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## Thoughts From Pastor Amanda Simons

In March I had the opportunity to chaperone Torsten's first-grade class field trip to the U's Arboretum in Chanhasen. As we crunched snow and walked through the beautiful muck of melting snow into mud on our way to the maple sugar house, I pondered Robin Wall Kimmerer's chapter "Maple Sugar Moon" from her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*. This introduction was the first time in my life I'd heard the words "Maple Sugar Moon" and I adored them with the reframing of this in-between season of freezing nights and warming days along our way to the springing of daffodils, tulips, and lilacs.

In her book, Ms. Kimmerer describes this season thusly,

"The Maples each year carry out their part of the Original Instructions, to care for the people. But they care for their own survival at the same time. The buds that sensed the incipient turn of the season are hungry. For shoots that are only one millimeter long to become full-fledged leaves, they need food. So when the buds sense spring, they send a hormonal signal down the trunk to the roots, a wake-up call, telegraphed from the light world to the underworld . . . Dissolved in this water from the spring-wet earth, the sugar streams upward as rising sap to feed the buds. It takes a lot of sugar to feed people and buds, so the tree uses its sapwood, the xylem, as the conduit, Sugar transport is usually restricted to the thin layer of phloem tissue under the bark. But in spring, before there are leaves to make their own sugar, the need is so great that xylem is called into duty as well. At no other time of year does sugar move this way, only now when it is needed. Sugar flows upstream for a few weeks in the spring. But when the buds break and leaves emerge, they start making sugar on their own and the sapwood returns to its work as the water conduit.

Because the mature leaves make more sugar than they can use right away, the sugar stream starts to flow in the opposite direction, from leaves back to roots, through the phloem. And so the roots, which fed the buds, are now fed in return by the leaves all summer long. The sugar is converted back to starch, stored in the original 'root cellar.' The syrup we pour over pancakes on a winter morning is summer sunshine flowing in golden streams to pool on our plates (p. 68-69)."

As Torsten, his friends, and I gazed in wonder at the sap traveling from the sugar maple trees through lines to the sugar maple house, where it's converted into sap water, syrup, and maple sugar, I silently contemplated, *what can we learn from the maple trees?* As we tasted the sap water, the water of life, with the upcoming gospel text being the story of the Samaritan woman at the well in conversation with Jesus, I pondered the gift of this water of life within the trees and the ways that God's good creation brings forth life that is mutual, interdependent, and connected. *How does the summer nourish us and creation throughout the winter providing us gifts that we may overlook? In what season of our lives are we called into duty like the xylem to assist in the production of life for the nourishment of ours and others' well-being? When are we fed and grateful for being fed through the gifts and generosity of creation and other human beings? When are we the ones who are called to feed and be generous with our gifts for creation and other human beings? How does reframing and broadening our awareness of stories from a variety of cultures enhance our own understanding of self, God, and the world?* I have so many questions. I bring them forward to you as we move out of Maple Sugar Moon towards our Easter spring.

What questions are you wondering this season? How is your wandering and your adventures opening the mystery of God for you? How do you relate your daily living, your learning, and your experiences to your faith life with God?

The more I age, the more I realize I have more questions than ever – and the more comfortable I become resting in the unknown. As we journey through Holy Week together and into the Easter season this April, I look forward to wandering and wandering with you and our Hope community. Thank you for being a community that affirms the tagline "Complex world. Thoughtful church" and wonders together.



In gratitude, Pastor Amanda Simons

## Pastoral Note from Pastor Maria

I recently finished reading *The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World* by Rabbi Sharon Brous. Throughout the book she describes the importance of showing up with and for one another in times of grief, loss, challenge, and joy. "That is the *amen effect*" Brous writes on page 44, "- the sacred mandate to hear each other, to embrace each other, to love each other up, especially on the hard days. To say to one another, 'Amen.'" The book includes stories from ancient scriptures, contemporary authors, and her experiences as a rabbi that ground us in the many forms the *amen effect* can take in our lives.

A couple of weeks ago I started a conversation with a member of our community by saying I had a proposition for them. "Okay," they responded with hesitation, "but I'm pretty busy right now." As I explained that I was hoping they would provide presence and support to another member of our community, a smile came across their face, "Of course I have time for that! I'd be honored." This is the *amen effect*.

What I have always appreciated about our community at Hope is that we show up for each other - either through the prayers of the people, visiting people when they are sick or struggling, bringing meals when members go through life transitions, and in many more ways. I've had the opportunity to see this up close in more formal ways through our Friendly Visitor Ministry, our Compassion Care Ministry, and the spiritual accompaniment groups that have gathered at different times in my tenure at Hope as well. And all of that doesn't even include the ways I've seen how you all showed up during Operation Metro Surge.

As we continue to live through a tense time as a nation and in our city, our care for one another in the personal struggles and heartaches of our lives are still important. So, please don't hesitate to reach out for support or connection - not only to your pastors, but to one another. And in the ways that your pastors can help facilitate this kind of support for you, we would be glad to do so.

This truly is a community of Hope. I pray that the promise of God's presence as told through the stories of Holy week and throughout this Easter season will continue to give you Hope, too. To you I say, "Amen."

Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert

## Building Beloved Community Day Camp - June 15-19 - Register Now!

Registration is now open for Building Beloved Community Day Camp. It will be held at Diamond Lake Lutheran Church again the week of June 15 - 19.

Especially in these hard and violent days, it is important that we can help our children and youth gain skills to resist evil, hold fast to what is good, and build community rooted in faith, active nonviolence and love. Here's the website with more information and a link to registration: <https://www.smplsdaycamp.org/>

**We also need plenty of adult and high school volunteers** to help make day camp a success. Please prayerfully consider if you might be able to help build beloved community in this way! Contact Pastor Maria with any questions OR [Sign up to volunteer here!](#)

## 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!

### April Birthdays

April 7<sup>th</sup> – Leonard Hrnrcir  
April 8<sup>th</sup> – James Solem  
April 18<sup>th</sup> – Elaine Reed  
April 29<sup>th</sup> – Jean Albrecht  
April 29<sup>th</sup> – Janet Munson

### May Birthdays

May 5<sup>th</sup> – Sharla Aaseng  
May 7<sup>th</sup> – Ruth Fingerson  
May 26<sup>th</sup> – Ana Moreno Solem  
May 28<sup>th</sup> – Gretchen Peik – 80!



## Children's Ministry Dates

We're excited to continue with our experiment with Family Faith Formation gatherings. These gatherings are open to all parents with children ages birth - 4th grade and will take place after the fellowship meal. We'll have time together and time for parents and children to learn apart. Thank you to Ann Agrimson and Tim Gustafson for time leading with our children! Mark your calendars for the following dates:

- April 19th - 12:30pm – 2:00pm
- May 17th - 12:30pm – 2:00pm

## Worship & Music

**Wednesday, April 1:** No midweek Lenten worship, choir and brass rehearse

**Thursday, April 2 at 7:00 pm:** Maundy Thursday worship, music led by Hope Choir

**Friday, April 3 at 7:00 pm:** Good Friday worship, music led by Hope Choir

**Saturday, April 4 at 7:00 pm:** Easter Vigil worship

**Sunday, April 5 at 10:30 am:** Easter worship, music led by Hope Choir and brass

**Sunday, April 12 at 10:30 am:** worship led by Hope Handbells

**Sunday, April 19 at 10:30 am:** worship led by Hope Choir

**Sunday, April 26 at 10:30 am:** worship led by Hope Choir

I'm writing this article just after our big snowstorm that canceled worship on March 15. Our choir was disappointed to not get to sing "O Love" by Elaine Hagenberg, but we will reschedule for April, and this will give me a chance to tell you more about it before you hear it!

I would first like to highly recommend [hymnary.org](https://hymnary.org) as a source for learning about hymn texts. This resource is managed by members of "The Hymn Society," which is an ecumenical organization of which I have had the privilege to be a member for a number of years. They especially serve the United States and Canada, but they have many connections to the global church, including the World Council of Churches, and in just the past few years have had presenters on topics related to congregational song from almost every continent and many cultural traditions, presenting via zoom or in person.

*O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go* is a hymn text written by George Mattheson in 1882. You can read the entire text and a little bit more about him here: [https://hymnary.org/text/o-love-that-wilt-not-let-me-go#google\\_vignette](https://hymnary.org/text/o-love-that-wilt-not-let-me-go#google_vignette)

Mattheson had troubles with his vision since childhood and when he became completely blind while engaged to be married, his partner said she could no longer marry him, not wanting to be married to someone who was blind. He then lived with his sister, and it's said that he wrote this text on the eve before her own marriage, after which she would no longer be living with him.

Elaine Hagenberg was inspired both by this story and the text itself. She took a relatively small portion of the full text for her composition and wrote completely original music (not using the hymn tune called ST. MARGARET, which it is usually paired with, in some hymnals). After publishing the piece in 2016, she had a musician ask her to write a cello part for a performance, and she now considers this version with cello to be her preferred version of the song.

Paul Stever, Minister of Worship & Music



## Wild Church Gathering

No Wild Church this month. Find some time to connect with our creation kin in your own neighborhood! We'll resume this communal gathering in May.



## Bread for the World Offering of Letters Moved to April 19th

Due to the March 15 snowstorm that caused Hope to cancel in-person worship and all other activities on that Sunday, the Bread for the World Offering of Letters has been moved to Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> during and after the Fellowship meal. Instructions and materials will be provided. Please join us for this very important action in helping to procure billions of dollars for desperately needed hunger programs, for this nation and the world.

Donna Neste

## Fellowship Meal

Fellowship Meal will be on April 19. Details will be shared as we get closer to the date. But you can predict we will need salads and desserts. So start planning!

Questions? Talk to Sheila Hougen or Ann Beane.

## Greetings from Lutheran Campus Ministry

Lutheran Campus Ministry-Twin Cities is a young adult ministry at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities that centers the unconditional love of God, and is marked by curiosity, integrity, and a commitment to creating belonging for one another and our neighbors. While we often talk about young adults as the "future" of the church, the young adults that comprise LCM are actively shaping our church right now, in the present.

As we move into yet another set of uncharted waters politically and culturally, we continue to learn so much from the young adults in our midst about the power of the Gospel, the deep hunger for grounding spiritual practices, and the eagerness to belong to a community that shares ones' values. Whether bearing the weight of grief and loss, AI, a fractured political system or the weight of mental illness, young adults are learning what it means to be resilient and faithful amidst a world that will likely be uncertain for a very long time.

And still, or maybe because of this uncertainty, students are actively engaged with their faith. They are hungry, and they show up to pray, to serve, to learn, and to worship together. More than anything, they show up to connect, and to center down in the love of God. At LCM, we see first-hand the incredible work of the Holy Spirit, who animates these young adults and our ministry among them.

We are excited to let you know that a student will be preaching on April 12, proclaiming the Gospel, and sharing stories about their life as a young adult. They will also be providing LCM updates at the Sunday Forum before the service. We are also excited to thank you, and to invite you into further partnership with this ministry. Your support matters now as much as it ever has, and we are grateful that your church will be taking a special offering in support of this vital young adult ministry.

Please consider making a gift that day and thank you for being church together. For more information, visit <https://umnlutheran.org/support-us/>

Chaplain Kate

## 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.

**April 19<sup>th</sup>** – Worship and Meal

# April Sunday Forums: Hope for a Future Generation

**April 12<sup>th</sup> - Lutheran Campus Ministry Update.** A current student of LCM will be presenting what is happening within their organization at this time. We will also have our own Hope member, Tim Gustafson, who is a past board member for LCM.

**April 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> - Dietrich Bonhoeffer,** presented by Lori Brandt Hale. At this time of rising authoritarianism in our country and around the world, we have a unique opportunity to explore the thoughts of Lutheran theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, with an expert in the field. Dr. Lori Brandt Hale is a professor at Augsburg College and a member of the International Bonhoeffer Society – English Language Section (IBS-ELS). This society is dedicated to advancing the theology and legacy of German pastor-theologian and Nazi resister, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in the academy, church, and world.

“The ultimately responsible question is not how I extricate myself heroically from a situation but how **a coming generation is** to go on living.” ~Dietrich Bonhoeffer, December 1942.

## Lace Up for a Cause! 5K Fun Run & Pizza Bake for Food Assistance

Join the students of Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) on **Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>**, for a day of movement and community action. Lutheran Campus Ministry is partnering with University Lutheran Church of Hope and Grace Lutheran to support those affected by ICE activity through this food assistance fundraiser. LCM is raising money for Calvary Food Shelf and inviting folks to donate directly to their own emergency response fund: <https://www.givemn.org/story/wwca4g>



The journey kicks off at noon at Grace and finishes at ULCH, where we'll celebrate with a fresh pizza bake!

**Lend a Hand:** The Baking Hope team needs your help to make this happen. We are looking for volunteers to assist with:

- Pizza crust making: April 10 & 11
- Event setup
- Pizza topping prep
- Baking at the outdoor oven
- Clean-Up

Come for the run, stay for the wood-fired pizza, and help us support our neighbors in need. If you'd like to sign up for the 5K Fun Run, send an email to [dana@umnlutheran.org](mailto:dana@umnlutheran.org). For questions or volunteering, contact Rebecca Tetlie ([rebecca.tetlie@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.tetlie@gmail.com)) or Bryan Kufus ([bkufus462@icloud.com](mailto:bkufus462@icloud.com)).

Rebecca Tetlie



## New Members!

Are you interested in becoming a member of Hope officially? Pastor Amanda and Pastor Maria would love to invite you to a gathering after worship on May 3<sup>rd</sup> to meet others who are hoping to become members at Hope and learn about our life together here! On May 17th, we will receive these new members in worship. Contact Pastor Amanda or Pastor Maria with any questions or to let us know you're interested.

## Celebrate Our Graduates

Do you have a graduate in your family this year? Maybe they're graduating from High School or college or graduate school? We'd love to celebrate them and this important life milestone with them! If so, please let Pastor Amanda or Pastor Maria know. If you give us permission, we'll ask for you to send a recent photo and a little information about their interests by April 20th to include in our May Visitor. We will pray for them in worship on May 31<sup>st</sup> whether they are present or not.



## Holden Evening Prayer Around the World Wednesday, April 29 • 6:30 pm University Lutheran Church of Hope Sanctuary

Join us for this special service as we gather with communities around the world to celebrate Holden Village and the 40th anniversary of *Vespers '86*, the beloved liturgy composed by Marty Haugen during his residency at Holden. Friends of both Hope and Holden are warmly invited. The service will include a time of fellowship afterward and a special offering to support Holden Village as it recovers from the devastating mudslides and flooding that destroyed the access road to the village.

## Reminder: Sunday Morning Worship Accessibility

Our leadership cares deeply about both accessibility and security as we gather for worship and other events. As a reminder, on Sunday mornings the west and north parking lot entrances are open from 9:00 am to 10:45 am for entry into the building. The blue doors and main sanctuary doors on 13th Avenue will remain open throughout worship, with ushers nearby to welcome those arriving a bit later.

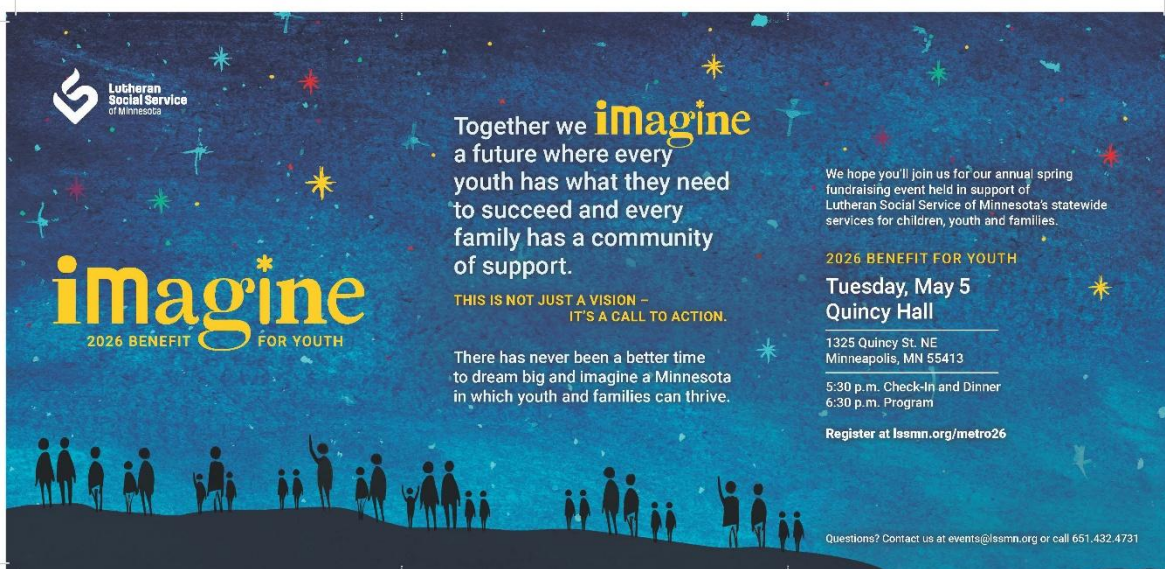
## You're invited to make a gift of generosity to the Sanctuary Fund (supporting our immigrant neighbors)

In 2016, our congregation made a faithful commitment to be a sanctuary congregation in support of our immigrant neighbors. ELCA congregations live out this commitment in many ways—providing legal and mutual aid, accompanying individuals to court, advocating with legislators for immigration reform, and more.

During Operation Metro Surge, our congregation responded with compassion and solidarity, both collectively and individually, to support our immigrant neighbors and members. That commitment continues today. Through our dedicated congregational Sanctuary Fund—also known as the Hopeful Hope Sanctuary Fund—we accompany immigrant friends with legal and mutual aid in times of real need.

As we enter this Easter season, would you consider making a financial gift to support this vital ministry? Your generosity directly supports individuals and households our congregation accompanies through challenging circumstances, offering hope, stability, and tangible care.

Thank you for your continued compassion and partnership in this work.



## Imagine What's Possible with LSS Youth and Family Services

On Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> ULCH is invited to learn about the ways LSS is meeting the needs of youth and families around the state. There has never been a better time for us to dream big and imagine how we can play a role in helping Minnesota youth and families thrive! Please consider attending LSS's Benefit for Youth fundraising event in Minneapolis, tickets are \$25 and include food, drinks, music, and a program. You can buy individual tickets or become a table captain and invite others to join you. If you're unable to attend, please consider a gift; your gift will be used to invest in supportive resources for youth and families across Minnesota. We'd love to have a strong turnout from ULCH at this event! Tickets available at: [lssmn.org/metro26](https://lssmn.org/metro26)

## Coming to Hope in October: The North Star Sustainable Living Festival

At the request of the East Bank Neighborhoods Partnership, Hope along with Sunny Day Earth Solutions and others will be hosting the North Star Sustainable Living Festival on our church campus on October 10 of this year. This will give us a chance to shine (think of our solar, LED lighting, recycling, and other sustainability initiatives) while providing a space for learning, interacting with professionals and non-profits and students in the sustainability fields, and having a good time. It will be a chance to learn what is being done (and can be done) in the sustainable living field while figuring out how we, as individuals, can make a difference.

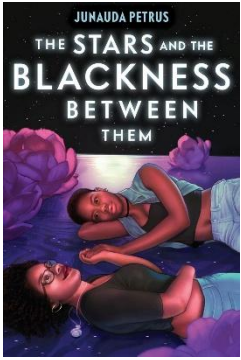
The idea started in the SE Como neighborhood with the SE Como Environment Team, building on past experience from both the big Wisconsin annual fair and smaller local fairs. The SE Como neighborhood, along with the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood (where Hope resides) and others recently formed the East Bank Neighborhoods Partnership – see [eastbankmpls.org](http://eastbankmpls.org) for all the neighborhoods involved. Hope was asked to host this festival because of location, space, amenities, and our very visible solar panels.

There will be more information in subsequent Visitors. We won't be asking for specific volunteers until later, but we will eventually. Meanwhile, if you know of or work for a sustainable organization or company that you think would be interested in either tabling at, selling at, or presenting at, please let Kathy Knudson or Karen Jorstad know so we can contact you or them. We will be having presentations/workshops going on all day during the festival inside the Hope building while filling the north parking lot with booths, music, other entertainment, and food trucks.

Kathy Knudson for the North Star Sustainable Living Festival (and Hope member)

# Hope Book Club

Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 7pm on Zoom

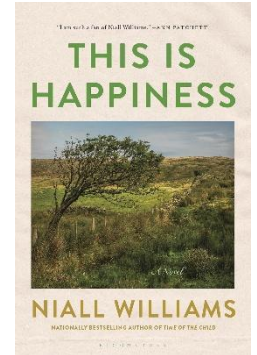


**April 12<sup>th</sup>** *The Stars and the Blackness Between Them*, Junauda Petrus. Minneapolis 2025 Poet Laureate. “Told in two distinct and irresistible voices, Junauda Petrus’s bold and lyrical debut is the story of two black girls from very different backgrounds finding love and happiness in a world that seems determined to deny them both.” [The Stars And The Blackness Between Them — Junauda Petrus](#)

**Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>** *This Is Happiness*, by Niall Williams (Becky Halverson recommendation). “Harking back to a simpler time, *This Is Happiness* is a tender portrait of a [small Irish parish] community – its idiosyncrasies and traditions, its paradoxes and kindnesses, its failures and triumphs—and a coming-of-age tale like no other.” *This Is Happiness* by Niall

Williams | Goodreads

Please contact Sonja Peterson for the Zoom link and/or with book suggestions at [dunn.pete.law@gmail.com](mailto:dunn.pete.law@gmail.com)



“What an astonishing thing a book is. It’s a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you’re inside the mind of another person, maybe somebody dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic.” Carl Sagan

## Sanctuary Sound Upgrades

A new Sanctuary sound system is coming to replace our aging speakers! This project is funded by the large bequest we received several years ago. All four main speakers in the Sanctuary are at the end (or beyond) their useful life and will be replaced with new ceiling mounted speakers. There is also extensive updating of the amplifiers, processors, and audio infrastructure hidden away in the basement that will affect the Fellowship Hall / Heritage Hall sound system. This project will alleviate some of the difficulties in hearing the service in certain parts of the room (you know if you sit there!).

Installation is scheduled to begin after Easter Sunday, starting April 6, 2026, and will continue for three weeks. During this time, we will continue to gather for worship both in person and online as normal, using a temporary sound system provided by our contractor. There will be some construction equipment and scaffolding stored in the Sanctuary during installation and the staff asks for patience and flexibility as we worship around this disruption.

Once the new system is commissioned, please let the staff know of any issues you experience. Sound systems are tuned to the room and may require adjustments once people are in the space. This is normal.

# Presidents Report

**Dear Friends at Hope,**

As spring begins to show itself, I've been doing a lot of reflecting on all that's happening here at Hope. There's a real sense of energy in the air—something that comes with longer days, melting snow, and new things taking shape. Some days it feels like I just stepped into this role as president, and other days it feels like I've had a front-row seat to so much good work for quite a while now.

This month, I wanted to share a snapshot of what's been going on around the church. Some of this may already be familiar to you, and in many cases, there are folks among you who know far more about the details than I do—but it's still worth celebrating the momentum we're building together.

On March 21, our Vision and Governance Board gathered for a half-day retreat. They spent time reviewing governance documents and talking about where we are headed as a congregation—both now and into the future. Looking ahead, the Personnel Committee will also be holding a retreat toward the end of April.

Speaking of Personnel, we are continuing our search for someone to regularly manage our worship technology. If you know someone with the right skills and interest, we'd love your help spreading the word. Interim Past President Erik Ringham can provide more information.

Several task forces are also hard at work right now. Their focus areas include updating financial policies, reviewing building security needs, and thinking creatively about how we use our Chapel space. This includes making sure we have the right audio and visual tools for streaming, presentations, and other gatherings at church.

You may have already noticed some physical improvements around the building. We're in the middle of upgrading the sanctuary sound system, and work is underway to improve our heating system. New thermostats should make a noticeable difference, particularly in the PEASE classrooms.

Also in the PEASE space, new locks have been installed on classroom doors (excluding bathrooms and the mop closet). These locks allow doors to be secured from the inside, which greatly improves safety in the event of an emergency and helps PEASE meet district requirements.

Looking ahead to later this year, we have a financial audit planned for late summer or early fall. We're also looking forward to hosting the East Bank Neighborhood Partnership's North Star Sustainable Living Festival here at Hope this October—more details about that event are included elsewhere in this publication.

It's also important to pause and appreciate how much we've already accomplished together. We recently held a successful annual congregational meeting, completed our kitchen and lounge renovations, and refreshed the library with new carpet, chairs, and soon, new shelving. These updates will be enjoyed for years to come.

In the spirit of joy and community, I also want to celebrate another wonderful Night Songs event. It was deeply moving to see so many volunteers—musicians, technicians, coordinators, and others—come together to create such a rich experience of sound and sight. Thank you to everyone who played a part. It truly does take a village.

And finally, looking way ahead—about 11 months from now—the final payment on our church mortgage will be made in February 2027. That feels like something worth celebrating, and I hope you'll mark it on your mental calendar.

I continue to be amazed by the dedication and generosity of this congregation. Thank you for all the ways you contribute to our shared life and to the many good things unfolding at Hope. As always, I welcome your thoughts, hopes, and ideas as we move forward together as the University Lutheran Church of Hope.

Yours in faith,

Kelly Brooks; [President@ulch.org](mailto:President@ulch.org)

# Treasurer's Report

February 2026

|                              | February Actual    | February Budget  | Amount Over / (Under) | % Over / (Under) Budget | YTD Actual         | YTD Budget         | Amount Over / (Under) | % Over / (Under) Budget |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Income</b>                |                    |                  |                       |                         |                    |                    |                       |                         |
| <b>1500100 Giving</b>        | \$ 42,346          | \$ 51,376        | \$ (9,030)            | -18%                    | \$ 118,485         | \$ 102,753         | \$ 15,732             | 15%                     |
| <b>1500300 Rental Income</b> | \$ 13,161          | \$ 13,428        | \$ (267)              | -2%                     | \$ 26,786          | \$ 26,856          | \$ (70)               | 0%                      |
| <b>1500400 Interest</b>      | \$ 1,835           | \$ 1,250         | \$ 585                | 47%                     | \$ 3,735           | \$ 2,500           | \$ 1,235              | 49%                     |
| <b>Total Income</b>          | <b>\$ 57,342</b>   | <b>\$ 66,054</b> | <b>\$ (8,712)</b>     | <b>-13%</b>             | <b>\$ 149,005</b>  | <b>\$ 132,108</b>  | <b>\$ 16,897</b>      | <b>13%</b>              |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>        | <b>\$ 91,472</b>   | <b>\$ 63,117</b> | <b>\$ 28,355</b>      | <b>45%</b>              | \$ 163,462         | \$ 144,366         | \$ 19,097             | 13%                     |
| <b>Net Income</b>            | <b>\$ (34,130)</b> | <b>\$ 2,937</b>  | <b>\$ (37,067)</b>    | <b>-1262%</b>           | <b>\$ (14,457)</b> | <b>\$ (12,257)</b> | <b>\$ (2,200)</b>     | <b>-18%</b>             |

February income came in 13% under budget, but after a strong January we are 13% over budget year-to-date (YTD). Expenses were 45% higher than budgeted for the month, but YTD total expenses were a less alarming 13% higher. Our bottom line is 18% unfavorable to our budget YTD.

Higher expenses in February were driven by natural gas, snow removal and boiler expense. We are optimistic that as the year progresses, we will see much of this early variance smooth out, but we are committed to closely managing expenses throughout 2026.

ULCH began issuing grants approved by the Trust, and the first payments on major projects are starting. This means that our bequest fund balance will decrease significantly as we utilize this to bring new projects to life.

The bank accounts reconciled perfectly this month. Our staff is making great progress on sunsetting the relationship with Old National Bank, and we have appreciated the high caliber of service Sunrise Banks have offered us.

It is worth noting that our Financial Administrator Catherine was out the last week of February and first week of March. She is going through her inbox as quickly as possible, but if anyone is awaiting a response, please feel free to send her a nudge!

Mark Nelson, Treasurer

## Spring is Coming –Gardening Starts Soon!

We will have some special planning and planting and mulching in the Gardens of Hope this spring. Thankfully, the Trust Board has granted us \$3,500 to revitalize our four raingardens. Hopefully, many of you will be able to help with this work.

I don't know how to predict when the revitalization will start because I can't predict when spring planting weather will really be here. Nor do I know when the new plants that we will soon be ordering from a native plant nursery will arrive (they provide them when the weather is right). I will get out notices as quickly as I can when we have actual work and planting dates. Please help me – if you are currently on my Gardens of Hope email list you don't have to do anything until you hear from me. If you are not on it but think you will be able to help this spring and summer, please email me at [kaknudson@comcast.net](mailto:kaknudson@comcast.net) and I will add you to the list so you can get gardening information as soon as it is available. I will also try to use the Thursday Epistle if I can get the timing right, church announcements, and signage around the church if necessary.

One of the reasons I am pushing it now is because we are holding the North Star Sustainable Living Festival (see other article) here this fall and I would like to have attractive and fully functioning raingardens to show off during the festival. Another reason I am pushing it now is because I just turned 80 and I really need to find someone to take over the garden lead position from me – this process of revitalizing the raingardens is an excellent exercise for the new garden leader-in-training. I expect to be asking some people that I think would do a good job, but if you want to volunteer, come to me ASAP. The basic job requirements include: a love of gardening, a decent knowledge of plants, good knees, a strong back, being significantly younger than me, and having the good sense to delegate as much as possible.

Kathy Knudson for the Gardens of Hope

# UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF LUTHERAN HOPE

## Staff

**Lead Pastor:** Rev. Amanda Simons

**Pastor:** Rev. Maria Anderson-Lippert

**Minister of Worship and Music:** Paul Stever

**Administrator:** Nathan Obrestad

**Financial Administrator:** Catherine Melnick

**Custodian:** Geremew Beshah

**Sunday Opener/Closer:** Evan Peterson

**Working in Partnership with Lutheran Campus Ministry:** Rev. Kate Reuer Welton

## Vision and Governance Board

**President:** Kelly Brooks

**Vice President:** Matt Fry

**Past President:** Eric Ringham

**Treasurer:** Mark Nelson

**Secretary:** Karen Jorstad

**Worship and Music Liaison:** Jaclyn Hawkins

**Youth and Young Adults Liaison:** Zack Rau

**Education Liaison:** Nan Knutsen

**Hope in the World Liaison:** Ann Beane

**Relational Ministries Liaison:** Tomi McLellan



On Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> the 2025 and 2026 Vision and Governance Board members gathered together for a Board Retreat. We engaged in teambuilding and visioning exercises. We also enjoyed the vibrancy of our Hope neighborhood on a very spring-y day.