

January
2025

The Samaritan

Worship Themes

January 5 - Epiphany /
Communion / "Shine"

January 12 - Baptism
of the Lord / "Do Not
Fear" - Mary Ellen
Nielsen preaching

January 19- Epiphany
2 / "Fountain of Life"

January 26- Epiphany
3 / "Good News"

For Bare Branches

Do not measure yourself by
Things done and left undone,
No matter what the shadows say.

You are brave and bare branches,
Gnarled and eerie at dusk,
Stunning in the crisp air of dawn.

You are a sprig that shoots out
Even after everything is cut down,
Nervy and reaching anyway.

The exposure is beautiful,
You're not enough and you're everything.
Be revealed as you are and shine.

Today is short and not yet written.

Rev. Meta Herrick Carlson
from *Ordinary Blessings for the Christmas Season*
Broadleaf Books, Minneapolis 2023

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Pastor's Page

Welcome to the new year at Good Samaritan UMC! As we go to print we have enjoyed very successful Hanging of the Greens and Lessons and Carols services with a great spirit of celebration and teamwork. Our Sunday worship remains strong as well with consistent returning visitors, both brand new and some re-engaging after a season away from church as well.



For Sunday fellowship time now, we have moved from three quarters of a large pot of coffee last summer to one and half large pots. **We have doubled the "font of many blessings", if you will.** This is a great sign that people are staying to engage in conversation and continue discussion about themes sparked in worship, and the week-to-week events of our lives including the world and times in which we live.

As we begin the six weeks of the Epiphany Season, we recall the story of the wise ones from the East. They were likely Zoroastrian priests who travelled to find the Christ Child, relying on their knowledge of the heavens and following the wisdom of their dreams, which informed them to take another way home to avoid the schemes of Herod. (Matthew 2:1-12).

As we move into this new year together, may we be open to the speaking of the Spirit to us in ways both familiar and surprising with new insights and possibilities for the future. Epiphany season points us to renewed ways of recognizing and understanding our calling and our identity as **beloved children of God as we are ever more deeply formed in God's love and wisdom throughout our lives.**

Thank you to all of the volunteers and staff who work tirelessly to help bring our ministry to life and to all of you for your prayerful and financial support that makes our ministry possible.

Let us welcome the new year as we celebrate, grow and serve together!

Yours together in ministry,

Pastor Max

Congregational News

All Church Conference following worship January 26 at 11:15 a.m.

The finance team, in cooperation with our staff and volunteers, is diligently preparing our budget for the new year. Stay after church for an overview and to vote on this important business item in the life of our church. Pastor Max will preside at the meeting.

New Member Classes

Our next new membership exploration classes will be offered the first two weeks of February (2/2 and 2/9) following worship in the Fireside Room. Attend one or both sessions to get acquainted, ask questions, learn some basic United Methodist history and theology and more about the ministries of Good Samaritan UMC. Please see Pastor Max to sign up and to ask any questions you might have.

Expanded Office Hours

The church office hours are being extended one hour beginning January 1. The new hours that Cindy Bergstrom will be in the office are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



Pledging for the Future



Thank you to those who have returned your 2025 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. Extra pledge cards are available on the Welcome Table or by the church office.

Pledges can also be made online at good.org/give/make-a-pledge or with the QR code.



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 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. 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.



Congregational Care

How Much?!

"Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you.
I've called your name. You're mine.
When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.
When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.
When you're between a rock and a hard place,
it won't be a dead end—
Because I am God, your personal God,
The Holy of Israel, your Savior.
I paid a huge price for you:
all of Egypt, with rich Cush and Seba thrown in!
That's how much you mean to me!
That's how much I love you!
I'd sell off the whole world to get you back,
trade the creation just for you."

~ Isaiah 43:1b-4 MSG

Pastor Jim Beard
(he/him)

Director of
Congregational Care

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Peninsula State Park, Door County, Wisconsin. 2024 photo by Jim Beard

For those who would claim that grace is a thing only in the New Testament, here is a passage which would challenge that assumption. The pen of Isaiah underscores the unconditional love of God centuries before Christ walked the earth. Here we hear of a personal God, one who will sacrifice and pay a high price for you. How much? How high a price? Answer: absolutely everything! You are worth the world to God, the whole of creation even! That's how much you matter to the one who created you, redeemed you, rescued you, and cares for you! If words alone aren't enough to convince you, consider the saving grace of God from the beginning of time (or turn to the back half of the Holy Bible and watch what God does through Jesus Christ for you!).

I once assisted on a week-long youth retreat at a United Methodist camp. One of the evenings involved several stations wherein God's unconditional love was brought to life for the campers. My station was waist-deep in the middle of a serene lake. I was to remind these young disciples of their baptism, which was most likely performed when they were infants. In this beautiful sacrament, we celebrate the love of God for the one being baptized, with life-giving waters pouring

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Congregational Care

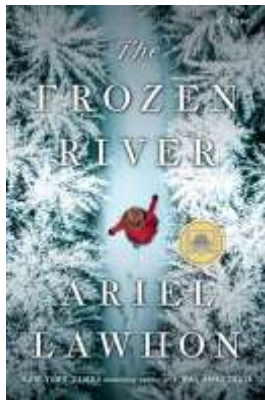
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forth. I invited each to come out into the lake one at a time and to consider how much water they need – a cup? A gallon? A barrel? “Now look out across this lake,” they were instructed, “and consider that this is how much love God has ready to pour upon you! Better yet, instead of a lake, imagine that you are looking out at an ocean of love which reaches as far as your eyes can see – that’s how much love God has for you, and even more!” The imagery brought many to tears; it should do the same for each of us as well.

Loving God, your love for us is overwhelming! In a world of conditions, judgments, and criticisms, we find your unconditional love so difficult to truly believe. Open our hearts, minds, imaginations, and souls to fully receive and appreciate what this means. No matter what, you would give the world for us ... for me! May the waters of my tears be signs of my acceptance and gratitude to you. Amen.

Thursday Afternoon Book Group

Our next meeting will be on January 9 at 1:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. The first discussion title of the new year is *Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. A work of historical fiction, it is based upon the real-life story of midwife, Martha Ballard and her challenges in 1789 New England. Please join us for a lively discussion, fellowship and refreshments. Questions: Contact Vicki Dunn, victoria.dunn@q.com, 952-930-3431.



CareNotes

Check out the free CareNotes booklets in the rack in the Narthex. These small booklets contain inspirational messages about grief, mental health, and life challenges to name a few.



Holiday Fun

The Tuesday Morning Bible Study enjoyed their holiday luncheon with Good Samaritan staff on December 3. Many thanks to those who provided food and hospitality. It was a lovely time!



Congregational Care

Growing Your Faith 2025

Coming This Winter



De-Mystifying the Book of Revelation

In vivid, sometimes shocking, images of the future, the Book of Revelation portrays the triumphant finale of God's just rule throughout all of creation. John's visions stretch our imaginations, fuel our anticipation, and comfort us as we await the final curtain call. The words are mysterious for those who don't know how to make sense of them. Join us for this series where together we'll aim to make sense of it all.

4 Consecutive Weeks

Sundays 11:15am – 12:15pm starting January 19

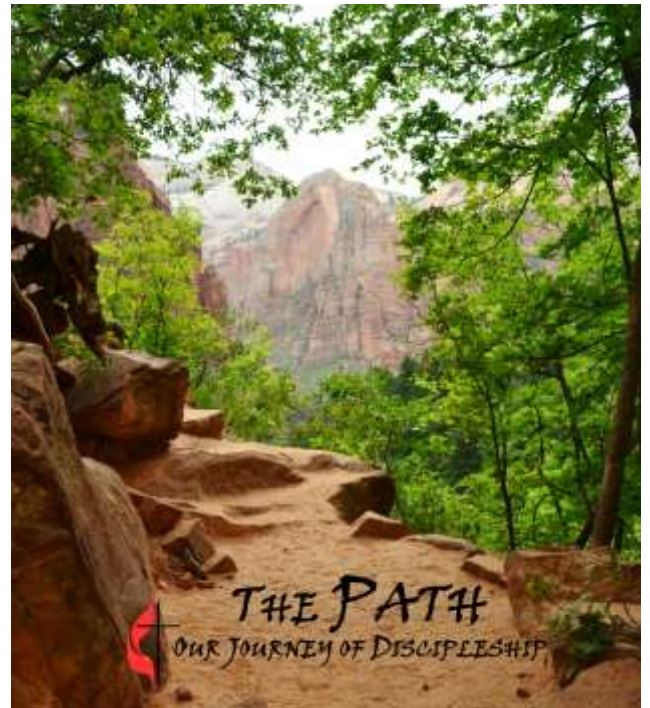
or Tuesdays 9:30am – 10:30am starting January 21

(Registration opens January 5)

Coming This Lent in March & April

The Path: Our Journey of Discipleship

What does your spiritual path look like? Are you making any progress? Many of us hate to admit it but we often don't know what to do or know how to do it. Therefore, find ourselves standing still in our faith. The Path is a six-session series which empowers you to take a step or two forward while exploring the United Methodist practices of prayer, presence, gifts, service and witness. Come find what works (and doesn't work) best for you! More details to come in next month's *The Samaritan*.



Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Hello, 2025! Here is a fun activity for the whole family. If you need extra magazines, I have a bunch of them in the art closet. I'd be happy to get them to you! ~ Jan

Making a Family Vision Board for the Year Ahead

A family vision board is a fun and faith-filled way to reflect on your hopes and dreams for the year ahead. It invites every family member to think about what they want to prioritize, celebrate, or pray for in the coming months. Here's how to create one together:

1) Gather Materials and Reflect

Choose a relaxed time (New Year's Eve? Valentine's Day?) and gather supplies like poster board, magazines, scissors, glue, and markers. Begin with a simple prayer, asking for God's guidance as you dream together: "God, help us as we create a family vision board for the next year. Thank you for this time, Amen."

Choose a guiding question to get you started, such as, "What do we hope for as a family in 2025?" "How can we grow in love and kindness together?" "What would we like to pray for?"

2) Make the Board

Cut out images, words, and/or phrases that represent your hopes and prayers. Write or color them on the board. You can either make the collage all together as a family or divide the board up with each section given to a member of the family for their own ideas about the family vision. Remember: this vision is for the whole family. It's not a personal vision board.

3) Bless the Intentions

Have each person write their name or initials in the corner. Take a look at it together, asking each person to explain their portion of the board. Bless the board by saying something like, "Thank you, God, for giving us a vision for what our family life will be like this year. Help us to live into our family vision with peace, hope, love, and joy!"

4) Hang it Up and Look at it!

Hang up your board in a family space and remember to refer to it often!

As you look forward to a New Year, enjoy your time of creating vision together. Try not to get too caught up on making the board perfect or having to do it just at the beginning of the year. A vision board can happen any time of year.



Jan M. Russell (she/her)

Director of Children, Youth
& Family Ministries

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Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Need a Sub for the Super Bowl?



The 2025 ASP Mission trip youth will be taking orders for sub sandwiches on Sunday, January 26 and February 2 at a table in the narthex following worship. All funds not used to cover supplies will be donated to the youth to support their ASP trip. Subs will be available for pick up on Super Bowl Sunday, February 9, following worship. Thanks for your support!

Cost: \$10 for a 6-inch sub.
Options are ham, turkey, or veggie.

Vacation Bible Camp

June 23-27, 2025

Join us in a fun-filled adventure on the open road, taking all the kids (Travelers) on thrilling journeys to exciting destinations. Led by the Navigator and an adventurous pup, Scout, kids will learn that God is always with them. Through engaging stories from the Navigators' Guide (the Bible), Travelers will delve into timeless tales of faith from the Old and New Testaments. Get ready for twists, turns, and excitement as they face new challenges and find strength in God's presence on this unforgettable trip!



Missions

2024 Wraps Up



Serving
Opportunity

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

Wednesday, January 8 @ 9:30-11:15 a.m.
Friday, January 17 @ 7:00-8:30 p.m. (new time)

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

Thank You!

A big thank you to all who donated toys, books, and gift cards at our Hanging of the Greens service. We were able to donate 35+ toys, 5+ books and \$500+ in gift cards to STEP (St. Louis Park Emergency program).



Stylized photo by Janet VanBenthuyssen.

The Missions Team wrapped up December 2024 and rings in January 2025:

December 10: Missions Team met to review and complete actions for 2024; the Christmas Offering letter was mailed and we are thankful for the generosity of all who make this work possible.

December 11: Ten Good Samaritans and friends gathered with many others at Feed My Starving Children to pack 152 boxes containing a total of 32,832 meals that will provide 89 kids with a daily meal for a year at a cost of \$9,521.28. (see picture) Thanks to Jane Heimerl and all for the leadership and support. We remembered Jean Zivkovich for her great support over the years.



December 20: Good Samaritans drove for Edina Meals on Wheels; with thanks to Vicki Dunn and Jane Heimerl and remembering Jean Zivkovich for support of this program.



Reconciling News



On December 17, 2024 the Leadership Team of Minnesota Reconciling Congregations met to plan for 2025. Their first meeting of 2025 is scheduled for Thursday January 9, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. For more details, please access the website at www.mnrcumc.org. To receive email notices of monthly meetings contact minnesotareconciling@gmail.com.

Library Committee

A Restocked Library

The Good Samaritan Library Committee would like to recognize the generosity of our congregation which has enabled our library to purchase many current and popular titles.

Here is a list of the titles that were added:

Adult Titles

Armstrong- Sacred Nature: Restoring Our Ancient Bond
Boyle- Tattoos of the Heart
Brooks- Build the Life You Want
Guthrie- Mostly What God Does
Hooks- All About Love
Kendi- Be An Anti Racist: A Journal for Awareness, Reflection, and Action
Kendi- How to Be An Anti Racist
Kingsolver- Coyotes Wild Home
LaMott- Somehow: Thoughts of Love
May- Enchantment: Awakening Wonder in an Anxious Age
May- Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times
Murthy- Together: Healing Power
O'Dell- Saving Time: Discovering a Life Beyond the Clock
Pipher- Women Rowing North
Renkl- Comfort of Crows
Wilkerson- Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents
Yong- The Immense World
Zamora- Solito

Juvenile Titles

Carlson-Voiles- Star Party
Crustaldi- **I'll Love You Till the Cows Come Home**
DiCamillo- Hotel Balzaar
DiCamillo- Orris and Trimble
DiCamillo- Puppets of Spelhorst
Higgins- Some of These are Snails
Ponti- City of Spies (Books 1-4)
Rojas- Nana and Abuela
Stoddars- Brave Like That
Willems- Because
Wynter- Nell Plants a Tree



~ Vicki Dunn and the Library Committee

Epiphany

Guiding Stars

Throughout the Epiphany Season, choose one of these words to guide your daily devotions.

kindness
caring
sharing
giving
compassion
love
openness
pardon
understanding
discipleship
servanthood
stability
hopefulness
prayerfulness
praise
gentleness
knowledge
happiness
laughter
acceptance
self-control
restraint
mercy
truth
peace
faith
consideration
fellowship
unity
teaching
singing
celebration
perseverance
judgment

discipline
courage
confidence
clarity
honor
contentment
imagination
commitment
friendship
freedom
creativity
devotion
joy
strength
comfort
leadership
discernment
obedience
thoughtfulness
responsibility
patience
forgiveness
humility
faithfulness
hope
tenderness
enthusiasm
evangelism
healing
loyalty
rejoicing
respect
insight
selflessness

righteousness
assurance
justice
honesty
wisdom
awareness
tolerance
wholeness
guidance
hospitality
foresight
trust
learning
proclamation
encouragement
trustworthiness
inspiration
wonder
flexibility
grace
graciousness
integrity
helping
witnessing
generosity
perceptiveness
purity
prayer
service
steadfastness
determination
nurturing



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

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 care upon request)

6:00 p.m.

- Chancel Chimes Rehearsal

7:00 p.m.

- Chancel Choir Rehearsal

7:00 p.m.

- Youth Group

GOOD SAMARITAN OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
 Phone (952) 929-0049