



the CHALLENGE



Spring Quarterly Edition!

Feb - **May** - Aug - Nov

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NATIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Jacob's Ladder
(*Polemonium reptans*)
above, is one of the native species in the seed mix for our woodland. The tidy foliage sports rows of opposite leaflets that give the appearance of a ladder. It thrives in shady, moist, humus-rich sites.

Spring has sprung here at St. Luke! With great excitement, our community is now emerging from a long, cold winter into a flurry of spring activity. As an intro to our spring *Challenge* article, I'd like to offer once again my gratitude on behalf of our full staff and leadership teams for all who've flexibly responded with us to the creative challenges of our time. Despite pandemic waves, lockdowns and logistical challenges, we've managed to share a robust Lent and Easter season, including a few special highlights:

- Our choir is back and singing together (carefully!)
- Our Community Kitchen project wrapped up and is ready for its inaugural use at Fran Bell's memorial service on Sat, May 21
- A responsive refugee support drive raised \$14,000, in addition to scores of fabric and sewing machines for recently homed Afghan families
- The first seeds of Grounds Restoration ([VIEW HERE](#)) effort being planted: a great transitional moment in the life of our project.

There's a lot of joy, mission and meaning-making to share together in the weeks and months ahead. As you'll see in this issue's articles, we'll be launching a new summer worship series, continuing our Grounds Restoration effort, and celebrating the closing of Will Rand's tenure with us as St. Luke's Minister of Worship Arts. We'll also be honoring a number of saints this spring and summer with several upcoming celebration of life and memorial services (see pg 3 for dates and details).

We are in a season that offers more and more daylight with each passing day. May we live, plan, work and worship accordingly!

Yours in peace and purpose,

Brennan

Fran Bell 1917 - 2022

Remembering Fran

By Lynn Cox

"Frog in your throat—be glad it's not a porcupine!!" is just a piece of humor shared with a loving twinkle in the eye of our beloved Fran Bell, the last living charter member of St Luke who recently passed away at age 104. Did you know that St Luke (not St Luke's) got its roots and wings in a living room gathering of family and friends in the home of Fran and Art Bell (St Luke formally established in 1958 with the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area).

Fran was open to changing ideas and was about creating community and welcoming everyone (descriptive of St Luke) with a spirit of acceptance/without judgement. When in her home (yum for the fresh baked bread), or at the Marsh where she exercised/swam weekly well into her 90s, or in the wider community teaching inner city preschoolers at Zion Baptist Church in Minneapolis or teaming with her husband, Art Bell, to visit a man in prison in Arizona, she had a way when being with others for life to be about them/not her and helping them to feel good about themselves.

Fran's presence was gentle with unconditional love and a family member shared never remembering her being angry. In her own way she was a warrior of openness and joy and her weapons were smiles that came from her soul (not just a social gesture) that became mutual, that carried unbounding energy and a sense of gratitude.

Service and joy with her family was an important part of her life (with sacrifice: not finishing grad school in social work in order to make a "home" for care of each of their children allowing them to be their own self — each on different paths in life). Did you know that she created amazing harmonious artwork in acrylics, watercolor, and fabrics? Does anyone still have one of her hand-knit strawberry hats? (She made many for the newborns in hospitals.) Embracing people of all ethnic race and backgrounds with openness to differences, she traveled to many places/spaces including China and Spain and left a legacy of earth care and love of the natural world through their Wisconsin "cabin-life."

Fran's home was always full of music and so it was when traveling in the car as the glove compartment was full of songbooks. In her final days of life when spoken words did not come easily, Fran could repeat/sing the words of songs and create that feeling of harmony—in song and LIFE and deep with FAITH. Fran so deeply grieved the loss of husband, Art, and when asked, "how did you manage his care as he was living with dementia" she answered, "We just sat on the steps and held hands.

"Truly a legacy she leaves us at St Luke. *"We bring nothing material with us into this beautiful world, and when we leave, we take with us only that which in life we give away"*.



Honoring St. Luke Saints

Services for these Saints will take place in the Sanctuary

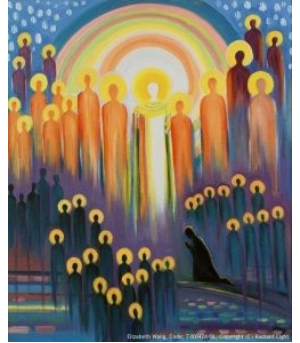
Fran Bell Memorial Service: Saturday, May 21, 2:00 pm

Dick Nelson Memorial Service: Saturday, May 28, 11:00 am

Bill Frank Memorial Service: Saturday, June 4, 2:00 pm

Marilyn Cool Memorial Service: Saturday, June 25 (likely date - still TBD)

Memorial services may be live-streamed remotely from our website, www.stluke.mn



Godspeed, Will!

Dear Friends,

As I contemplate the transition from one season of life to another, I want to share a moment with you and reflect. I am feeling a sense of growing uncertainty as I encounter a new “post-undergraduate” world. It is a delight to share that my partner, Viveka, has been offered a position in Seattle with an interfaith non-profit called *Paths to Understanding*. She will work in a fellowship position to engage in community bridging work between different faith traditions. This is a deep passion of hers and is sure to be a wonderful new experience. I will be moving to Seattle with her and will look for work opportunities with faith communities, choirs, and other arts organizations. I will also do some remote work with a choral arts community in Austin, Texas, and some continued work with Justice Choir in Minnesota.

As I ponder my time at St. Luke, I marvel at the life force that binds our community together. I still remember how I felt when I first walked into our space. The spirit was so alive. I felt myself so in rhythm with the heartbeat of our community. I have so rarely felt this kind of rhythm before: a drumbeat of love for our neighbors, longings for justice, and urgent calls to action in the way of Jesus. I have continued to feel the love of the community after every worship service when we connect and share life together. This life force is practiced, embodied, and freely given. I will always remember how it *feels* to be at St. Luke.

I carry unending gratitude for you, my dear friends. Thank you for the loving presence which you bring to every space. I will miss you dearly and I know we will meet again.

With deepest love and gratitude,

Will



1000 Hours Outdoors

“No matter how lousy a day starts out, we can almost always turn it around by going outside and enjoying nature together.” Linda McGurk

By Lindsay, Matt, Otto and Nori Juricek

In 2021 our family completed the 1,000 hour outside challenge. This challenge started by a woman, Ginny Yurich. Data shows kids spend four to seven minutes playing outdoors but four to seven hours on screens. The research scared Ginny and after living a lifestyle of getting her kids outside for about 20 hours a week she started a movement to bring this to more families. She officially decided in 2013 to name this challenge and write about it. Ginny brought attention to the need of balancing childhood in such a tech heavy world. After being in a pandemic with two young children, looking for something to motivate us at a time of uncertainty we jumped on the 1,000 hour outside challenge and printed our tracking sheet.



January 1, 2021 we posted our tracking sheet to the fridge and saw 1,000 empty little dots just waiting for time outside. We felt confident if we averaged an hour a day in winter we would easily bank lots of hours in the summer and be done before the end of the year. I wish it was that easy and we banked enough over summer but truth be told we were finishing our last hour on December 30, 2021 sledding at my parents house with cousins.

When we started this challenge the competitive nature in me said we would be done early, we could finish by September easily if we kept focused. But as we plugged along the year I realized the challenge isn't to strictly bank hours and get it done, it's to look for opportunities to get outside, let kids be kids and dig in the mud, play in the rain, feel the weather all weather. And to do this consistently during the year, in all weather, almost all days, not just the good weather days. Ginny herself has said "nature play is not another thing to shove into the crevices of an already overloaded schedule. A childhood built upon nature play is a different way to do childhood altogether."





Ginny hosts podcasts and has a great Instagram profile. She recommends several books and getting fully immersed in this challenge I was reading several of the books. My favorite book that I read during this time was *There's No Such Thing as Bad Weather- by Lindsay McGurk*. I quickly realized in order to really experience this we needed to embrace all of Minnesota's weather. We are a winter family- we love snow, Otto shovels our neighbors driveway because doing ours alone is not satisfying to him. But I realized we are not a spring family- we don't know what to do on rainy days other than sit inside.

"Being able to cope with different types of weather will make children more resilient." - Linda McGurk. Our neighbors asked if we wanted to attend a Minnesota United soccer game- the weather was supposed to be rainy, windy and cold. But we had the opportunity for free first row tickets because they didn't want to sit for 90 minutes of soccer in that weather. Sign us up! I placed a quick order for rain pants at REI and we layered on the clothes. We were making memories and loving the game along with

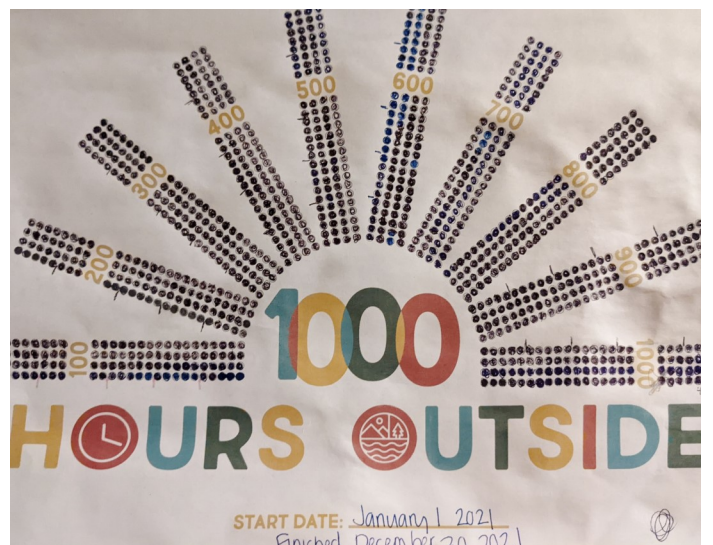
the other fans sitting in the rain. Linda McGurk really says there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothes. It is absolutely correct. Adding some rain pants to our outdoor gear has opened so many doors and allowed us to say yes to a lot more activities and opportunities. This challenge has changed our whole mindset on saying yes more to new opportunities and trying to take advantage of what's available to us- and nature is always available.

As weather changed to summer we tested out our newly acquired tent camping on a horse farm in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for the kids' first time. The kids slept to the quiet sound of rain hitting the tent, stayed up way too late with the time zone change and extended daylight hours, fell asleep to the sound of horses neighing in the distance. It was pure magic. Later on, we needed to head to Illinois to visit Matt's family. We had the opportunity to sleep at his brother's house as we always do but instead found ourselves searching campgrounds all around the Chicago area. We booked our weekend stay at the KOA and pitched our tent again. As the kids were falling asleep, Otto said I really love the sound of crickets as I start to go to bed. Matt and Otto headed to Duluth to camp with a neighbor and ride the trains. We hosted a neighborhood campout in our backyard that led to downpouring rain and us being the only family to sleep out that night.

This challenge really changed the way we view the weather and always made us look for opportunities to get our kids to experience nature and the outdoors. Living in Minnesota with toddlers it is easy to stay inside under a warm blanket enjoying books on the couch, but it is better bundled up exploring the woods and seeing the birds come back in the spring, watching soccer in the rain, listening to church at the columbarium, sweating outside in the humidity and making snow angels.

"Every single outdoor experience you provide for yourself and for your children has benefits. With each hour, you are allowing time for your family to flourish in deep and untold ways. When you are intentional about nature time you fill your life with grand, simple movement that provide lifelong advantages and lifelong memories." - Ginny Yurich

Get outside.



Youth and Families

Farewell to Winter and Welcome Spring!



Winter held on tight for a bit longer than any of us wanted, but as the cold fades we look forward to the new life of spring and upcoming summer season of transitions and freedom.

We wrapped up the youth group, "Our Whole Lives," lessons exploring current gender and orientation issues, as well as making decisions about the kind of relationships we were ready to have.

Our NEW Elementary Eco-Club got started exploring how seeds germinate, as well as what blessings can be found on our very own grounds. Eco-Club explored our woods and found supplies to help a unique native-sourced Palm Sunday celebration.





It was a chilly Easter morning, but our youngest still managed to find all 100 eggs hidden in our backyard!

With weather warming up, our Outdoor Sunday School program has resumed at the beloved stump circle.



For the past two years, Anna Flekke has provided childcare and Sunday School support both in-person and virtually. She is preparing to graduate this spring and begin an exciting transition into the next phase of her life at the University of Calgary! Be sure to wish her well and thank her for the amazing work she's done with our youngest before she's off this summer. We'll miss you, Anna!



As one chapter ends, another begins and we're excited to welcome aboard two new youth to assist with our childcare needs and regular Sunday School support. You'll begin to see Eva Pattee & Alayna Winters in the coming months, as they begin their transition into the child care position.

Mark your calendars! June 5 is the day we'll be honoring all the graduates of our community during worship! If someone in your family is graduating, please email Nora@StLuke.mn, so we can honor them (grads of all ages included)!

Fun Restoration Factoids (and their insects)

Dive deeper into our woodland restoration work with these fun factoids.

By Anne Deuring

Factoid #1: Our Palm Sunday "palms" were actually **White Snakeroot** (*Ageratina altissima*) and **White Pine** (*Pinus strobus*). Palms were locally available in Jerusalem. White snakeroot and White pine are locally available in Minnetonka. Our young Eco-Club gathered the White snakeroot from our own woods. Although considered too aggressive for many home gardens (it reseeds like crazy), white snakeroot is a useful native placeholder while other natives are getting established. Its fall bloom is striking. It is sturdy enough to remain standing throughout the winter, providing winter habitat and visual interest. White snakeroot is a caterpillar host plant for two species of lepidoptera: Clymene Moth (*Haploa clymene*) and the Hitched Arches (*Melanchnra adjuncta*).



White Snakeroot



Clymene Moth



Hitched Arches

Factoid #2: What tree holds onto its leaves all winter but is not an evergreen? Most deciduous trees in the upper Midwest drop their leaves in the fall. This is a trait that has evolved over eons of time to prevent limb breakage from heavy snow. However, there are a few species of deciduous trees that hold onto their leaves until spring when the new buds swell and push the old leaves off.

Deciduous trees that hold onto their leaves throughout the winter are called '**marcescent**.' These tend to be very strong-wooded trees like oaks. Because of practically year-round coverage, these are good species to plant when you want a little extra screening. We will be planting three species of marcescent trees or shrubs in our woods on June 4 at The Big Planting Event.

1. True to its name, **Ironwood** (*Ostrya virginiana*) has very strong, durable wood. It is a shade tolerant tree that grows in the understory of a woodland. Its leaves turn dull yellow in the fall and persist all winter where it appears to glow in the dark. While Ironwood is a caterpillar host for 68 different species of lepidoptera, it is the only host for the *Caloptilia ostryaeella* (no common name). We will be planting 16 Ironwood trees on June 4.



Ironwood



Caloptilia ostryaeella



Blue Beech



Luna Moth

2. **Blue Beech** (*Carpinus caroliniana*) is another marcescent tree. Also known as Musclewood (notice the bark), Blue beech is a caterpillar host for 58 different species of lepidoptera, including the glamorous Luna Moth (*Actias luna*). We will be planting 15 Blue Beech trees on June 4.

3. Also marcescent, **Witch Hazel** (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is unique in still another way — it blooms in the fall! It is a caterpillar host for 48 different species of lepidoptera. And it is one of only two caterpillar hosts plants for the Labyrinth Moth (*Phaecasiophora niveiguttana*). We will be planting 19 Witch Hazel shrubs on June 4.



Labyrinth Moth



Witch Hazel

What's Been Happening?



Holy Week was filled with multi-sensory experiences—music, painting, flowers, smells, water, fire, dance, prayer.

The Ash Grove was seeded with a special mix of woodland plant species. This type of seeding is not for the impatient. The cover crop (winter wheat) will sprout this year, but we may have to wait up to three years to see all of the 28 native woodland species germinate.



Congratulations to Brennan for receiving his Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago! His doctoral project, shaped by our shared work at St. Luke, received the seminary's John Randall Hunt Prize for outstanding Doctor of Ministry thesis.



Our cherished Bur Oak was given a new lease on life. Some rot has developed between the two main trunks of the Bur Oak to create a concern for the western-most trunk breaking. An arborist determined that both trunks have a long life expectancy and the bark will slowly grow over the wounded area if they are protected from breakage. Two cables were attached to branches high in the canopy, holding the east and west trunks together, taking the weight off of the lower trunk. A growth regulator was also applied to promote root growth over tip growth.

News and Upcoming Events

Adult Education: Sundays at 9:15 am in the East Room or on Zoom

We value continuing education for students of all ages. Your adult education coordinating team will continue to provide hybrid adult education and community building modules twice a month.

May 15: Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative's Community Organizer, Ricky Kamil, will offer an overview on local affordable housing initiatives through Beacon and how faith communities can advocate for housing for all.

May 22: Dr. Dennis Yockers will lead a walking tour of our grounds to see which birds might be meeting some of their habitat needs. Bring your binoculars and a good pair of walking shoes! We will meet in the main entry upstairs before heading out.

June 5: "Ask A Graduate" Come celebrate the journey to graduation for our eldest youth.

June 12: Divesting from fossil fuels with Buff Grace of MNIPL

Saturday, June 4, 2022 from 9:00 to 12:00 - Big Planting Event: We will be planting over 300 native trees and shrubs as part of the Woods Restoration. We will be joined by neighbors and partner organizations. Coffee and treats will be available.

Restoration Work Days: Every first Saturday and third Wednesday beginning after June 4 from 9:00 to 11:00 am. Caribou coffee provided.

Author Diane Wilson will be at St. Luke on June 26 at 2:00 pm to share her story and book.

Poems of Power

Seeking Submission for "Poems of Power" Summer Series

This summer, St. Luke celebrates the moving and often spiritual impact of poetry in a unique series called "Poems of Power."

Beginning in late June, we'll create an exhibit in the sanctuary of poems and poets that inspire us. Short or long, sacred or secular, individual poems or collections: we'll gather poems that have opened our hearts and minds.

Email us your poem or drop off a book (yes, the actual book) along with 100 words or less on how the poem/poet has moved you. Books may be left in the church office. Our pastors will then craft a summer sermon series on the power of poetry, placing our tradition in dialogue with these creative sources.

If you're willing to share in-person about how your selection influenced you, please let Brennan know, as the pastors would love to involve congregational voices in this summer reflection series.



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

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

Email Anne at office@stluke.mn

WEB ADDRESS

www.stluke.mn

Note: Notices such as Session Slices and Birthdays may now be found in our weekly congregational email.

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.