

the CHALLENGE



August
2021

The St. Luke Woods

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Antidote to Climate Hopelessness

If you grew up playing in the woods (or if you've seen the musical "Into the Woods") you already understand the magical power of trees, brambles, moss, ferns, wildflowers, and duff to spark imagination. The St. Luke Woods is part of what was historically classified as an Oak Woodland, From Wikipedia "An **oak woodland** is a [plant community](#) with a tree [canopy](#) dominated by [oaks](#) (*Quercus spp.*). In terms of [canopy closure](#), oak woodlands are intermediate between [oak savanna](#), which is more open, and [oak forest](#), which is more closed. Although the community is named for the dominance of oak trees, the [understory](#) vegetation is often diverse and includes many species of grasses, sedges, forbs, ferns, shrubs, and other plants." While we may not expect to recreate an actual Oak Woodland, we can create a plant community that performs as an Oak woodland with all the diversity and flora/fauna interrelationships.

And it starts with removing the unproductive, non-native plants to make room for a diverse native community. We know that we will be in keeping on with the not-so-much-fun of pulling/digging non-native invasive plants for yet another year or two — remnant buckthorn, garlic mustard, etc. How do we stay excited and motivated?



Actaea rubra (Red Baneberry) in our woods!

The St. Luke Woods - continued

We have a similar gumption problem when it comes to climate change. Rigorous scientific research has been so far unable to accurately determine the future climate. We know the planet is warming both by natural causes and human-induced causes, but by how much and how fast is simply a guess. And theories of how to fix it are complicated, costly and, still, a guess.

We are bombarded with gloom and doom messages that are intended to spur us to action, but do they? And to what action?

The psychological responses to over-wrought climate predictions, such as conflict avoidance, fatalism, fear, helplessness, and resignation (hopelessness) are growing.

These responses are keeping us, from properly addressing the core causes of and solutions for our changing climate.



Pollen producers in our food garden



The trails are being cleared

However, the one surefire antidote that is within the grasp of every individual is the restoration of the natural world. Michael Rosenzweig, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary biology, calls the redesign of human habitats for the accommodation of other species "reconciliation ecology." According to author and entomologist Douglas Tallamy, the consensus among landscape ecologists is that only 3 to 5 percent of the US remains as undisturbed habitat for plants and animals. And Nature's living components—its 9 million or so species of plants and animals—are, for the most part, still with us, although most species are in a desperate struggle to adapt to the changes humans have imposed.

We are fortunate. We have the antidote in our back yard: Spend time in the St. Luke woods! Imagine it as an Oak Woodland. Walk the trails (the pink flags) remembering how dense the buckthorn used to be. Look for the [34 native plant species](#) that managed to hold on throughout the buckthorn siege. Check out the beautiful food gardens. Visit the labyrinth. Pull some garlic mustard and deposit it under the [occultation tarp](#). Imagine the future diversity of flora and fauna as we continue this restoration.



Occultation: A secure place for noxious weeds

We also have the antidote in our own individual yards: Reduce your turf grass — plant natives. The ratio of habitat area to numbers and species of birds and insects is an easy-to-remember 1:1. For example, convert 10% of your lawn to native plant species and you will see 10% more birds and butterflies. Tell your neighbors what you are doing and casually mention that insects and birds need corridors! It's quite addictive! And the sense of well-being that accompanies this work of co-creating alongside God – well, it just doesn't get any better!

This is life-giving reconciliation work! Originating from love, not fear or guilt.



Labyrinth as envisioned by the youth of Mac-Plymouth

Who knew?!?! We are doing, by far, the most effective thing for the sustainability of our planet *and* beating the climate blues!

See you in the woods.

Encouragingly,

Anne Deuring

August Birthdays

August 1 McKayla Murphy
 August 2 Paul Seel
 August 5 Jasper Swan
 August 5 Ann Hommeyer
 August 6 Lin Branson
 August 6 Rebecca Marks
 August 8 Lucille Goodwyne
 August 8 Chris Sullivan
 August 10 Phoenix Sullivan
 August 11 David Bishop
 August 12 Kyle Keenan

August 14 June Cleaveland
 August 17 Jenna Stickler
 August 17 Eric Williams
 August 17 Larson Williams
 August 19 Lane Ayres
 August 20 Dale Snyder
 August 23 Fran Bell
 August 23 Sheryl Bjork
 August 23 Billy Bjork
 August 24 Becky Stratman
 August 25 Nancy Clift

August 25 Frank Babka
 August 26 Becky Kajander
 August 27 Doug McNamara
 August 27 Anne Olmsted
 August 28 Bryn Hart
 August 29 Jamie Manning
 August 30 Bob Northrup
 August 31 Rachelle Williams
 August 31 Laura Blue

Congregational Questionnaire

Congregational Questionnaire: July 26-August 8

St. Luke is participating in a Congregational Questionnaire, along with sibling churches and the Presbytery of the Twin Cities. This survey will provide key data for the presbytery's Institutional Race & Equity Assessment and will also help our congregation know "who we are together."

All St. Luke members and attendees are invited to complete the survey, which asks some basic demographic information. It gives everyone the chance to tell how you talk about yourself in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, and disability. It takes 5-10 minutes to complete and is being sent to you as a link in an email (or by postal mail if that's how you receive the Challenge). Watch your mail! St. Luke's two-week survey period is Monday, July 26 through Sunday, August 8.

Individual responses will be seen only by the Presbytery's Anti-Racism Institutional Assessment Coordinator and an assistant. We will receive our community's responses in summary form, except for two community-building questions at the end of the survey.

The St. Luke Session has endorsed this survey and hopes that you will join us in completing it. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Nora P. Elliott (nora@stluke.mn, 801-556-1881), Clerk of Session Phyllis Messenger (pmessenger@umn.edu, 612-790-5587), or Church Secretary Anne Deuring (office@stluke.mn, 952-473-7378).

Thank you!

Deacons

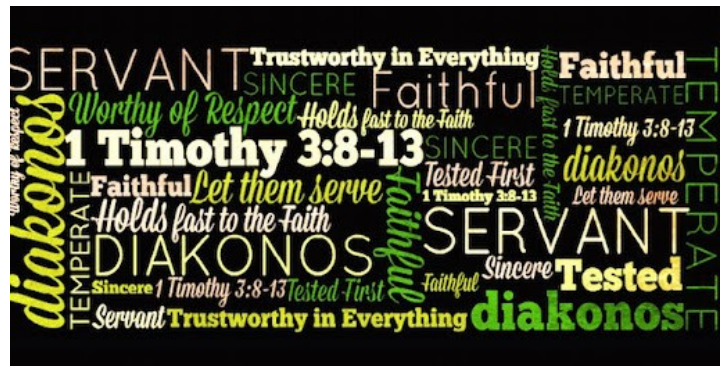
Calling all Deacon Candidates!

Do you like people? Are you interested in connecting with and supporting your fellow St. Lukers? Then you sound like a great candidate for deacon, and the nominating committee would like to hear from you!

Deacons provide care and communication with their neighborhood, a designated group of members and frequent visitors. They connect with them on birthdays and special occasions and are a conduit for requests for pastoral care and prayers. They take turns as deacon of the month, carrying out duties related to worship hospitality. Deacons meet on the first Tuesday of every other month.

If you have questions or would like to become a deacon (terms are three years), please contact Deacon Sue Ribe (sueribe@gmail.com, 612-590-8424), Deacon Judy Leatham (judyleatham@yahoo.com, 612-669-7241), Nominating Committee member Ben van Lierop (benvanlierop@gmail.com), or Church Secretary Anne Deuring (office@stluke.mn, 952-473-7378).

Thank you!



Faith Formation

The OWLs are Returning to the Nest!

Soon, our community will have Our Whole Lives, or OWL, groups for youth again, but this year we're expanding to include age-appropriate groups for younger children too! We're going to have a lot of fun utilizing arts, story, movement, and discussion to discover who we are and who we want to be, as beloved children of God with bodies!

Important dates for Parents/Caregivers/Grandparents:

Fall Faith Formation Program Preview

Sunday, Aug 29, 11:45 am – 12:30 pm

OWL Parent/Guardian Orientation for 1st – 12th grade programs

Sunday, Aug 29, 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm

NEW Little OWL (1st – 3rd grade)

Sept 19 – Nov 7

Sunday mornings, 9:15 am – 10:15 am

Middle OWL (7th – 9th grade)

Sept 12 – May 22

3x per month (generally 2nd, 3rd, & 4th Sundays)

Sunday evenings, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Joint Family Dinners for Middle and Senior OWL 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

NEW OWL Fledging - Parent/caregiver

support group offering information for upcoming OWL groups

Sept – May

1x per month (generally 1st Sundays)

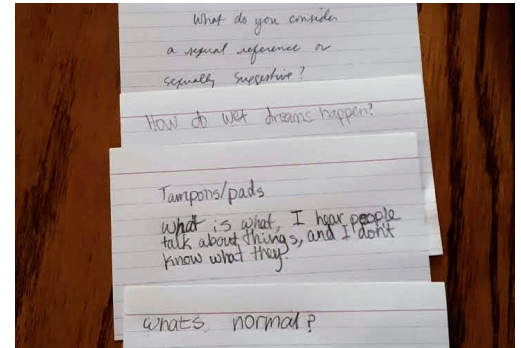
Sunday afternoons, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Registrations due by **Aug 15** or email

Nora@StLuke.MN with interest.

This is a free program we offer to members and friends are always welcome. If you want to invite a good friend to this fun and life-giving program, please be in contact with Pastor Nora ASAP.

COVID precautions will be in place to care for our communal health, contact nora@stluke.mn for more details.



Questions for the anonymous question box

NEW Elementary OWL (4th – 6th grade)

Jan 30 – April 3

Sunday mornings, 9:00 am – 10:15 am

Senior OWL (10th – 12th grade)

Sept 12 – March 6

2x per month (generally 2nd and 4th Sundays)

Sunday afternoons, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm



Middle OWL Class of 2019

Climate Connections

Help Winona LaDuke and other Line 3 Resisters!

Enbridge continues to build its pipeline through 200+ bodies of water. Meanwhile, the case to stop it is headed to the MN Supreme Court. Brave protestors, including LaDuke, continue their efforts to stop construction and many have been arrested. LaDuke has been since released, but follow [Stop Line 3 on Facebook](#) to see current video of what's happening on the frontline. Contact President Biden and Governor Walz to ask them to put a stop to Line 3 and read on for other ways to stay engaged.... <https://mn350.org/line3mutualaid/>

Click [here](#) for more Action Alerts from MNIPL.



Library Corner



Calling all Library Books

Calling all church library books back home now that we are able to return to our beloved church! You can return them to the big black return bin just inside the Library door (not on the shelves or counter please). And the library is now open for browsing and check-out again! Just sign the little check-out card, date it for three weeks ahead (there's a little calendar there) and leave it in the little caddy on the counter.

Enjoy, yahoo!

Julie Mall

Women Connecting

August Women Connecting Cancelled

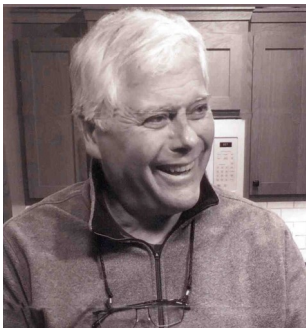
There will not be a Women Connecting event in August. Let's join together again on September 12. Details to follow.



August Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:30 AM Worship	2 7:30 PM AA	3	4 6:30 PM Minnetonka Climate Initiative	5 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support	6	7 9:00 AM Grounds renewal service day
8 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Family Picnic 12:00 PM Youth Grounds Work/Fun	9 7:30 PM AA	10 6:30 PM Earth Stewards	11 9:30 AM The Book Group	12 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support	13	14 7:45 AM Hermanos
15 10:30 AM Worship	16 7:30 PM AA	17 6:45 PM Session Meeting	18	19 2:00 PM Challenge Deadline 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support	20	21 9:00 AM Grounds renewal service day
22 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Family Picnic 12:30 - 3:30 PM OWL Facilitator Training	23 7:30 PM AA	24 10:00 AM Family Native Garden Harvest	25 10:00 AM Family Native Garden Harvest	26 10:00 AM Family Native Garden Harvest 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support	27	28
29 9:00 AM OWL Orientation Grade 1-3 11:45 AM Faith Formation Fall Program Preview 12:30 OWL Parent/Guardian Orientation	30 7:30 PM AA	31	1	2 7:00 PM ACA 7:00 PM Depression & Anxiety Support	3	4 9:00 AM Grounds renewal service day

Greg Smith Memorial Service



September 18, 2021 at 11:00 am in the Sanctuary.

St. Luke Staff and Communications

Every member and friend, Ministers

Rev. Brennan Blue (he/him/his), **Senior Pastor**

952-473-7378, brennan@stluke.mn

612-518-7737 cell

Rev. Nora P. Elliott (she/they), **Associate Pastor**

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Randy Lofgren, Custodian/Sexton

952-473-7378

Jill Engeswick (she/hers), **BeFriendsers/Dementia Friends Coord.**

952-426-2831, jillengeswick@gmail.com

Joe Anderson & Brenda Davis, Sunday Morning Custodians

Anna Flekke, Childcare Worker (she/hers)

St. Luke Presbyterian Church
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GENERAL QUESTIONS

Email Anne at office@stluke.mn

MAILING ADDRESS

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WEB ADDRESS

www.stluke.mn

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

The Challenge is published monthly.

The deadline for submitting articles
for the September newsletter is:

2:00 pm, August 19

to office@stluke.mn

St. Luke is a joyful, inclusive and compassionate community on a spiritual journey
seeking to do justice, make peace, act mercifully, and walk humbly with God.