeannie Shubitz, along with cameos of their young sons, Sawyer (4 years old) and Griffin (2 years old). Jeannie also helped with the last children's Christmas program in 2019 and Jason currently serves on our leadership team.

They found our church after moving to Minnesota from New Jersey. Looking for a place to go on Christmas Eve, they were on the hunt for an inclusive, open-minded and service-oriented church. Jeannie had done research online and found one church while Jason drove every day past a United Methodist Church with a rainbow flag hanging on the building. It turned out, they had found the same church. They showed up on Christmas Eve in 2018 and have been here ever since!

**What motivates them to volunteer:** The building of community. Our involvement has both made us feel more a part of the community at EUMC, and has hopefully helped to support and strengthen the church, its people, and the communities it serves.

**Hobbies:** Paddle boarding, kayaking, yoga, running, the nightly picking-up-of-toy-cars-off-the-floor...

**Favorite type of gathering:** smaller to medium gatherings with friends on family

**What makes for a welcoming gathering:** friends, a come-as-you-are approach, food and drink, and easy conversation.

**Favorite game to play at a gathering?** Lava monster? Telestrations, probably. The more absurd the better! (Except in Jason's case, then it's probably volleyball.)



# STAND. FOR JUSTICE



FIGHT TODAY  
FOR A BETTER  
TOMORROW

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

Excelsior UMC continues its tradition of preparing food and serving meals at Simpson Homeless Shelter. Dates for the next two months:

Tuesday, September 21  
Tuesday, October 12

Watch for info in the all-church email and bulletin on how to sign up to donate food and/or serve.



## Simpson Shelter Apartments

Simpson is moving forward with plans to create Simpson's Community Shelter and Apartments, a national best practice low-barrier shelter model with 70 beds and 42 units of permanent housing, intentionally designed to meet the short-term housing needs of shelter guests. This modern and dignified space will be developed at the site of Simpson's current shelter.

Simpson Housing Services has a \$10 million state bonding bill (HF1389) that has been presented in the House Capital investment committee and a bill (HF1719) that has been heard by the Senate Housing Finance and Policy Committee. The \$10 million state bonding bill is an essential investment that will support the construction of the new shelter for community members to work alongside advocates and transition out of homelessness.



# TREASURER'S REPORT

We've had a very successful year so far, both in terms of supporting our ministries and financially, all thanks to your incredible generosity.

Your tithes and offerings have helped our church install new video equipment to livestream our worship serves to people all over the country and support our ongoing ministries as they help us prepare to worship, serve, and engage in fellowship as we return to in-person church events.

You've allowed us to host Vaccine Busses, serve people at our Food Shelf and through our Little Free Pantry, host a Drive-Thru Puppy Shower for Can Do Canines, support an MCEE Year-in-Review Event, plan VBS for later this summer, install solar panels on the roof of our church, and so much more!

In addition to our church's growing programs, this year we have supported:

- EUMC's ICA satellite food shelf
- EUMC's Free Little Pantry
- EUMC's Social Justice ministries
- Simpson Shelter
- His House
- Housing Assistance to those losing their apartments (through our nonprofit partners)
- Kiva Loans
- ICA
- WeCAN
- Can Do Canines
- Minnetonka Coalition for Equitable Education

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/give](https://excelsiorumc.org/give). 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)



## PURPOSE

Loving Beyond Ourselves

## VISION

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

## MISSION

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

## CONTACT US

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