



the CHALLENGE



Summer Quarterly Edition!
Feb - May - **Aug** - Nov

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Columbarium
- 4 Vote Your Values
- 6 Youth and Families
- 8 Grounds Restoration: Bringing it Home
- 10 What's Been Happening
- 11 News and Events
- 11 From Will

NATIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Indian Hemp or Dogbane *Apocynum cannabinum* (above), is an important native species as the exclusive host plant for the beautiful dogbane beetle *Chrysochus auratus* (right). This beetle is also viewable right now on our own Dogbane in the southwest rain garden.

Summer is unique time of year at St. Luke. With many of our school year programs on sabbath, there's suddenly room for rest, creativity, and long, slow-tending projects like the nurture of food crops in our Division of Indian Work (DIW) food garden. Summer sermon series – like our current "Poems of Power" offering – are only possible with large swaths of unclaimed summer Sundays. We give thanks for the space and lightness that this season offers our church and its people.

...and of course, our big "Come Together" fall season is just around the corner! The programmatic year represents an important opportunity for us to come together again as a community, reconnecting and recommitting to our shared mission as a church. We've a number of exciting ventures ahead of us in the coming weeks, which are covered in more detail within this month's *Challenge*.

- The return of our Columbarium social hour gathering
- A church-wide *vote your values* campaign supporting voter information, registration and commitment
- Renewed Confirmation programming for our youth and a new OWL (Our Whole Lives) sexuality and identity series for older adults
- On-going grounds restoration work, with encouragement to "bring it home" and practice ecological restoration in your own yards and balconies
- Trunk or Treat, Blessing of the Animals, DIW's LEAP fundraiser, and many of the fall hallmark events we've come to cherish



Friends, now is the time to come together and celebrate the many creative ways that we share in our life and mission together. We look forward to these last lingering weeks of summer and the festival burst of fall.

Brennan Blue

Columbarium

The St. Luke Columbarium: A Sacred Place of Rest and Remembrance

By Connie Branson

The St. Luke Columbarium has grown into a vibrant, meaningful site of ministry, love and remembrance. For those new or newer to the ministry of the Columbarium, we offer an overview article below, highlighting the unique details that make this sacred space special for our shared community.

What is a columbarium, anyway?

The word Columbarium comes from the Latin word "Columba" meaning "dove." More fully, it means a place where doves rest at night and from the heat of the day. When Christians, relegated to Roman's catacombs, began using cliff-side niches to seal away ashes of the faithful who died, the term "columbarium" took on its present meaning: sacred compartments for storage of cremated remains.

The St. Luke Columbarium was constructed and dedicated in 2014 to provide an enduring place of rest and remembrance for St. Lukers. Our specific columbarium is a granite structure with 72 individual niches (individual spots), each capable of holding one or two individuals' remains. There have been 44 niches purchased at this point and we have the capability of installing a second Columbarium structure in the event that our collection of 72 slots are claimed.

Who can be interred in the St. Luke Columbarium and what are the costs?



St. Luke members, former members, family members, and active participants of the St. Luke community are eligible for interment in the St. Luke Columbarium (note: the Legacy Focus Group and Session approve potential interment of non-members). Historically, the cost of a niche in the Columbarium has been \$2,000 for a niche with two cremains and \$1,100 for a niche for single cremains. We will be increasing that cost to \$2,200 for two and \$1,250 for one on September 1, 2022 to reflect rising costs of engraving the granite face plate of a niche.



Visiting the Columbarium

We encourage families and friends to visit the Columbarium Plaza at any time! To facilitate access, an ADA-approved walkway was constructed from the lower parking lot in 2020 to make the Plaza accessible for walkers and wheelchairs – with gratitude to funds given in honor of Dick Rademacher’s life and legacy. This spring, the hill from the lower parking lot was planted with native plants and we’re hopeful that the walkway will be filled with colorful blooms in upcoming years.

You may have noticed that, since the start of the pandemic, that Columbarium Plaza has also been used as a convenient gathering place for St. Luke programming and events. We’re glad to know that our Columbarium residents are being kept in good company by St. Lukers of all ages! Of course, nothing quite compares to our annual Columbarium happy hour, which finally makes its return this summer after a three-year pandemic hiatus. All those who’ve purchased (or are interested in purchasing) a Columbarium niche are welcome to join our Columbarium social hour from 4:00-5:30 pm on Wednesday, August 31.



If you would like to learn more regarding the Columbarium please contact Don Davies or Connie Branson of the Legacy Focus Group or Rev. Brennan Blue for more information.

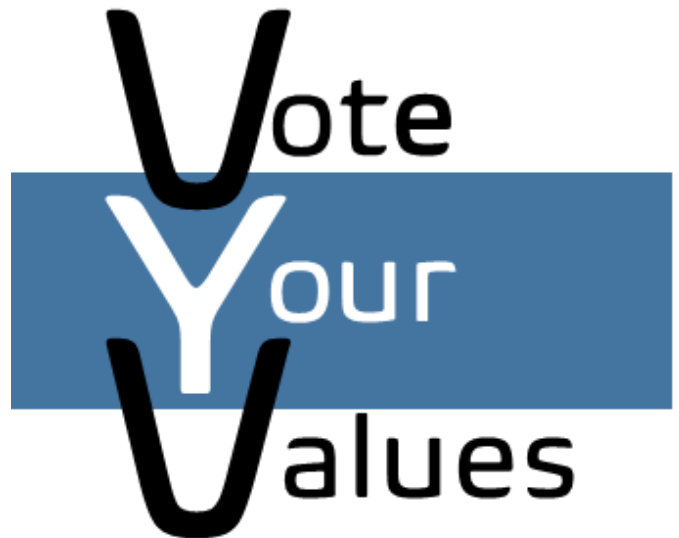


Social Justice Collaboration Team

Vote Your Values

By the Social Justice Collaboration Team of St. Luke

With election season right around the corner, St. Luke continues in its historic commitment to support voter information and advocacy, along with policy issues central to our faith ideals of love, peace, justice and equity. As we roll along into the fall programmatic year, you'll see and hear regular "Vote Your Values" updates from St. Luke's Social Justice Collaboration Team designed to help all people better know and engage with the issues and candidates that are a part of our local, state and national elections.



Let's Start with the Basics

This year is a mid-term election year with US House Representatives, MN Governor, MN Attorney General and several other local/state offices on the ballot. Primary election is on Tuesday, August 9 and the General Election is Tuesday, November 8. Both early and mail-in voting options will be available. You can find out what's on your local ballot, learn about your candidates and make sure your registered to vote by visiting www.vote411.org or www.sos.state.mn.us. Additionally, the Social Justice Collaboration Team of St. Luke will have information on voter wards, districts, registration, etc. available around the church. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, St. Luke does not endorse specific candidates or parties. We do champion voter information and participation, though, and will continue to support free, fair, and accessible voting access to all. In fact, St. Luke's building will once again serve as a voting location for the State of Minnesota!

Questions to Ask Your Local Candidates

Now is a great time to get to know your local candidates for elected office. Take time to learn their names, positions and policies. Now more than ever, your questions and advocacy can help shape the direction that candidates will take as they run for office. We encourage all people to be active participants in this civic, democratic process and to specifically inquire about how local candidates' policies will impact the justice and equity issues that our faith calls us to work for as a community. Here are some of the questions that our Social Justice Collaboration Team leaders are considering ask their local candidates:

- How would you change Minnesota's/Hennepin County's/Minnetonka's/etc. laws and policies to reduce the racial disparities in employment, income, home ownership, or education that exist in our state?
- If elected, what specific actions would you take to help Minnesota reach its goal of 100% carbon free electricity by 2040?
- How are you working to improve the availability of affordable housing in our community/state/nation? What percentage of affordable housing do you believe should be required for all new developments?

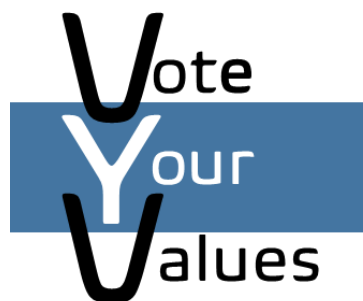
Tune In and Plug In This Fall!

The Social Justice Collaboration Team of St. Luke will continue to gather information, helpful resources, and key policy advocacy suggestions as we approach the election. We encourage all St. Lukers and friends to actively engage and advocate in this crucial election cycle.

If you are interested in joining or learning more about St. Luke's Social Justice Collaboration Team, contact Brennan Blue or Adele Lennig-Sullivan. We typically meet monthly on Zoom at 1:00 pm on the third Tuesday of the month. Our next gathering is Tues, Aug 16. We'll continue to work on election information and local advocacy issues in the coming months.



Primary Election
August 9



General Election
November 8

Youth and Families

Youth & Children's Fall Program Preview

St. Luke

[Click here](#) to watch our **Fall Program Preview Video** and find out about all the exciting things we've got coming up for the 2022-23 program year! The video is also available at [YouTube.com/StLukePresbyterianChurchMN](https://www.youtube.com/StLukePresbyterianChurchMN)

EcoClub: Harvest

Our Elementary EcoClub returns after worship on Aug 14 to HARVEST their garden! Registration is free on our [website](#) where you can find all the harvest dates and more information.

Sli.do is a new way to engage across the divide of our times. Type sli.do into a web browser, hit enter, and use #stlukeyouth to connect. No apps to download!

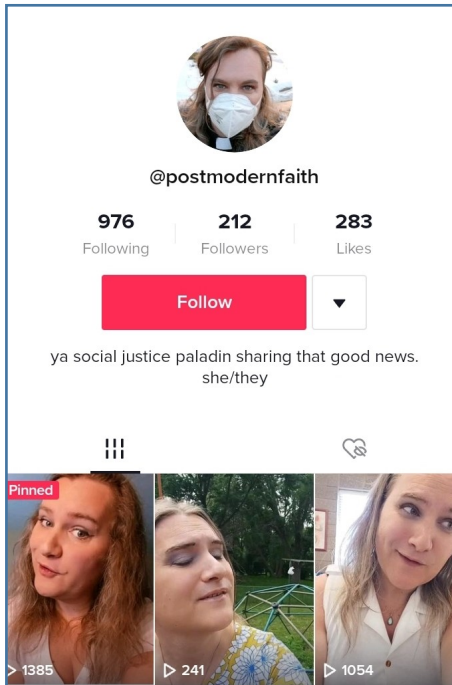
slido



D&D campaigns: Calling ALL AGES for one or two new campaigns starting in the late fall. No experience necessary. Different campaigns available for elementary and high school.

"Dungeons & Dragons, or D&D, is a great way to build social and critical thinking skills" – Rev. Nora Elliott

This summer our senior high youth completed their first campaign by freeing an archfey, stopping an evil wizard and reuniting a lost mythical beast with its mother. What will our next campaign hold? The decisions are up to the players and a roll of the dice.



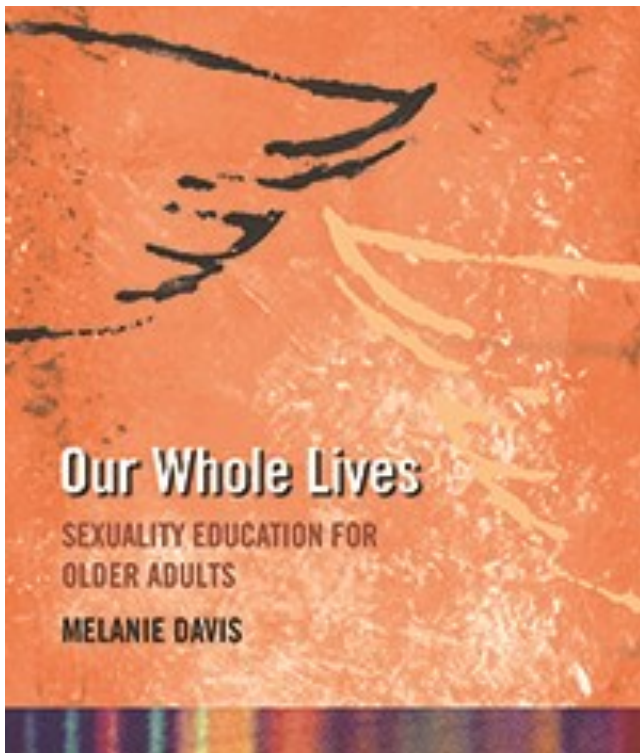
Pastor Nora is on TikTok! Follow her [@postmodernfaith](https://www.tiktok.com/@postmodernfaith)



Outdoor Sunday School returns on Sept 11, during worship, with a focus on prayer and understanding the prayer of Jesus.

Our Whole Lives: Older Adults

For the first time at St. Luke, this fall we will have not one but TWO sexuality education groups. This curriculum is designed for adults over 50. The first group will meet mid-September through mid-October, and the second group Oct – early December. Please note times for each group are different, with the first group being 2:30 pm-4:30 pm and the second being noon – 2:00 pm. To enroll, please contact Nora@stluke.mn before Sept 11.



St. Luke's 2nd Annual Trunk-or-Treat

Right after worship on Oct 30th, the cars parked in our lower lot will pop open their trunks to reveal the fun, silly, and creative ways our community will hand out Halloween treats to our youngest. Contact nora@stluke.mn to reserve a spot and start planning now for how you'll decorate your car!



Grounds Restoration: Bringing It Home

Homegrown National Park Early Adopter

By Mary Malotky

I was turned on to the idea of creating a place for native plants in my yard through my climate work. I was exposed to Doug Tallamy's **Homegrown National Park** movement, info@homegrownnationalpark.org, a grassroots call to action to promote biodiversity by replacing monoculture turf lawn with native pollinator friendly plants.

After the rather frightening removal of all the sod from our front yard, my husband and I scattered native wildflower/grass seed and prayed for rain.



Scan with your smartphone!



In our neighborhood of carefully coiffed lawns, neighbors were dubious. I was dubious! With our cool, cloudy spring, the seeds were in no hurry to germinate. I called the seed company for reassurance. Our front yard of dirt brought side glances from folks too polite to say anything out loud. I fretted, conducting multiple visits around the yard looking for anything green! But finally, those little sprouts started to appear. Looking at our bright green yard now with tall native plants and black eyed Susan's making their summer debut, I wonder how I ever could have doubted the power of Mother Nature.



Now, neighbors are curious. They stop and ask questions. Occasionally, someone who knows more than I, will stop and suggest I pull something (a weed).

The most delightful surprise of all, however, was the twilight dance of the fireflies. As our yard lit up like a Christmas tree, the surrounding yards of sterile monoculture turf grass remained empty of these magical beings.

Historically, a manicured lawn was a way to advertise one's prosperity. This was then equated with beauty. Over time, however, this has equated to landscapes devoid of nature and to lawn services and leaf blowers roaring nonstop all summer. But if you step back from convention and reorient your idea of beauty to align with that which complements, rather than compromises, nature, you might find a native landscape to be truly beautiful.

Over the next 3 years, as our native landscape matures, we will weed and water and tend the little plants while they, in turn, will provide a lovely wild garden for us to enjoy and supply the insects and the birds with a habitat where they can thrive.

We couldn't be more pleased.



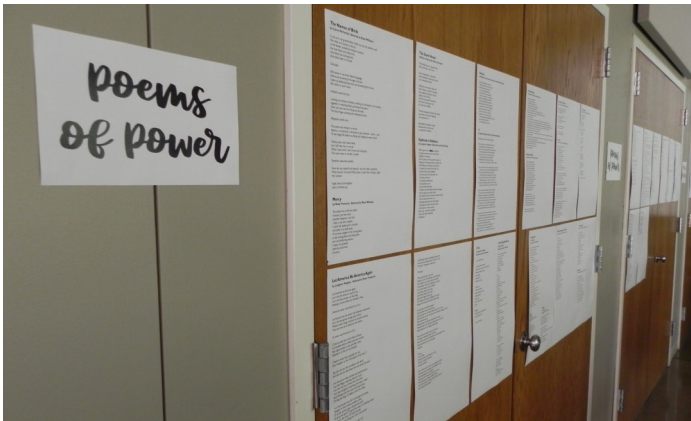
Monarda punctata (Spotted Beebalm)

What's Been Happening?



The Big Planting Event was a great and fun success with 80% of the plants planted. Follow-up planting days finished it off.

Award-winning local Dakota author Diane Wilson presented her latest book *The Seed Keeper* and entertained crowd questions in an inspiring partnership event hosted by St. Luke and The Division of Indian Work.



Poems of Power, our summer worship series has kicked off. 54 powerful poems were submitted. They are posted on the doors in the sanctuary.



Our sign is getting a facelift. Our "new" sign (8-years-old) was starting to fade. Randy is repainting it to its original vibrancy.



News and Upcoming Events

Dick and Jean Clarke Memorial Service: August 4 at 11:00 am with visitation at 10:00 am Masks encouraged.

Niche Society Gathering: Whether you plan to have your remains interred in the St. Luke Columbarium or would like to know more about it, join us Wednesday, August 31 on the Columbarium Plaza from 4:00 to 5:30 for a social gathering.

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

Choir Rehearsal Resumes: Due to Labor Day, our first rehearsal will be Wednesday, September 7 at 7:00 pm. Regular Monday evening rehearsals will resume on September 12 at 7:00.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Coalition's Gubernatorial Forum: Tuesday, September 13, 7:00 pm at Wayzata Community Church. Join all the collaborative as we build relationships around affordable housing with the governor candidates. [Register for the event here.](#)

EV Showcase: Electrify Your Life: Hopkins West Junior High, 3830 Baker Rd, Minnetonka, MN 55305 on Wednesday, September 14, 2022. Display in parking lot at 5:30-7:00 pm Speakers and Q&A in school cafeteria at 7:00-8:00 pm. View electric vehicles (EVs), eBikes, lawn equipment, and a solar boat. Learn about solar gardens subscriptions, rooftop solar, and much more. Talk to actual EV owners about why they love their EV. Try out an eBike for yourself.

LEAP! Into Action: The Division of Indian Work (DIW) celebrates 70 years of proudly serving our Twin Cities American Indian community as an American Indian-led organization with its annual LEAP! fundraiser. LEAP! Into Action returns for its 7th year as an in-person event, taking place on Mon, Sept 26 at the Metropolitan Event Center in Golden Valley. 5:30 PM 8:30 PM See Lori Cocking for tickets.

From Will

Dear St. Luke,

I am overwhelmed and deeply moved by your many cards, messages, and loving support through such a time of significant and tumultuous transition in my life. I carry your love and "good courage" with me as I navigate a move out west and an unpredictable upcoming season of life. I miss you all and think of you so often.

Love and gratitude,

Will



St. Luke Staff and Communications

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

952-473-7378, brennan@stluke.mn

612-518-7737 cell

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

952-473-7378, nora@stluke.mn

801-556-1881 cell

David Hovick Lohman (he/him), **Minister of Music**

david@stluke.mn

Alayna Winters (she/her), **Childcare Worker**

Eva Pattee (she/they), **Childcare Worker**

Anne Deuring (she/her), **Secretary**

952-473-7378, office@stluke.mn or anne@stluke.mn

Darla Monson, **Finance Secretary**

952-473-7378, darla@stluke.mn or finance@stluke.mn

Randy Lofgren, **Custodian/Sexton**

952-473-7378

Joe Anderson & Brenda Davis, **Sunday Morning Custodians**

Connie Branson, **Moderator of Deacons**

Rev. Bob Haskin, **Parish Associate**

Phyllis Messenger, **Clerk of Session**

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

St. Luke Presbyterian Church
3121 Groveland School Road
Minnetonka, MN 55391

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.