

January
2024

The Samaritan

Worship Themes

January 7 - Epiphany /
Communion

January 14 - "I AM
the Light of the World"

January 21 - "I AM the
Gate for the Sheep"

January 28 - "I AM
the Good Shepherd"



To the New Year

By W.S. Merwin

With what stillness at last
you appear in the valley
your first sunlight reaching down
to touch the tips of a few
high leaves that do not stir
as though they had not noticed
and did not know you at all
then the voice of a dove calls
from far away in itself
to the hush of the morning

so this is the sound of you
here and now whether or not
anyone hears it this is
where we have come with our age
our knowledge such as it is
and our hopes such as they are
invisible before us
untouched and still possible

OUR STAFF

Rev. Carol Zaagsma
Lead Pastor
carol@good.org
952-452-9395

Rev. Jim Beard
Dir. of Congregational Care
jim@good.org
952-452-9396

Jan Russell
Director of Children, Youth
and Family Ministries
jan@good.org
952-452-9398

Christian Nielsen
Coordinator of Worship Arts
and Online Engagement
christian@good.org

Paolo Debuque
Chancel Choir Director &
Music Coordinator
paolo@good.org

Mary Beth Berg
Organist/Accompanist
marybeth@good.org

Kate Graber
Chancel Chimes Director
kate@good.org

Brad Carlin
Homeward Bound Director
bradleypcarlin@gmail.com

Cindy Bergstrom
Office Manager
cindy@good.org
952-452-9393

Kim Hill
Bookkeeper
kim@good.org
952-452-9394

Dan Green
Building Engineer
danrg@good.org
612-889-4015

Dandy Lewis
Media Specialist
dandy@good.org

Good Samaritan UMC
Office: 952-929-0049

Pastor's Page

Reflecting Amid the Turn of the Calendar



This is the time of year when I seem to take stock of bigger life issues...looking back on the previous year...looking forward to the next...and evaluating how it is with my soul right here and now amid the transition between the two.

I recently viewed an article that seems to put this year's annual rhythm of reflection in a slightly different light. The article summarized the writings of Bronnie Ware, who wrote a memoir after working as a caregiver in palliative care for a number of years. Palliative care is similar, yet different, from hospice care, in that it offers long-term care and relief from pain and symptoms related to a disease or chronic disorder. As time went on, many of her patients died. Through her memoir, she gives voice to those who have died, sharing themes found in their departing wisdom about what they would have done differently in life, given the chance again.

The first theme – *"I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me."* This was the most common regret of all, according to the author's interactions with the patients. At the end of life, it's easier to see clearly what dreams have gone unfulfilled. What makes it hard is knowing that many of the dreams were unfulfilled due to choices made, or not made, due to pressure from others.

The second theme – *"I wish I didn't work so hard."* This was a prevalent theme for every male patient, many having missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. And it was noted as a regret by their family members, too...by the children and partners who also suffered because of their absence.

The third theme – *"I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings."* Many described suppressing their feelings in order to keep peace with others, and sometimes this led to them carrying bitterness and resentment. Those who did speak honestly often found in the end that it raised a relationship to a whole new level that was ultimately much healthier.

The fourth theme – *"I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends."* There were many deep regrets about not giving friendships the time and effort they deserved.

The fifth theme – *"I wish that I had let myself be happier."* Fear of change had many pretending that they were content, when deep down they longed to laugh deeply and bring some silliness back into their lives again.

I'll admit that many of these observations resonated with me. Fortunately, there are life lessons learned by others that we can also learn from. Words of wisdom like this, along with a fuller faith that comes from what we learn and experience as a congregation, can prompt changes or adjustments to our own priorities. So, I share these themes with you in hopes they will shape some of your own reflections as we usher in the New Year.

Contemplating along the journey,

Congregational News

Pledging for the Future

Thank you to those who have offered such a quick turnaround in returning your 2024 pledge cards. Doing so is instrumental in the budgeting process, so very much appreciated by the Finance Team.

Please mail remaining pledge cards to the church office, or drop into the offering plate when you come to worship on Sunday.

Pledges can also be made online at good.org/give/give/make-a-pledge.

Christmas Offering for Missions

Contributions for the good work of our Missions Team are always accepted and appreciated, but especially so through the Christmas Offering. It's not too late to support their efforts. Mail your Christmas offering to the church office, drop it off in the offering plates during Sunday worship, or bring it during office hours Monday-Friday 9:00-1:00 if you're in the area during the week.

You may also give securely online at good.org/give. Select GS Missions from the fund menu, and the project of your choice from the sub-fund menu. Scan this QR code for your convenience.

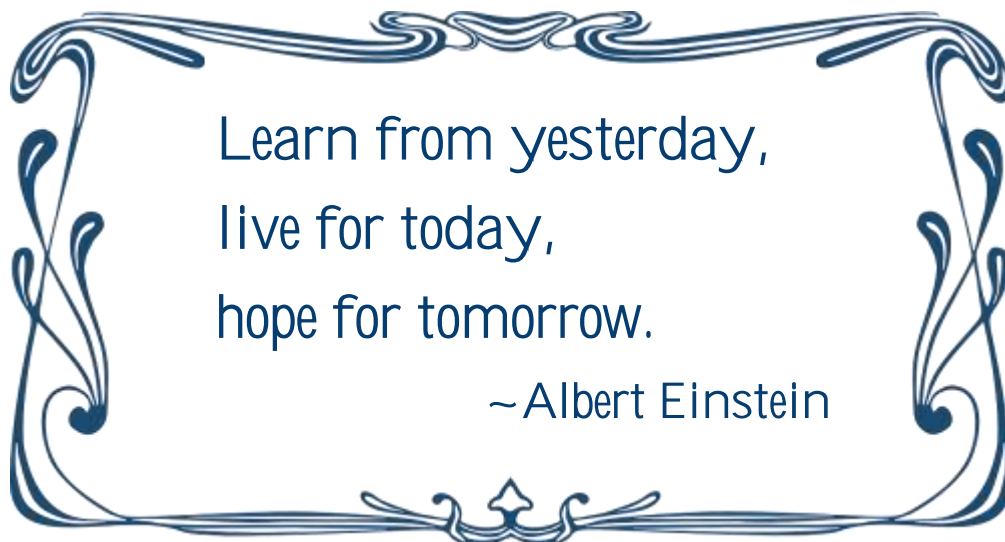


All Church Conference

Our Annual Church Conference will be held Sunday, January 28, 2024, following worship. We will receive reports from Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), Board of Trustees, and Finance, as well as vote on the 2024 budget. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Read the Bible in a Year

Have you thought about reading through the Bible, but not quite gotten around to it? Why not give it a try in 2024? Pick up a copy of a bible-reading plan at the welcome desk in the narthex, or on the literature table by the office, or email carol@good.org and Pastor Carol will send one to you. There are a couple different options available to choose from.



Congregational Care

A New Year's Success Story

There's a success story told by Robert Fulghum in his book *It Was on Fire When I Lay Down on It* (Villard Books) about a man who, it might appear at first glance, died a failure.

John Pierpont was his name. Pierpont graduated from Yale and chose education as his profession. However, he was a failure as a teacher. He was too easy on his students. So, he turned to the legal profession.

He was a failure as a lawyer. He was too generous to his clients and too concerned about justice to take cases that brought good fees. So, he tried dry goods next.

He was a failure at business too. He was too liberal with credit and didn't charge enough for his goods. He tried writing poetry and then tried being a minister. He failed at both endeavors. He even tried politics. He ran for governor of Massachusetts. He ran for Congress. He failed to win either race.

Someone finally found him an obscure job in the back office of the Treasury Department in Washington, D.C. and he finished the last five years of his life as a file clerk.

Of course, Fulghum points out, elements of Pierpont's life story militate against calling him a failure. His commitment to social justice, his desire to be a loving human being, his active engagement in the great issues of his time, and his great faith in the power of the human mind—these are not failures!

But every winter, especially in the colder climates, we celebrate his success for something entirely different. In our hearts and minds, we carry a memorial to him for a song.

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer of the world, all that we can do is a blessing given to us by you. Thank you for the ability to touch the lives of others through our efforts and bring joy to their souls. The world may look at us and say the we are a failure, but you look at us and use our efforts to transform lives. Right now, we dedicate our year ahead to doing your will on earth as it is in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

Pastor Jim Beard
(he/him)

Director of
Congregational Care

jim@good.org
952-452-9396



John Pierpont wrote *Jingle Bells*.

In his book, Fulghum says aptly: "To write a song that stands for the simplest joys, to write a song that three or four hundred million people around the world know — a song about something they may have never done but can imagine — a song that every one of us, large and small, can hoot out the moment the chord is struck on the piano and the chord is struck in our spirit — **that's not failure.**"

As we turn the page of our calendars to another year ahead, let us remember to not judge our successes by worldly standards, but to use every gift and grace that God has given us to **its fullest, and leave the results in God's hands.** Every act is a testimony to our faith in what God can do through us. Let us not be deflated by those who would proclaim us to be failures; instead, **use every good gift from God for God's glory.**

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

1 Peter 4:10-11 NIV

Congregational Care



Your Input Desired

A 1-minute Spiritual Growth Survey is currently being taken in order to reveal topics, timing, and formats which would be of most interest and accessible for you. What do you need to further your spiritual life?

- Knowledge to further your Biblical understanding
- Practices to live a life of justice
- Connections for fellowship or support
- Something else

Due to the busyness of Christmas for many, the original deadline of December 31 has been extended to January 8. Please take one minute by clicking on the link below and sharing your thoughts and desires with us. Further details will be surveyed once these basics are obtained. Thank you for your input!

Access the Survey at
tinyurl.com/GSSpiritualGrowth.

Additional Resources for Your Journey

Occasionally we will share with you what our neighboring United Methodists or Annual Conference leaders are offering so you may take advantage of these growth opportunities also. These offerings are lifted up because they reflect the values we uphold at Good Sam or are unique opportunities for spiritual growth. When necessary, register yourself directly and enjoy! Here are two you might want to consider...

Grace Can Lead Us Home (Book Study)

Join Associate Pastor Laura of Hennepin Avenue UMC in Minneapolis for a five-week book study of Kevin Nye's book *Grace Can Lead Us Home: A Christian Call to End Homelessness*. The book study will take place entirely on Zoom on Mondays from 7-8 p.m. (Jan. 8-Feb. 5, 2024).

"Reporting back from his work in homeless services, minister and advocate Kevin Nye introduces readers to the Christ he's met in tents, shelters, and drop-in centers. He demystifies homelessness by journeying into complex issues like affordable housing, mental illness, addiction, and more...."

During the February 5 gathering, Kevin Nye will join participants to discuss the book and do Q&A. Each participant will receive a physical copy or Kindle version of the book.

For more information and to register, go to tinyurl.com/GraceHomeBook.

Dynamite Prayer Initiative

Ready to see what God can do when we come together in prayer and ask God's Spirit to unleash in us?

Join United Methodists across the Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area from Jan. 14-Feb. 10 for our area-wide Dynamite Prayer initiative. Throughout this period, Bishop Lanette Plambeck invites you to read *Dynamite Prayer*, a 28-day devotional guidebook by Rev. Dr. Rosario Picardo and Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey. The book will help you incorporate a surrendered prayer practice into your daily life following Christ, and help you cultivate your capacity to discern, to notice, to respond to God's guidance, and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

For more information and to register, go to www.minnesotaumc.org/dynamiteprayer.



Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Happy New Year!

As we journey into 2024, even though we wish it was not so, I suspect our lives will continue to become busier and busier! Finding time for all that we wish to do is very hard, I have been thinking about ways to sneak a little more God into our everyday lives. For 2024, I will be suggesting a spiritual practice that you can do at home with your family. From toddlers to teens, we can find five minutes to connect with God! So let's set the stage.

For January, create a small sacred place in your home. Is there a coffee table, a shelf in the breakfast nook, a small table in the family room that you can add or use? Maybe even a shelf in the mud room might work, somewhere when it is already in your daily path. There are no rules or restrictions for creating this space. If you are tight on space, consider using a basket to hold your items.

Choose some meaningful items that remind you of God., something to involve your senses.

- A cross, big or small
- A candle to remind you Jesus is the light of the world, battery operated ones are great for this
- A plant, flowers, a rock, or seashell – something from nature to remind you God is the Creator
- Incense or essential oils to create a sensory experience with smell
- Fabric to create an altar space to reflect the various seasons of the year
- Pictures of family or friends, some type of heirloom or memento

Be intentional with the time; it doesn't have to be long, just intentional. Begin with a deep breath and a prayer, light the candle, read a passage of scripture, a poem or singing a song. If your gathering time is at the end of the day, ask each other where they saw God today. If your time is as you are leaving for the day, how will you show God's love to someone today. Either is a great time to remind you family of how much you love them, that God loves them, and that their church family loves them. Ask if there is something you can pray about for them, a test, a difficult fellow student, thanksgiving for a great teacher or grown up, what ever is on their heart. Don't forget to tell them what they can pray for you too! Then close in prayer. This process can be just five minutes, but a truly meaningful five minutes.

This practice can really help ground your family and build those strong connections to carry the whole family through our very busy lives! Once a day or once a week, it doesn't matter, just start!

I am praying for you and your family! Grace and Peace, Jan



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

Need a Sub for the Super Bowl?



The ASP Mission Trip youth will be taking orders for sub sandwiches on January 28 and February 4 at a table in the Narthex. All funds not used to cover supplies will support the youth on their trip. Subs will be available for pick-up on Super Bowl Sunday, February 11, after worship. Cost: \$10 for a 6-inch sub. Options are ham, turkey, or veggie.

ASP Mission Trip Info Night

January 10 , 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.
Come learn about our upcoming Mission trip to Appalachia, June 15 - 23, 2024. This will be Good Sam's 42nd trip!!



Save the Date!
Vacation Bible School
June 24-28, 2024
4 years to 4th grade

Missions



Serving
Opportunity

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

Wednesday, January 10 - 9:00-10:45 a.m.

Friday, January 19 - 7:00-8:45 p.m.

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



Congregational Convening

Thursday, January 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Richfield UMC

The 100 congregations of various faiths who belong to the Beacon Interfaith Collaborative are invited for light refreshments to celebrate the impact of Beacon's advocacy and organizing power this past year. Plus, we'll ground ourselves in the urgency of the current housing crisis, explore Beacon's proposed interventions and legislative campaigns in 2024, and identify actions we can take to increase access to deeply affordable housing. We'll hear from Beacon's new CEO, Chris LaTondresse, and other housing champions. At Good Samaritan, we know Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative mainly through Families Moving Forward.

Register here: <https://www.beaconinterfaith.org/event/congregational-convening-1-18-24/>

Check out what else Beacon does: <https://www.beaconinterfaith.org/who-we-are/mission-values/>.

The Baiwalla School is growing!

First, Judith Banya returned to her hometown, Baiwalla, Sierra Leone, from the USA after becoming a minister and started a Methodist Church there. Then she started the Richard Ormsby High School and added grades 4th - 6th. She then started a farm to help provide lunches and income for the school and help the students learn farming. Next, she started a store to provide income for the school, help students learn to run a store, and provide a larger variety of foods and goods for the town of Baiwalla, which has only one small store. This year they built a new elementary school and added grades 1st - 3rd!

Good Samaritan is helping them by providing \$3,000 to cover teacher's salaries. Last year we sent them books and supplies to start a library in the high school. We also are planning to send down lots and lots of books to get the students reading. We need your help to do that! We will start collecting children and youth books in January. They need beginning readers, chapter books, and non-fiction at all levels. So, save your books and watch for collection boxes in the Narthex and Collection area one floor down by the elevator. Pat Deckas Becerra and JoAnn Knutson will travel with a group to Baiwalla in March and make sure the books in the elementary school classrooms are ready for the students to check out and read, read, read!





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

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 TWIN CITIES, MN
 PERMIT NO. 2518

Electronic Service Requested



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

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