

The Visitor

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July 2009
Issue #7 - 09

*University Lutheran Church of Hope
is a welcoming, Christian community of faith
centered in God's grace and
called to demonstrate God's love for the world.*

Farewell Message from Dannica Montplaisir

It's hard to believe that my year has come to a close already. This has been a year of great joy for me, to learn with you, pray for you, serve with you, and to get to know you. It seems like only yesterday I was visioning and dreaming about what the Young Adult Program could look like at University Lutheran Church of Hope. Before I knew it we were off and running, and now, at the height of growing relationships and booming enthusiasm, it's time for me to say goodbye.

Over the past year, I think that young adults have made a huge footprint on the life of the congregation, by the ways we have served, the ways we have taken on leadership, and by the way we have modeled being a community who cares for one another as we grow as disciples. We have young adults on almost every ministry team, a congregational vice president who is a young adult, and a vibrant worshipping community of young adults who are invested in the lives of this congregation. I am thrilled for the ways that we have been able to engage each other in conversation at Theology Tavern, the ways we have struggled and fussed with biblical study, the ways we have served the congregation and the community, but most importantly the ways in which we have created caring community among young adults as well as the congregation, discovering what is going on in the life of the other.

As I look toward moving to my next call in ministry, serving Westwood Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park, I leave Hope with a bittersweet feeling. You all have helped me to grow and to put vision into action. I am thankful for the friendships that I have made and for the ways in which you all have enriched my life over the past year. A special thanks to Pastor Shirley for being an incredible leader, mentor, and friend. His ministry, strong pastoral leadership, and his willingness to try new and different ways of doing ministry have been invaluable as I have grown into my own identity in ministry.

I am confident in the future of the young adults at Hope because you have a strong foundation on which to build continued ministry. It is refreshing and reassuring that this congregation has seen and met a growing need and taken seriously the ministry to the "missing generation" of churchgoers; thank you for the investment. Blessings on you as you continue to do God's work in the world, and thank you for allowing me to be a part of the journey.

God is most certainly at work in our lives. For me, a call to Hope was much more than employment—it was an opportunity to be changed and to be in relationship and friendship with you all. Thank you for the difference you make in the kingdom of God and thank you for confirming that time does fly when you are having fun!

Peace be the journey, friends!

—Dannica Montplaisir,
Young Adult Minister



Additional High School Graduate

In the list of graduating high school seniors in the June issue of *The Visitor*, we accidentally overlooked one student.

Eliot Bieletto graduated from Minneapolis South High and will be attending the United States Military Academy at West Point. Congratulations!

Facilities

We are continuing to work toward the Watershed project, which will be a pretty major addition to our property, and an important step to helping the environment. We are hoping to apply for a \$50,000 action grant in the fall, after we get an estimate of the various costs of the projects.

For those of you who have experience in the fund-raising and/or grant writing fields, keep your eyes and ears open if you hear of possible environmental grants that we could apply for.

For those of you who would like to donate to this particular project, just let Craig Wiester know you would like it to go to the Watershed fund.

The roofing should start in July!

And don't forget Wednesday Weeding, starting at 6:30 p.m.!

—Fred Kreider

Thank You

“Miss all of you great friends at University Lutheran Church of Hope. Thanks a million for all the messages of courage and strength—you are great to remember me. May God give you strength and courage to carry on the great work at Hope.”

—Vicki Miller

Families Moving Forward Returns to Hope

After nearly a year's break, Families Moving Forward (FMF) will again be our guests the nights of August 30 - September 5. Sign-up for volunteers will begin Sunday, August 2, before and after worship. Please plan to be part of this valuable ministry that reaches far beyond the “hallowed halls” of Hope to provide shelter to homeless families in our greater metropolitan community.

In these difficult economic times, financial support for FMF has declined to the point where their very survival is in question. On July 16 their board of directors will determine whether they have sufficient funds to continue serving these especially vulnerable families. Please consider sending them a vote of confidence by making a contribution in one of the following ways:

- Visit familiesmovingforward.org
- Place a special gift in the offering plate (designate your gift for FMF)
- Send a check to FMF at 1808 Emerson Ave. N., Minneapolis, 55411

If you have any questions about Hope's ministry through FMF, please contact me at (612) 729-5891 or Bryan Kufus at (651) 429-7295).

Thank you!

—Jo Schroeder, Co-coordinator

Lutheran Links

Here are URLs to a few key Lutheran organizations that should be of interest to members of University Lutheran Church of Hope. Have fun exploring!

www.thelutheran.org

The Lutheran (official magazine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, available for reading online)

www.elca.org

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

www.mpls-synod.org

Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA

www.luthersem.edu

Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

www.augsburgfortress.org

Publishing House of the ELCA



A Quiet Ministry with an Impact

No bells, balloons, or bands—just servants doing extraordinary volunteering! That aptly describes those who answer the call to be a Friendly Visitor (FV) or to serve on the Friendly Visitor Committee.

To be an FV is to have a one-to-one connection with a shut-in or someone no longer able to participate actively in the ongoing life of University Lutheran Church of Hope. An FV is a special friend who connects through several monthly visits and/or phone calls.

In 1970, the Rev. David Preus made a request to three women that they organize an FV program at Hope, similar to the one at Central Lutheran Church. Those women were Marvel Kingsley, Bertha Hanson, and Verle Rhoades. The congregation responded with enthusiasm, creating a visitation program that has remained strong for 39 years.

The song “Sunrise, Sunset” from the musical “Fiddler on the Roof” includes the lyrics, “*Swiftly fly the years, one season following another, laden with happiness and tears.*” We hear those words and must accept the reality of aging and changes. Therefore the time has come to invite younger members to continue the mission and traditions of the FV program.

As the transition is made this year, there are many dedicated members to whom humble thanks should be raised! First and foremost are the dozens of faithful Friendly Visitors who responded and contributed to this volunteer work. I wish each name could be listed, but space is limiting. Blessings on each of you! Thank you!

The cog of the wheel is the FV Committee, whose members keep the FV program turning. Thank you for your long years of service!

Retiring Committee

Bertha Hanson

Winnie Frolen

Jean Hoisington

Marilyn Preus

Melanie Ahlstrom

Marvel Kingsley (deceased)

Illah Larson (deceased)

Current Committee

Marilyn Asp (Chair)

Kathy Knudson

Pat Lindquist

Rosalie Eldevik

Leslie Frost

Verle Rhoades

The congregation of University Lutheran Church of Hope can be proud of its senior ministry, as demonstrated by its support of a staff position for this purpose. Pastor Esther Dant is our current Visitation Pastor, a role for which she is exceptionally qualified. She and Pastor Craig Shirley are great blessings to our congregation, bringing hope and peace to all whom they visit. Thank you!

Any program is as strong as its volunteers. You are invited to join in the FV work. Both men and women are needed! Please contact Pastor Dant or Marilyn Asp to become part of a *quiet* ministry with a *loud* impact.

Here is a thought for the day from the *Metro Lutheran*:

Did anybody's life improve today because of something I did? Did I become today more nearly the person God intended me to be?

Love! Thanks! Blessings!

—Verle Rhoades

Summer Book Discussion

Evil and the Justice of God

Join the summer discussion on this book by N.T. Wright.

All people age 10 and older are invited to participate.

Childcare will be provided during the discussion time as well as during the 10 a.m. worship.

8:45 – 9:45 a.m. in Heritage Hall

Donuts and coffee will be served.

July 12 & 19 – Discussion on themes from the book with Diane Shallue (July 12) and Pastor Craig Shirley (July 19)

July 26 & August 2 – View the DVD and discuss.

Questions? Contact Diane Shallue at dianes@ulch.org or (612) 331-5988, ext 19.

Book Description

Many people believe in the modern idea of human progress and dismiss evil as nonexistent. In contrast, postmodern thinkers have rightly argued that evil is real, powerful, and important, but they give no real clue as to what we should do about it. Can we possibly envision a world in which we are delivered from evil? How might we work toward such a future through prayer and justice in the present? These are the powerful and pressing themes that N.T. Wright addresses in this book that is at once timely and timeless.

DVD Description

N.T. Wright explores 21st-century turmoil, the definition of evil from Old and New Testament perspectives, and then examines what Christians can do about it. The program is filmed in modern style, with a combination of actual place visits, reenactments, and special effects complementing Wright's direct address to the viewer. The program ends with a look at South Africa and the response there to many years of evil and how, through forgiveness, recovery has begun in earnest. It

From the Visitation Pastor

Last month I wrote of the Blue Zones. They have been identified in a book by Dan Buettner from Minneapolis. They are select areas in the world where there is an unusually high number of people who are into their 90s and 100s and still living active lives. I wrote of people who remind me of this in our community here at University Lutheran Church of Hope. This month there are more, and characteristics of their lives include staying active, eating healthy food, having a social network, and making family a priority.

Gladys Holsten was just finishing her Bingo game when I arrived at her care center in Stillwater. As I wheeled her into her room, we saw an envelope on her bed. It was from the White House. First though, she had to put away her Bingo winnings. "I never spend it," she said. Then we opened the letter of congratulations for her 100th birthday and I read it to her. It was signed by Barack Obama and Michelle Obama. "Well isn't that something. I wonder how they knew it was my birthday?" Then I asked her, "What do you think has helped you reach 100?" "Oh, I grew up on a farm and we always ate good food and I've tried to do that all my life." She looks wonderful!

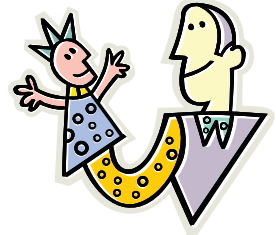
I called Inga Saari to set up an afternoon visit early in May. "Oh, I couldn't then, I play cards from one to three that afternoon." "What about three then?" I asked. "Oh, I need time to say goodbye to my friends." We set up the visit earlier in the day. Inga indeed needed that time. At her funeral service last week, we learned how she had time for so many. How granddaughters cherish the time she spent with them. Her bulletin cover verse is from Psalm 23: "*I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*" That is her reward now for the full, rich life she lived. Most of all, she is a child of God, but also another Blue Zone woman. She would have been 98 in July.

Servants together,

—Pastor Esther Dant

Music and Arts Camp

Music and Arts Camp for children who are entering grade 2 through grade 9 will be offered on August 23-26 in the evenings. High school students are needed as assistants. Puppetry will be the art offering again this summer, with instructors from In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre. Pick up a registration form today, and please bring your friends. Contact Tim Strand for more information.



IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST PUPPET AND MASK THEATRE
MINNEAPOLIS · MINNESOTA 

People of Hope

We are sad to report the death of our dear **Inga Saari**. Inga was a faithful worshiper at the early service for years, and was with us on Easter Sunday this year. She would have turned 98 on July 11. Inga volunteered for more than 25 years at Fairview Riverside Hospital, and was usually seen working and chatting with customers in the Housewares department during our rummage sale.

Tom Frost has a most interesting and at the same time heartbreaking job. He is Executive Director of **CornerHouse**, a child abuse evaluation and training center.

While working in the Hennepin County Attorney's office on child abuse prosecution, Tom saw that there were many inadequacies in their investigations. Children needed to feel safe and valued while telling about their experiences. Interviewers needed to do no additional harm to the children after what they had gone through.

The conversations were difficult for both children and interviewers in a frightening office or at the Police Department. The interviewers needed special training in order to gain information from a child about his or her physical or sexual abuse, or the witnessing of a violent crime. The questions needed to be different for different ages of children, who usually range in age from 3 to 12.

Tom and others founded CornerHouse in 1989 to fulfill that need. CornerHouse is a pretty, yellow house in a residential neighborhood, staffed with trained, sensitive, interviewers. After spending some years on the Board of Directors, Tom took the job of Executive Director three years ago.

More than 17,000 people have come from all around the country and the world, including the International Criminal Court at The Hague, for training at CornerHouse on their methods of interviewing children. The CornerHouse website is at www.cornerhousemn.org

A May visitor to University Lutheran Church of Hope from Norway was very interested in our former altar painting, **Holy Woman at the Tomb**, that is now hanging on the east wall of the north transept. He told his friend Ola Gjendem, from the city museum of Molde, Norway, and Ola contacted us about the painting.

Ola wants to know details about the painting, which we are researching. Our painting is Herbjørn Gausta's copy of a painting by Axel Ender. The Ender original was in a small church in Molde, near Ålesund and Kristiansund. The first church in Molde was built in 1661. A new church was built in 1887. The altar painting by Axel Ender was made for this church.

The newer church burned in April 1940 as a result of bombing by Nazi Germany. The King and the government leaders had fled from Oslo to Molde as the Nazis invaded Norway. The painting and a wooden cross were safely hidden before the Nazi bombing.

Tell us your news! Please contact Ruth Fingerson at Rfingerson@comcast.net or (651) 633-5316 if you have any news that others in the congregation might like to know about you. Do you have a new abode? A new job? How about a new grandchild or an illness/injury/recovery, a trip, school news, or a special houseguest? Do you have a new special interest? We would like to hear from you. Thanks!

—Ruth Fingerson

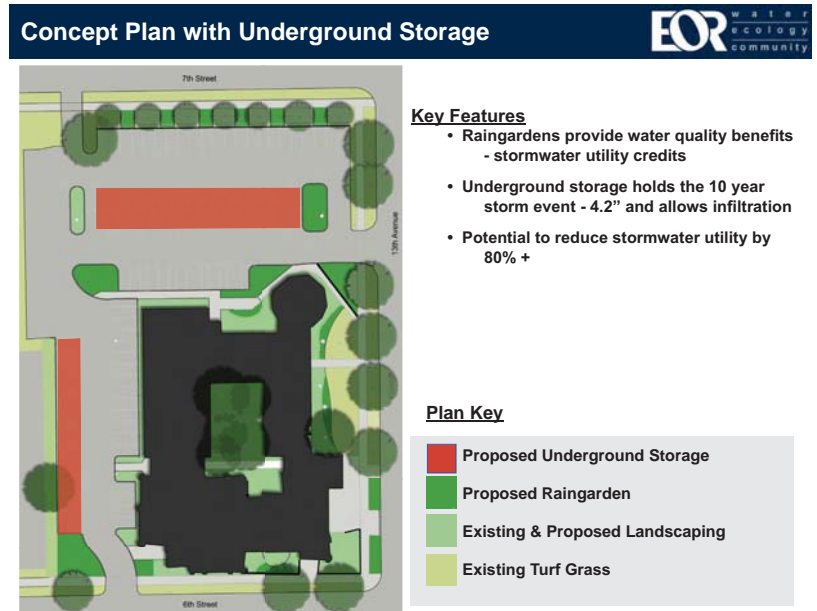
Watershed Planning Progress

Watershed planning is entering its final phase. In June, Fred Kreider and I went over the initial plans with the Vision & Governance Board and gained their support on selecting the parking lot option we want to use in the final design. The Facilities Team agreed the following evening. Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR) has been notified of the decision and will be going ahead with the final design, which will include parking lot underground stormwater storage and lots of rain gardens. This will allow us to use regular asphalt on the parking lots, which will minimize our maintenance costs for the lots while giving us the opportunity to maximize our quality and quantity stormwater utility credits with the city. We should have final plans in a few months, in time to apply for a Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) action grant to help with one major portion of our watershed plan in 2010.

If you missed the plan presentation back in April or want to refresh your memory, the presentation is online at <http://ulch.org/images/PreliminaryWatershedPresentation.pdf>. Also watch the bulletin board by the main elevators—I'll get some of the relevant slides up there for members who do not have ready access to computers.

The Board has also asked us for two estimates. The first is an estimate from EOR to design an outdoor patio on the east side of the church outside the lounge area concurrently with the stormwater design plans. This may impact the preliminary plan, there but the Board felt it important that they be done concurrently. The second estimate is for the cost to put the electrical service in the west parking lot underground when that parking lot is redone. Those numbers will need to come from Excel Energy, and when done will eliminate the two utility poles in that parking lot. It was funny that during both the Board meeting and the Facilities Team meeting, one person at each meeting admitted backing into one of those poles (not mentioning names). I wonder how many others have had that experience.

—Kathy Knudson



President's Perspective

That “in between” place—the subject came up recently in a discussion with a youth of the congregation: talented, wise, yet feeling stuck between worlds. Do you fully commit to one area, forsaking all others, or do you go for the jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none status? It can be a lonely place, but so familiar to many.

Our congregation has been going through some identity-searching over the past several years, and the Mission Renewal Process made great strides toward helping us see more clearly who we are. If we've learned anything, it's that we're a changing congregation, not one to be too closely labeled. In the end, who we are *is what we do*. We can adopt all the goals and mission statements we want, but if it doesn't show in our actions, it isn't really what we're about.

We've recently celebrated a milestone in faithful giving, and this effort shows who we are. Our faithful, creative use of these gifts also identifies us: creating and maintaining inviting, safe, and functional spaces for use by us and our many guests; working toward more responsible management of rainwater on our property; and supporting our youth on a mission to celebrate life and learn real lessons about service. These are a few examples that point to who we are—because they are what we do. You may recall the words of a common song from the past, “...and they'll know we are Christians by our love.”

—Jack Dant, Congregation President

Vision and Governance Board Highlights

The Vision and Governance Board of University Lutheran Church of Hope held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on June 9, 2009.

- Fred Kreider and Kathy Knudson presented a status update on the Mississippi Watershed Management Project. The Board indicated its preference for pursuing an underground water storage option, rather than permeable pavement. The operations group was thanked for their fine work on this issue.
- Treasurer Mike Fingerson presented the May financial reports, noting that we are holding close to budget. Mike also pointed out the extraordinary repair bills from last November's vandalism, but this was largely compensated for by insurance.
- A housing allowance resolution was passed for Visitation Pastor Esther Dant.
- Sadly, Leslie Frost has submitted a letter of resignation from the Vision & Governance Board. Efforts will be initiated to find a replacement for her position as the Member-at-Large Liaison for Relational Ministries. In addition, Leslie served as the Vision & Governance Board Member-at-Large Representative to the Executive Committee. The board will discuss reassignment of this position at its next meeting. Leslie will be missed, and her service to the Board and congregation are very much appreciated.
- Past President Bob Moluf advocated for the development of an information kiosk and provided a handout showing samples of what such kiosks look like. The Board authorized a maximum of \$5,000 to be expended from the Capital Campaign Fund for this project, to be developed and built as soon as possible. The kiosk is intended to be a focal point for information for members and visitors on Sunday mornings.
- Efforts continue on all areas of this year's Mission Objectives. Meetings are planned to determine next steps for Outreach/Inreach and for Addressing Economic Impacts of the Recession. The hiring process for a half-time Youth Director continues; the Dream Team will take a lead on this process.

—Jack Dant, Congregation President

Treasurer's Report

Total income for May was \$46,169 compared with expenses of \$47,557 leaving net income for the month of -\$1,388. This result is close to budget, where the net income was projected to be -\$1,016. For the year, with a net income of -\$8,216, we are still well ahead of the projected loss of -\$16,808 for the end of May.

A significant item during the month was \$6,002 for repairs caused by some vandals. Fortunately, all but \$298 was covered by insurance. Another significant, unbudgeted operations expense was \$1,125 for repairs on our heating system. Administration expenses under budget by almost \$2,000, which certainly helped our numbers this month.

A summary of actual numbers for May and Year to Date are as follows:

	March		Year to Date		Over/(Under)
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
General Giving and Holiday	40,522	42,219	206,945	202,716	4,230
Rental and Extraordinary	5,647	4,873	25,852	24,947	904.75
Total Revenue	46,169	47,091	232,797	227,663	5,134
Total Expenses	47,557	48,107	241,013	244,471	-3,458
Net Income	-1,388	-1,016	-8,216	-16,808	8,593

—Mike Fingerson, Treasurer

Staff

Pastors:

Craig Shirley; Esther Dant

Cantor:

Timothy Strand

Director of Education and Adult Small-Group Ministries

Diane Shallue

Youth Director:

Young Adult Ministries Coordinator:

Administrator:

Craig Wiester

Weekend Custodian:

William Frank

Working in partnership with Lutheran Campus

Ministry Staff: Kate Reuer

Vision & Governance Board

Officers:

President: Jack Dant

Vice President: Gregg Landmark

Past President: Bob Moluf

Treasurer: Mike Fingerson

Ministry Areas:

Worship & Music: Uli Koester

Youth & Young Adults: Ann Beane

Education: Dan O'Loughlin

Hope in the World: JoAnn Bablitch

Relational Ministries:

Support Areas:

Operations:

Mike Fingerson;

Bob Moluf

Leadership Development

& Communications:

Jack Dant; Gregg Landmark

The Visitor

The Visitor is published monthly by University Lutheran Church of Hope, located at 601 13th Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414-1437.

Articles for *The Visitor* may be submitted via email or in the church office. They must be signed. Electronic submissions in either Microsoft® Word or plain text format are strongly preferred. Articles may be edited for length. Contributors are responsible for clearly identifying any material that is from published sources and for obtaining appropriate permissions. Send submissions and correspondence to visitor@ulch.org

The deadline for submitting articles is the 15th of every month (for the following month's issue).

Copies of the current issue of *The Visitor* as well as back issues are available at ulch.org/VisitorArchive or by contacting the church office.

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Book Club Summer Plans

July 12, 7:00 p.m. in the Lounge

Evil and the Justice of God, by N.T. Wright

“A rich, wonderfully thought-provoking survey of Biblical theology as it relates to evil.... Wright’s purpose is to discuss God’s solution to the ‘problem of evil,’ and by this latter phrase he does not mean the philosophical problem of how a good, all-powerful God could allow evil to exist, but rather God’s solution to the existence of evil now that it is here. It is our understanding of the Biblical narrative that shows us how God solves the problem of evil as it actually confronts us today.” —Academic Initiative Review



August 16: Waterville get-away to bike, swim, and discuss *The Namesake*, by Jhumpa Lahiri. The first novel from the Pulitzer-winning author of *Interpreter of Maladies*, about a second-generation Indian-American immigrant who begins to feel the strong pull of his heritage and destiny.

September 13: *Report to Greco*, by Nikos Kazantzakis. Author of *Zorba the Greek* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

—Sonja Peterson

From the Director of Adult Small Group Ministries

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as is the habit of some, but let us encourage one another... (Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV).

This month I will wear my “Small Group Ministries” hat. I wanted to find the above biblical passage about not neglecting to meet together, so I looked for the word “together” in my Bible Concordance and found 200 Bible verses that include it. Umm...that was surprising. Togetherness is a big deal! How do we as Christians get together? Let’s consider small group ministry.

First of all, Small Group Ministry brings people together—adults and youth of all ages. The group has to make some sort of a commitment to meet together for a period of time. Next there is an element of caring conversation that builds cohesion in the group and is a distinguishing element of many church-related small groups. Then there is grounding in the Word of God in some way and maybe a fun activity or a discussion time or a service time.

People here at University Lutheran Church of Hope are involved in many types of small groups organized in and through the congregation. Last year a task force created the Hope Connections small group experience, which involved 55 people in seven groups in the fall of 2008. A new Hope Connections Task Force consisting of Sarah Burson, Jen Dotson, Tom Frost, Jan Johnson, Nancy Miller, and Diane Shallue is in the process of creating another Hope Connections experience for the fall that will involve even more people. Look for more information coming in August. Currently there are other small groups that are organized through the congregation. For example, there is a quilting group, a crafting group, a Shoreview Bible study group, a Lauderdale discussion group, a Book Club, women’s circles for Bible study and service, and a foreign film group.

Yet many people neglect worship or gathering together with other Christians. They miss out on the encouragement that Christians can provide for one another to help us in our mission of showing the love of Christ to others. They miss out on laughter and the giving and receiving of the caring of others. None of us is an island or a rock. We were born into a community and need other people to help us become the people whom God created us to be. I ask you to pray about allowing time in your schedule to be involved in a small group this fall, and to open your heart to reap the benefits of that involvement.

Your partner in ministry,

—Diane E. Shallue