

# the CHALLENGE

A blue circular graphic with a white border containing the text "Spring 2023".

Spring  
2023

Spring Quarterly Edition!

Feb - **May** - Aug - Nov

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## NATIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Early Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum dioicum*) is an early blooming woodland plant. Male and female flowers are on separate plants. (male pictured above) It is host to the Pink Patched Looper Moth (*Eosphropteryx thyatyroides*)

## Spring has Sprung, Beloved!

By Nora P. Elliott

We are moving into a new season of warmth and life. During these seasonal shifts, I often like to take stock of how we got here, honor any lessons learned along the way, and set some intentions for the season ahead.

The past season has been a whirlwind for our community, but how did we get there? One Friday in December, I shared a Zoom meeting with former Senior Pastor, Brennan. With both of us being called in a month of each other, we were considering some creative ways to navigate dual sabbaticals in 2024. I was preparing a case to bring for a vote to allow me to be on a mini-sabbatical from Jan - Feb, this year! I met with Brennan anticipating some discussion about how we could approach that, but was met with some news that caught me by surprise. He informed me he had felt a shift in his call and had accepted a position with a local non-profit to do ecological restoration work, full-time.

I was honestly floored but did my best to be supportive of his discernment. If I'm being totally honest, I didn't have time to consider feelings of grief or loss, as I was preparing for the Gift Making Workshop, Advent, a Christmas pageant, and a sabbatical! By the time the dust settled on Advent, it was the new year and his final Sunday was upon us. Because of a massive



Continued on next page

## Spring has Sprung continued

blizzard his final days in the office were cut short and he was gone. I was the one who removed his name from the office next to mine, and am not ashamed to say I shed some tears.

Brennan was my first colleague in ministry and together he, David Lohman, and I (as well as Will!) led worship for our community through the pandemic. Just as we were getting our feet under us again, the band broke up.

I am grateful for the compassion and understanding that came from our Session and all of you during these last days of his tenure. I have complete and utter faith in the work of the holy spirit to inspire us to serve our world in the greatest way possible. While I would have selfishly preferred Brennan stay with us, I know the spirit is at work doing what needs to be done. I commend him and all of you for honoring that shift in his sense of call.

Before I could catch my breath, we had a familiar face back with us again! Rev. Bill Chadwick returned after 20 years to serve our congregation again in that liminal space between Brennan leaving and our transitional pastor beginning. This was a new experience for me, being a pastor at a congregation that is going through a pastoral transition. While Bill was not Brennan, he brought other life-giving gifts to our community. As our Clerk of Session, Phyllis, said on his departure, "he reminded us we could laugh again." Through this initial time of transition, Bill brought humor, experience, and humility. A refrain I heard him echo several times from the pulpit was, "and I learned."

As we begin to imagine the warm seasons ahead, two lessons have stuck out from this past winter. The first is to soak in and be grateful for every moment we share with one another. We don't know what the future will hold, though we often like to fool ourselves into thinking we do. And speaking of fools, let us embrace being a fool. What I mean is let us recognize that we don't know everything and someone with less schooling, experience, or conventional wisdom, might have a lived experience that can teach a masters course. May we remember to be in a posture of humility and curiosity, while holding gratitude and joy in our hearts.

And as for the season ahead? Well, I've already gone over my word limit for this article, so to find out what's in store for our community, I invite you to continue reading through this newsletter and set your own intentions for the season to come.

How will you reconnect to St. Luke? Let's see how the spirit is calling us together once again.

With gratitude and love,

Nora



# Introducing our Transitional Pastor

We are pleased to announce that both the St. Luke Session and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry approved **Rev. Ane Fitzgerald as St. Luke's Transitional Pastor**, Head of Staff.

As often happens, Pastor Ane and our transitional pastor search team connected with each other through informal channels. St. Luke's Dick Lundy suggested we connect with Rev. Anne McKee who served with Dick as our Associate Pastor in the '90s. Dick felt Anne may know someone who would be a good fit for us. Indeed she did!

Pastor Ane has sent us a message to introduce herself. Her first Sunday will be May 28, so please come to greet her that day.



## From Ane

Calvin Presbyterian Church, Long Lake, Minnesota is the church where I was baptized and confirmed. In the summertime when our pastor was on vacation my dad and I would attend worship at other churches. St. Luke was one of those summer experiences.

Rev. Anne McKee and I were classmates at Yale Divinity School. Early in her career, she was Associate Pastor at St. Luke. My first call was in Louisville, Kentucky. When I came home for vacation, I would slide into your back row to enjoy worshipping with you 'all.

My career in ministry includes a mixture of serving in specialized ministries (juvenile justice, advocacy for the homeless, and mental and elder health services.) I have been a parish associate in both urban and rural settings, and I taught pastoral counseling at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

Many moons and ministries later, here we are knocking on each other's door. I like to think God has a hand in all of this.

St. Luke is in a season of change and needing a transitional pastor. I believe we share a heart and passion for bringing God's peace, justice and love to the world. I'm excited to get to know you and I look forward to our shared ministry.

Peace and blessings,  
Pastor Ane



# Youth and Families



## Fundraiser

Our youth traveling to Alaska this summer raised nearly \$15,000 at the spaghetti dinner fundraiser! Thank you to everyone who helped and contributed. Big shout out to Brenda Davis, Joe and Gavin Anderson, Randy Schumacher and Amy Angeline for their support behind the scenes.



## Confirmation

Our next confirmation class prepares for the end of their faith journey together, after exploring the sacraments, prayer, and many more aspects of faith. Look out for their take on the Prayer of Jesus, entering our worship rotation May 14.







## D&D

Our adventurous youth and young adults have been trapped in a dungeon across the world, battled a dragon turtle, met a powerful deity, and are preparing to end their campaign.

"This group has really meant a lot to me and has been a highlight of my year." —Meghan Jensrud



## Mural project

Elementary Eco Club dedicated a new mural to our world.



## Ecoclub

With warm weather it's time to start preparing our garden. First step is a green house to grow seed starts. When they get big enough we'll transplant them to the garden out front.



# Know Your Neighbor

By Chris Sullivan

## Jim Gregory

You walk by pools, fountains, and Chinese statuary to approach the house of Jim Gregory. Enter and shed your shoes. Once inside, you feel like you are in a combination of a Buddhist monastery and a museum. The interior feels orderly, balanced, and homey, but the dominant feeling is serenity. Original art covers most of the wall space, including many of Jim's own ink and brush paintings in a traditional Japanese style. He says, "I am able to maintain a serene environment with the help of my wife, Christina, who manages to keep the space uncluttered and peaceful. That is the real secret to my ideal world."

He describes himself as a man of mountains and the sea, and yet, he chuckles, here I am living in Minnesota. When he was younger he spent many years hiking through the Sierra Nevada. They impressed upon him the immensity of the beauty that surrounds us. He is nostalgic for the times before its grandeur was fractured by barbed wire and no trespassing signs.

More recently, in 2019, he walked the del Norte and the Primitivo routes on the el Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Spain. He began the trek with his college roommate but discovered that their paces were incompatible. He was hesitant to separate from him though because he felt dependent upon him, partly because Jim doesn't speak Spanish. Paradoxically and unexpectedly, the separation provided Jim with a burst of energy and self-confidence. He found that he was more self-reliant than he thought.



Jim Gregory with his painting *Kranial Kaos*



*Enso It Is* won Honorable Mention at an exhibit at the Hopkins Center for the Arts

## Greta Staples

Greta Eloise Staples, eight and one half years old, pays attention and is kind to the people around her. She exhibits her awareness of other people and her powers of observation by reporting after school to her mother Emily of the interactions of her friends. Little brother Simon, 2, benefits. She is an amazing big sister, providing guidance, tenderness, and education. And her older brother Evan too. Teachers and coaches consistently express appreciation and praise for her presence and contributions. For some families, dogs is dogs. But in the Staples' house, Ruby, a rescue dog with a rich and diverse heritage, becomes for Greta another object of compassion and vehicle for her curiosity. She asked her mother to find in the library books about canine communication so she can better understand Ruby.

Greta's also an athlete. Everything started to click, according to Emily, during the basketball season just ended. Her strength, coordination, and self-confidence are coming together to make her a formidable competitor. She's an artist. She collected shells in a recent trip to Florida and is making jewelry of her finds on the beach. With scissors and markers, she builds small and detailed environments that appeal to her imagination, such as puppy shops. She is working on an adventure story with the working title *The Christmas Ship* and expects to self-publish this summer.

Emily says, "Greta is fierce, determined, and independent and will change the world one day." Greta is her own person, according to Grandmother Eloise.

## Holly Winters

Holly Winters is not doing what she expected with her education, which began in psychology in Madison, WI, and then graduated from the Minnesota School of Professional Psychology at Argosy Twin Cities with my PsyD, the professional equivalent of a doctorate. She imagined counseling people, which she does but in a narrower setting than she expected. She is the psychologist on a team of medical professionals guiding people through weight loss at the Park Nicollet Bariatric Surgery and Weight Loss Center in St. Louis Park.

In other ways she is doing exactly as she planned and hoped. She graduated from high school in the village of Mount Horeb in the driftless area of Wisconsin. It is known as the Troll Capital of The World and is famous for The National Mustard Museum. Holly, husband Garrett, and one-year-old Alayna arrived in Minnesota in 2008. Since then, they have built the life she wanted. Kaiya arrived in 2013. They bought a beautiful home in Excelsior. Several times a week, weather permitting, they get out onto the lake in their boat, their "cabin", Holly calls it. They downhill ski, travel, and transport children to skating and dance lessons.

Holly describes herself as an introverted observer, but don't believe her. Introverted maybe, but certainly not only an observer. In addition to being a driving force in the lives of her clients and family, she serves on the board of The Lake Minnetonka Figure Skating Club. She volunteers preparing meals at The Humanity Alliance of Minnesota. She can't not respond to the suffering she sees right here in Minnetonka consequent upon food insecurity. And, as her children require less and less of her – Alayna now drives herself to work – Holly seeks new ways to give back to her community.



Greta Staples



Holly Winters and her daughter Alayna



# Grounds Restoration: Bringing It Home

## Adventures and Misadventures of Bringing Native Plants to My Yard & Garden

By Cindy Eyden

I know many of you to be wonderful gardeners. That is not true for me. I am an impetuous gardener and so I have had to learn my lessons the hard way.

Twenty some years ago I was inspired by a friend's efforts to restore a prairie in Wisconsin. Asters and echinacea, compass plant and goldenrod, rattlesnake master and spiderwort! I delighted in the flowers as well as their names. I had a vision of a prairie in my own front yard!



*Echinacea pallida*  
(Pale Purple Coneflower)

and I skipped some really important steps: 1) planning and designing my garden and 2) preparing my soil. I have suffered the consequences since!

I began poorly. I simply dug out the grass - sort of - and introduced asters, echinacea and golden rod first, and then added cup plant, blazing star and spiderwort. I figured all of these were appropriate to my full sun boulevard location! They are, but design was not part of my plan! So, the smaller plants got overrun by the really aggressive, taller plants, and my garden was less interesting.

I brought a bit of this wildness home and introduced it to my yard along the boulevard. I enlarged it the next year. My daughter had gone off to college and what was I to do? I dug and I planted.

This garden was - and is - a fabulous success for the bees and wasps and moths and butterflies. To stand by my garden in August is to vibrate with the intensity of these pollinators. I actually can feel my garden a-buzz before I spot a single pollinator. The density and variety of their presence is astounding!

But, my enthusiasm was matched by my ignorance



*Symphyotrichum oolentangiense*  
(Sky-blue Aster)



*Silphium laciniatum* (Compass Plant)





*Solidago speciosa* (Showy Goldenrod)

I eventually learned what I need to consider. I made a list of the plants I am interested in, making sure their sun and water requirements are appropriate to the spot they will be planted. Other elements I keep in mind are the height of the mature plant, and what time of the season they will bloom. (I like to have plants blooming throughout the season as our pollinators are hungry!) In order to do this I made a simple spreadsheet with this information. This has been very helpful in planning as well as remembering what plants I have where.

I also recommend, when choosing plants, that you find truly native plants rather than "nativars" or cultivars of native plants. Discerning this requires research and then looking for the species of the plant. "Nativars" often come in colors that the native plant do not. These changes to the hybrids often mean a decrease in the nutritional value for the pollinators that are counting on these flowers to feed their next generation.

I'm also learning different ways of preparing the soil. Initially I did not truly get rid of the turf prior to planting the native plants, and so I still have grass growing in the midst of the garden. It is much more difficult to deal with later and it interferes with the overall appearance of the garden as it is growing. So do get rid of the turf grass by doing a thorough job of digging out the turf or by smothering the grass by laying down layers of cardboard and waiting a season. As an impetuous gardener, that is not easy. As an older gardener, I love it. And with the cardboard technique you can plant right through it when the time comes.



*Eryngium yuccifolium*  
(Rattlesnake Master)

This has been an amazing process - watching the web of life become more diverse and abundant right in my own yard is deeply satisfying. And I have learned much about living my own life in the process.



*Tradescantia occidentalis* (Spiderwort)

There are many resources to turn to these days, including organizations that are supportive of bringing native plants into your space. Prairie Edge chapter of Wild Ones is one such organization that I would recommend (<https://www.wildonesprairieedge.org/>). And here is a website for Minnesota Wild Flowers (<https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/>). And talk and listen to the many experts in our midst. A gardening adventure awaits!

May your gardens grow and blossom, bringing you an abundance of wonder and beauty to your yard!

# Scholarships

## Scholarship at St. Luke

By Sue Ribe

Since 1972, the St. Luke Scholarship Fund has awarded educational scholarships for higher education. That is a long history of commitment to youth and educations. St. Luke scholarships are maintained under the umbrella of The Legacy Focus Group in two separate funds:

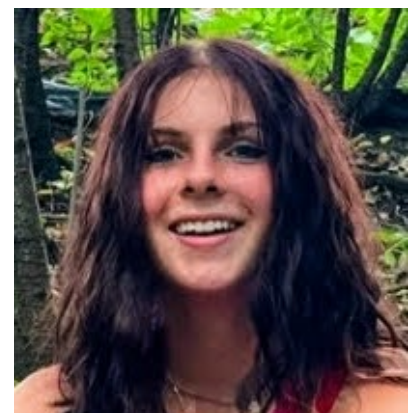
**Permanent Endowments Funds** which make use of endowment earnings to fund scholarships. The St. Luke Scholarship Fund provides financial for college or trade school education; non-traditional students are eligible. The Karen Johnson Travel Scholarship Fund provides financial support for youth and their chaperones engaged in mission, service, and educational travel experiences to poor and underserved areas.

**Stated Purpose Funds** which member donors give to the funds on an ongoing basis to fund scholarships in specified areas of learning. For many years, these funds were provided by the **Dick & Jean Clarke Scholarship** for a single annual scholarship awarded for high school graduates or undergraduate college students pursuing STEM fields. The **Nancy Woolworth Scholarship** provided annual scholarships to high school graduates or college undergraduate college students pursuing a bachelor's degree in science, history, or education. Looking back at the history of these awards, since 2015 alone, scholarship awards totaling over \$40,000 have been made from the Clarke/STEM Scholarship (\$10,000); the Woolworth Scholarship (\$22,475); and the St. Luke Scholarship (\$7,659).

The Scholarship Committee is part of the Legacy Focus Group, and for the past three years was comprised of Sue Ribe, Mike Breckenridge, Mary Sauter, and Chris van Lierop who met to review applications received, and make their recommendations for awards to the Legacy Focus Group.

## 2023-2024 Awards

This year **Eva Pattee** was awarded a \$1,000 Woolworth Scholarship. Eva has been accepted at Montana State University in Boseman, Montana. She plans to major in psychology and minor in criminology. Eva will graduate from Minnetonka High School in June 2023. She has been an active youth member of St. Luke since 2006 and participated in Sunday school, youth group, two rounds of OWL, Families Moving Forward and the gift making workshops.



Eva Pattee



Jane Williams

A second award went to **Jane Williams** who was awarded a \$1,000 St. Luke Scholarship. Jane graduated from Minnetonka High School in June 2022 and will be completing her freshman year at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire in May 2023. She is majoring in Choral Music Education and will begin her sophomore year in September 2023. Jane was active at St. Luke growing up and participated in Sunday school, youth group, confirmation, OWL, Christmas pageants, and Fire & Ice.



## Karen L. Johnson Scholarship

**By Judy Nelson, sister of Karen, and Nicole Egan, niece of Karen**

We are thrilled that the Karen L. Johnson Scholarship, part of the St. Luke Legacy Program, is being used this year to match the donations dollar for dollar for up to \$5,000 earned by the St. Luke Youth Spaghetti Dinner/Auction in preparation for their community connections trip to Alaska this summer. The fund-raising event on April 17 was a great success, raising \$9,000. The \$5,000 gift will be added to cover everyone's trip expenses from the Karen L. Johnson Scholarship fund.

My sister, Karen, had expressed an interest in setting up a travel fund in her name with part of her estate, but she never got a chance to follow through before her passing in 2011. When I was looking at options to fulfill her wishes, I remember being moved by the sermon Marc Well Nagel gave to introduce the St. Luke Legacy Program to the congregation in 2010. Part of his sermon included the following message, "I have a hope that someone here today will say to themselves or their partner, "I want to make sure that every youth at St. Luke has an opportunity through a scholarship fund to have their lives and possibly their career choices changed by experiencing life other than what we know here in upper middle class Minnesota. I am going to give part of my estate to offer this experience and life changing opportunity for our youth."

I felt St. Luke would be a great fit for Karen's scholarship fund. Being members of St. Luke ourselves, our family would know and have personal connection to the recipients of the scholarships for decades to come. We would be able to hear about, follow, and learn about their travels and experiences.

Karen was a free-spirit who sought adventure, traveled the world, gave generously of her time and money, and made things happen for herself and for others. Karen fulfilled her dreams and lived her passion by creating and running her own travel agency for 38 years. She loved working with clients to make their dream trips come true and always looked for ways to enhance their trips in ways they had not even imagined. She wanted her clients to experience the world, become global citizens, love and respect nature, and learn from people of all cultures - to experience the interconnectedness of us all! She was a visionary as to how we should travel. She visited all 7 continents, yes even Antarctica, and over 80 countries. Her travels took her to some of the most unique and remote areas in the world.

Karen was a pioneer in the field of ecotourism. She loved and respected the earth and believed in our connectedness to nature. Her travel philosophy followed the quote, "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints." As much as possible, she and her clients stayed in locally owned and operated, smaller lodging facilities that did their part in taking care of the earth and the environment that was sustaining their businesses.

Again, we are thrilled that some of our youth and their chaperones will be continuing Karen's legacy through traveling to Alaska to build connections with a new community, experience and learn about another culture, admire and appreciate the varied gifts of nature God has provided us, deepen relationships within our St. Luke community and expand our sense of global community with new connections afar.



Karen L. Johnson

# What's Been Happening?



We made our way through the cold winter months of Lent with a sermon series focused on the 7 Holy Virtues. This series uplifted the very human act of misplaced understanding. As a community that seeks to uplift the ministry of Jesus, our idea of the holy virtues would naturally be lived out differently than one who's dedicated to the oppressive demands of empire.

With grace and care for our neighbors, we moved through Holy Week and encountered the ancient tradition of foot washing at our Maundy Thursday service.

A joyful Easter Sunday greeted us at the end of a long and cold Lent, as Pastor Bill reflected on the virtue of diligence.



Following Easter, worship has continued to focus on the people that live and breathe in the St. Luke Community, with a mini-series highlighting Member Ministries. Up first was a multigenerational dialogue sermon with volunteer leaders of the Families Moving Forward ministry, which provides shelter in our church for families experiencing homelessness.

After three long years of meeting virtually, Session gathered together IN PERSON for our April Session meeting! Future meetings will be hybrid to allow those traveling or unable to drive out to still be present.





# News and Upcoming Events

**Grounds Restoration Work Days:** Two opportunities each month from May through October. Session 1 will be on the first Saturday of each month from 9:00-11:30 am and Session 2 would be the third Wednesday from 1:00-3:30 pm. Our first work session will be Saturday, **May 6** from 9:00-11:30 am.

**May 14: Youth Sunday, New members, Baptism of Hazel Avery**

**June 11: Kickoff of Summer Worship Series — The Theology of Broadway**

**July 15 - 21: Youth Community Connections Trip to Juneau, Alaska**

**July 18: Music Party** — All are invited to enjoy an evening with the Corens Family band at St. Luke. Light snacks. Freewill donation to a beneficiary TBD. 6:00 - 10:00 pm

Look out for more details about outdoor community events this summer with music, food trucks, and friends.

## Adult Education



Our new long-form format for Adult Ed was a success! We had over 20 people for every session of our Bible study, Gratitude & Grace. Thank you to everyone who attended, questioned, and considered the complex tome that is the Holy Bible.

Coming up we have our graduate debrief panel on June 4, so be sure to mark your calendars as we prepare to wish our graduating youth well as they set off into the world. We also have many weeks available, so if you're a member and have a personal ministry you'd like to share, please contact [Nora@StLuke.MN](mailto:Nora@StLuke.MN) to schedule a week before we break for the summer.

This Fall, our adult ed focus group is planning a deep dive into the reality of modern migration and immigration issues. We've long been supporters of immigrant rights, but the landscape has shifted in the past decade and over several weeks from Sept - Oct we will explore new avenues for support and engagement including: forced migration of trans families, the human face of immigration today, and what's happening at the border under Biden's administration with a very special guest speaker (to be announced this summer).

# St. Luke Staff and Communications

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WEB ADDRESS  
[www.stluke.mn](http://www.stluke.mn)

Notify [office@stluke.mn](mailto:office@stluke.mn) to receive  
weekly emails or to join the prayer  
chain.

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

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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.