



# The Visitor



June 2018

Issue #14-6

Complex world. Thoughtful church.

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*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.*

## Happenings at Hope

### PEASE Graduation – You Are Invited!

PEASE Academy is the recovery high school that has graced our building for the last 29 years. PEASE stands for Peers Enjoying A Sober Education. You are invited to attend the graduation ceremony at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 6, to support the good work of PEASE and glimpse what happens around Hope daily. The ceremony is a powerful witness and always an inspiration.



### Building and Cooking Projects



Bread oven construction (above and right)  
Pasty making (far right and below right)  
Children's play area construction (below)



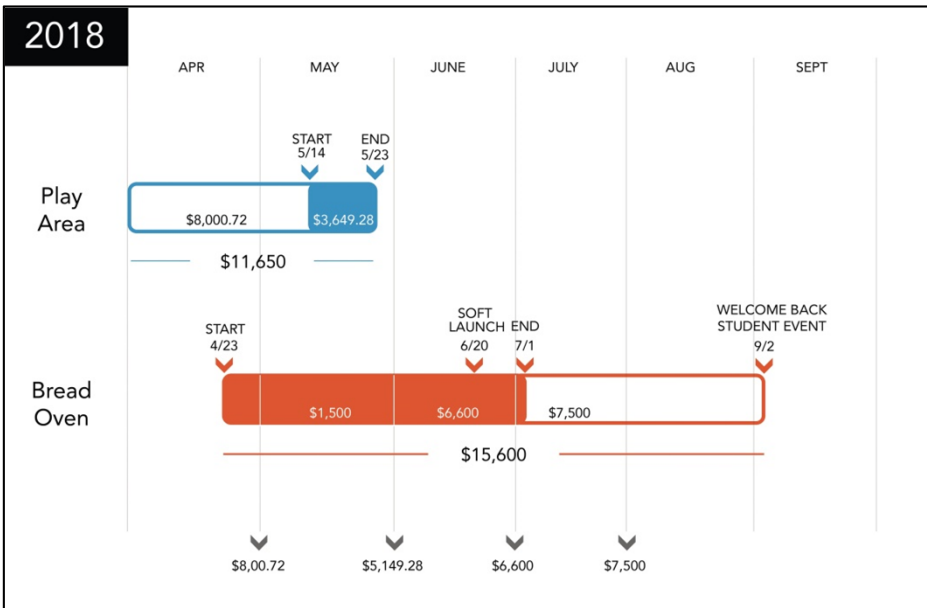


**Giving Update:** Thanks for your generous giving! Our totals have continued to rise and at the time of printing *The Visitor*, we celebrate commitments of \$413,682 from 101 households. Thank you!

If you haven't yet had a chance to make a pledge, please still do; it's not too late. Talk with Gayle in the church office for information or if you have questions. Again, thank you!

# JUNE

## Bread Oven



The Children's Play Area (part of the Revealing Hope appeal) will soon be completed. Stay tuned for the opening in the next two weeks.

Check the wall near the office area (by the north parking lot entrance) for additional information and details on both the Children's Play Area and the bread oven construction. Thanks to all the teams, volunteers, and staff for their hard work.

**COMING UP!** You may be wondering what is happening with the stained glass windows and the organ. We're highlighting the bread oven and play area in 2018, but 2019 and 2020 hold energy too. With a 36 month campaign (through January 2021), a monthly mortgage payment to consider, and great commitments to benevolence giving, we're watching our cashflow and our energy. Teams from the congregation are making arrangements for the stained glass and organ work that will be completed in the coming years. As contracts are signed, we'll be able to share more about the timeline.

## Only for Adults? Only for Kids? Breaking Down the Worship Leadership Walls

Back in April, I smiled as a 4<sup>th</sup> grader (very soon a 5<sup>th</sup> grader) carefully schooled his fellow acolyte, a 50-something, in the tasks of this special role that she doesn't get to do nearly as much as the young person. When do we do such and such? How does that work? Should I stand here? You'd have questions, too, if you hadn't acolyted but a time or two since you were in school! Thank goodness we've got almost-5<sup>th</sup> graders to guide us! And thank goodness for those who aren't quite as young who are willing to take a risk and learn a new role.



A few weeks ago we had, not one but, three assisting ministers in our Sunday worship. Truth is, any one of the three could have taken on this role solo, but teaming up seemed right for their first round in this leadership role. They carried the cross that fixed our gaze at the start and end of worship. They gathered our prayers. They placed in our hands the bread that is the body of Christ. Finally, they sent us out into the week with words of peace, Christ's peace.

This three-some offered great leadership that Sunday morning. Would they do it again? Even do it on their own? "Yes, definitely, I want to!" one declared. And with the smile and gleam in their eyes of folks who have entered a new stage of leadership and participation, the other two thought they could also. These worship leaders here at University Lutheran Church of Hope are part of our middle school Sunday School class. They are finishing 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades this month. Does that surprise you?

It is beautiful and holy to experience the absolute abundance of leadership present in our community here at Hope. At our very best, we are intergenerational: teaming up across generations, learning from one another, encouraging each other, and making a space for those of any age to get as involved as possible. Will it feel risky? Will we make some mistakes? Yes, and yes, in 5<sup>th</sup> grade or 8<sup>th</sup> grade or in our 20s or 50s or 70s whenever, we're still learning. That's good news, for that is what it means for us mortals to worship the creator of the universe, the lover of our souls, who doesn't expect perfection but welcomes our honest attempts and our growing confidence.

We're not trying to be inter-generational to "help out" the kids (even as we take seriously our work of faith formation for children and all ages). We're trying to be inter-generational to more fully and truly be the body of Christ. With our mix of ages and our variety of experiences, we learn a whole lot more about following Jesus and heeding the Spirit. Want to try your hand at acolyting or other worship leadership? Let me know and we'll get you trained and into the rotation. I give thanks for each of you.

Pastor Jen

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## Intern Coming!

University Lutheran Church of Hope will welcome Linqing Chu (pronounced Lin CHING Chu) in mid August. Linqing is in the ELCA candidacy process training to be an ELCA pastor and she is completing M.Div. coursework at Luther Seminary. Intern Pastor Linqing will be with us full time for 11 months. This is a chance for a student to experience and practice all areas of pastoral ministry (worship, preaching, pastoral care, education, outreach, administration). It is also a chance for us to understand more deeply our calling as a teaching congregation, walking with an intern as they discern their gifts for ministry, practicing these growing skills, and understanding their vocation. Over the coming weeks we will be forming an Internship Committee, an essential committee for Linqing's learning. More information to come! Please talk with Pastor Jen if you have questions or if you are curious about the Internship Committee.

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## The Next Edition of *The Visitor*

...will include July AND August. Items for inclusion are due on June 15 to [visitor@ulch.org](mailto:visitor@ulch.org). Combining two months offers a breather in the heart of the summer-enjoy!

## Sunday Forums

Thanks so much to all who, during the Sunday Forums, have shared your knowledge, skills, faith, time and wisdom over the past year as we learn and grow together in our faith. Thanks to all on the committee who have collaborated in considering and executing these topics and programs: Marilyn Asp, Diane Greve, Linda Herman, Karen Jorstad, Brian McCaffrey, John Setterlund, and Andrea Zibble along with our Vision and Governance liaisons Kirsten Mebust and Melissa Odenbach.

After taking the summer off, we will begin again on September 16 with a conversation with our seminary intern, Linqing Chu. September also will bring Spoken Word Artist Joe Davis, and author Maria Nhambu. If you have a topic or presentation of interest, please let us know. We have delighted in a strong attendance this past year and hope for the same in the fall. Watch for more details.

Diane Greve

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## Worship and Music Notes

As we journey into summer and the worship load lessens slightly, I wanted to take a moment and express gratitude: Thank you to all our volunteers who help make worship happen each week. Assisting ministers, acolytes, lectors, greeters, ushers, communion servers, communion clean-up folks, altar guild folks, bulletin collators, offering counters – there are over 100 of you who volunteer and give generously of your time and energy. Thank you for helping keep worship a thriving centerpiece of our church life.



Thanks also to our volunteer musicians – Hope Choir and the ULCHers – who rehearse diligently and offer all of us moments of sublime spiritual elevation in our weekly worship. A special shout-out to those who have taken part in our Drop-In Choir opportunities. It has been a joy to sing with you! To all: we are very grateful for your talents and art.

We will add outdoor worship back into our monthly schedule this summer. On June 10, worship will take place outside on the east side of the building along 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. Seating is provided on the patio, but you are strongly encouraged to bring your own seating – picnic blankets, camping chairs, etc. – to make the outdoor layout truly successful. Watch for other Sundays in July and August TBA.

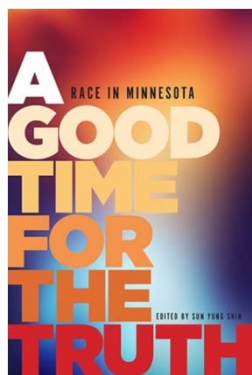
Prayer Around the Cross, our monthly service of quiet, singing, and candle lighting, will continue through the summer. Services will be once a month on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. in the chapel. Dates TBA.

If you would like to offer special music for worship over the summer, please sign up on my office door! I am looking to fill slots for each summer service that takes place in the sanctuary. Any and all are welcome to offer music. It can be a solo, a small group piece, or anything! I am available and willing to help pick out music, arrange music, provide accompaniment, or whatever you need. Be in touch!

Zach Busch, Minister of Worship and Music

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## Hope Reads: *A Good Time for the Truth*



The Racial Justice Team invites Hope members to join in a congregational book reading of *A Good Time for the Truth*, published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. It is a collection of sixteen essays by Minnesotans of color about their experiences growing up and living as non-white in our then-as-now supermajority white state. Since its publication in 2016, the book has generated much conversation among church and civic groups around the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota about what, more often than not, it has felt like to live here as a person of color.

Current plans are to make copies available over the summer and to kick off a series of discussions around the book with an event featuring one of its authors in the early fall. Watch for a June announcement, that copies have arrived. We hope you will consider picking one up and joining in “Hope Reads: *A Good Time for the Truth*”.

The Racial Justice Team, Hope in the World

# Summer Gardening

Here is the gardening schedule for June and July:

- Saturday, June 2, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Wednesday evenings, June 6, June 20, July 4 (Holiday), and July 18 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- Wednesday mornings, June 13, June 27, July 11, and July 25 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon

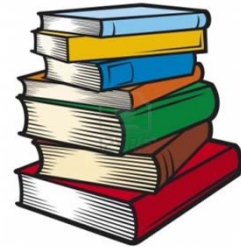
There could possibly be more Saturdays scheduled. Watch the Thursday Epistle and bulletin for future announcements. Maybe if we get everything looking beautiful, we could consider a Garden Party. Stay tuned. We need ideas for garden signs too. And lots of gardeners!

Kathy Knudson for Gardens of Hope

## Book Sale!

Yes, the much-loved Hope book sale will be back September 2<sup>nd</sup> during the Welcome Students event. Please save those good titles to share at the sale, and plan on working to set up, sell or take down. After take-down, we will need drivers to take unsold books to Half Price Books.

Questions? Comments? Call Ruth Fingerson at 952-995-1141 or write to [ruth.fingerson@yahoo.com](mailto:ruth.fingerson@yahoo.com). Thank you!



## Treasurer's Report

	Actuals Apr. 2018	Budget Apr. 2018	Apr. 2018 Variance	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Variance
<b>General Giving</b>	\$44,222	\$41,976	\$2,246	\$150,071	\$167,902	(\$17,832)
<b>Rental Income</b>	\$4,828	\$11,723	(\$6,895)	\$40,039	\$46,892	(\$6,852)
<b>Total income</b>	\$49,050	\$53,699	(\$4,648)	\$190,110	\$214,794	(\$24,684)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$49,503	\$53,698	(\$4,195)	\$208,223	\$214,794	(\$6,571)
<b>Net Income</b>	(\$453)	\$0	(\$453)	(\$18,113)	\$0	(\$18,113)



April giving was \$44,222 and our rental income was \$4,828 for a total income of \$49,050. Expenses for April were \$49,503 which was \$4,195 under the budgeted amount of \$53,698. Total income was \$4,648 under budget, but lower expenses than budgeted contributed to a minimal net loss of \$453 for the month. Rental income was below budget by \$7K as PEASE Academy's April rent was recorded in March. Additionally, holiday giving contributed positively to the general giving amount, making up for a low electronic giving month. Finally,

administration expenses were higher due to the implementation of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to allow employees to access the University Lutheran Church of Hope network remotely.

Contributions for our current capital campaign, Revealing Hope, totaled \$25,688 during the month of April. Pledges for the capital campaign continued to increase and the fund had positive net activity of \$15,011. Additionally, \$4,620 was paid out in benevolences to organizations voted on by the congregation. The net cash balance in the Building Fund is \$94,147.

Thank you again for all the ways you contribute to this congregation! We are excited to use these funds to improve our community through the construction of a bread oven in the parking lot, children's play area in the courtyard, and improving the stained-glass windows in the sanctuary. As we look forward to the summer months, please remember to consider taking advantage of online giving! Please visit [ulch.org](http://ulch.org) and click *Give*.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at [treasurer@ulch.org](mailto:treasurer@ulch.org).

Emma Carpenter, Treasurer

## Hope Church Trust

The Hope Church Trust Board is happy to report the approval of the following grants:

- \$1000 to Orphan Sponsorship India, a program that helps girls in Pune, India finish high school and go on to higher education, giving them options beyond early marriage or factory or cleaning work, helping them to support their families. University Lutheran Church of Hope member Lynette Lamb has been involved with this very successful program for nearly ten years and has visited the site three times as a site sponsor. <http://orphansponsorship.org/india/index.html>
- \$300 to Mabel's Free Clinic, which offers dental, medical, optometric care and eye surgery to indigent patients in Nuevo Progreso, Mexico. University Lutheran Church of Hope members Sandy and CJ Robinson have been involved in this program for 13 years, Sandy as a dental hygienist. <http://www.shop-progreso.com/miscellaneous/Mabels.html>
- \$2,000 to support University Lutheran Church of Hope youth attending the ELCA national gathering in Houston.
- \$2,000 to support a mini farmer's market at University Lutheran Church of Hope this coming summer.
- \$5,000 toward the purchase of equipment for Hope's Community Bread Oven project.
- \$4,000 to continue support for Hope's "Visual Revitalization Project" via the Arts and Environment Task Force. This project includes everything from new/revitalized art work around the church to a chapel communion table and a refurbished chapel baptismal font.
- \$1,200 to Hope's Racial Justice Task Force to support an awareness event which will include a shared book reading, panel discussion, and community speakers.

Once again, the generous support of Hope members for the Hope Church Trust has made grants such as these possible for enhancing and extending the life and mission of our congregation. Through donations, memorials, bequests, and other such support, the trust will continue to be a blessing that keeps on giving, both within Hope's walls and beyond.

Hope Church Trust Board: Joan Campbell, Kathryn Carpenter,  
Jack Dant, Greg Davenport, Carol Flaten, Meri Hauge, Merrill Morse

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## Focus on the Holy Land

Many thanks to the members and friends of Hope, who reported some highlights of their March trip to Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. The capacity crowd at the Sunday Forum on April 22 seemed thoroughly engaged and appreciative.

A 6-DVD set has been donated to the church library, titled *The Holy Land Revealed*. One of the renowned, "Great Courses," this is a series of 36 half-hour lectures by Dr. Jodi Magness of UNC – Chapel Hill. She discusses the history of the Holy Land from the earliest eras to the 7th century AD, which includes the entire sweep of biblical writings. Special attention is given to the records of archaeology and of non-biblical accounts. Hope members are encouraged to look into some or all of the subjects contained in this series.

Middle East Peace Now (MEPN), a group of pro-Palestine activists, meets monthly on Saturday mornings, sharing talks and discussions on current issues related to the Middle East. The next meeting scheduled will be at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, at 10:00 a.m. on June 9. Bryce Lockwood, survivor of Israel's 1967 attack on USS Liberty during the six-day war, will speak.

A "Pilgrimage to the Land of Jesus" is scheduled for this fall (Oct.22 – Nov. 2, 2018), hosted by Pr. John Setterlund. Our local agent is Janet Tollund at Group Travel Directors (952-885-2133 or [jtollund@gtd.org](mailto:jtollund@gtd.org)). This can be a life-changing experience and Hope members are cordially invited to inquire; there are a few openings for additional travelers. Contact Janet or John if you have questions.

John Setterlund

# Congregational Life

## Coming Up

- **June 10**—Summer Outdoor Worship
- **June 17**—Graduation Sunday (details below)
- **June 17-22**—Apostle Islands Trip through Amnicon (youth and adults)
- **June 18-22**—Summer Shared Ecumenical Day Camp (details below)
- **June 22-24**—Paddling on the St. Croix River and/or Camping at St. Croix State Park (details below)
- **June 26-July 1**—ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston
- **July 14**—Paddling on White Bear Lake
- **July 15**—Bread for the World Offering of Letters
- **August 12-16**—Camp Amnicon for kids entering 4th-6th grade
- **August 13-17**—Community Organizing Vacation Bible School (VBS) (evenings)
- **September 2**—Welcome Back Students event and Book Sale
- **September 15**—Paddling on Bde maka ska

## St. Croix Paddling and Camping

Want to join a group of Hope folks and friends for a night or two of camping and some paddling (canoe, kayak)? On Saturday, June 23, we'll paddle a stretch of the St. Croix River. Many will gather to camp at St. Croix State Park on Friday night, June 22. Some may also consider camping on Saturday night, June 23. Bryan Kufus has reserved group camp space at the state park. Bring your own equipment and food, and enjoy this chance to get to know one another casually. Canoe and kayak rentals are available. Please contact Bryan Kufus (cell/text: 612-685-0402 or email: bkufus462@icloud.com) if you want to join or if you have questions. Also, talk with Bryan if you will need to rent a kayak or canoe. All ages and abilities expected!

## Love Your Neighbor: Summer Ecumenical Shared Day Camp for Kids

### WANTED: Kids and Volunteers!

**What?** An ecumenical summer day camp shared by congregations in south and south east Minneapolis. This year's theme is *Love Your Neighbor*. Mornings include bible stories, music, art/mosaics, games, puppets, and more. Afternoons are larger activities and experiences.

**When?** June 18-22, 2018, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Where?** Hosted this year at Bethel Lutheran Church (4120 S. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave., Minneapolis)

**Who?** Children entering K to 8th grade for camp (the older kids will have a special middle school track)

**Registration?** Registration forms are available at the welcome center and on our website.

**Helpers and Volunteers Needed?** Youth helpers entering 9th thru high school and adult volunteers needed throughout the week. Youth help the whole week and receive a stipend. Adults can tailor a schedule that fits interest and time. Please consider this option!

**Questions?** Talk with Pastor Jen or Nick

## Graduation. Grad Sunday. Godspeed.

On Sunday, June 17, during the single 10 a.m. service we will honor this season's graduates – high school, undergraduate, certificate, graduate programs. Graduates: whether you can join us on the 17<sup>th</sup> or not, please send to [jenn@ulch.org](mailto:jenn@ulch.org) a picture and a little about your hopes and plans for what comes next and we will include you. Parents: since this is a busy time, we appreciate your help in gathering this information. Also, if you are heading out for new adventures, let us know and we will pray Godspeed for you. Talk with Pastor Jen or Pastor Barbara if you would like prayers of Godspeed.

# Congregational Life (continued)

## Life Events at Hope

We are a community of hope, called to hold one another in prayer in our times of deepest need and grief, and in our experiences of new life. In these summer months, here are a few of the life events affecting our community. We need your help to know for what we can pray. Please alert a pastor or contact the church office. We include in prayer...

- **Welcoming children and baptism** – On May 6 we welcomed in baptism Constance Skoy (child of Regina Skoy). On May 13 we welcomed in baptism Theodore Semanko (child of Lachelle and Jesse Semanko, great grandchild of long-time Hope member Margaret Vainovskis). We hold in our prayers Lance and Megan Radziej and big brother Reid as they await a baby in June. We pray for those in our congregation who are awaiting children and holding hope in joyful and painful times.
- **Marriages** – We pray for all those preparing for marriage, and for all relationships of commitment, including Kaiya Hoyer-Leitzel and Josh Borglum who celebrated their marriage on May 26.
- **Deaths** – We pray for all who grieve the loss of loved ones, including Jan and Bill Sanden at the death of sister in law Pollie; Val, Eric and Andy Sayre at the death of Val's father and Eric and Andy's grandfather Harry R. Nelson; Marty Lewis-Hunstiger and Gretta Hunstiger and Matt McDonough at the death on May 9 of Marty's husband and Gretta's dad Tim Hunstiger. A celebration of life is planned for Tim at church at 11 a.m. on Saturday, June 9, with lunch to follow.
- **Significant Illness** – Those living with illness, cancer, recovery, uncertain diagnosis, chemical dependency and other addictions, and mental health struggles, including Micah Anderson, Janet Carpenter, Hannah Kiresuk, Trish Gorbunow, Madeline Teske, Alexander Otey-Wold, Cyndi Ganzkow-Wold, and Chuck Lewis.
- **Separation, Divorce, Retirement, Moves, Graduations, and New Beginnings** – We hold one another in prayer. God is with us through it all.

**Fellowship Time in the Summer** – In this season, our pace around Hope slows and it's a great time to linger over snacks and enjoy a summer Sunday in the courtyard or on the patio after worship. Please consider this your invitation to sign up to host a fellowship time following the single 10 a.m. service. Better yet, sign up with a friend. This can be as easy (including simply serving cookies available in our freezer at church) or as elaborate as you like. Directions for making the coffee are available. Thanks in advance! Sign up in the lounge.

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## Facilities

There are many changes coming to our building and grounds this summer so here's a brief update. The bread oven project is well underway and should be finished in mid-June. There will be some small-scale baking events later in the summer, which the bread oven team will publicize. Please be patient with the parking lot situation since it will improve in the next 4-6 weeks.

The children's play area project, located in the SE corner of the courtyard, started in mid-May and is nearly finished! A new water fountain with a bottle-filling feature will be installed in the upper education wing. A new gas fireplace insert for the lounge will be installed this summer for use this coming fall. And the bike rack was re-installed near the north entrance. We are considering adding a second one if there is enough demand.

Our monthly meetings are open to all and we welcome new members. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

John Pignatello, Co-chair Facilities Committee



## Faith in Community

### Camp Amnicon – Apostle Islands June 17-22

A group of mostly high school students from University Lutheran Church of Hope is heading north for a week of paddling around the Apostle Islands in a Voyageur Canoe. This trip has a couple of open spots, and anyone over the age of 14 is invited to join us, youth and adults alike! If you are interested in joining this incredible trip, please contact Nick Tangen at [nickt@ulch.org](mailto:nickt@ulch.org).

### Dinkytown Farmers Market – Summer Launch

The Neighborhood and Campus team is still hard at work preparing to launch the Dinkytown Farmers Market this summer. Mini-markets are great tools for combatting food insecurity in neighborhoods without access to fresh, affordable, and local produce. You are invited to help make this ministry happen! If you would like to be a part of the Market team, please contact Nick Tangen at [nickt@ulch.org](mailto:nickt@ulch.org).

### Children’s Ministry

A big thank you to all of our teachers, assistants, volunteers, parents, and children who make Children’s Ministry happen at University Lutheran Church of Hope! This was a fun and educational year. We packed school kits on *God’s Work, Our Hands* Sunday, led worship during Advent, organized a Service Sunday focused on “Home,” and most importantly learned together about the love of God in Jesus.

A special thank you to Madhu Bhat who will retire from teaching Godly Play after 16 years! Wow! Thank you, Madhu, for your dedication and care, and for your meaningful connection with the kids of our community.

Over the summer the Children’s Ministry Team will be imagining and planning for the next year, and we would love to hear from you! If you have any feedback, suggestions, wonders, or questions, please contact Nick Tangen at [nickt@ulch.org](mailto:nickt@ulch.org).

### 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering

On June 26<sup>th</sup> a group of a dozen youth and adults from University Lutheran Church of Hope hop a bus headed for Houston to enjoy a week of worship and service with 33,000 other ELCA Youth from around the country. Your generosity made this trip possible, and we cannot say thank you enough! Keep an eye on Facebook and Instagram for updates from the Youth Gathering.

### Holy Ground: Building a Just and Healthy Neighborhood (for Grades K – 5)

**5:30 – 7:30 p.m., Monday – Friday, August 13 – 17, 2018**

Come build an entire city in the basement of Holy Trinity, and then work together to make wise and faithful decisions to help your city thrive! We will have visits from local experts and community leaders, and residents of the city will need to band together and work with a community organizer to keep outside interests from making life in their city less equitable. We will learn strategy, negotiation, power analysis, and, of course, protest songs! An evening meal will be provided each night and parents are welcome to visit the “city” and learn its story on the final day.

### Save the Date: Welcome Back Students

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Welcome Back Students event will take place on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mark your calendars! If you would like to help with planning and set-up, contact Nick Tangen at [nickt@ulch.org](mailto:nickt@ulch.org).

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## Centering Prayer Fridays 1:00 p.m.

“Slowly, steadily, Centering Prayer patterns into its practitioners what I would call the quintessential Jesus response: the meeting of any and all life situations by the complete, free giving of oneself.” – C. Bourgeault

It is this free giving of ourselves that makes real solidarity possible and creates lasting movements for justice and reconciliation. Our spiritual practices reveal our fundamental interconnectedness and our dependence on one another. Centering Prayer is a silent method of prayer that exercises this giving motion, and trains us to dwell deeply in God’s presence. From this trusting position we enter the world as bearers of God’s justice-making love. Join us on Fridays at 1 p.m. for a time of holy rest and meditation. Peace be with you.

Nicholas Tangen, OblSB, Minister of Faith in Community

# Care and Nurture Ministry

## Hope Diamonds Picnic June 20



All are welcome to gather on Wednesday June 20 at noon in the courtyard for a potluck picnic with the Senior Group. Invite a friend! Bring a salad or dessert to share if you'd like. Sloppy Joes on a bun and beverages will be provided.

Congregational president John Lauber will be with us to talk about all the interesting things that Hope leaders are working on. Sign up at the Welcome Desk or call in your RSVP.

Rev. Barbara Johnson, Care and Nurture

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## Let's Get Acquainted with Marge Perko

Marge (Hansen) Perko grew up on the Hansen family farm outside of the town of Donnelly, MN, near Morris. Her paternal grandfather, Hans Christian Hansen, settled on that farm when he emigrated from Norway (ca. 1850's). There were no churches in the area, and he felt strongly about raising their children in the faith, so he and his wife hosted weekly worship services in their home with neighbors. Hans would conduct the service himself when there wasn't a circuit-rider pastor available. Eventually, the Kongsvinger Lutheran Free church was built in Donnelly, where it continues to serve that western MN community. She recalls Pastor Sevier Torgerson's requirement for her Confirmation (ca. 1940's) was to memorize the entire small catechism.



Marge was the third of nine children. Marge's memory of the whole family living and working together on the farm, without electricity or running water in the house meant they all had jobs to do. They were "rough and tough farm kids" who worked hard – herding and hand milking the cows, setting up the grain bundles at threshing time and daily tending to the wide assortment of animals and poultry. When the chores were done, she said they were "free-range kids" who made up their own games. Considering how often one or more of them was airborne, it was a miracle there were no broken bones. Education was a core value in her family. A voracious reader all her life, she recalls bringing home boxes of books from the Salvation Army for 5 cents a book, and reading several each week. Reading books of almost every genre continues to be her favorite activity.

She moved to the Twin Cities as a young adult with an uncle & aunt when her cousin was being treated for polio at University hospital. They stayed at a boarding house on Oak and Delaware owned and operated by Eero Perko, while he took classes at the U of M. Within several months Marge and Eero were married, and she joined him in caring for the patients and their families who stayed at the boarding house. Later they moved to the house on 8<sup>th</sup> Street S.E. where they raised their seven children. Sixty years later, Marge still lives just one block from her church, sharing the residence with one of her sons.

She first became interested in University Lutheran Church of Hope when she saw signs advertising a rummage sale at Hope, and she donated several hand-knitted items to be sold. The women invited her to join a bible study and the quilting group. She was active many years in helping provide quilts for Lutheran World Relief and local Sharing and Caring Hands. She started making activity bags for children when she noticed they needed something to write on during worship. She also joined others in making seat cushions for hard pews.

After Eero had a stroke in 1983 and was bedridden, Marge cared for him at home for nine years with help from her children. She has 4 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren whom she proudly describes as representing the "United Nations," citing her own great grandparents who came from Norway, Germany and the Netherlands, and her great-grandchildren whose heritages represent at least 5 additional nationalities.

Marge recently celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with the quilting group. Most days, she sits in her favorite chair and keeps an eye on the bird's nest just outside the window. She enjoys talking about the latest books she's reading and whatever remarkable events are in the latest news. She takes life each day as it comes, with an easy smile and sense of humor.

## President's Report

On a gray Saturday morning in April, on the last snowy weekend of this long, long winter, nearly twenty intrepid souls from University Lutheran Church of Hope gathered at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church in St. Paul for a half-day planning retreat. Participants included the entire Hope staff, Vision and Governance Board officers, ministry liaisons, and members of the recent "Revealing Hope" capital campaign committee. The gathering was an opportunity for the group to review the evolution of Hope's ministries over the past few years, and to begin charting a course for the future. The retreat provided participants with a rare and wonderful opportunity to talk about some of the inspirations, aspirations, expectations, and occasional frustrations that have been part of their experience as members of our community.

The starting point for the conversation was a concise statement of goals entitled "Igniting Our Life Together" that grew out of a V&G retreat held in the fall of 2015. As many of you will recall, this was a time of significant transition for University Lutheran Church of Hope as several senior staff members retired, and our new leaders sought to understand Hope's strengths and weaknesses and discern opportunities for growth. The participants in that retreat identified three goals for the congregation:

- Connecting with the University and the community.
- Igniting worship and deepening spirituality.
- Revitalizing our ministry with youth and children.

As the group looked back over the past few years, it became evident that Hope has made significant progress in all three areas. We have a stable and remarkably gifted staff. The parking lot is full to overflowing on Sunday mornings. Opportunities for worship and music have been expanded and enriched. We see many new faces in our pews and hallways, including people from all generations as well as students from the University. We have maintained and expanded our connections to the neighborhood, and have more initiatives in the works. We are actively evaluating our ministries to children, youth, and young adults, and have begun to act upon the premise that "faith formation" is not just Sunday School, but a process of lifelong learning.

In addition to the "Igniting Our Life Together" document, the group at this year's retreat also had an opportunity to review, consider, and comment on the results of a more recent survey and congregational assessment completed in the lead-up to the current "Revealing Hope" capital campaign. That conversation generated copious amounts of raw information, but a couple of things became immediately clear: We have accomplished a great deal since 2015. And there are still many opportunities for growth. Over the next several weeks, retreat participants will be sifting and sorting this raw material, in an effort to develop an updated vision statement that will guide our ministries moving forward.

From my vantage point, it seems fair to say that our life together has indeed been ignited over the past several years. Now it's time to fan the flames. Stay tuned. Blessings!

John Lauber, Congregational President

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## Hope Book Club

On Sunday, June 10th at 7 p.m. in the Hope Library, the Hope Book Club will discuss *LaRose*, by Louis Erdrich. *LaRose* begins with Landreaux Iron accidentally shooting a close friend's 5-year-old son, Dusty, and then giving his own 5-year-old boy, LaRose, to the bereaved parents. In this literary masterwork, Erdrich ... "wields her breathtaking narrative magic in an emotionally haunting contemporary tale of a tragic accident, a demand for justice, and a profound act of atonement with ancient roots in Native American culture." [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

July 8: *We Crossed the Bridge and it Trembled*, by Wendy Pearlman. "A stunning mosaic of narratives told in vignettes of varying lengths. It's hard to fathom the humanitarian disaster of the Syrian war. These testimonies – wrenching but also deeply hopeful – help us wrap our minds around it." Fusion

Please contact Sonja Peterson with suggestions or questions at 612-789-0397 or [speterson@dunnwald.com](mailto:speterson@dunnwald.com).



## **Ann Wagner's Gratitude and Generosity Moment** **(delivered during worship on May 13, 2018; slightly edited for length)**

When I was a little girl, I used to dream about growing up, getting married, and having children. My mom was blind and I knew early on I would eventually become blind as well. My mom was wonderful – she never let blindness slow her down. I wanted to be just like her – mostly. I'm not sure I wanted to have five children, and I really hoped that, when I stubbed my toes, I wouldn't cuss like a sailor. That part isn't going so well.

Despite the occasional cussing, my mom was loving and devoted. She knew I had a strong maternal instinct. She was thrilled when I became pregnant in my first marriage. We both sighed with relief when I made it through the first trimester, supposedly a higher risk period in a pregnancy. Two weeks later, my mom and dad dropped everything to come be by my side when I had a miscarriage that required a complicated surgery. My mom's face was the first thing I saw when I came out of anesthesia. She held me as we cried together.

We cried together again later when I learned that those complications meant I would never be able to have children of my own. I thought about adopting; my husband refused. That was a sad and challenging time, but my mom taught me resiliency and faith in God -- that God's love was with me. She taught me to grieve what needs to be grieved and to accept what cannot be changed. She taught me that each day really is a blessing, with life to be lived. So I grieved and I lived.

A few years later, I got divorced. My parents were very supportive. They knew it was a good decision. One year later, my mom delighted in hearing the stories of when Eric first asked me out, how we began dating and how we began falling in love. She especially loved the story of when Eric proposed. And my mom heard my stories of meeting Eric's children, Madeleine and Peter. They were in their early 20s at the time. Mom heard how I got to know them, how I came to care for them and how I grew to love them. Mom kept asking, "Ann, when will I get to meet Madeleine and Peter?" We tried, but our schedules just weren't cooperating.

A few months before Eric and I were to be married, my parents celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Eric's son Peter was able to arrange his schedule to join us for the celebration. We decided to keep it a secret; I wanted to surprise my brothers and sisters and my parents, but I especially wanted to surprise my mom. We arrived at the reception hall early and watched my parents arrive. My mom was beautiful in a new dress, and she was beaming just like a bride holding the arm of her beloved, my dad. Eric and I greeted them and I said, "Mom – we have a surprise for you." Her eyes lit up as she said, "Oh? What?" I said, "Mom, Eric's son Peter is standing in front of you."

This is the part I most want to share with all of you here today, for what it means about my mom and what it means to me. I said, "Mom, Eric's son Peter is standing in front of you." My mom let out a squeal of delight and wiggled in excitement, just like a little girl opening up the best Christmas present ever. Her hands flew up in front of her and she asked Peter if she could Braille his face. That was the word mom used to mean she wanted to feel his face. My mom experienced her world through her ears with hearing, and through touch with her hands. She wanted to touch Peter's face. Peter was such a good sport as he said "Yes, of course," and Madeleine was an equally good sport when she met my mom.

So I'm watching my mom exploring Peter's face, knowing that to her, it means "I am not just going to know you, I am going to love you." What it meant to me is this: I knew that my mom only Brailled the faces of people she loved. Peter was a stranger to my mom. So her squeal of delight, her wriggle of excitement and her hands flying up to Braille his face – all of that was because of how much she loved me, because she knew what they meant to me. She knew I loved them, so she was going to love them. And she knew that when Eric and I were married, Madeleine and Peter would become my children. I was going to be a mom.

My mom died 10 months ago. This is my first Mother's Day without her. I am so grateful that she lived her life with dignity and grace. I think of the meaning of that word, "grace," God's enduring love for us no matter what. That's the way my mom loved. It just so happens that her name is Grace – Grace Louise Wagner.

I am grateful for my mom. I am grateful for everything she taught me and for every single memory I have of her. I am grateful for her faith in God and for her faith in me. And I am grateful for this opportunity today, on Mother's Day, to share my mom with all of you. Thank you.

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