

December
2023

The Samaritan

Worship Themes

Our Advent worship series is based on several African American Spirituals

December 3 -
"Mary Had a Baby" /
Communion

December 10 -
"Rise Up, Shepherd,
and Follow"

December 17 -
"Children, Go Where I
Send Thee" /
Christmas Pageant

December 24 -
10:00 a.m. "Go Tell It
On the Mountain"

Christmas Eve -
4:00 & 9:00 p.m. .
"This Little Light of
Mine"

December 31 -
"Star Words"



2023 Holiday Worship Calendar

Lessons and Carols

Saturday, December 9
in person at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 17
during in-person worship at 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24

Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m. to conclude our Advent series
(pre-recorded online worship available as early as 6:00 a.m.)

Online Christmas Eve available at noon or any time thereafter

Family Christmas Eve in-person worship at 4:00 p.m.

Candlelight Christmas Eve in-person worship at 9:00 p.m.

New Year's Eve

Sunday, December 31
Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.

OUR STAFF

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Pastor's Page

All earth is waiting...to see the Promised One.

These are the opening words of one of my favorite Advent hymns, *Toda la Tierra (All Earth Is Waiting)*, UMH #210. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." During Advent, we find ourselves waiting for the "arrival" of the baby Jesus, or the "coming" of Christ among us...anxiously waiting for Christmas Day.

A big part of waiting involves getting ready. Children might prepare a list of presents they hope Santa will bring. Adults might send out invitations to social gatherings they are hosting. And, of course, there is shopping for gifts.

Sometimes in the frenzy of getting ready we forget what it is we are waiting for. We see Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day, or perhaps the weekend before, or the weekend after...whatever date we will gather with family or friends...as a stressful deadline for which we will have to have all the shopping and baking and cooking and cleaning done. And in the midst of the countdown, we forget about the Christ in Christmas.

We forget that we are waiting for "Emmanuel," or "God with us." We forget that we are waiting to see the "Promised One." We focus on the frenzy and stress around us, and lose sight of the real reason for the season.

Who will be today's prophet, announcing the coming of the "Prince of Peace?" Are we ready as a church to be such a prophet? And since "I am the church; you are the church; we are the church together," I must ask, are you and I ready to be such prophets?

I think the world is looking for such a prophetic voice to cut through the frenzy and the stress we create for ourselves and one another. The words of the hymn continue...*All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty...it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.* I think the world is looking for a different way...a way out of the frenzy and stress... a world in which no one is bound and struggling anymore.

This Advent season during worship we will join in God's chorus while crying out for justice and searching for the truth. We'll do this by taking a closer look at a few African American Spirituals and learning what we can from their stories of origin to understand better how we can earnestly seek *true liberty*...for all.

I hope you will join me on this journey as we gather online or in person each Sunday leading up to Christmas. *All earth is waiting...to see the Promised One.* While we are waiting this year, let's prepare to show the world the true liberty that comes through Christ.



Peace,

Pastor Carol

Welcome New Members

Get to Know Our Newest Members

What a joy to welcome four new members during in-person worship November 12, 2023. Each of our new members has an interesting life story to tell, so be sure to strike up a conversation next time you see them at church.

Wally Norton transferred his membership from Mizpah United Church of Christ, which is also where he and his wife raised their kids.



He grew up in Central Illinois and went to college at the University of Illinois for electrical engineering. The day after he graduated, he was commissioned in the Navy, and the day after that he was married! After the Navy, Wally enjoyed a 36-year career with Honeywell here in

Minnesota, and really enjoys singing in the Chancel Choir under Paolo's musical leadership.

Luth Tenorio was born in the city of Catbalogan in the province of Samar, Philippines. Her father converted from the Roman Catholic Church to the Presbyterian Church, which made her family the only protestant family living in the area.



After obtaining her baccalaureate degree in nursing, Luth came to the United States for an internship program at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, which is part of New York University. After her master's degree

studies at the University of Indiana, Luth then began teaching at Mankato State College. She earned her doctorate and eventually moved to Seattle, Washington to serve as Seattle University's Dean of the College of Nursing. She now lives in Friendship Village and often comes with her friend Carol Smith. Luth transferred her membership from Bellevue Presbyterian Church in Bellevue, Washington.

Loretta Smith grew up in Saint Paul and has roots in the Baptist and Presbyterian Churches, and reflects on learning different understandings of God along the way - from fear to love and forgiveness. Loretta comes from a family of singers, but finds her passion in teaching children as she has served in previous churches as a Deacon and Elder in charge of Sunday School.



Loretta is the Resident Director of Edina ABC (A Better Chance). She comes to Good Samaritan UMC by way of Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church in Saint Paul, and is already helping out in the AV booth on Sunday mornings among other ministries here.

Dale Braddock, Jr. is returning to the church he was raised in. A smile emerges as he recalls and talks about his confirmation class photo downstairs on display in the music wing. Dale enjoys attending church once again with his mom, Shirley, and has transferred his membership to Good Sam from Freshwaters UMC in Princeton, Minnesota.



Worship Arts & Online Engagement

Advent Worship

As we enter the Advent season, this becomes a busy time in the church. I'm looking forward to hearing so much wonderful music, through both in-person and online worship with the incredibly talented musicians of Good Sam.

We've already recorded some beautiful music

for online Advent and Christmas Eve worship. I love the collaborations that this season brings across our many teams.

For this Advent, we're collaborating to create a component to our wor-



ship that acknowledges that this season may not be joyful for everyone. I'm so grateful we're creating space for those feelings, as well as the joy and anticipation this season brings. This fall and into January, I'm focusing much of my energy on improving our use of sanctuary technology as well as creating processes for both in-person and online worship technology. If it seems like I'm hiding in the AV both a lot, that's why. I'm very grateful to all of our volunteers who have learned or are learning to work in our AV worship ministry. I'm also grateful to the Memorials Committee and all they've done to support the technological ministries of this church. I wish everyone an Advent and Christmas season filled with wonder.

Please share in our Good Samaritan Online Community on Facebook

One of the purposes of our private Facebook group is to provide a space to come together and interact as community in an online space. Is there an event you think the community might want to know about? Is there an article you read that might be of interest? Is there a meme that tickled your funny bone (and is appropriate for our group)? Is there a prayer or intention you would like to raise up? A thought

you

Christian Nielsen
(he/him)

Coordinator of
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might want to share? A photo of beauty you would like to share? In order to maintain our safe space, all posts are screened by one of our group admins before they appear to the group. Our most important guidelines are that we be kind to each other and keep what's shared in our groups private unless otherwise indicated by the poster. Please feel free to join the conversation, or start a new one by posting in the group. We'd love to hear from you. If you haven't joined us yet, please scan the QR code below with your smartphone camera, or go to: www.facebook.com/groups/goodsamaritanumc/.



Congregational Care

Faith?!



Darkness, sadness, oppression
long days, longer nights, longer yet years
where is God?
promised, prophecies, hope
waiting,
wondering, doubting
faith

angelic visitor, pregnant, me?!
fear, confusion, rejection
caesar, taxes, census
dusty journey, donkey
anxious exhaustion
sorry, no
God provides
faith

Behold!
Good tidings!
Great Joy!
baby, manger, king!
faith

this, this is Christ the King
silent night, holy night, heavenly peace
o come all ye faithful, o come let us adore Him

and you?
love? hope? joy? peace?
faith?

wishing we could wrap these up and give them to you
but the best we can do is give you the story
and pray you make it your own

thinking of you, you are a part of us

Jim Beard
(he/him)
Director of
Congregational Care
jim@good.org
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Congregational Care



Blue Christmas Options

This Advent, Good Samaritan will be offering a new approach to our Blue Christmas service. Rather than one worship opportunity for those who may be experiencing sadness, loss, or anything else which may be dampening your Christmas cheer, the invitation remains open to acknowledge this each Sunday or any other day you might drop in.

A blue Christmas tree has been set up alongside the tall sanctuary tree, with scratch off ornaments on a table beside it. You are invited to write a sorrow, the name of a loved one, or a prayer for the world and add your special ornament to the blue Christmas tree. **You may do this as often as you'd like.** A member of the Caring Ministries Team will also be available by the tree following each worship to take prayer requests and pray individually with folks.

For those who prefer a worship experience dedicated solely to grief this season, there are several "Longest Night" or "Blue Christmas" worship services available at our neighboring United Methodist churches which we encourage you to attend...

Monday, Dec. 18 at 6:00 p.m.
Lake Harriet UMC (4901 Chowen Ave, Mpls.)

Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 6:00 p.m.
Eden Prairie UMC (15050 Scenic Heights Rd)

Tuesday Bible Study Christmas Social

All are invited to the annual Tuesday Bible Study Christmas Social on Tuesday, December 5, at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room. We'll enjoy time to chat, be together, and savor some sweets. Come and enjoy fellowship as we celebrate Advent.



Thursday Afternoon Book Group Holiday Luncheon



We are planning our Holiday Luncheon for Thursday, December 14 at 12:30 p.m. (note earlier start time). Please bring a dish to share (appetizer, salad, etc.) and a favorite Christmas reading. Contact Vicki Dunn with questions - victoria.dunn@q.com or 651-249-6948.

Pickleball at Good Sam

If you are an experienced pickleball player, you are welcome to join the players in the Good Samaritan Gym during any of the following sessions:

Mondays – 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Thursdays – 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Saturdays – 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Bring your own paddle. Balls are provided. Contact Robin Strangis with questions - rstrangis12@gmail.com.



Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Hello Good Sam Families!

I wanted to share this great way to have a faith moment at home! As you are decorating your Christmas tree, use this blessing. Then snap a family selfie with your tree and send it to me! (jan@good.org or text to 612-849-6242) I will assemble a collage of all of our trees!

Faith Practice Spotlight:
Christmas Tree Blessing by Traci Smith

In the middle of the hustle and bustle of Advent, take a moment to bless your Christmas tree with these words:

God who created all things, bless this tree as we decorate it and make it a joyful symbol for our home. May its branches remind us of the shelter and shade you provide for us and for many creatures. May its trunk remind us of your strength. May its lights bring us peace. May we remember your gift to us this season, the gift of baby Jesus, Amen.



Children's Project Choir

Now is the perfect time to join us to prepare for Christmas Eve! Children in K-6th Grade are invited to join Children's Choir rehearsals, Wednesdays from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. in the Children's Choir Room, to prepare for singing during Family Christmas Eve Worship on Sunday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m.

Feel free to invite any friends, grandchildren, etc. All are welcome! Sign up at tinyurl.com/GSchildrenschoir.

Questions? Contact Cindy Bergstrom at cindy@good.org. We look forward to singing with you!



Jan M. Russell (she/her)
Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries
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Good Samaritan UMC
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

December 17, 2023 10:00 a.m.
If you would like to participate, this is a no-rehearsal pageant. All ages! Arrive at 9:00 a.m. to be costumed!

Coming in January!
Super Bowl
Sub Sandwich
Fundraiser for ASP



ASP Mission Trip Info Night

January 10, 2024, 6:30 p
Fellowship Hall 

Come learn about our upcoming Mission trip to Appalachia, June 15—23, 2024. This will be Good Sam's 42nd trip!!

Children, Youth and Family Ministries

2nd Annual Family Movie Night!

The Muppet Christmas Carol

Wednesday, December 27, 2023 | 5:00 p.m.
Good Samaritan United Methodist Church

Join us for a free, magical evening!
On Wednesday, December 27, all ages are invited to
a showing of the movie *The Muppet Christmas Carol*.

We will start off with a light dinner at 5:00 p.m. and move to
the Sanctuary for the movie. Kids can get cozy with their pillows,
sleeping bags, and stuffed animals!

We will be collecting donations of socks and cans of soup
to share with our food shelf and shelter partners.



Missions

A Jew, a Muslim, and a Christian Walk into Good Sam!

This could be the start of a bad joke or a horror story, but it isn't. Rather, it is the story of the wonderful ecumenical spirit of our church and our community. As you know, Stonebridge World School, the charter school we have partnered with for over 30 years, hired a young Iranian woman to teach fourth grade. Niyousha arrived a couple months ago and we have assisted her in finding an apartment, stocking the apartment with kitchen materials and furniture, and getting warm clothing. Martha Kouatli, as well as Sue Cleaveland and Kent Holmes, hosted her in their homes until she got an apartment. Niyousha comes from a musical family. Her father played music professionally in Iran and her mother teaches piano. Niyousha plays the violin. However, she had to leave her violin behind. JoAnn posted on Buy Nothing Edina asking if anyone had a violin to loan. A wonderful Jewish woman named Frances did! She hadn't played for many years and thought Niyousha's story spoke to her and wanted to help. They all met at Good Sam on a Sunday afternoon, met each other, shared each other's stories, and exchanged the violin. Niyousha's parents are planning a visit this summer at which time they will bring her violin to her. Truly a season of thanksgiving!

~ David Knutson



Missions



Good Samaritans in Action

Thanks to all for your support and the trust you extend for the work of the Good Samaritan Missions Team. It was a busy November!

- Collecting furniture and furnishings over several days and moving collected items to assist the new teacher and a new para at Stonebridge World School - thank you JoAnn Knutson, Brian Boysen, & more.
- Collecting furniture for the Community Room from a neighborhood family on the move.
- Sending considerably more funding for Richard Ormsby School in Baiwalla, Sierra Leone.
- Working at Feed My Starving Children: On November 8, the Good Samaritan contingent helped the group pack 168 boxes which translates to 36,288 meals and feeds 99 children for a year. Thank you to Jane Heimerl for organizing FMSC, and to all those for packing.
- Delivering Meals on Wheels every month. Thank you Vicki Dunn for organizing;
- Contributing about \$1,000 for Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative.
- Supporting the VEAP Gala and auction fundraiser with items.

It's certainly a time of Thanksgiving and looking forward to the Christmas Season and the Christmas Offering.

~ Brian Boysen & Pat Deckas-Becerra



Reconciling Report

The Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN, national organization) Leadership team met on November 1 to plan and budget for the coming year. Minnesota Reconciling Congregations (MRC, local team) met on Nov 9 to plan and budget.

Good Samaritan budgeted \$800 for 2023 to go to Reconciling, and that amount was contributed as \$400 to MRC and \$400 to RMN in 2023.

MRC meets usually every other month and the next meeting is January 2024. You are always invited to attend the MRC meetings by Zoom. Details are on the MRC website at www.mnrcumc.org.

Questions can be directed to Brian Boysen at bteam@earthlink.net or (952) 937-0624.



Serving Opportunities

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

Wednesday, December 13 - 9:00-10:45 a.m.

Friday, December 15 - 7:00-8:45 p.m.

Sign up with Jane Heimerl at jane.heimerl@yahoo.com by two days before. Space is limited!

Finance

Finance Update

Thank you for your support of our church. The table below reflects our financial state through the end of October. As we are closing out the final two months of our “financial year” at Good Sam, we have an opportunity to either not use our Reserve Funds or less than budgeted (we make up any year-end shortfall with the Reserve Fund). If you have fulfilled your pledge and can give an additional amount (our household did!), that would be much appreciated! Contact Cindy in the office if you have questions, cindy@good.org, or give online at good.org.

	October Actuals	October Plan	Year-to-Date
Income	\$35,912	\$35,938	\$539,217
Expense	\$60,051	\$43,403	\$573,079
Net	\$24,139	(\$37,465)	(\$33,861)

The Good Samaritan Foundation

Many Thanks Continue



The Foundation Board is acknowledging a 52-week high in donations to the three funds of The Foundation (October 2022 to 2023). Total giving has reached \$50,406! The breakdown is:

- Outreach Fund \$6,583
- Evergreen Fund \$26,154
- Cornerstone Fund \$17,669

Besides giving to Good Samaritan’s operating budget directly, The Foundation is a vehicle for onetime gifts or legacy/bequest giving. Monies are conservatively invested to grow and provide continuous funds for future years. If you would like information on legacy giving or would like to let The Foundation or church office know that you have Good Samaritan in your financial plan, please contact Pastor Carol at carol@good.org or 952-452-9395, or Claudia Boysen at claudiaLboysen@gmail.com. Contributions to The Foundation are an investment in the future of Good Samaritan.

Minnesota Conference

Conference Update

A special session of the Minnesota Annual Conference was held on November 13, 2023. The purpose was to consider requests from six United Methodist Churches to disaffiliate from the Minnesota Annual Conference of the UMC. The requests were approved and brought to a total of 23 the number of congregations approved for disaffiliation from the Minnesota Annual Conference this year. That is about 8% of the Annual Conference total congregations.

Contact Brian Boysen with questions - bteam@earthlink.net or (952) 937-0624.

Trustees

Maintenance Minute: More Winter Prep

Here are a couple of things happening on our grounds and back woods at Good Sam.

I first have to start off with giving a huge shout out and thank you to our Boy Scouts - Troop 68 for their help in getting our amphitheater benches stacked and tarped. A crew of Good Sam members and myself met a couple years ago to get the benches repaired and painted. Getting them stored properly will definitely give us more time before they will need another coat of paint. Again, thank you Troop 68 and leaders for all your help!

We also recently had Ed's Buckthorn Control back to do some preventative maintenance in our woods. They obviously take care of the buckthorn but also any other noxious invasive plants. They cut down any large buckthorn and use a wetland-approved herbicide for the plants and smaller buckthorn. They do a great job and are very devoted and passionate about the work they do. Thank you to Ed, Collin, and their crew!

Dan Green
(he/him)

Building Engineer

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OUR VISION

INSPIRING
 Joyful Faith

BUILDING
 a Loving
 Community

SERVING
 Neighbors Near
 and Far

SUNDAYS

Worship
 10:00 a.m. (In-person and Online)

Nursery
 9:45-11:30 a.m., Infants - Age 3

Children's Sunday School
 Held during worship following
 Children's Time. All are welcome!

WEDNESDAYS

(Nursery open from 5:45-9:00 p.m.)

6:00 p.m.

- Chancel Chimes Rehearsal
- Children's Choir Rehearsal

7:00 p.m.

- Chancel Choir Rehearsal
- Youth Activities

GOOD SAMARITAN OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 Phone (952) 929-0049