



the CHALLENGE



Fall Quarterly Edition!
Feb - May - Aug - Nov

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NATIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) leaves are the stars of the show in the fall, but they are of greatest value lying on the ground. Leaves provide winter homes for many insects like the woolly bear caterpillar (right). Leave the leaves.

It's been a beautiful and bustling fall here at St. Luke: a season of coming together, restoring relationships, and expanding our mission and ministries. In terms of the church year, fall is often the busiest season. Sure, there's nothing quite like the excitement of Christmas and Holy Week. As far as seasons go, though, fall is when we make our big push. A few highlights from our fall season together include:

- A delightful "blessing of the backpacks" service at the start of the school year
- A vibrant Coming Together Sunday and the return of weekly choir anthems
- Adult Ed mods, youth confirmation, older adult OWL, and children's eco-club
- A "Vote Your Values" educational effort led by our Social Justice Collaboration Team
- Our second annual "Trunk or Treat" gathering, now with a churchwide soup potluck

We'll keep the love, momentum, and fellowship rolling as we head into holidays and the turning of the season. You'll find glimpses ahead and behind within this quarter's *Challenge* newsletter, along with a spotlight on November as Dementia Awareness Month, a feature article on gratitude as a spiritual practice, a review of the season from Faith

Formation, and our latest "bringing it home" profile for environmental stewardship.

As the night's grow longer, may our hope shine brighter and provide glimpse of God's love for a world in need of grace.



Dementia Awareness

November is Dementia Awareness Month

By Jill Engeswick

Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails. (Psalm 71:9)

Sky-rocketing numbers of people diagnosed with dementia present a health and economic crisis unlike anything seen before in this country's history. At St. Luke, we strive to be a "Dementia Friendly" church. We care deeply about all who come to St. Luke in each stage of life. We work to support both the individual and the caregivers to provide a safe and loving environment. We have provided resources from the Alzheimer's Association, invited Minnetonka Senior Services to present about their free or low cost services, we experienced Climb Theatre's presentation about love and dementia through the eyes of a young girl, and we explored the concept of Ambiguous Loss. We also partnered with other community groups to show a film at St. Luke about life with dementia. The St. Luke library (lower level) has many excellent books about aging, dementia, caregiving and also books for children on this issue. Other resources include:

- **The Alzheimer's Association** - free resources: alz.org/mnnd/helping or 952-857-0558.
- **Senior Community Services** - Caregiver support and home maintenance seniorcommunity.org or 952-746-4046
- **Normandale Center for Healing and Wholeness** - Caregiver support groups 952-442-7660

Individually, we can support those families who are living with dementia by:

- Being positive about what people with dementia CAN do
- Reminding ourselves that we can reach people through their abilities that don't diminish with time, such as understanding music, art, facial expressions and touch
- Making St. Luke a place where those impacted by dementia feel respected and understood, and where they are valued as contributing members of our community
- Working to better understand the fear, isolation and stigma of memory loss
- Sharing resources about local support systems
- Providing occasional rides to events or church or offering a few hours of respite care
- Showing people with dementia love. Everyone flourishes when they know that others care about them and they feel us mirroring God's love.

Make time for caregivers:

- Ask how they are doing/feeling
- Include them in your prayers
- Offer to spend time with the caregiver or offer respite care for their partner
- Ask what they need and brainstorm how to help them
- Offer empathy as opposed to "shoulds"
- Share what has worked in your family as an idea for them to consider
- Listen, listen , listen!

Wisdom and grace for all of us, but especially caregivers:

Things that can be equally true (@findyourshinetherapy)

- You are resilient and you need a break
- You gave your all and need to back out
- You are independent and still need others
- You were sure and things changed
- You are kind and have boundaries
- Others have it worse and your pain is valid
- You did your best and now you know more

Do you have some ideas that will help St. Luke be more Dementia Friendly?

Every family has unique needs. If you have ideas about how St. Luke can be supportive to your family, please contact Jill through the church office. All are welcome in God's home and we want everyone to feel included and beloved.



The Spiritual Practice of Gratitude

We do big things. We also do small things. I am grateful for both.

By Brennan Blue

Friends, for the past 2.5 years we've creatively wrestled with how to be the church together in the midst of a great societal shake up. At the same time, we've been discerning how to navigate our own calling and context, knowing that church attendance, engagement and membership been declining steadily throughout the U.S.

These are major headwinds to navigate and persevere through as a community. And yet we continue to do big things. And small things. And I am truly grateful for both.

Let's take worship attendance, as an example.

There are Sundays that find our Sanctuary packed and bustling with energy.

There are also Sundays that find our Sanctuary far more intimate feeling.

If we celebrate the former, does that mean we are called to lament the latter?

We live in a society and economic system that constantly preaches "growth" and "more." When it comes to the Church, this often translates to an attitude of "get busy growing or get busy dying," along with an overall feeling of disappointment on days that are smaller in number. Friends, I urge us to resist this impulse.

If you flip through the gospels, you'll find many accounts of Jesus preaching and teaching to large gathered crowds. What you'll find even more of, though, are accounts of Jesus preaching and teaching amidst a small, intimate band of disciples.

Did Jesus prefer or hope for one more than the other? I honestly have no idea. Very rarely are we privy to Jesus' inner thoughts and motivations. What we are privy to, though, is how Jesus responds. Regardless of the size of the crowd, Jesus was deeply present. He was in the moment, sharing meaningful ministry. Whether the crowds were big or small, Jesus seemed grateful for both.

As your Senior Pastor, I am, too.





As a church, we're going to have big days, like this past Sunday, when *well* over 100 people gathered to worship and then spilled out onto our grounds for a Trunk or Treat and Soup potluck party. We're also going to have small days, like snowy winter Sundays that find much smaller gatherings of St. Lukers congregating to visit, worship, and pray.

Similarly, we'll have days when loads of families with young kids are with us. We'll also have many days when there are far fewer little ones among us. This is a simple truth of generational worship attendance habits. We can lament some of these days while only celebrating select others. Or we, like Jesus, can see the gift and grace that comes with each.

I love the energy that comes with big bustling Sundays. I also love the intimacy, care and connection that we share when we find ourselves in smaller numbers. The wisdom of our tradition teaches us respond with gratitude: both are worthy; both are enough.

We are still a church that does big things. We are still a church that also does small things. We can be grateful for both as faithful embodiments of being the church, together.



Faith Formation

Youth and Children's Ministries



All ages gathered together again at our outdoor stump circle to explore the stories of our faith in Sunday School.



Our fall back together luncheon and program kick off brought families together as the new school year began.

Elementary EcoClub: Harvest Time, got our children's hands dirty as they pulled veggies out of the ground and got to sample new foods



A new group of confirmands began their journey together to explore and deepen their faith.



Our confirmands are joined by a group of elder faith partners from our community to share stories of faith and church life.

Intergenerational Ministries

Gift Making Workshop returns December 3, 10:00 am – noon. Gift making stations for all ages this year! Contact Chris Sullivan for more information, andromeda88@comcast.net, or visit stluke.mn/gift-making-workshop.



Coming in 2023, look for ways to support our youth community connections trip to Juneau, Alaska!

Adult Education

Adult Education

A new season of adult ed mods in our hybrid ed room (east room) has brought in guest speakers including our District 6 county commissioner, Chris LaTondresse.

We will continue to offer adult ed mods at 9:15 am, on the first and third Sundays of each month through December. Upcoming sessions include:

November 6 – Older Our Whole Lives (human identity and sexuality education for older adults) fall cohort debrief. What is OWL? Why is identity and sexuality education important for folks over 60? Pastor Nora leads a panel discussion with some recent graduates of our first Older OWL cohort.

November 20 – A Pine Ridge Indian Reservation Support Team has been making the journey out to the Pine Ridge reservation for decades. This year was a unique one. Veterans of the trip will gather to discuss how it was started, what it has traditionally looked like, challenges of COVID, and what the future holds for this ministry.

December 4 – Jo Olson from Fresh Energy will present on the impact of the Inflation Reduction Act on ecojustice ministries.

December 18 – Does our current Adult Ed model meet our communal needs? What does the next 3-5 years look like for Adult Ed? Pastor Nora leads an open forum discussion about the future of adult ed and some changes the adult ed focus group is considering for 2023.



Grounds Restoration: Bringing It Home

Enjoy the season with natives!

By Dennis Yockers

Fall is upon us! The temperatures are dropping, and plants are preparing for the cold season. It is a great time to get out and see the brilliant colors of the trees and the fall asters, sunflowers and goldenrods.

Nine years ago we moved to Minnetonka and the first step in the native landscaping process was completing an inventory of what was on our ¼ acre property. There were a few trees, shrubs and some other landscaping plants.



A native landscape management plan was developed. Information included details about light and moisture conditions and plant natural history (blooming times, colors and importance for various types of wildlife).



Grass turf has been reduced by half and the remainder is slowly being converted to fescues and other species that do not require lots of water, herbicides and mowing. This past summer I only had to mow the grassy area twice! It has been a continuous management process with some new plant species being added every year. Some of the plants took a few years to really get established.

Having native plants does require some time commitment. There are always a few invasives to keep up with. Each fall I put wire cages around most shrubs to keep the rabbits away.

The property now has a 10-20 foot border around the perimeter which keeps all the surface water runoff from flowing out in the street. A rain garden which was partially funded by the watershed district helps with water management and increases biodiversity. Over the past five years over 50 species of birds, several mammals, amphibians and countless insects use the property to meet some of their habitat needs. As of the end of this summer the count of native plants now exceeds a hundred species. The little $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of property provides us with an amazing year of natural history along with joy and appreciation for the natural world.

All of us have a responsibility for making sure that our actions contribute to a more sustainable planet. This winter start developing a plan for your property. There are agencies like the Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota Extension, local watershed districts and non-governmental organizations like the Wild Ones that have resources to help.

Let me know if you have any questions about native landscaping by contacting the church office.



What's Been Happening?



Congratulations to St. Luke member and leader Dennis Yockers for receiving the City of Minnetonka's landscape sustainability award! (So I guess we can trust he knows what he's talking about on the previous two pages!)



Our 2nd Annual **Trunk or Treat** event was so much fun with the addition of a community potluck! Looking forward to next year!



Our Ground Restoration work continues along with ongoing planting, seeding, and invasive species removal. There's work to share in all four seasons of the year - contact the office if you'd like to learn more about how to volunteer.



The St. Luke Choir is back in rhythm with Monday evening rehearsals and Sunday morning choral offerings most weeks. We look forward to sharing our first Advent season back together later this month.

News and Upcoming Events

Grounds Restoration Work Day: Wednesday, November 16 from 9:00 to 11:00 pm

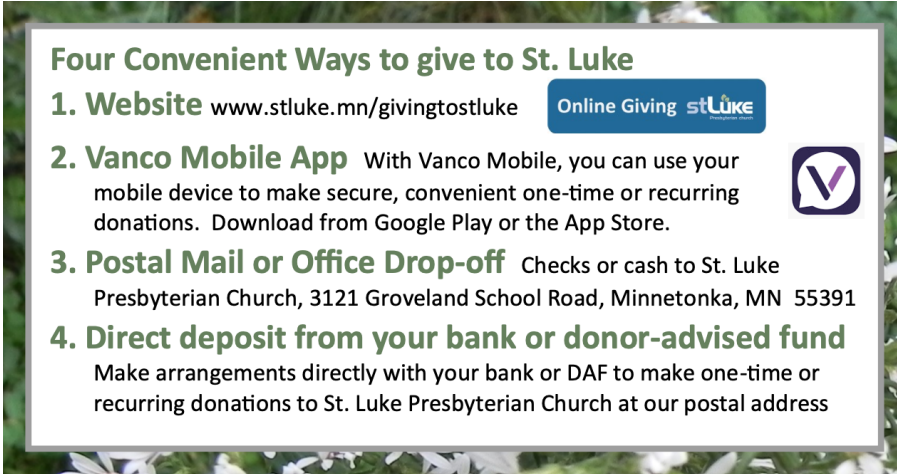
Gift-Making Workshop: Saturday, December 3 from 10:00 to 12:00 am

Nancy Woolworth Celebration of Life: Thursday, December 29, 2022 at 2:00 pm at St. Luke



Christmas Eve Worship: Saturday, December 24 at 4:00 pm

Renew and Restore

Thank you for all of those who've made a stewardship pledge for our upcoming year of mission and ministry! Your gifts, tithes and pledges drive our ability renew hope, restore relationships, and expand our work for justice and peace. Still looking to make your pledge? Review our stewardship materials [\[here\]](#) or pledge to St. Luke using any of our four convenient ways to give:



Four Convenient Ways to give to St. Luke

- 1. Website** www.stluke.mn/givingtostluke 
- 2. Vanco Mobile App** With Vanco Mobile, you can use your mobile device to make secure, convenient one-time or recurring donations. Download from Google Play or the App Store. 
- 3. Postal Mail or Office Drop-off** Checks or cash to St. Luke Presbyterian Church, 3121 Groveland School Road, Minnetonka, MN 55391
- 4. Direct deposit from your bank or donor-advised fund** Make arrangements directly with your bank or DAF to make one-time or recurring donations to St. Luke Presbyterian Church at our postal address

Holiday Fair Trade Bazaar



Shopping for Good

St. Luke will once again be having its annual Holiday Fair Trade Bazaar, on the 4 Sundays between Thanksgiving and Christmas (Nov. 27 and Dec. 4, 11, and 18) in the Garden Court. We will have vendors selling fair trade coffee, cocoa products, clothing, jewelry, artwork, and crafts produced by indigenous people around the world. Plan on doing some of your shopping with us! Frank Babka

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

Email Anne at office@stluke.mn

WEB ADDRESS

www.stluke.mn

Every member and friend is a minister of God's love and justice.

St. Luke Presbyterian Church
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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.