

# NEWSLETTER

BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP  
Sundays at 10am



SHORELINES  
March-May 2022

# PASTORAL UPDATE



Lent has begun. A season of repentance and fasting, of prayer and reflection, of preparation for Jesus' resurrection. As the writer Kate Bowler says, "we are almost to the saddest part of the year." It is a season of brokenness and grief, a season of not enough and too much.

Our world seems to be matching the liturgical calendar. Hourly news from the Ukraine is giving us too many examples of brokenness and pain. Add to that the continuous news of Israel, Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan and so many other places to which we have become numb. Not enough peace, not enough democracy, not enough lives being protected and saved. Too much greed, too much power, too much violence, too much destruction and death.

As I was struggling to figure out how to respond to the news of the Ukraine, I read these words from the activist Kaitlin Curtice. She calls them the five "R's":

- Receive
- Respect
- Respond
- Release
- Rest

"**Receive** the information, the news, the realities. **Respect** what they mean: take note of privilege, of what's happening in your body, of what this means to others. **Respond** to it. Do what you need to do: donate money, time, write, create art, support others tangibly, or just give them space, too. Listen. Learn. **Release** it for the moment, holding onto what you've learned and processed. **Rest. Rest. Rest.** And be ready to receive again."

Lately, I've been very heavy on the receiving information and news side. Scrolling and scrolling for more updates, feeling more and more despair and fearful as I read. Got that part down. When I look at how I normally act, I have focused mostly on the first three steps. Receiving, respecting and then responding. Repeat. Where I need to lean into in this season of Lent are the last two—releasing and resting. I'm good at resting and watching basketball on television, but I'm not so good at releasing and resting my brain from its swirls of thoughts. Those can be the most grounding aspects of the process, that remind us we are not alone. It is in releasing and resting that I am best able to remember that God goes before me and after me, above me and below me, in front of me and behind me.

May this Lent be a time of reflection for you and for our world. May each of us make time and space for receiving, respecting, responding, releasing and resting.

With gratitude,  
Pastor Brooke

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LEAD PASTOR

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BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



# CURRENT SERMON SERIES



## Sermon on the Mount

The greatest sermon ever preached. We will dive deep into the words of Jesus this Lent and listen to them anew. When Jesus climbed onto the hillside and spoke to the crowd, he gifted all of us with words that could change the world. Join us as each week we look at a different part of his sermon.

March 13	The Lord's Prayer	Matt 6: 7-15
March 20	Finding Treasure	Matt 6: 24-34
March 27	Living in the Kingdom	Matt 7: 6-29

## OFFICE HOURS

M-TH	9am-1pm
F	Closed

# APRIL WORSHIP



### Palm Sunday worship

**April 10, 10am**

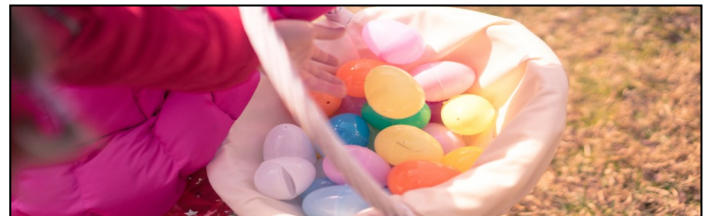
All ages join us for a Palm Processional and Holy Communion.



### Good Friday worship

**April 15 @ 7pm**

Join us for an evening of reflection and music led by the Chancel Choir.



### Egg Hunt

**Saturday, April 16 @ 11am**

Always a highlight! Kids will hunt for eggs outside. Meal to follow.



### Easter morning worship

**April 17 @ 9am & 10:30am**

Celebrate the Risen Christ!

## The Excitement is Building!

We have moved into the next stage for our building project. Thanks to those of you who volunteered to participate in our building committee. Throughout the capital campaign, we took notes of the questions and feedback the congregation shared with us. We have given that feedback to Station 19, who is adjusting our plans based on your input. They are also working on structural engineering issues, to ensure that what we want to do is feasible. We will officially vote on our building committee and preliminary architectural plans at our church conference on March 27 at 11am. Please plan to attend!

### We have selected a Construction partner:

Langer Construction will partner with us and Station 19. Langer has over 76 years of experience and religious organizations account for more than 80% of their projects. They are the ones who did our Columbarium ceiling, so we already have a positive relationship with them.

Over the next 5 weeks, the building committee will meet with Station 19 and Langer construction to:

- Review and confirm floor plan designs
- Conduct a structural engineering assessment and options
- Complete a budget review (Is what we are planning within budget parameters?)
- Update construction timing and impact assessment.
- Review and confirm interior design plans (flooring selection, furniture plans, wall colors, etc)

### Pews:

We have heard from some of you that you'd like a pew! If you have any interest in the pews, for a garden, wood building project, or any other creative use, let us know.

### Building Committee:

Lynn Hughes, chair	Connie Kurtz
Lynne Farrell	Bill Lester
Bill Judd	Jim Stromberg
Jeannie Shubitz	

### Upcoming congregational votes:

Appointment of Building Committee and authorize the project (March 27 @ 11am)

Vote to authorize a bridge mortgage (TBD)

### The SoHi (South of Highway 7) Community Playground

Another project we hope to begin this summer or early fall is to build a community playground in partnership with the City of Excelsior on the field west of the church. We are applying for a grant from the Hennepin County Youth Sports Program. Our conversations with the Excelsior Rotary and the city have demonstrated very enthusiastic responses and communal support. Both have expressed interest in helping us raise funding for this project. Sarah Nelson is spearheading this endeavor. Stay tuned for more info!





## LEADERSHIP

Spring will be a busy time for EUMC and the Leadership Team. As we prepare to enter the season of Lent let me share the highlights of the areas we will be focusing on.

- New Leadership members will join the team in March. There will be a Church Conference on Sunday, March 27 following worship to vote on the new slate of leaders, have an update from the Building Committee and a report on 2022 budget.
- Formation of the Building Committee is complete, and Leadership will liaison with that new committee in areas of Trustees and Finance.
- As shared in worship we are sad that Jordan will be leaving the staff late spring. Leadership has begun working on a plan to replace the three areas that he has responsibility for. Those 3 areas are Youth, Outreach and Finance.
- Jeff Fawbush will be joining our music staff as a songwriter and instrumentalist. He will be partnering with Gail to provide worship music on a regular basis.
- The financing for the existing mortgage has been completed. EUMC has now partnered with Bridgewater Bank for all our monetary needs.
- Update on the playground project has been provided and that project continues to move forward. This will be in partnership with the City of Excelsior, Hennepin County, the Excelsior Rotary and potentially others. Leadership strongly views this as a positive fulfillment of our mission to Build Community, Serve Others and Stand for Justice. Sarah Nelson and Bill Lester are leading this project.
- Pastor Brooke will be taking a 6-week renewal leave this summer. The Book of Discipline directs pastors to take a short-term renewal leave every four years, in addition to their vacation. This leave request comes with the support and backing of the MN Annual Conference and the Conference also makes some funds available to cover guest preachers. Leadership Team strongly supports this leave and had an excellent discussion about the benefits this brings to both pastors and churches when we met with the District Superintendent in December. Dates are not finalized but will be mid June thru July or early August.
- Our Ministry Teams have many stories to share with the congregation as they have been working with our children and youth, serving the community, and educating us in February with the sermon series What Matters Most: Urgent Issues for Today. If you missed any of that, take time during Lent to decide what issues really matter to you.

If you have questions for Leadership, please let us know. As we celebrate the resurrection story once again this spring, may you hear the good news and then may you share it.

Kristie Lester, Communications

### Message From Pastor Brooke

Every four years, pastors are encouraged to take a renewal leave for the sole purpose of rest and renewal. This summer, I will take a six-week renewal leave at the encouragement of my District Superintendent and our leadership team. I am looking forward to a time of releasing and rest, where I can ground myself in the presence of God without focusing on accomplishing or completing tasks. I hope you too will examine the rhythms of your life and where you might build in more rest.

# BUILD. COMMUNITY



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

### What's New in Sunday School

As we move into spring, Children's Sunday School will continue to focus on New Testament stories. Each Sunday School lesson includes a short video, Bible story, and group discussion, along with a craft, song, game, or group activity. We are always looking for additional volunteers, so if you would like to join us in Sunday School, please contact Children's Director Kallie Stroh.

### EUMC Young Families Camping Weekend August 12 - 14

Let's do it again! We had so much fun last year. Carver Park Reserve on Lake Auburn has a playground, swimming beach, and the best bike trails around. Each family is independent with their own campsite, tent/camper, meals and supplies. If you're brand new to camping and/or need any supplies, we can help! The dates are Friday evening, August 12 through Sunday morning, August 14.

To reserve a campground, go to [threeiversparks.org](http://threeiversparks.org), search Lake Auburn Campground and click "Reserve a site online" link to book, \$41 total. Brooke and Jeremy booked campsite #6.



### Vacation Bible School

At WEIRD ANIMAL VBS, children will discover that Jesus' love is one-of-a-kind! They will have a fun time gathering for dinner, and trying out new games, songs, crafts, snacks, hearing awesome Bible stories, and more! Registration forms are available on the church website.

**Dates:** August 1 - 4

**Time:** 5:30- 8pm Daily

**Ages:** 4 years - completed 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Consider joining the VBS team as a volunteer! You can help in many different ways. VBS is rotation style and both small group leaders and rotation site leaders are needed. A background check is required for all volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Kallie Stroh.





## YOUTH MINISTRIES

### Confirmation Sunday, May 15

This May we will be celebrating our Confirmation students who make the decision to become full members of our church. After two years of learning about UMC theology and practices, and serving their community and their church, our students will stand in front of the congregation to accept the following vows:

To renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness,  
reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sin;  
To accept the freedom and power God gives them  
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression;  
To confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put their whole trust  
In his grace, and promise to serve him as their Lord;  
To remain faithful members of Christ's holy church  
and serve as Christ's representatives in the world;  
To be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church  
and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries;  
To faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers,  
their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness;  
To receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in  
the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Our young people are such a valuable part of our Excelsior UMC community, and we ask everyone to celebrate them, invite them to be a part of their work in and around the church, and to consider their voice as we seek to build community, serve others, and stand for justice.

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### Upcoming Events

March 12	Sky Zone Trampoline Park in Edina, 10:30am-12pm
March 18	Movie Night at the church (dinner provided), 6-8pm
April 16	Easter Egg Hunt, 11am
May 15	Confirmation Sunday, 10am
August 1-4	Vacation Bible School, 5:30-8pm
August 12-15	Young Families Camping weekend

# SERVE. OTHERS



## OUR COMMUNITY

### A Typical Day at Our ICA Food Shelf

Many members of our church have donated food, money, and time to the Food Shelf we host on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. We'd like to walk you through a typical day, giving you a glimpse of the experience our volunteers and those we serve have.

Early in the week ICA is contacted with our requests for specific items according to the needs of our clients. Wednesday afternoon, volunteers arrive to set up tables, the check-in and weigh-in stations, organize the shopping area, and unload the ICA food delivery truck. This process takes an hour or so, even with six or more volunteers.

Once set up is complete, clients are able to enter the building to begin the shopping process. Very generous limits of food are available to each family to take home. No one looking for food is turned away. On an average Wednesday we serve 25 or more families, many of who take home pounds of food, hygiene products, and household essentials.

It takes a village, and we are so grateful for everyone who helps!



ICA volunteers



Fresh produce area



Dry goods and personal hygiene shopping area

# STAND. FOR JUSTICE

A photograph showing a crowd of people at what appears to be a protest or demonstration. In the foreground, a person holds a large, hand-drawn cardboard sign. The sign has the words "FIGHT TODAY" and "TOMORROW" in bold, black, block letters. Between them, the word "FOR A" is in black, and "BETTER" is written in a red, cursive script. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a green banner with white text.

FIGHT TODAY  
FOR A BETTER  
TOMORROW

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

We spent the month of February talking about the issues that matter most to our community. Climate Justice, Racial Justice, Mental Health and Economic Disparity. These issues can seem so daunting, so huge, so beyond our control, that it is easy to shrug our shoulders and think they are problems that we can't really do anything about. But, by listening to other people's stories, by talking about the needs and concerns of others, we become aware that there are many things that we can do to help lift others up.

Each Sunday during the February, the Social Justice Ministry Team provided a list of suggested resources; books, movies, TED Talk/video discussion, and podcasts to help us learn and to stimulate opportunities for discussion about that Sunday's topic. (We also gave away free books, toilet paper, and chocolate!) You can help by continuing the conversation around these topics with people in your spheres of influence and contact.

### Climate TED Talk Challenge

The Social Justice Ministry Team would like to challenge everyone in the congregation to watch a TED Talk by Katharine Hayhoe. Find at least 2 other people to have a short discussion with about their thoughts on this TED Talk. Did they hear the same message you did? What information or ideas was new to them, to you? Did the ideas presented make sense? Any take aways that will change how you act?

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE presented by Katherine Hayhoe. ([https://www.ted.com/talks/katharine\\_hayhoe](https://www.ted.com/talks/katharine_hayhoe))

A main priority for our faith community is to make sure that we work towards justice in our community, state, nation and world. Our Social Justice Ministry aims to educate, listen, and act to eliminate injustice and oppression. We do this through providing resources and opportunities to learn, hosting events and discussions, sharing action tips for our congregation, and partnering with others who are already doing important work.

1. Anti-racism
2. Climate Justice
3. Democracy
4. Health Care
5. Inclusion and Reconciling Ministries

## Welcome, new members!

Excelsior Methodist is pleased to welcome our newest members: **Nick and Alysa Gardino** and **John and Carrie Tietz**.

Nick and Alysa live in Shorewood. Their three children Kellen, (8) Amelia (8), and Tessa (5), keep them busy with school and other activities. The family enjoys traveling, outdoor activities, and cooking. In addition to their parenting jobs, Alysa is the board chair for a non-profit daycare in Plymouth, and Nick works in technology sales. Both Nick and Alysa rowed briefly in college and have recently rediscovered the enjoyment of rowing on their indoor rowing machine. "Even the kids have gotten excited about rowing!"

They chose Excelsior Methodist because it is "a welcoming church that aligned with our principles of equality and justice, that has strong and caring leaders, and a family community. EUMC is a great fit!"

John and Carrie live in Excelsior. They have three grown sons: Chris lives with his wife and two children in Minneapolis; Erik, his wife and son live in Connecticut, and Jonathan and his fiancée live in NYC/LA. Carrie and John enjoy spending time with their grandchildren. John likes wood-working, watercolor, gardening, reading, travel and golf. He always has a project going. Carrie stays busy volunteering, walking, biking, cooking and baking bread. She started making sourdough bread when the pandemic started and hasn't stopped!

They were encouraged to attend EUMC by friends who are members, Carrie says, "but after attending off and on for a few years, we started feeling more and more inspired by the sermons and service and the welcoming nature of the church. EUMC's Purpose, Vision and Mission align with what we feel is important in a faith community."



Gardino Family



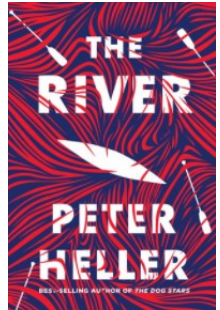
John and Carrie Tietz

## Cover Girls

No meeting in March.

Monday, April 25 at 1pm in the Fireside Room  
"The River" by Pete Heller

This novel is a story about two college friends who take a wilderness canoe trip in northern Canada. They encounter a large dangerous forest fire, difficult white rapids, and a strange meeting with a couple in the woods. These events turn the trip into a suspenseful and dangerous survival story. The author has a beautiful way of writing and describing the wilderness and how the deep friendship of these two friends help them survive their ordeal.



Monday, May 23 at 1pm in the Fireside Room  
"The Night Watchman" by Louise Erdrich

This Pulitzer Prize winning story was inspired by letters written by the author's grandfather who worked as a night watchman. Erdrich introduces us to a few real and many fictional characters who live on a reservation in North Dakota. It is 1953 and the U.S. Congress is trying to pass a bill to abandon the old treaties and take away Native American's land and benefits. Erdrich introduces us to fascinating history, folklore, family and cultural beliefs, and struggles that her rich characters face.



Contact Sue Judd for more information.

## Sarah/Lydia Circles

**April 14:** Discussion with Gretchen Fogo on living with "Gusto, Guts, Growth, and Grace".

**May 12:** We will view and discuss "It's Not a Burden: The Humor and Heartache of Raising Elderly Parents". This feature-length documentary provides an intimate look at the relationships between aging parents and the adult children who care for them, examining the challenges they face and the solutions they discover along the way.

Meetings are at 1pm at EUMC. Contact Joyceln Hughes for information. All are welcome!

# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GIVING

## Treasurer's Report

	2021 vs 2020	
	2021	2020
<b>Operating Summary</b>		
Offering Income	481,777	445,281
Other Income	54,268	7,007
Total Income	536,045	452,288
Operating Fund Expenses	(458,149)	(414,814)
Net Income	77,896	37,474

## Cash Summary

All Funds Cash Balance	1,054,292	510,154
Less Designated Fund Balances *	916,785	417,214
Unrestricted Cash Balance	137,507	92,940

\* The increase in the 2021 balance is primarily due to capital campaign giving.

## 2021 in Summary

2021 proved to be a very successful year. We ended the year with a surplus of \$78k. While offering income tracked to budget, we also had incremental revenue as a result of our PPP loan forgiveness (\$44k). Our expenses were roughly \$20k under budget related to both Covid and the timing of filling open staff positions.

## 2022- A look ahead

2022 will be a very exciting year on many fronts. Transforming for Tomorrow will continue to be a key focus and we will begin to realize the benefits of our commitments. We are committed to increased financial support of our outreach, youth and children's programming to deepen connections in both our congregation and community. We are also excited to share that we recently refinanced our mortgage (current balance of \$412k) and were able to reduce our borrowing rate from 5% to 4.25% for the next 10 years. We will provide an update on the 2022 budget in the coming weeks.

Julie Newell, Chuck Welle and Jordan Harper



## 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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