

August  
2022

# The Samaritan

## Worship Themes

We continue on our worship series based on Rabbi Harold S. Kushner's book *Nine Essential Things I've Learned About Life*.

**August 7** – "Religion Is What You Do, Not What You Believe" / Outdoor Worship (weather permitting) / Communion

**August 14** – "Leave Room for Doubt and Anger in Your Religious Outlook"

**August 21** – "To Feel Better About Yourself, Find Someone to Help"

**August 28** – "Give God the Benefit of the Doubt"



## Outdoor Worship August 7 - 10:00 am (weather permitting)

Join together for worship and holy communion in our outdoor amphitheater with Homeward Bound leading our music. We'll move inside the sanctuary if the weather doesn't cooperate.



We're blessed to hear from Rev. Judith Banya, United Methodist clergy from Minnesota, who returned in 2014 to the remote village of Baiwalla, Sierra Leone, to serve as a missionary to set up a multi-faceted ministry there. She promised God that if she had a chance, she would start a secondary school in her hometown to give other children an opportunity to get a high school education. Her dream has come true, and now consists of a church, school, farm and store.

Good Samaritan UMC Foundation provided funding late last year to create a science lab in the school for the older students, so we're looking forward to hearing her inspiring message in person.



## OUR STAFF

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# Pastor's Page

## A Year In Review



On June 26, 2022, we had our Ministry All Church Conference to recognize the end of the program year, which loosely follows the school year. This was a great time of looking back on the year while also sharing exciting plans for what lies ahead. This edition of our newsletter contains summaries of these reports by various staff members, so I commend them to you.

The Minnesota Annual Conference asks all congregations to focus on what we know as the "Gospel Imperatives." The three gospel imperatives are to 1) Grow in Love of God and Neighbor (*based on the Great Commandment in Matthew 22:37-40*), 2) Reach New People (*the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20*) and 3) Heal a Broken World (*the Great Proclamation in Luke 4:16-21*).

The importance of these three gospel imperatives is evident in our organizational structure and in the way we carry out our ministries. For example, "Growing in Love of God and Neighbor" has been a primary focus through our worship themes as we have called ourselves back to who we are by looking closely at our vision statement as well as our Good Samaritan beliefs. "Reaching New People" is the primary reason we continue to enhance our online presence and expand our digital ministries. And "Healing a Broken World" is clearly a main motivator for our Missions Team.

At our Administrative All Church Conference in January, I named three priorities: 1) Support Jan in rebuilding our Children, Youth & Family Ministries; 2) Support Christian in our Digital Campus Initiatives; and 3) Continue working on systems and culture here at Good Sam. The reports made by staff during our June meeting illustrate the progress we've made in a relatively short period of time.

While we will continue to strengthen the opportunities named in those first three priorities, our progress thus far enables me to bring into focus two additional priorities: 1) I've applied for a spot in the Leadership Center for Social Justice inaugural cohort at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, which is a nine-month commitment funded through a Lilly Endowment Grant. If selected, I will be using the framework of this program to work with the Missions Team and other key leaders to incorporate a more substantial social justice focus to our ministries at Good Sam; and 2) Entering a time of discernment with our congregation to identify an 8-year strategic plan for what and how we intend to be church by the year 2030.

Psalm 104 talks about God's Spirit renewing the face of the earth. I believe God's Spirit is doing such renewing work right here at Good Samaritan UMC, and it is truly a privilege to be a part of it with you.

In faith and gratitude,

*Pastor Carol*

# Worship Arts & Online Engagement

## Celebrating Progress



**Christian Nielsen**  
(he/him)

**Coordinator of  
Worship Arts &  
Online Engagement**  
[christian@good.org](mailto:christian@good.org)  
952-452-9399

Near the beginning of this past program year, I transitioned from being an independent contractor to being an employee of Good Samaritan, tasked with continuing to produce online worship, to work to enhance in-person worship, and to lead our efforts to become a digitally connected, 21st Century Church. I'm excited by the work we're doing to grow as a congregation into new spaces. While there is still much to do, I'm proud of the things we've achieved.

### In-Person Transition

As many of you know, our sanctuary video system was mostly installed at the beginning of the pandemic. During the pandemic fog, the system wasn't quite completed; it sat for over a year along with our sound system and had multiple problems. Dan Rogers-Green and I worked hard with our vendor to fix the problems and get our system running. As you can see today, it's finally up and running smoothly and reliably. We created a core AV team to meet the needs of in-person worship, which includes Joan Hirsch, Jeff Jelen, Brad Carlin, Dave Knutson, and myself. We're starting to move into the work of developing a vision for our use of images and sound for in-person worship.

### Online Worship

In collaboration with program staff, music staff, and volunteers, we are continuing to produce our online worship as its own distinct worship experience. This service has been cited by the Minnesota Annual Conference as the "gold standard" for online worship, and we still have approximately 70-140 views of our weekly online services since returning to offering in-person services.

### Digital Team

We have formed and are working to grow our Digital Team, which is working to develop online strategies and advise in content creation. Currently the team consists of Dave Knutson, Christina Leenders, Joel Stegner, Pastor Carol, and myself. We welcome new members! Our first objective has been to create our Good Samaritan Online Community Facebook group, which is a way we can engage, converse, and communicate as a community, and provide a space for new ways to be church. We're at 68 members. Please join us as we continue to grow this community.

### What's Next

- Expanding AV & Digital Teams
- Continue building our Facebook Online Community
- Expand Digital Footprint through other platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and website
- Digital Outreach & Marketing- we're creating good things in our digital space, and we will be working to expand our outreach in the online space

### How You Can Help

- Engage in Online Community FB Group
- React and Share our Facebook Page Content
- Consider Joining AV and/or Digital Teams
- Volunteers assist in online production
- Volunteers to Read for Online Worship

I am so grateful to be doing this work with all of you, and I look forward to what the future holds as we continue this journey. I have a strong faith that we will continue to grow into the church we are becoming. Thank you all!



# Music



**Paolo Debuque**  
**Chancel Choir**  
**Director &**  
**Music Coordinator**  
**paolo@good.org**  
**952-452-9397**

## **Music is back in full swing at Good Sam!**

This past year was a year of ramping back into “normal,” and we are pleased to have almost fully arrived!

To recap the past year's big events:

1. Rally Day: We hosted a string orchestra during worship with the Chancel Choir supporting with prerecorded music. Homeward Bound played after worship during an ice cream social.
2. Advent: We piloted a new annual offering, a collaborative Lessons and Carols service involving all the church's musical groups, doubling as a fundraiser for music programming. It was a successful first iteration, and we're looking forward to continuing to offer it!
3. Advent: Also in advent, the Chancel Choir recorded Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, featuring a professional harpist and masterfully recorded and edited by Christian Nielsen.

In the spring, the Chancel Choir returned to singing live on Sunday mornings! Their contributions included:

1. Easter: Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* with guest baritone Adam Reinwald and a professional string orchestra.
2. AAPI Month: Another pilot program, bringing in multiple Asian-American/Pacific Islander musicians over the month of May to share their experiences with us through music.
3. Final Sunday: A festive Chancel Choir and Homeward Bound collaboration.



This being my first year at Good Sam, I've been so happy and grateful for the opportunity to help bring music back to full strength, as well as having the space to try out new things!

The main goals for next year are:

1. Children and Youth programming! In collaboration with Jan, we'd like to reintroduce music activities for children and youth at Good Sam, starting with a fun project in Advent for all interested (stay tuned!)
2. Develop successful programming: Build on the past year's successes with Lessons and Carols and AAPI month, and continue looking for opportunities for thoughtful innovation.
3. Grow our numbers! We are always looking for more choir singers, bell ringers and band members! If you know anyone looking to dip their toes or hop back in, please email me at [paolo@good.org](mailto:paolo@good.org).

Thanks for a great year, Good Samaritans! I'm excited to embark on Year 2 with you all.

# Congregational Care

## Congregational Care Comment: Highlights from the Past Year

As some of you witnessed in person at the All-Church Conference on Sunday June 26, I and our other ministry leaders were able to share a summary of our ministry over the past year. In case you missed it, I want to share with you some highlights from the past year of Congregational Care.

**Nikki Holm (she/her)**  
**Board Certified Chaplain**  
**Director of Congregational Care**

**nikki@good.org**  
**952-452-9396**

**Office Hours (Part-time, 15hrs/week):**  
**Wednesdays 9-4pm and variable**  
**(or by appointment) Tuesdays**  
**and Fridays**



Congregational Care, as we transitioned from fully virtual to partially virtual, included a variety of small group ministry opportunities as well as stand alone events. Some small group invitations have been seasonal and some are on-going as they weave themselves into the fabric of our lives here at Good Sam. The hope is to provide a multitude of ways for people to be connected to and grow in connection with one another, themselves, and God.

With that intent in mind, let's take a look at Congregational Care - A Year In Review: July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022:

### On-Going Small Group Offerings:

- *The Compassion Collective*: Meets the 3rd Friday of every month from 3:30-4:45pm both in-person and via Zoom simultaneously
- *Caregivers' Support Group*: Meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 6:00-7:00pm in-person only (via Zoom in case of emergencies)

### Short-Term Small Group Offerings:

- *Remembering Your Story: Creating Your Own Spiritual Autobiography*: A 10-week series held in-person at Good Sam during the Fall of 2021
- *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*: An 8-week book discussion held over Zoom during the Spring of 2022

### Stand Alone Events:

- July 27, 2021: Celebration of Life for and on behalf of the Tuesday Morning Bible Study in honor of those members they had lost since the beginning of the pandemic
- December 21, 2021: Blue Christmas Worship: A Service of Hope



Amidst all of this, my ministry has included pastoral visits, funeral/memorial service support, on-going accompaniment to the Caring Ministers, sporadic preaching, and regular contributions to the prayer life of the community through the weekly prayer chain and weekly pastoral prayers for virtual worship. As a reminder, I have been asked to care for the soul of this congregation and I am doing my best to fulfill that high responsibility. It has been a meaningful year and I look forward to finding ways to continue to connect, learn, and flourish with you all in the year to come!

# Congregational Care

## Upcoming Maternity Leave Details

As most of you know, I am due to have a baby on August 20. Depending on when he or she decides to make their arrival, I plan to then take a leave from my duties here at Good Sam from approximately mid-August to mid-November. During this time, other staff members and volunteers within the congregation will be fulfilling the majority of my responsibilities. A few changes to note are listed below; otherwise, assume our normal adult ministry offerings will carry on per usual.

- There will be no gathering of The Compassion Collective in August; The Compassion Collective will resume meeting in September as an in-person only offering for the remainder of my time away, led by volunteers from the group.
- Caregivers Support Group will continue to meet monthly with leadership provided by Jan in August and Pastor Carol thereafter.
- Please send all weekly prayer chain requests to Pastor Carol by the end of the day on Tuesdays.
- Pastoral care needs currently being divided by Pastor Carol and me will be addressed in the interim by Pastor Carol only. Please send them directly to her at [carol@good.org](mailto:carol@good.org).

I hope you all have a lovely fall and I look forward to getting reacquainted upon my return!!

## The Church Library is Open!

Feel free to come in and enjoy the library any time. Stay awhile to enjoy children's and adult books in our comfortable space, or take them home with easy check-out. Simply enter your name, book title, and the date in the journal provided. When returning the book, just cross your entry out. We are also looking for new recruits to the Library Committee. Contact Vicki Dunn at 651-249-6948 or [victoria.dunn@q.com](mailto:victoria.dunn@q.com).



## Prayer for August

Gracious and Loving God, We thank you once again for the blessings that summer has brought. We thank you for increased sunshine and time outdoors, for opportunities to explore, relax, and restore together and alone. Help us to savor all such sweet moments that we are gifted for the remainder of this season. Let them fill us up and do us good.

God of accompaniment, be with those of us amidst transitions in these weeks. Transitions back to work or to new work. Transitions back to school or to a new school. Transitions away to new homes, care facilities, or dormitories. Transitions to the quiet of becoming empty nesters. Transitions to becoming new parents or parents again. Transitions to life without a loved one whether through separation or through death. Transitions due to changes in health, either mental or physical.

Holy Spirit, be with us amidst all of these as well as with us in all of the little and not-so-little changes not here named. As we experience such shifts, help us to honor our grief and fear as well as instill in us your hope and peace.

In all aspects of life, O God, help us to stay aligned with you and with our own spirits. Help us to remember your truths that we are never alone, that we are loved wholly and completely, that we are yours and you are ours. Help us to call upon our inner reservoirs of strength, grace, courage, and compassion whenever and as often as we need them. Lead us to continue to show up for one another, near and far, with benevolence, respect, and love.

God of light, we pray all of these things in your holy name, Amen.



# Children, Youth & Family Ministries



Jan M. Russell (she/her)  
Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries  
[jan@good.org](mailto:jan@good.org)  
952-452-9398



## Jr. and Sr. High Youth Group August 17

Let's kick off youth group with a trip to Valley Fair! Good Sam will pay the admission fee for you and a friend, you bring money for snacks.

We will meet at the Good Sam lower parking lot at 1:30pm and be back to Good Sam about 9:30pm. Transportation provided!

Please sign up by August 8 at [www.signupgenius.com/go/4090A4AAEAA2CA31-valley](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090A4AAEAA2CA31-valley)



## VBS Recap: 57 Kids!

Vacation Bible School "Food Truck Party" is a wrap!! What a great four days. Fifty-seven kids attended and made 200 Sandwiches for Dignity Center, 200 Kindness Kits, and 30+ Birthday Bags for VEAP. Our friends at VEAP stopped by with their food truck (their mobile food pantry) and told us all about this awesome service. They took all the Birthday Bags back to their warehouse.



We learned fun new songs and dance moves. "Manna in the Morning" was a particular favorite. At Science we learn more about the Rain Garden on the Good Sam grounds and planted pollinator plants to take home. We dug into stories of the Bible that food played a big part in: the wealthy person's banquet, the widow and the endless oil, manna and quail, and Jesus feeds the 5000.

It was a fantastic week. The crafts! So many fun, messy, hands-on art! Everyone had a great time!

Thanks to our amazing volunteers:  
Krisalyn Cook, Kayden Scharping, Samantha Tietz, Zoe Wyatt, Dave Knutson, JoAnn Knutson, Betsy Kumagai, Sarah Kumagai, Dean Kraus, Lynda Seitz and Martha Kouatli.



# Children, Youth & Family Ministries



## Children, Youth & Family Ministries A Year of New Connections

### Summer 2021

- We partnered with Hearts and Hammers and painted and landscaped a home in Bloomington, since we were not able to go to Appalachia due to the pandemic.
- VBS 2021 was a joint effort with Hennepin Ave UMC – completely outdoors. It was well received from our families.
- Serve MSP was the first year of a collaborative effort with the Minnesota Annual conference.
- “Popsicles Under the Portico” were well received by our choir family!

### Fall 2021

- Rally Sunday on September 12 included a Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream Truck and the opportunity to make backpack tags.
- Bible Sunday – Bibles were given to our 3-year-olds, our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and our 9<sup>th</sup> graders going into Confirmation. They were hand delivered to the friends who were still not quite comfortable being indoors for worship.
- Our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Drive-Through Mini-Boo had both church friends and neighbors drive through!

### Winter 2021-22

- It was great to be able to have Hanging of the Greens in person after not having this beloved event due to the pandemic in 2020.
- Advent Pageant—COVID-style. Our kiddos dressed up as shepherds and angels and helped tell the nativity story.
- In an effort to keep connected to our young adults, care packages were sent in December and a Valentine’s Day card was sent in February.
- In January of this year, we revived in-person Sunday School for our elementary-age and younger kiddos, and re-opened the nursery.

### Spring 2022

- A very well-received family event, the Ukrainian Egg Day was well attended and a great way for our families to start to reconnect.
- Our Easter Craft Extravaganza featured several craft stations and a selfie station that resulted in some great pictures and fun take-home crafts.
- The Confirmands, to conclude a year of study and meetings with mentors, went on a fun and interesting field trip to Lakewood Cemetery. We confirmed five students and gave two students certificates of completion.
- Our Senior recognition Sunday featured a small video of our nine graduating High School Seniors. Gifts were given to them all.



# Missions

## Missions Annual Report - May 2021 through May 2022

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Karen Bach, Brian Boysen, Pat Deckas Becerra, Vicki Dunn, Lynn Johnson, JoAnn Knutson, Roy Moeller, & Janet Van Benthuyssen. Liaisons: Tony Branch, Jane Heimerl, Steve Kumagai, & Sue Ohman. Committee co-chairs for 2021–2022: Brian and Pat.

Thanks to the generosity of Good Samaritan's members, the Missions Team was able to give over \$40,000, countless volunteer hours, and in-kind donations to many charities and individuals. Your Mission Team has been very busy helping people deal with *homelessness, hunger, education, and inclusiveness* - our key issues. We've been using social media successfully to involve the community with our various collections, so many non-members also contribute to our work. We focus on these six main areas:

**HELPING REFUGEES** – We delivered 8 beds and many furnishings to one family of 13 from Myanmar. We've been helping 3 Afghan families with furniture, food, clothes, and furnishings over several months; we are currently "befriending" one Afghan family of 7 with weekly visits (grocery shopping, English lessons). Refugee Services from the MN Council of Churches vets and facilitates this. We sent \$2,225 to help Ukraine via UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief).

**EDUCATION:** We gave \$5,500 to these groups: the Wesley Campus Foundation at the U of M, Joyce Preschool, A Better Chance (ABC), Stonebridge World School, and Camphor UMC Scholarship Fund. We're involved in various ways with STONEBRIDGE WORLD SCHOOL: Four Good Sam members volunteer weekly to run the Stonebridge library; we delivered over six carloads of furnishings, along with gift cards, to needy families there; we used \$8,661 for our Stonebridge Family Rent Support program - ALL 17 Stonebridge families we helped are independent of our help now!

**AFRICAN EDUCATION:** We wrote and obtained a \$3,095 grant from the Good Samaritan Foundation for a science lab in a school in Baiwalla, Sierra Leone. We also collected about 400 books and educational games to also send to that school which the Hennepin Ave UMC started. We currently want to set up various scholarships for girls at \$310 each to ensure that they can attend school.

**FOOD SHELVES:** We donated \$6,300 to various groups: VEAP, Joyce Uptown Food Shelf, Feed My Starving Children, Meals on Wheels, and Brooklyn Center UMC Food Pantry; during MN Foodshare we donated 344 pounds of food and \$10,405. We also gave them 12 cases of diapers during our diaper drive. Members regularly pack food for Feed My Starving Children (FMSC);

**HOUSING:** We gave \$7,000 to various housing groups: Simpson Housing services, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, Hearts and Hammers, and Emma Norton Services (for women and families experiencing homelessness). We also donated \$2,000 to the MN Annual Conference Love Offering. Many Good Sam members and the community donated about 60 bags and boxes of furnishings and clothing to distribute to needy families and refugees. We created 26 UMCOR buckets for emergency relief.

**INCLUSIVITY - LGBTQIA+:** We hosted a showing of the film "They Know Not What They Do" that focuses on the Supreme Court legalizing marriage equality. Good Samaritan also served as a host site for a live-stream program for the Spring Gathering of the Minnesota Reconciling Ministries. We set up a booth in Loring Park for the PRIDE festival with information on the reconciling congregations.

# Missions

## Hearts & Hammers Program Day Saturday, August 27, 2022

Hearts & Hammers is a local non-profit organization providing free exterior painting and maintenance assistance for income-qualified homeowners across the Twin Cities. The home we will be working on is in south Bloomington. Check in will be 8:00am. We'll have coffee and donuts!



To register for the Good Samaritan project, please **contact Brian Boysen: (952) 937-0624, (612) 220-3795, or bteambackup@earthlink.net.**

Please provide the following information: name, contact information and work preference.



### FMSC

Volunteer at the Chanhassen site (18932 Lake Dr E):

**Wednesday, August 10 from 9:00-10:45am**

Sign up with Jane Heimerl at [jane.heimerl@yahoo.com](mailto:jane.heimerl@yahoo.com) by August 8.

## Celebrating PRIDE



Minnesota Reconciling Congregations participated in the Twin Cities PRIDE March on Sunday June 26 and staffed a booth in Loring Park on June 25 and 26, distributing more than 12,000 peace medallions. Peace to you all.

## Thank You!



Thank you for your support of the VEAP Back-to-School Drive. Check out the Good Sam Highlights & Updates this month for a summary of the results.

## Rev. Judith Banya in Minnesota

Rev. Judith Banya will be speaking Monday, August 8 from 7:00-8:30pm for a cake and coffee reception at Hennepin Avenue UMC, 511 Groveland Ave. Minneapolis. Her topic is "The Blessing of School Sponsorships in Baiwalla." For families living on \$2 per day, the sponsorship program has been a Godsend to help pay the \$310 tuition for school, which includes lunch every day. Banya will describe the school and resources Minnesota United Methodists have donated, and how they are used to create hope and a better future.

# Finance Team

## The Dog Days of Summer

The table shows Good Samaritan's finances for the month of June and June year-to-date. June 2022 current month Income of \$29,645 was below Plan by \$3,864. Due to a three-payroll month, expenses were higher than Plan, resulting in a New Income of (\$43,941).

We have reached what the Finance Committee calls the "dog days of summer" - where members go on vacation, up to the cabin, etc. As you know, the vast amount of Good Samaritan's expenses are fixed (personnel and building/property) - so there is still a need for income to support the church.

Thanks for keeping your pledge current so we can better manage the church's finances throughout the year. To give online, go to [good.org/give](http://good.org/give).

Favorable (Unfavorable)	Current Month of June		June YTD	
	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan
Income	\$29,645	\$33,509	\$359,652	\$396,772
Expenses	\$73,586	\$67,777	\$370,050	\$310,093
Net Income	(\$43,941)	(\$34,628)	(\$10,398)	\$18,902

# Good Samaritans Doing Good

## USA Games Recap

Biza Peterson attended the 2022 USA Games as part of Team Minnesota! The USA Games, held in Orlando, FL, united more than 5,500 athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean. The USA Games feature 19 Olympic-style team and individual sports.

This was Biza's first competition, and she won medals in the 50 meter backstroke, 50 meter breaststroke, and in the 4x50 relay. Congratulations, Biza!



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## Live Like Lauren Memorial Scholarship Established



The Live Like Lauren Memorial Scholarship was recently established at Boston College to honor the life and memory of Lauren Washam Bradshaw. Lauren graduated from Boston College in 2005, where she majored in Political Science with a minor in Fine Arts. For Lauren, life was all about people - friends, family, strangers, everyone - and this scholarship intends to embody Lauren's character and values.

Boston College charges its students and alumni to live as men and women for others. Lauren embodied that calling daily. With the establishment of this scholarship, her parents, Jack and Ware Washam, celebrate Lauren's curiosity about the world and the people around her, her passion for service, her endless humor and wit, and her unbounded love for friends and family.

Lauren grew up in Edina and was very active at Good Samaritan United Methodist Church. In June 2019, Lauren was diagnosed with sarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer. She met each challenge with grace, strength and positivity, and while her life was too brief, she was an inspiration to many.

The goal with this memorial scholarship is to build a legacy that will impact lives far into the future, a positive movement that will be the greatest testament to Lauren's loving spirit. The scholarship, once funded, will be an endowed scholarship that continues in perpetuity.

More information, along with an inspiring video introducing the scholarship that shares more about the spirit of Lauren may be viewed here: [www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/alumni/sites/live-like-lauren-memorial-scholarship.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/alumni/sites/live-like-lauren-memorial-scholarship.html)





Good Samaritan United Methodist Church  
5730 Grove Street  
Edina, MN 55436

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## OUR VISION

INSPIRING  
Joyful Faith

BUILDING  
a Loving  
Community

SERVING  
Neighbors Near  
and Far

## WORSHIP AT GOOD SAMARITAN

**Sunday Worship** 10:00 am (In-Person and Online)

**Nursery** Infants - Age 3

**Children's  
Sunday School** Children's Sunday School is held during  
worship, following the Passing of the Peace.

**Youth Sunday  
School** Postponed until Fall.

## GOOD SAMARITAN OFFICE HOURS

**Monday-Friday** 9:00 am - 1:00 pm  
**Phone** (952) 929-0049

# Newsletter Extra - Beware of Scams

*Following is a word of caution from Pastor Carol:*

Scammers are targeting members of our congregation again with messages that appear to be from me. These interactions can appear legitimate and result in you being a victim of fraud, and are common in many churches. Here's an example of a recent interaction between scammers and a member of our congregation:

"Hi (name), are you available? I need a favor, text me back when you get my text.  
– Rev. Carol Zaagsma"

After the congregation member replied, the following text was received:

"I would like to spend \$300. I need you to get 3 iTunes cards of \$100 denominations total \$300. When you get the cards, take them off the paper pack, take pictures of the code numbers on the cards and send directly to the nurse at the hospital via julesemily02@gmail.com. I will get the physical cards from you tomorrow morning and reimburse you. Make sure you

indicate that the cards are from me. Many thanks."

After engaging with the scammers (who were posing as me), our congregation member received another message saying I needed another \$500. Upon calling the text message phone number, the number rang but then had a recorded message saying "this number is no longer in service or the line is not in use."

Anyone can get swept up in a scam like this. Please know that I will **never** reach out to you by text or email asking for money to be wired or gift cards to be purchased for me or anyone else. If there is an opportunity for you to help with a need, you will hear a broad appeal from me directly on Sunday mornings (such as with the VEAP school supply drive or opportunity to bring clothes for a refugee family needing seasonal clothes) or through public communications such as the newsletter or Wednesday Highlights. Please give me a call to verify before taking action on a seemingly private request such as the text messages above.

# Newsletter Extra - Beware of Scams

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"I would like to spend \$300. I need you to get 3 iTunes cards of \$100 denominations total \$300. When you get the cards, take them off the paper pack, take pictures of the code numbers on the cards and send directly to the nurse at the hospital via julesemily02@gmail.com. I will get the physical cards from you tomorrow morning and reimburse you. Make sure you

indicate that the cards are from me. Many thanks."

After engaging with the scammers (who were posing as me), our congregation member received another message saying I needed another \$500. Upon calling the text message phone number, the number rang but then had a recorded message saying "this number is no longer in service or the line is not in use."

Anyone can get swept up in a scam like this. Please know that I will **never** reach out to you by text or email asking for money to be wired or gift cards to be purchased for me or anyone else. If there is an opportunity for you to help with a need, you will hear a broad appeal from me directly on Sunday mornings (such as with the VEAP school supply drive or opportunity to bring clothes for a refugee family needing seasonal clothes) or through public communications such as the newsletter or Wednesday Highlights. Please give me a call to verify before taking action on a seemingly private request such as the text messages above.