

# the CHALLENGE



**Spring  
2024**

**Spring Quarterly Edition!**  
**March - May - Aug - Nov**

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It's easier to take things apart—to deconstruct them, blow them up—than it is to build things. In our postmodern age we've all been schooled in the techniques of deconstruction. Our minds are trained to find the flaws by which anyone or anything might be pulled apart. We are forever seeking to protect the lives we've built from being undone. We often get angry or defensive when we perceive a threat to the lives we've built. We know that life-building is not easy, and we want to protect what we've built. Even if we're shown how to build better lives, we're more attuned to what such reconstruction might cause us to lose than by what we might gain.

In Jesus' ministry we're shown a still more excellent way to build our lives. But this feels threatening enough to the beneficiaries of the way things are in Jesus' time—the Romans, Scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees—that when Jesus comes to Jerusalem their response isn't to thank him for his good news. Their response to kill him—to deconstruct his life and very body. Because their minds, as ours, have been conditioned to see a threat—even when it's the exact opposite of a threat.

So, Jesus is killed. The hope of this still more excellent way is quashed. And yet. What is God's response to this most definitive act of deconstruction? It is to reconstruct what was destroyed. To bring life out of death. To show us what the divine response to the human impulse to destroy is resurrection. New life, new building, out of that which was annihilated.

Image Above : Mary proclaiming the resurrection to the disciples.



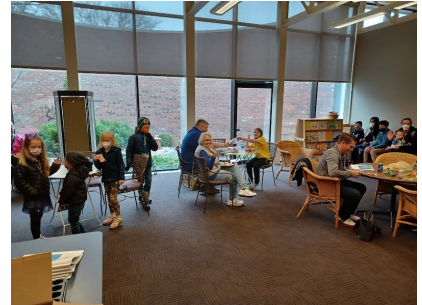
# News and Upcoming Events

## **Family Luncheons and Small Groups - beginning April 7, running each week through summer**

Following worship, families are invited to gather and share a meal in the new Youth Room (Rm 211). Cold cuts and PB&J will be provided, and families are invited to bring more to share.

Interested attendees can stick around to join small groups led by Pastor Nora and volunteer leaders for fun activities and spiritual growth.

Please join us and bring the young ones in your life.



## **PLANT-GROW-SHARE Effective May 1st**

**Big changes in the garden this spring!** Minneapolis based **Plant-Grow-Share** will take over the growing of the veggies for the Division of Indian Work. Plant-Grow-Share, a program within the Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization (CANDO), provides gardening education and prioritizes teaching Black, Indigenous, Latine and people of color, along with low-income white folks. They ground their work in antiracism, decentralized power, deep relationships and personal growth. Watch for opportunities to take part in an anti-racism workshop with the farmers in training. To learn more about **Plant-Grow-Share**, check out their

## Facing the Inevitable - Living Well and Dying Well

This spring Adult Ed will feature a series called **Facing the Inevitable – Living Well and Dying Well**. It will be a six-week series which will feature presentations about end-of-life planning and care, and dive into the big question of “what happens after we die”?

**9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. West Room Adult Ed Sessions**

**March 31 – EASTER – NO SESSION**

**April 7 - Not Your Mother's Biblical Exploration of Death & After-life Theologies**

What happens when we die? Did Jesus condemn people to hell? Join Pastor Nora for a thoughtful exploration of post-Easter reflections. Bring your questions as we embark on this sacred exploration and dialogue.

**April 14 – Book Reviews / Legacy Letters**

Individuals will share brief reviews/recommendations of books they have read during this series about living and dying well. Discussion/Summary of Legacy Letters

**April 21 – Green Burial Options / Make Video Recording of Written Legacy Letters**

Green Burial Option - Special Speaker - Nicole Lutz, Interra Green Burials (with Mueller Memorial Funeral Home) Opportunity to make a video recording of your Legacy Letter.

# News and Upcoming Events

## Earth Stewards Presents Earth Month Plus

**Lots going on in April and May around climate and sustainability.**

### **April 21st**

**Alternatives to Plastics Fair** in the Garden Court after the service (11:30 – 12:30). We will have a display of great products to help you purge plastic from your life. We are also celebrating **Earth Care Sunday Worship** this day.



### **April 28th FAST FASHION**

The clothing industry is the second biggest polluter in the world behind the oil industry. Come hear a panel discussion about the fashion industry. Topics include; dupe culture, hauling, social media influence, peer pressure, thrifting, Buy Nothing movement. Two panelists will be here; Kristy Janigo, former fashion designer, and Megan Malotky, University student, studying fashion design.

### **May 5th Food & Nutrition**

Join Derek Nicolas, the nutrition coordinator from the Division of Indian Work and learn about his work bringing authentic native foods to the clients they serve and how he uses the food St Luke grows. Aimee Meyers will bring her induction cooker to demo.

### **May 12th Electronics Recycling**

Maria Jensen, Executive Director of RECA (Recycling Electronics for Climate Action) will talk about a bill that will provide free electronics recycling to all Minnesotans, and work towards collecting 100% of our e-waste! Minnesota generates 266 million pounds of electronic waste each year, providing a \$3.2 billion dollar opportunity to capture critical metals via recycling. In doing so, we could prevent toxic pollution in our landfills and prevent toxic air resulting from burning e-waste, both of which harm human and environmental health. But...we only collect 24% of our e-waste for recycling in Minnesota.

### **May 18th Electronics Recycling Event 9-12 PM**

Empty your closet and junk drawer and bring us your old cables and electronic items for recycling with eCycle. Watch for more information in the coming days. ***This event will be held at Groveland Elementary, 17310 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka.***

### **May 19th Rooftop Solar and Solar Gardens**

Buff Grace of MNIPL will be here to give us the latest info on residential solar, tax breaks and benefits from the IRA bill . Lori Cocking will share her experience with a solar installation on her barn in Wright County.

## Spring Women's Gathering

**SAVE THE DATE!** Saturday, May 18th is the Spring Women's Gathering at the church, from 10-12 a.m.

# Know Your Neighbor

By Chris Sullivan

**Tamara Rogers**



I don't expect you to believe me when I tell you that Tamara Rogers, when she was just a very little girl, was skinny, anemic, and weak. She wore corrective shoes and when sides were chosen for kickball, she was always taken last. So she says of herself even.

One night, which was no doubt was dark and stormy, her circle of friends determined to explore the local haunted house, even though it was locked up tight. Well, now Tamara's body size was a virtue. She was the only one slender enough to ride the coal chute into the basement. Despite the danger, despite being alone, at night, without so much as a flashlight, down she slid into the creepy basement of a haunted house. Her assignment was to find her way through the house to the front door and let the Others in. And that's exactly what she did.

Later that night, she told her parents about her adventure. They chastised her, not harshly, for exposing herself to that much danger. They said she had been irresponsible for leaving the house unlocked, which puzzled young Tamara because she knew that no one locked their doors in her neighborhood. They called the police and asked them to secure the abandoned house. Through their admonishments though, Tamara sensed that they were impressed with her and proud of her bravery.

Tamara was also impressed and proud of her own bravery. It was a formative event for her the details of which remain with her decades later. Her confidence expanded. She remembers saying to herself, "I am a brave person."



# Know Your Neighbor

By Chris Sullivan

## Adele Lennig Sullivan



Adele graduated from Webster University in St. Louis with a degree in theater with a focus on the role of director. Her father, a corporate vice president, was uncertain of the value of that degree. She says, however, that a degree in theater is fabulous training for many careers, which she has demonstrated many times over, matching her father by becoming a corporate vice president herself at Ameriprise Financial.

While she did quite well in her business career, her greatest services have been as a volunteer in the nonprofit world. Two organizations, Theater Mu and The Nonviolent Peaceforce, benefited from her capacity for strategic planning and leadership, her devotion to peace and justice, her generous heart, and being smart as the dickens. She led both groups through the complex process of reconstructing their governance structure, a process much like repairing an airplane in flight. Last year she was on a small leadership team that organized a global event in Geneva, Switzerland, that brought

together people devoted to nonviolent conflict intervention. Her most recent project is The Unarmed Civilian Protection/Accompaniment Community of Practice which is a dynamic network of organizations and individuals evolving together to create effective, community centered, nonviolent ways for civilian and community protection and violence prevention.

Last month Adele checked off a bucket list item when she traveled to Kenya to see elephants, giraffes, and lions living in their own native habitats. Now she is in Japan with her husband on a Road Scholar trip.

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On April 7th you can join Adele in worship as we welcome Ethan Quezada and Anna Zaros of the Non Violent Peace Force Organization.



# Youth and Families

## Nora's Back



After three months of reflection and rejuvenation, I'm thrilled to be back in the saddle and prepping for the next season of ministry together. Gone are the days of once a month groups for different ages. What week is youth group? Is EcoClub this week or next? NO MORE!

Starting on Local Branch (Palm) Sunday, March 24, I'll be hosting a family luncheon after worship. Following that informal meal, we'll get outside (weather permitting), play some games, or do some art together.

- This informal time of community building will focus on the interests and needs of whoever shows up!
- We have a bunch of elementary kids present? EcoClub time!
- A few youth show up, lets hang in the youth room and do some art!
- We got both? Parents, lets figure out and support our kids together.
- We only have one age group? I'll take 'em and parents you can hang out with your peers for a hot min without paying a babysitter!

## Fire and Ice

On MLK weekend, St. Luke Youth attended the 2024 Fire and Ice event at Wilderness Canoe Base and it was an unmitigated success. We were 3 youth, 3 young adults and 2 (less young) adults out of a total of over 30 participants. We were joined by almost 30 more folks from UCC New Brighton and Anoka UCC. There was broomball, skiing, puzzling, many many card games, the sauna, and of course the table challenge (ask one of the youth if you don't know what this is). The close quarters and challenging weather help to quickly build connections and a real appreciation of nature, even when the windchill is -30. Can't wait till next year!





# Youth and Families

## Upcoming Summer Events



Summer family ministry experiences with St. Luke Presbyterian Church this July & Aug!

### **1. Senior High Travel Experience - MADD Camp in Black Forest, Colorado (July 14 - 20):**

This summer, our Senior High youth have the incredible chance once again to participate in the Music, Arts, Drama, and Dance (MADD) Camp nestled in the breathtaking Black Forest of Colorado. From July 14 to 20, this immersive experience promises spiritual development and creative exploration.

For more information and to get a sneak peek into the magic of MADD Camp, click [here](#)

### **2. First Timers Camp Info at Clearwater Forest (June 30 - July 3):**

This shorter camp provides a taste of a full week at Clearwater for younger campers who might not be ready to be away from home for a full week. These campers are still able to enjoy all of the fun of camp without the risk of getting work out or missing family too much. Contact [Nora@StLuke.MN](mailto:Nora@StLuke.MN) to get in on the carpool. (\$375-\$500)

### **3. Endless Camp at Clearwater Forest (July 28 - Aug 2):**

For our students entering 3rd through 12th grade, Clearwater Forest awaits with its Endless Camp from July 28 to August 2. Surrounded by the beauty of nature, this experience fosters personal spiritual growth and joy. Detailed information about this exciting camp, or the smaller **First Timer's Camp for younger students** can be found [here](#). For inquiries about carpooling, please reach out to Nora at [nora@stluke.mn](mailto:nora@stluke.mn).

### **4. End of Summer BBQ & Fall Preview (August 18):**

As we bid farewell to the summer months, join us after worship for a luncheon BBQ on August 18, for an End of Summer BBQ & Fall Preview. This casual gathering promises good food, great company, and a sneak peek into the exciting events planned for the upcoming fall season, including Our Whole Lives, Trunk or Treat, and much more.

For registration, carpooling, and travel details, email Pastor Nora at [nora@stluke.mn](mailto:nora@stluke.mn).

Note: Nora is on sabbatical and will respond after her return on March 17.

With prayers of hope and joy to seize these opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.

# What's Been Happening?

## A Period of Transition



The Session welcomed back to the Pulpit Rev. Bill Chadwick as Bridge Pastor thru part December and January who graciously agreed to step in to lead services at St. Luke at such short notice. Rev. Bill formally served as a co-pastor of St. Luke and worshipped with St. Luke on occasion following his honorable retirement from full-time parish ministry.

Rev. Bill Chadwick addressed the congregation saying “You have been through rough spots before and you have survived...and thrived. And you will once again come through this just fine. “

## Joy of Christmas thru the Period of Transition

The beauty and spirit of the Christmas season truly came to life through the incredible efforts and participation of our congregation. From the youngest performers to the seasoned members, the dedication and enthusiasm shone brightly, creating an atmosphere of joy and togetherness that resonated throughout the congregation.



It was truly heartwarming to witness the unity and communal spirit that filled the space as we celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ. The Christmas Pageant not only showcased the talents within our congregation but also reflected the love and fellowship that define our community.



# What's Been Happening?

## A Tribute to Phyllis Messenger



Pastor Bill blessed Skip and Phyllis Messenger as they begin a new life in Duluth.

The congregation expressed deep appreciation for their years of service to St. Luke Presbyterian Church.



Phyllis and Skip leave St. Luke with these words: We want to thank you for all the love and good wishes we have received from the St. Luke community, especially in the last several months, as we prepare to move to

Duluth. Your support has meant so much! And you are in good hands with our new Clerk of Session, Cel Smith. Please give her the same encouragement and trust you have given me.

## St. Luke Welcomes Cel



A member of St. Luke for 34 years, Cel has been a member of the Session four times. She held multiple Board positions and served as deacon.

When Phyllis Messinger moved to Duluth, Cel assumed Phyllis' position as Clerk of Session.

## St. Luke Welcomes Rev. Zach Wilson as Bridge Pastor



Zach has served in many different contexts in his twenty-four years of ministry—eighteen as an intentional transitional pastor. He most recently served as transitional pastor at Andrew-Riverside Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis as it transitions from a chartered congregation to a fellowship partnering with the Episcopal Church to work with college students and young adults. Zach views times of transition as generative opportunities for each spiritual community to thoughtfully discern who they are called to be.

Zach grew up in the Eastern Washington town of Yakima, Washington before attending Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. He met his wife Jennifer Rome there and they attended Princeton Seminary before Jen was assigned to the Saint Paul Synod

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Jen currently serves as the pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Saint Paul. They have two daughters—Aster (18), and Adelaide (14)—who both attend Saint Paul Public Schools.

# What'd Been Happening

## Ordination of Elder Ruth Klepfer



Ruth Klepfer was ordained to the office of Ruling Elder during worship on Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. Among other responsibilities Ruth works to keep the church's technology up to date and in good repair.

## Bridge Pastor Update

Our new Bridge Pastor, Zach Wilson, began serving with us on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Since then, with the Session and many others, Zach has

- Enjoyed meeting and getting to know so many people!
- Planned and lead a leadership training and discernment retreat for the Session
- Started to get an understanding of the building and budget.
- Worked to plan worship with an amazing team
- Welcomed Nora back—yay!

If he hasn't met you yet he looks forward to doing so. Please call, text or email people if you want to get in touch.

## St. Luke Giving

**Beyond New Beginnings (BNB)** supports young moms and their children as they gain independence in safe homes. They're involved in New Beginnings High School Program, post-secondary education, or employment, empowering them for community engagement. St. Luke donated [\\$684.99](#) in January.

**Bimosedaa, meaning "Let's Walk Together" in Ojibway**, provides 48 supportive apartment homes in downtown Minneapolis. It offers culturally relevant support services for the Native community, including job search, education, and health services, fostering residents' contemplation of their next steps. St. Luke donated [\\$560.26](#) in February to support this program.

**ICA** is more than a food shelf. Scott Searl, Director of Philanthropy, shared their mission at St. Luke's in February. They've expanded into housing and job placement while ensuring food security in a growing service area. St. Luke's donated [\\$457.60](#) in March to support ICA's mission.

### **St. Luke 2024 Educational Scholarships**

Since 1972, the St. Luke Scholarship Fund has awarded educational scholarships to many individuals for higher education. Funding for these scholarships for over 40 years has come from generous donors in the St. Luke congregation. The Scholarship Committee will be meeting in April to update the applications for these awards along with the process to apply. Please keep an eye out for additional information in the coming months. It will be well publicized and the Committee looks forward to awarding scholarships later this spring. Sue Ribe, St. Luke Scholarship Committee Chair

**With financial support from St. Luke and others we have been able to reach more families. Thank you St. Luke for your prayers and support**

# BeFrienders

## Listen! Can you hear it?

Simon and Garfunkel singing Bridge Over Troubled Waters... "when you're weary, feeling small, when tears are in your eyes, I'll dry them all. I'm on your side when times get rough and friends just can't be found. Like a bridge over troubled water..."

BeFrienders are trained to be that bridge. We listen without judging. We honor confidentiality. We listen without giving advice. We listen so you can gain perspective to solve your own problems or to share your pain or sadness. Or we would just listen to whatever you want to talk about. BeFrienders listen to people who may be experiencing times such as:

- Grieving the loss of a loved one.
- Sadness that can go with aging.
- Loneliness.
- Major decisions.
- Major life changes.
- Illness.
- Problems with family member...
- or any other time you just want someone to listen without interrupting or advising.

If you would like to meet with a BeFriender or want more information, you may call Janie Warner (612-747-1373) or Ginny Larson (952-210-8388). You may also ask any BeFriender if they are free and could meet for coffee or in the privacy of the church.

## 2024 BeFrienders:

Mary Lou Hoff  
Lynn Cox  
Marcia Yockers  
David Bishop  
Dave Bosselmann  
Nancy Rademacher  
Ben Van Lierop  
Ken Ribe





# St. Luke Staff and Communications

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

**Cel Smith (she/her), Clerk of Session,**

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**Connie Branson, Moderator of Deacons**

**Ginny Larson (952-210-8388) and Janie Warner (612-747-1373), BeFriender Coordinators**

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

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

Email Smeeta at [office@stluke.mn](mailto:office@stluke.mn)

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.

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.