



Complex world. Thoughtful church.

The Visitor

September 2026
No. 26-09



**Sunday, August 23rd was a beautiful day
to worship outside.**



Thoughts from Pastor Amanda

The Book of Ecclesiastes reminds us that for everything there is a season. The song “Turn! Turn! Turn!” based on this biblical passage, composed by Pete Seeger, and sang by the Byrds in the 1960s provides a modern interpretation.

As I look forward to my first Neighborhood Hope Party Celebration on September 20th and the beginning of the school year for both my elementary-age children and the young adults of the University of Minnesota (our neighbors) and those of Gustavus Adolphus College (where I serve as a trustee), I find myself more and more drawn to this ancient wisdom.

I am excited for the new beginnings that are unfolding around us in schools and universities. For the new beginnings and the excitement of fall at Hope with the resumption of Sunday Forum, choir, fellowship meals, and upcoming events – the Courtyard Concert, Neighborhood Hope, the Festival in October, and more.

I am grateful for a community that values the cultivation of a spiritual space for belonging in which people can mourn, dance, tear, sow, break down as needed, and build up as needed.

I am grounded in the rhythm of human civilization and religious expressions that have tried to understand God, neighbor, stranger, and self for generations, including in challenging seasons like now when American institutions are under tremendous peril and neighbors, locally and globally, are under threat of war, famine, and the stripping of civil rights. A time to break down and a time to build up . . . a time to tear, and a time to sow . . . a time to keep silence, and a time to speak . . . these words mean more to me now in these times and at my current age than ever before. I ponder them often and incorporate them into questions of faith when I read the morning newspaper.

What questions does God evoke within you from these ancient words of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8? How do you faithfully ponder them among this season of your life, individually and communally?

In gratitude, Pastor Amanda Simons

Pastor Maria's Reflections from Amnicon

Last weekend, ULCH joined First Congregational for what has become our annual weekend of connecting with each other and nature at Camp Amnicon. About 35 people of all ages attended - roughly a dozen of them from Hope. It was a joy to have been there with my family, too, and has become a highlight of our summer over the years. While we are there we play some get-to-know-you games, practice wild church together, have some free time, and share smores around the campfire at night.

At our closing reflection time on Sunday morning, many shared how healing the weekend had been and how they felt held by the sound of the waves on Lake Superior and the company we shared. I experienced this as well with the time away from technology and the hurried pace of the clock. At dinner Saturday night I looked across the grass and saw all the kids - aged 4 to 14 - sitting in a circle playing a game together. The teenagers were so kind to the young ones and everyone was included. I was held both by the opportunity to connect with creation and to re-member my place on this earth, AND by the community that gathered. I am grateful. Maybe you'll join us next year?

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!



September

September 10th - Miriam Hougen
September 22nd - Jim Hougen
September 27th - Ken Sarkela
September 28th - Rob Lindesmith

October

October 11th - Karen Lindesmith
October 27th - Janet Booe
October 31st - Jerry Johnson



Sunday Forums Return September 13th!

September 13: USAID Cuts, Effects, and What You Can Do

Ryan Begley presents. Founded in 1961, USAID historically supported global health and humanitarian initiatives, saving millions of lives through major programs like PEPFAR and the President's Malaria Initiative. Following early 2025 executive orders, USAID was dissolved and replaced by the "America First Global Health Strategy," causing a massive drop in foreign assistance funding. This presentation will explore the current research estimating the effects of USAID cuts, as well as what you can do as an individual to alleviate some of the suffering associated with the USAID cuts

September 20: No forum.

Hope Neighborhood Welcome Party follows worship with wood-fired pizza, circulation of free items, with the ELCA young adult Gather group joining the festivities at 1:00 p.m.

September 27: Children and Families at Hope

Britta Anderson will be leading a panel of parents of young families. They will be sharing updates on policies relating to children at Hope. They will also be talking about the ways in which members of Hope can support children while we are in community together.

Neighborhood Hope Celebration Sunday Sept. 20

Join us for a fun-filled time of community, connection, and hope! Enjoy delicious oven-baked pizza, Zack Kline live on fiddle, mini-golf and sidewalk art, Recovery Bike Shop clinic plus drawing for bike swag, electronics recycling and LED giveaway, vendors and displays, and our Circulation Event helping donated household items find new homes.

Bring your family, invite a friend, and celebrate the joy of being a neighborhood together! Want to help make it happen? We're looking for volunteers to assist with setup, hospitality, games, and cleanup. Whether you can help for an hour or the whole event, we'd love to have you join the team and help bring hope to our neighborhood! Contact Pastor Amanda at amandas@ulch.org to volunteer.

**UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF
LUTHERAN HOPE**
hosting the Neighborhood Hope
Celebration Event!

**Sunday, September 20,
11:30am to 2pm!**

There will be:

- Oven-baked pizza!** (with a pizza slice icon)
- Music!** (with a musical note icon)
- Games!** (with a mini-golf icon)

And....

**A household item swap! Where you can
bring the things you don't want any
more and take something that one of
your neighbors brought!**

SPONSORED BY **EAST BANK
NEIGHBORHOODS**

Circulation Event

Do you have items that are in great condition that you no longer use? It's time to get them back into circulation! On Sunday, September 20th we'll host our third Circulation Event during Hope's Neighborhood Celebration. Here's what you need to know:

How does it work?

Starting on Sunday, September 13th, you can bring items to the church and place them on the designated tables in the hallways. Items can also be dropped off throughout the week during office hours as well. All items will be set out on the front patio beginning at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 20th. If you'd like to look over any items, you can do that both before and after the worship service!

What can we bring?

Our event is limited to household items, gadgets, small appliances, pots and pans, drinkware, dishware (everyday, not fancy china), cutlery, bakeware, storage containers, decor, lamps, candles, baskets, frames, garden supplies, tools, games, arts or craft materials, office and school supplies, reusable tote bags, odds and ends. Start now by going through your home and finding those items that you're not using anymore. You know you have them!

What CAN'T we bring?

Please do not donate clothing, furniture, books, or any particularly large items since we want to be able to easily transport leftovers after the event. Also, please be sure that items are clean, in good repair, and not missing any parts.

Who can take items?

ANYONE! If you see something you want or need, just take it and get it back into circulation. Although we hope this event will benefit students and neighbors, don't be shy about grabbing something you can use. Also, if you see something that you think a family member or friend would like, feel free to take it for them as well. We'll be advertising the event through Lutheran Campus Ministry and around the Dinkytown neighborhood, but if you know anyone else who'd like to take a look around, invite them to stop by. Tell them there will be free pizza, too!

Are there ways that I can help other than donating items?

Since Circulation Day is not a fundraiser, there is no need for pricing items, collecting money, or safeguarding against theft since everything is free! We will, however, need some help putting out the items, keeping things organized, and especially bringing leftover items to various thrift stores afterwards.

If you have further questions or would like to help, please contact Nan Knutsen at nanknutsen10@gmail.com.

Thanks for your support!

Family Sunday School

This fall, families will gather for Family Sunday School on the 3rd Sunday of the month after the Fellowship Meal, beginning in October. Our format will follow a similar routine to last year - we will all begin together and then parents will leave for some time to connect while the children continue their Sunday School lesson. Sunday School is geared towards children of all ages and will likely include two groups this year, one of toddlers and preschoolers and one with elementary aged children. More specifics will be emailed directly to families.

If you'd like to be on that list, please contact Pastor Maria (mariaa@ulch.org.)

Fall dates include:

October 18th: 12-1:30

November 15th: 12-1:30

December 20th: 12-1:30

Rev. Maria Anderson-Lippert

September 2026 Music for Worship

September 6: Bill Sanden, piano

September 13: Hope Choir

September 20: Hope Handbells

September 27: Hope Choir

Hope Choir Resumes September 9 at 7-8:30 p.m.

The fall season of Hope Choir rehearsals and worship leadership resumes with Wednesday night rehearsals, beginning September 9 at 7-8:30 p.m. If you haven't sung with us recently, it can be helpful to let Paul (pauls@ulch.org) or someone in the choir know you'll be coming so that we can have music ready for you. Whether you've sung with us recently or not, all are welcome! Also, if you would like to participate in handbells or any other aspect of music programming, feel free to reach out at any time. Handbells ring around once a month for worship (Sunday, September 20 is the next time) with rehearsal the Wednesday before from 6-6:55 p.m.

Courtyard Concert

Thursday, September 10 at 7:00 p.m., suggested free will donation \$10

Orkestar Bez Ime [or-KESS-tar behz EE-meh], meaning "orchestra without a name" in Bulgarian, was formed in 2002 to recreate the sounds of the village with a presentation as festive as the music itself. Focusing on Eastern Europe, OBI's repertoire reaches from Albania to Ukraine, with plenty of stops in between. Orkestar Bez Ime is a winner of the 2011-2012 McKnight Artist Fellowships for Performing Musicians administered by MacPhail Center for Music and a recipient of a 2012 Minnesota Emerging Composers Award from the American Composers Forum. The members of OBI are Colleen Bertsch, Scott Keever, Matt Miller, Katrina Mundinger, Natalie Nowytski, and Eric Ray.

<https://orkestarbezime.com/>

Paul Stever, Minister of Music and Worship

2027 Trust Board Grant Applications Due September 30th

The Hope Trust Board is now accepting applications for 2027 grants. The application deadline is September 30, 2026. Tentative funding decisions will be announced in October 2026, with final funding amounts decided (based on year-end financials) and distribution of funds in early 2027. [CLICK HERE](#) to apply online (preferred). Paper copy application materials are also available in the church building or can be downloaded [HERE](#).

Additional information regarding the Hope Trust and grant applications is posted on ULCH's Trust Board webpage (<https://www.ulch.org/trust-board>). Send questions to trustboard@ulch.org or contact Co-Chairs Shelly Parry or Leena Rapacz. Other Trust Board members are James Flaten (treasurer), Tim Hopkins (secretary), Kathy Kufus, Kerry Pearson, and Bo Peery.

Hope Trust Board

Fellowship Meals

Fellowship meals will be starting up again in OCTOBER. They will be on the third Sunday of the Month. Mark your calendar for **October 16, 2026** for our first Fellowship Meal of the season. More details to come.

Maintenance Needed in the Gardens of Hope

By the time you read this, the rain gardens at Hope should all be updated and in good shape. Meanwhile other gardens have been neglected because there just aren't enough active gardeners at Hope at this time. Meanwhile, we continue to plan for outdoor events -- and need to get the gardens up to snuff for visitors.

First, on **September 10** we are having a concert in the courtyard. The concert area of the courtyard is doing well but there are some weeds popping up. They are easy to tell from the legitimate plants and shrubs and should take a couple people less than an hour to remove. Go for it, someone!

Second, on **September 20** we are having an annual event, one that has evolved from our Welcome Back Students event into our Neighborhood Celebration. I believe this event is mostly on the north and east sides of the church building. It would be great to have the weeds in the parking lot, the weeds along the north and west side of the building, and the weeds in and around the patio cleaned up. The hedge along the chapel really needs trimming too. These are a series of small jobs that just a few people could do.

And third, the North Star Sustainable Living Festival will be here on **October 10**. The north parking lot will be fully used, and people will be coming from every direction. To put our best face forward and welcome the festival goers, Gardens of Hope really need people to step up to clean up the remaining areas/gardens on our campus. Please be some of those people.

Kathy Knudson for the Gardens of Hope
p.s. I still need someone to take over as head gardener.
Come to me before I come to you.

Anar: Building a Movement of Hope for Palestinian Children

University Lutheran Church of Hope has a growing connection to two incredible organizations: **Anar** and **Healing to Hope**. "Founded in 2023, Anar operates in the West Bank and Gaza. It aims to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma and provide healing for Palestinian children and caregivers experiencing ongoing Israeli occupation, violence, and genocide. Anar's innovative approach includes community-based psychosocial support, youth mentorship, and arts-based healing workshops." Healing to Hope is Anar's US-based sister organization.

Our congregation's connection? Former ULCH pastor and ELCA Bishop Mark Hanson is board chair for Healing to Hope, one of the five benevolence recipients of our Open Doors capital campaign. ULCH is also one of the congregations sponsoring this second speaking tour presented by Anar Executive Director and Founder Rami Khader.

Tuesday, September 22, 7:00 p.m. Presentation by Rami Khader with Q&A, located at the New City Center, 3104 16th Ave S, Minneapolis. Rami will be joined by **Sarah Myers**, the executive director of **Healing to Hope**.

The following additional events will be at Legacy Dream Space (in the California Building), 2205 California Street NE, Minneapolis:

Sunday, September 20, 1:00-2:00 - Family Arts Event: a hands-on workshop for children and caregivers to introduce Minnesota families to the tools and approaches Anar uses with children in Palestine — RSVP required!

Sunday, September 20, 2:30-4:30 - Short Program & Installation: a brief overview of Anar's Expressive Arts Unit, followed by open studio time for audiences to come and go, as they experience an interactive, immersive image-video-sound installation focused on Anar's work — with refreshments + live oud music!

Please register at healingtohope.org for any of these opportunities.

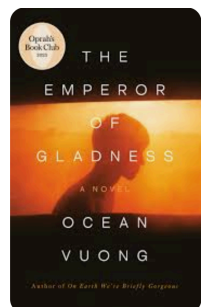
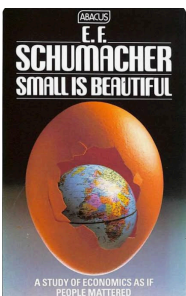
Welcome To The Hope Book Club

Join us on **Sunday, September 13, at 6:00 p.m.** for our annual Silverwood Park Potluck/Picnic!! 4200 Silverwood Park Rd, St Anthony, MN to discuss: *The Emperor of Gladness*, by Ocean Vuong "Ocean Vuong returns with an achingly beautiful novel about chosen family, unexpected friendship, and the stories we tell ourselves in order to survive."

www.Everand.com

Oct. 11: *Small is Beautiful, Economics as if People Mattered*, E. F. Schumacher. "... makes the kind of common sense that could help the survival of life on earth become at least a decent possibility." *Liberation*

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



President's Report

Some Things You Never Forget

Years ago, I was on my way to visit a friend. I had never been to her home before, and she lived about 25 miles from my home in Uptown. As I became increasingly concerned that I was headed in the wrong direction, I stopped at a gas station to ask for help.

Unfortunately, the clerk was unfamiliar with the area. Instead, he pointed me toward a pay phone at the back of the store. This was, of course, before cell phones were everywhere - and well before GPS could calmly reroute me.

Growing anxious, I called my friend. But she did not know the area I was traveling through, and she had no map nearby to guide me. By then, I was beside myself. Being lost is one of my least favorite and most vulnerable feelings, and as we talked, I began to waver between anger and tears.

My friend suggested that I drive a little farther and call her again if I was still lost. There was only one problem: I was completely out of quarters. With no clear answer and no obvious path forward, I hung up the phone. Just then, a stranger approached from behind and placed a handful of change on the counter beside me.

I was awestruck by the gesture - and perhaps a little embarrassed that someone had overheard my plight. I protested and asked the stranger to keep their change, but they simply smiled and walked away.

It was an ordinary moment of grace. Yet in that moment, it felt extraordinary.

That simple act washed over me like a wave of calm. Somehow, it reassured me that everything would be all right and that I would find my way to my friend's house. And I did - about 12 minutes later.

We have been talking in church recently about these ordinary moments of grace, and many of us have shared our own experiences. That seems fitting, because God's grace is at the very heart of our faith.

So, what exactly is grace? If you go to Christianity.com, you will find Episcopal priest and theology teacher Justin Holcomb explain, "Grace is the opposite of karma, which is about getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve and not getting what you do deserve." Indeed, God's Grace is love for the unlovable, unconditional care and generosity toward a person who does not deserve it.

How, then, do we experience God's grace through other people? The dictionary describes a gracious person as cordial, affable, tactful, and kind. I tend to think of grace as the patience and forgiving nature of a good friend or spouse - someone who knows our weaknesses, makes room for our foibles, and loves us through them.

A gracious person embodies gratitude and appreciation. They are merciful and compassionate. They take care not to wound others with careless words or thoughtless actions. Grace often appears not in grand gestures, but in the quiet decision to treat another person with tenderness.

The idea of grace is not confined to one tradition. In Judaism, grace may be understood as a freely given expression of affection, mercy, and compassion. In Chinese philosophical traditions, grace can be associated with empathy, especially compassion for those who are suffering or oppressed. Across cultures and faiths, grace calls us beyond judgment and toward mercy.

Scripture, of course, offers many powerful references to grace. Two passages have stood out to me:

"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

As imperfect human beings, we need God's grace. Our world could use much more grace these days, too. Perhaps that was what the stranger ahead of me in the coffee shop drive-thru was thinking when they paid for my coffee recently. I had done nothing to earn a free cup of coffee that morning, but what a pure gift it was to receive one. It was another ordinary moment of grace.

As the season changes, I hope each of us will continue to notice God's love reflected in these everyday encounters. May we recognize grace when it is offered to us, receive it with gratitude, and become instruments of grace in the lives of others.

Holcomb writes: "We live in a world of earning, deserving, and merit, which results in judgment. That is why everyone wants and needs grace. Judgment kills. Only grace makes us alive."

May the grace of the risen Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Kelly Brooks, Congregational President

Treasurer's Report for July 2026

July 2026		58% of year				
	July Actual	Jan - July YTD Actual	YTD Budget (58% of Total)	Amount Over / (Under)	Variance	Full Year Budget
Income			.			
1500100 Giving	\$ 34,387	\$ 378,747	\$ 359,634	\$ 19,113	5%	\$ 616,516
1500300 Rental Income	\$ 24,375	\$ 97,881	\$ 94,588	\$ 3,294	3%	\$ 162,150
1500400 Interest	\$ 1,656	\$ 12,305	\$ 8,750	\$ 3,555	41%	\$ 15,000
Total Income	\$ 60,418	\$ 488,933	\$ 462,972	\$ 25,961	6%	\$ 793,666
Total Expenses	\$ (74,949)	\$ (498,680)	\$ (462,972)	\$ (35,708)	8%	\$ (793,666)
Net Operating Income	\$ (14,531)	\$ (9,747)	\$ -	\$ (9,747)		\$ -

July Income was \$60.4K or about 9% under budget...an expected drop off from the unusually strong June which was 56% over budget. Year-to-Date (YTD) Income was \$488.9K which is over budget by 6%. This continues to be driven by solid Giving which is 5% over budget YTD. We are also seeing some positive results in our parking income, the result of some great efforts to better manage our monthly parking users.

Expenses in July were 8% below budget and showed some very promising results in the Administration and Operations expense categories after these have been running high much of the year. It's worth noting that July was one of our two months of the year with three bi-weekly pay periods which often drives our bottom-line expenses unfavorably. Keeping total expenses for the month below budget is a great achievement. YTD Expenses are still over budget, but by a manageable 8%.

Although our bottom-line Net Operating Income was \$14.5K unfavorable for July, YTD we are just \$9.7K unfavorable...driven by the strong results last month. All in all, these are encouraging financial results for our church. Thanks for your continued support.

Mark Nelson, Treasurer

Plans for the North Star Sustainable Living Festival Continue to Evolve

A poster for the North Star Sustainable Living Festival. The background is a dark olive green with a lighter green border. At the top left is a logo of a stylized sun with rays and a human figure. To its right, the text reads "NORTH STAR SUSTAINABLE LIVING Festival" in a mix of sans-serif and script fonts, followed by the tagline "Sharing, Celebrating Caring." Below this, a dark green banner contains the date, time, and location: "October 10th, 2026 | 9am - 6pm | 601 13th Ave SE, Mpls". The main body of text describes the festival's purpose: inviting local artisans, growers, educators, small businesses, non-profits, and community organizations to share their talents, knowledge, and passion for sustainable living. It then describes the festival as a vibrant gathering for exchanging ideas, sharing skills, and making connections, featuring handcrafted goods, earth-friendly products, interactive workshops, demonstrations, and music by Mac & Cheese. A call to action asks people to join in bringing the festival to life. A dark green box at the bottom contains the text "VENDOR AND WORKSHOP APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW" and a link "https://linktr.ee/NSSLF", accompanied by a QR code. At the very bottom, logos for the University of Lutheran Church of Hope, East Bank Neighborhoods, and Sunny Day Earth Solutions are displayed, along with a note that the festival is made possible by a grant through the Good Neighbor Fund.

**NORTH STAR
SUSTAINABLE
LIVING Festival**
Sharing, Celebrating Caring.

October 10th, 2026 | 9am - 6pm | 601 13th Ave SE, Mpls

We invite local artisans, growers, educators, small businesses, non-profits, and community organizations to share their talents, knowledge, and passion for sustainable living.

Together, we'll create a vibrant gathering where ideas are exchanged, skills are shared, and connections take root. From handcrafted goods and earth-friendly products, to interactive workshops and demonstrations, to music performed by Mac & Cheese, your participation will help cultivate a day of **Sharing**, and **Celebrating Caring**.

**Join us in bringing the
North Star Sustainable Living Festival to life!**

**VENDOR AND WORKSHOP
APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW**
<https://linktr.ee/NSSLF>

UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF LUTHERAN HOPE EAST BANK NEIGHBORHOODS SUNNY DAY EARTH SOLUTIONS

Festival made possible by a grant through the Good Neighbor Fund

If you haven't put Saturday, October 10, on your calendar as a good day to be at Hope, do so now. Tons of things will be going on. Lots of ideas and examples on how to live more sustainably. Good people, good music, good food, good times -- a Festival for all! Let your friends and contacts know whether you think they should just attend, should speak, should table, should sell, should volunteer. The more involved YOU are, the more likely you will get the utmost out of this learning and celebrating festival.

Kathy Knudson

Election Integrity

This fall, Hope has two groups working on Election Integrity: The Monarca team and Isaiah members. We want to clarify the mission of each group to avoid confusion. The Monarca group, the Election Protection Team, will be taking the lead within our congregation for election engagement/defense and election results protection. Isaiah, while supporting that effort, is committed to working more long-term in the community, on a wide range of social justice issues into the future and bringing legislative action to these causes.

In the coming weeks, you will be hearing a lot more about the work of these groups, and ways to become involved if you are interested.

For questions or more information contact: John Beane Isaiah Lead, Beth Ubbelohde Monarca Lead.



Staff

Lead Pastor: Rev. Amanda Simons
Pastor: Rev. Maria Anderson-Lippert
Minister of Worship and Music: Paul Stever
Financial Administrator: Catherine Menick
Custodian: Geremew Beshah
Sunday Opener/Closer: Evan Peterson
Interim Church Administrator: Sadie Bakken-Durchslag
Working in Partnership with Lutheran Campus Ministry: Rev. Kate Reuer Welton

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