

The Visitor

November 2025 No. 21-11

Complex world. Thoughtful church.



From top left: Pastor Amanda's Installation, Hope Pastors Maria and Amanda speaking on the capital steps, Hope delegation at the capital on gun violence, Confirmation graduates, Confirmands waiting patiently, more of Pastor Amanda's Installation, Confirmation group

Thoughts From Pastor Amanda Simons

"Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good."

~ Maya Angelou, Celebrations: Rituals of Peace and Prayer

This quote by author Maya Angelou has been reverberating in my thoughts these past couple of weeks as I've been preparing for our worship life together in the month of November. Amid reflection upon our 2026 general fund appeal "Lead with Love", the gratitude and generosity of the Thanksgiving season, and our partnership with All Nations Church, I have wondered how to bring all these themes together into our worship life as a congregation – and I keep coming back to this quote.

How do I rest into a pillow of gratitude at night? Rather than carry forward my worries into the night? Can I let go and trust God? Can I truly abide in the Psalmists words: *Be still and know that I am God (46)*. How does gratitude flow into faith?

For us as a community, what are the bridges that we have built that allow space for gratitude to flow into faith and welcome good? What are the bridges that need repair or no longer need to be? Where and how do we need to build new bridges to overcome evil and build good? How do we sustain one another in gratitude and faith?

I have so many questions. Which questions do you bring forward to God? What words are reverberating in your mind and heart this day? What is the Holy Spirit transforming within you? Within our community?

For this season of Thanksgiving, I recommit to the daily practice I began years ago upon reading Diana Butler Bass' book "Grateful." I greet the sun, say "Thank you, Lord, for this day" and then I name 3 people or things that I am grateful for. Perhaps it is time for me to let gratitude be the pillow upon which I kneel to say my nightly prayer too.

I encourage you to commit to a practice of gratitude in your own life. And ponder anew: How is the Spirit transforming me so that all may be well in my soul for my relationship with self, neighbor, and the Divine?

Lastly, I invite you to worship this November, online and in person, and to rest into gratitude (however, you define it or feel it). As the body of Christ of together, we are fed and renewed, sent forth into our daily living to lead with love.

Pastor Amanda Simons

Worship & Music

Music for Worship (10:30 a.m.)

November 2 Hope Choir November 9 Hope Handbells November 16 Hope Choir November 23 Hope Choir November 30 TBD



Choir and Bell rehearsals - All are welcome to join the Hope Choir or Hope Handbells at any time! Please reach out to Paul at pauls@ulch.org with questions. Hope Choir rehearses most Wednesdays 7-8:30 p.m. Hope Handbells meets about once a month, currently on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. There will be learning opportunities for beginners (October 29, at 6 p.m.) as well as a group that is planning to ring next on November 9 (rehearsal November 5, at 6 p.m.).

Paul Stever, Minister of Worship and Music

Upcoming Concerts - Sat, Nov 15, 4 p.m.-- 10th Wave concert



Children's Ministry Dates - Mark your calendars!

- November 2nd Sunday School with Madeline
- November 9th Sunday School with Madeline
- November 16th Sunday School with Madeline
- November 23rd Sunday School with Madeline
- November 30th No Sunday School Thanksgiving Weekend

All Nations Wopila Gathering

Dinner Church and Fundraiser on November 25, 6-8pm

On Tuesday, November 25, ecumenical partners will come together with All Nations Indian Church for a Wopila gathering. We will share a meal, hear stories from All Nations members, tour the building, sing and pray together. We will also raise money to support All Nations and lift up ways to continue to journey in relationship together. Prepare for this event with the Serviceberry study!

Because this event will be seated at tables, there will be a registration process. Please stay tuned for more information.

The Serviceberry" Study

Join members of our congregation us for a three-week journey through Robin Wall Kimmerer's "The Serviceberry," with reflections written by Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy on gratitude, reciprocity, and the gifts of creation. This study blends Indigenous and Christian teachings, exploring what it means to live in right relationship with the land and with one another. It was written with the hopes of strengthening relationships between All Nations Indian Church and their supportive partner congregations. We will gather after worship on November 9th, 16th and 23rd in the library with a light lunch provided. All Are Welcome.

Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert

Care and Nurture Ministries

We are living through challenging days as a nation. As a faith community, we have some ministries that can support you during these times in addition to the support of a pastor. Trained lay leaders on the **Compassion Care Team** can support through listening, prayer and accompaniment. **Friendly Visitors** can help support families caring for a loved one who doesn't leave home very often or is experiencing loneliness. If you or a loved one are in need of additional spiritual care support, contact Pastor Maria (mariaa@ulch.org) to learn more about these options. You do not have to endure suffering or challenges alone.

Wild Church Gathering

November 8th, 2-3:30pm, Nicollet Island.

Join with your human and creation community to remember our relationship and connection with one another. This month we are partnering with First Congregation and University Baptist for a time of listening and connection. Contact Pr. Maria (mariaa@ulch.org) with any questions. And check out our new Wild Church Twin Cities website: www.wildchurchtc.org.







Hope Birthdays

Let's celebrate! The birthday list below is of Hope's members who are 80 years and older, in addition to some who may be homebound, living in assisted living or a care center. Their contact information is in the ULCH directory. A phone call, card, or note from folks in our community is always appreciated!

November Birthdays

November 16th – Ron Sorenson November 27th – Jan Hrncir November 28th – Granger Whitney



December 1st – Shuzo Murakami December 16th – Judy Ranheim December 31st – Douglas Solseth



Hope Diamonds - Time with Pastor Amanda!

On Wednesday Nov 19th from 12:30-2pm, we will gather for a simple soup lunch and fellowship time. Pastor Amanda will join us for a time to get to know her better and for her to get to know you! As this ministry continues to shift and change, we would like to invite anyone from the Hope

community, of any age, who is able to come to a gathering in the middle of the afternoon. You are welcome whether you've come to Hope Diamonds before or not! Contact Pastor Maria with questions or to RSVP (mariaa@ulch.org.)

Plymouth Christian Youth Center Gift Bazarre

The PCYC's (Plymouth Christian Youth Center) children's gift bizarre is 12/13/2025. New items for all ages and genders will be collected at Hope 11/23,30,&12/7/25. More information coming soon.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Peace, Gretchen Peik

Welcome Catherine Menick to Our ULCH Staff!



Catherine is excited to join University Lutheran Church of Hope as the Financial Administrator. Her background is in nonprofit finance and lending, most recently at Propel Nonprofits based in Minneapolis. She has a Master of Public Policy degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs with a concentration in Public and Nonprofit Financial Budgeting and Management. She believes deeply in the values of ULCH and is looking forward to being a good steward of its resources.

Catherine lives in St. Paul with her partner and their perfect cat. In her free time she serves as Vice-Chair of local nonprofit Metro Blooms, writes poetry, enjoys the role of Head Election Judge in Minneapolis, hikes/camps with friends, and visits her family in Illinois as much as possible. Coming from a family of fiber crafters, she dabbles in machine and hand sewing, as well embroidery.

As Catherine onboards for the next couple of weeks, we ask that you welcome her and give her time and space to learn from Emma Carpenter, who has served as our interim financial administrator. Catherine's regular business hours for Hope will be Monday through Friday, 2:00 to 5:00 pm. Please contact her via finadmin@ulch.org to welcome her or drop by to say hello during her working hours.

Volunteer to Join the Welcoming Team

Have you been longing to:

- Show love to others
- Be a warm smile that welcomes others
- Assist others who have special needs
- Guide others to the places they wish to be

Then you are very welcome to join the Ushering Team (Welcoming Team). You can do that by going to https://secure.rotundasoftware.com/30/web-

<u>terminal/home?clientWebIdentifier=ULCH&use username=jhensrud</u>. You will be warmly greeted as you join the Welcoming Team. If you have any questions, please contact John Hensrud at 763-242-2174 or jhensrud@homesmsp.com

Thanks for considering sharing your love for others.

ISAIAH People's Convention

ISAIAH is part of a coalition of pro-Democracy groups who have taken on the goal of putting 13.5 Million people in the streets protesting the actions of the current administration on July 4, 2026. ISAIAH has committed to mobilizing 200K Minnesotans on that day. ISAIAH is calling this the "Palm Sunday Path." This is a reference to the counter-cultural protest that Jesus' followers conducted to demonstrate against the triumphal entry of Pontius Pilate into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, along with the might of the Roman legions. ISAIAH is sponsoring a day of learning and community organizing on December 13, 2025 from 12-6 at the Minneapolis Convention Center to present their Anti-Authoritarian legislative priorities for the coming session and to begin the planning process for 2026 "Palm Sunday Path" events leading up to July 4th. ISAIAH is planning to have 5,000 show up for their "People's Convention" on that day. We will have signup sheets and more information about the December 13th event at an ISAIAH table by the Welcome desk for the Sundays leading up to December 13. If you were wondering what you could do to prevent the breakdown of democracy in this nation: (1) Stop by. (2) Ask your questions. (3) And sign up.

If you are interested in being a part of an ISAIAH core team to help plan our actions at ULCH, please contact Pastor Maria (maria@ulch.org) or John Beane (pilgrim.beane@gmail.com).

Rise Up and Bake!

Get ready to fill your pantry—and our church—with the delicious aroma of fresh-baked bread! This event is perfect for novice and experienced bakers alike. If you've always wanted to try your hand at sourdough or a rustic hearth loaf but weren't sure where to start, this is your chance! Come learn from experienced bakers in a fun, relaxed environment.

What We're Baking - Our bakers will be teaching how to make several fantastic varieties:

- Seeded Sourdough
- Hearth Dinkytown White
- Whole Wheat Country Hearth
- Rosemary Hearth
- Maroon & Gold Pans (perfect for toast!)

Want to Volunteer? We need friendly faces to help with all aspects of the

bake! If you are interested in volunteering your time—even for just a few hours—please send an email to Bryan Kufus: kufus462@icloud.com

Reserve Your Bread and Scones - Freshly baked bread and scones will be available for a donation on Sunday, November 9. You'll definitely want this bread for your Thanksgiving table. To ensure you get the types of loaves you want, you can pre-reserve your bread and scones by emailing Kathy Kufus at kmkufus@icloud.com.

Baking Hope Team

All Are Welcome! November 16th Fellowship Meal

The next Fellowship Meal will be held on Sunday, November 16, after the church service. There will be a main dish provided. We will need salads and desserts brought by YOU! Watch for a sign-up sheet at the welcome desk on Sundays or contact Sheila at shougen03@gmail.com if you can contribute something. Whether you contribute or not you are welcome to join us in fellowship hall.

n o s

Sheila Hougen, Coordinator of the Fellowship Meals

November Forums are Food for Thought

Join us in this month of Thanksgiving for some Sunday forum highlights.

November 2 - John Beane's Camino pilgrimage will be not only a travel log, but a spiritual journey of the many fellow travelers dealing with crises in their lives.

November 9 - ULCH Member Stewart Herman will share his experiences of leading and journeying through different types of pilgrimages. This presentation pairs well with Jon Beane's forum on November 2. Come and be inspired for your own pilgrimage experience!

November 16 - The Gratitude and Generosity committee will light a spark in all of us to consider how we can approach Pledge Sunday in a spirit of joy and thanksgiving.

November 23 - "Local hunger, as seen by our congregation." You will be amazed at the number of people in our congregation that are actively involved in programs to alleviate hunger locally. Join in our discussion with the panel of your fellow congregants as they describe what they are doing within our neighborhood.

November 30 - "Do not Fear, have Hope." This will be an introduction to our Advent theme this year.

Sunday Forum Committee

Gratitude and Generosity in 2026

"You gotta put one foot in front of the other and lead with love."

Paul Douglas in a daily forecast recently asked the question, "So is it time to dig out the parkas and boots? Test the snowblower? His conclusion was a weather forecaster's definite "not yet-maybe".

It may not quite be the time for our Norwegian sweaters, Uggs, and Sorels (we hope), but this is an appropriate season for prayerfully reflecting on how we will live our faith in the coming year.

Commitments don't come easily in the midst of uncertainty (and there is more than plenty of that), but in the spirit of Melanie DeMore's song, sometimes you just gotta put one foot in front of the other [maybe just in timid small steps or maybe in big strides that foster your courage] and lead with love.

To encourage your deliberations, brief gratitude and generosity stories will be shared in our November 9, 16 and 23 worships and will be the focus of the November 16 Adult Forum.

We hope that once again you will continue to generously support Hope as part of your faith response, both in your time and in your resources. As in previous years, you will be provided with pledge cards to declare your financial intentions. Your pledges will be blessed in the November 23rd worship and will determine our church's mission and budget in 2026.

We thank you for your faithfulness. Know that you are in our prayers as you consider your response to God's goodness.

The Gratitude and Generosity Committee:

Don Hauge, Ben Hartmann, Karen Westwood and Bill Sanden and Pastor Amanda Simons

Bible and Brews November 17th at 6:30pm

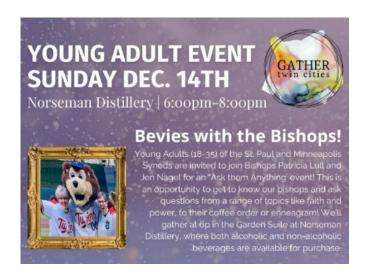


Exactly what it sounds like: bring your Bible, your favorite brewed beverage, and a penchant for laid-back but totally engaging conversations about faith, scripture, and current events. We meet the 3rd Monday of each month from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. Watch the Thursday Epistle or contact the church office for location.

Young Adult Ministry - Gather Twin Cities

Gather is a ministry for young adults in the Twin Cities; a place for those who are hungry for community and connection with other young adults in the metro area. Setting the table for connection and rest through worship, meals, and monthly events. A place for you to deepen in faith as you discover your identity, uncover your vocation and develop as leaders who do justice in the world. Gather is LGBTQI+ affirming and eagerly invites siblings of any sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression into full leadership and participation. Follow our Facebook and Instagram pages for more information @gathertwincities.



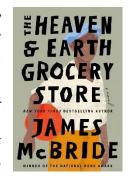


Hope Book Club

Sunday, November 9th, 2025, 7pm on Zoom

[Sorry for the delay. We had too many folks who couldn't make the meeting in October, so we decided to have our discussion on this one month later.]

The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store, by James McBride - Oct. 11: The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store, by James McBride (Toni's recommendation). "The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride is a poignant novel that explores the intertwined lives of Jewish and Black communities in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, against a backdrop of racial tensions and personal struggles." Summary, Analysis + Review: The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store by James McBride - The Bibliofile





December 14th: Small Things Like These, Clair Kleegan. "Small Things Like These can be read as a feminist revision of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol." All Book Marks reviews for Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan Book Marks

Please contact Sonja Peterson for the Zoom link and/or with book suggestions at dunn.pete.law@gmail.com or 612-242-8711.

"A book is a dream you hold in your hand." -Neil Gaiman

President's Report

Dear Hope friends,

You may have heard that I agreed to serve out the remainder of John Pignatello's term as president while he's away with Karen in North Macedonia. I'm happy to have the opportunity to serve the congregation in this way, but I'm beginning to realize that the job is a bit more complicated than I remember from my earlier term. Even so, I'll do my best.

These are exciting days in the life of our congregation. We've just celebrated the installation of the Rev. Amanda Simons as our lead pastor, joining our excellent team of Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert and Paul Stever, minister of music and worship. We're within spitting distance of paying off our mortgage. And if our country seems to be all twisted up with fear and hatred and greed and vulgarity these days, well ... what better time to cling to a church that bears the name Hope?

Our beloved former minister of music and worship Bill Beckstrand, now ordained and leading the beautiful Trinity Lutheran Church in Hovland, has been crafting sermons that prove his composition skills are not confined to music. He recently wrote: "Frederick Buechner, one of the best Christian writers ever, said that faith is a kind of homesickness, and I love that ... that our dull sense of longing and restlessness and anxiety is evidence of our faith! Faith is not a 'position' or a formula or a set of convictions ... Faith has nothing to do with certainty — though we all cling to that false idea. Faith, Buechner says, is 'sensing a presence, not buying into an argument.'"

I hope and trust that in these next few months we'll have many opportunities to sense that presence together.

In Christ, Eric Ringham

Treasurer's Report

September Financial Highlights

- General giving for August was \$33k, 87% of the budgeted amount. YTD totals \$386k, stable at 94% of the budgeted amount.
- Income YTD totaled \$512k at 93% of the budgeted giving. This number includes general giving, PEASE Academy rent and rental income.
- Expenses YTD totaled \$588k, which is 7% above the budgeted amount. The staff, V&G Board, and Facilities team continue to monitor these expenses.
- We continue to encourage ministry areas (Education, Hope in the World, Worship, Relational and Youth & Young Adult) to continue to utilize allocated funds for their dedicated purposes.

Our new Financial Administrator has been hired and started work Monday, October 20 – Welcome Catherine! Many thanks, again, to Emma Carpenter for her valuable support in this transition time. Emma offered an insightful post-service financial status overview on Sunday, October 26th. Highlighted during this time were the fact that while giving is strong and generous, expenses YTD outweigh giving. We continue to monitor status of both giving and expenses as we thoughtfully prepare for next year's budget.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at jackdant@comcast.net.

Best regards, Jack Dant, Interim Treasurer

Changes to the Thursday Epistle Process

Submissions for the Thursday Epistle need to be received by 12pm on Mondays. Submissions after that time will be added the following week. Submissions should be sent to TE@ulch.org. Thank you.

Life Events

We're a community called to hold one another in prayer in every season—in our deepest need and grief, and in our experiences of new life. 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 Baptisms—We pray for all who await and welcome children through joyful and challenging times.

Marriages—We pray for all those preparing for marriage, and for all relationships of commitment.

Deaths— We pray for God's strong embrace for all who grieve deaths and losses, those that are recent and those that were many years ago and whose memories fill us. We especially pray for the Bob Dickhaus and family at the death of Pat Frolen family and the Ganzkow-Wold family at the death of Cyndi Ganzkow-Wold.

Significant Illness—We pray for those living with illness, cancer, recovery, uncertain diagnosis, hospice, chemical dependency and other addictions, and mental health struggles, including Zoe, Wendy, Miriam, Rosalie, Nyla, Jeanne, Roger, and Paul. We also pray for caregivers.

We pray for all who are impacted by **new beginnings**, **separation**, **divorce**, **retirement**, **moves**, **graduations**, **and the civil rights movements of this time** trusting in God's love, grace, and guidance at all times.

Update! Hope Women's Retreat January 2026

"Mary Magdalene - Spiritual Teacher, Mystic and Embodiment of the Sacred Feminine" Registration will begin January 4. The 2026 Women's Retreat will be held again at University Lutheran Church of Hope.

Friday, January 23rd 5-9 pm - including dinner and informal time for fun, laughter and fellowship.

Saturday, January 24th 8:30-4:00 pm - with lunch, including programming both in the morning and afternoon. We'll end with an optional craft project and a final closing ceremony.

Questions? beatarydeen@comcast.net or spirit.beane@gmail.com
Beata Rydeen

Accessing Your Contributions and Community Directory

The church has successfully upgraded to using ICON as our church database software system. You can now access your giving records, update address and contact information as well as view the church directory. If you have not set up your account, please email Nathan in the office and he can send you a login email with instructions. Once the email is sent from within the ICON system, you will have 24 hours to complete the setup. Let Nathan know if you missed that window and he can resend the login.





Pictures from the joint fall Ministerium at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection

November 2025 Calendar of Events

Constant	Mondou	Tuesday	Moderadou	Thursday	Fuidou	Cotymdov
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 9:30am - 10:20am Hope Choir 10:30am - 11:30am Worship in Sanctuary, w/ Zoom/YouTube 10:40am - 11:30am Noisy Offering during worship 12:00pm - 2:00pm Confirmation - New Cohort 5:30pm - 8:30pm Community of the Black Rose	2 9:00am Forum Comm -Zoom 9:00am - 1:00pm Quilters 6:00pm - 8:00pm Parents of	Voting at Hope Office Hours 9-2 11:00am - 12:00pm Staff Meeting 6:00pm - 8:00pm Parents of PEASE support group - 206	Centering Prayer 1:00pm - 2:00pm Election Equipment pickup 3:00pm - 7:00pm P.E.A.S.E. APG After School 6:00pm - 7:00pm Hope Handbells 7:00pm - 8:30pm	6:00pm - 8:00pm Parents of PEASE	7 Office Hours 9-2 pizza prep 2:00pm - 7:00pm Baking Hope preparatons 3:00pm - 7:00pm P.E.A.S.E. APG After School	8 5:00am - 2:00pm Baking Hope Preparation 2:00pm Wild Church
9 9:30am - 10:20am Hope Handbells 10:30am - 11:30am Worship in Sanctuary, w/ Zoom/YouTube 12:30pm Serviceberry Study 7:00pm - 9:00pm Hope Book Club	2 9:00am - 1:00pm Quilters	11 Office Hours 9-2 11:00am - 12:00pm Staff Meeting	Office Hours 9-2 8:00am - 8:40am Centering Prayer 3:00pm - 7:00pm	13 Office Hours 9-2 9:30am - 11:00am Dorcas Circle 6:30pm - 7:30pm AA Group	14 Office Hours 9-2 3:00pm - 7:00pm P.E.A.S.E. APG After School 7:00pm - 10:00pm Craft Group	15 Kitchen Reserved - Prep The Visitor Articles Due 4:00pm 10th Wave concert
9:30am - 10:20am Hope Choir 10:30am - 11:30am Worship in Sanctuary/Online 11:30am - 2:00pm Fellowship Meal after Worship 12:00pm - 2:00pm Confirmation - New Cohort 12:30pm Serviceberry Study 5:30pm - 8:30pm Community of the Black Rose	2	11:00am - 12:00pm Staff Meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Vision & Governance Board	19 Office Hours 9-2 8:00am - 8:40am	20 Office Hours 9-2 6:30pm - 7:30pm AA Group	21 Office Hours 9-2 3:00pm - 7:00pm P.E.A.S.E. APG After School	10:00am - 12:00pm Oblates Group
9:30am - 10:20am Hope Choir 10:30am - 11:30am Worship in Sanctuary/Online 12:30pm Serviceberry Study	2	Office Hours 9-2 11:00am - 12:00pm Staff Meeting 12:00pm - 3:30pm PEASE Recovery Revival 7:00pm - 8:30pm	Office Hours 9-2 8:00am - 8:40am Centering Prayer 3:00pm - 7:00pm	27 Private Family Event Thanksgiving – Offices/Building closed	28 Thanksgiving - Offices closed 3:00pm - 7:00pm P.E.A.S.E. APG After School	29
30 10:30am - 11:30am Worship in Sanctuary, w/ Zoom/YouTube						

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 all the world.

601 – 13th Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414 ₺ Tel. 612-331-5988 ₺ Fax 612-623-0693 ₺ www.ulch.org

Staff

Pastors:

Rev. Amanda Simons

Rev. Maria Anderson-Lippert

Minister of Worship & Music:

Paul Stever

Church Administrator:

Nathan Obrestad

Financial Administrator:

Catherine Menick

Custodian:

Geremew Beshah

Sunday Opener/Closer

Evan Peterson

Working in partnership with

Lutheran Campus Ministry:

Rev. Kate Reuer Welton

Vision and Governance Board

Interim President:

Eric Ringham

Vice President:

Kelly Brooks

Past President:

Linda Herman

Interim Treasurer:

Jack Dant

Worship & Music:

TBD

Youth & Young Adults:

Zach Rau

Education:

Nan Knutsen

Hope in the World:

Ann Beane

Relational Ministries:

Tomi McLellan

Board Secretary:

Karen Jorstad

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