

February  
2025

# The Samaritan

## Worship Themes

February 2 -  
Communion / "The  
Greatest of These"

February 9 - "The  
Other Side"

February 16 - "Deep  
Roots"

February 23 -  
"Revisiting the Golden  
Rule"



## Listening to Winter (Excerpt) by Macrina Widerkehr

I am listening.

I am listening to the season of contemplation,  
**to the urgency of our world's need for reflection.**  
I am listening to all that waits within the earth,  
to bulbs and seeds,  
to deep roots dreaming.  
I am listening to the sacred winter rest.

I am listening.

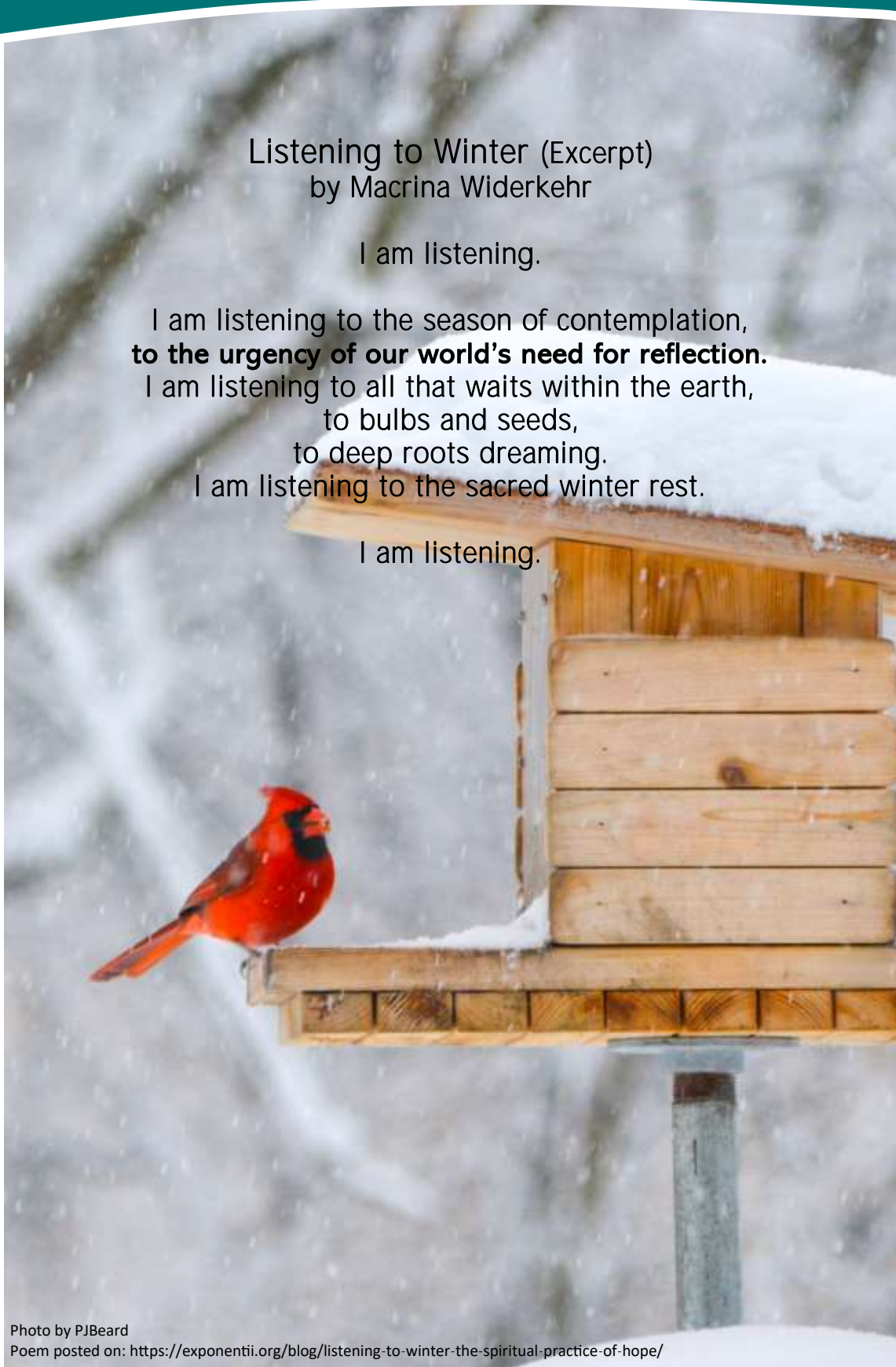


Photo by PJBeard  
Poem posted on: <https://exponentii.org/blog/listening-to-winter-the-spiritual-practice-of-hope/>

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# Pastor's Page

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Our Lenten Season is right around the corner. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for "lengthen", referring to the gradual increase of daylight that happens during these six weeks that lead up to Holy Week. Each year Lent and Holy Week shift a bit on our calendar. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox.



This year Ash Wednesday is on March 5. We will gather for worship at 7:00 p.m. You'll have the opportunity to write down something that you want to release for the Lenten season that will be safely burned. This is a confidential prayer between you and God. We remember our mortality as we receive the sign of the cross on our forehead or hand. We'll also celebrate Communion as we begin the Lenten season together.

Our Lenten/Holy Week theme is "Wandering Hearts" from the Sanctified Art series based on the life of the disciple Peter. Each week features a theme phrase from the beloved hymn "Come Thou Fount of Many Blessings".



The remainder of our Holy Week schedule will be:

- Maundy Thursday, April 17 @ 7:00 p.m. with Communion
- Good Friday, April 18 - Online Service (posting schedule published in the March newsletter)
- Easter Morning, April 19 @ 10:00 a.m.\* - Celebration with brass and Chancel Choir

\*Please note this year that there will be one service at 10:00 a.m. rather than an 8:30 a.m. option as in previous years.

I look forward to a vibrant Lent and Holy Week with you all.

Blessings,

*Pastor Max*

# Online Ministries

## Online Ministries Update

The online landscape is going through a time of rapid change, and it's a challenge for all of us to navigate. While it might be tempting to give up on this space, there is still enormous potential for ministry. The marketplace of ideas in the 21st century is in the digital realm. Jesus went into places many would not have ventured in order to spread the Good News.

The Apostle Paul went from market to market, setting up shop and spreading the news. John Wesley brought his message to the marketplace. We'll continue this work, while keeping our eyes open for new digital opportunities for ministry. Stay tuned!

Christian Nielsen  
(he/him)

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## Check out our YouTube Channel!



If you haven't subscribed to our YouTube channel yet, please consider checking it out. We not only have online worship there, but we have archives of music, Children's Times, Sermons, Prayers, Visual Meditations, and Christian Education. Most of it is organized into convenient playlists. Our channel is also the place where we livestream special events. Facebook is becoming a more challenging host for our Online Worship, and we're shifting some of our focus toward YouTube. Scan the QR code to visit the channel, or search for "Good Samaritan UMC Edina" in YouTube.



## Good Samaritan Online Community Facebook Group



Please consider joining our private and confidential Facebook group. Not only is it a place for information, but it's a safe space to share your prayers, thoughts, joys, and concerns. Come across an article our community might find interesting? Please share it. Is there a piece of music that connects with you? Please share it! This online space is a place we can come together in conversation and beloved community. This group is set to "Private" and is not open to the rest of Facebook or the internet. Please feel free to join and contribute. You may scan the QR code or search for "Good Samaritan Online Community" on Facebook.





# Congregational Care

## All in God's Time

Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it."

Deuteronomy 34:4 NIV

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The Grand Tetons, 2010 photo by PJBeard

Just prior to his death, Moses climbs Mt. Nebo and looks out over hundreds of miles of landscape. The view must have been spectacular: from the mountains, to the prairies, to the oceans white with foam...! More so, Moses stands on the apex of time, the high point of history: generations of faithfulness stretch out behind him to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while generations of faithfulness stretch out before him to David, Jesus, and even to us. The Lord has indeed been faithful to those like Moses who can see it. The Lord will be with God's people as the generations move forward.

God promised the Ancient Israelites a land flowing with milk and honey, so why can't this new land deal be theirs right now? Their children are surely going to receive it, but it is right there - why must they continue to wait? Obviously, God's timing is beyond their timing.

I wonder if our culture of instant gratification is patient enough for the work of God. Many im-

patient people demand change NOW or they give up in disgust. Many try to set deadlines into God's schedule, but it just doesn't work that way. If your prayers seem to have gone unanswered, if the last promotion seems to have passed you by, if things haven't transpired in the timing you were expecting, maybe God isn't ignoring you or saying, "No" to your wishes; maybe God's response is simply, "Not yet." Take a breath and remain faithful, knowing that all is indeed in God's time.

*Omnipotent Lord, grant that I too may be like Moses – with eyes to see and yet with enough patience to accept my place in your timeline of holy history. Grant me the acceptance to trust whatever your timing might be, and to rest assured that all is under your control. Amen.*

# Congregational Care

## Growing Your Faith 2025

### De-Mystifying the Book of Revelation



It's not too late to join the groups who are gathering to explore the Book of Revelation. It is an epic vision of good versus evil, with a resounding conclusion that is beyond even Hollywood's imagination! May John's revelation inspire and uplift your soul to new levels of peace, adoration, and joy!

Register today at [tinyurl.com/GSRevelation](http://tinyurl.com/GSRevelation), then follow the light out of the woods and come join us! Recorded sessions of earlier classes are also available on the Good Samaritan YouTube channel at [tinyurl.com/GSRevVideos](http://tinyurl.com/GSRevVideos).

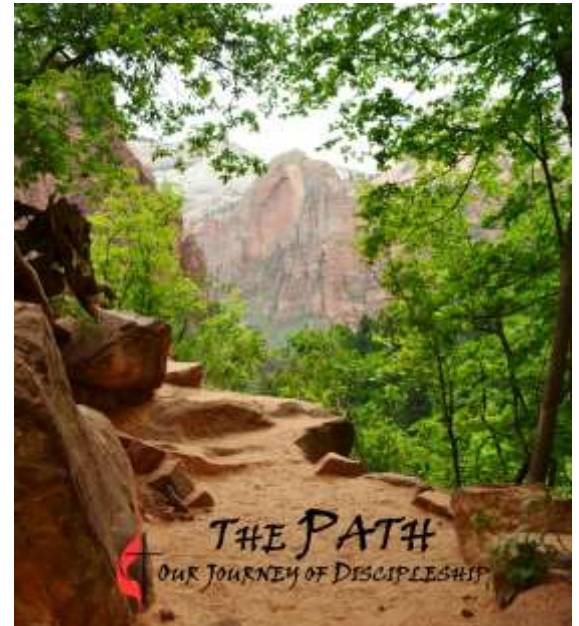
2 Weeks Remaining

Sundays, February 5 & 12 @ 11:15am – 12:15pm  
or Tuesdays, February 7 & 14 @ 9:30am – 10:30am

### The Path: Our Journey of Discipleship During Lent

What does your spiritual path look like? For many of us, we find ourselves standing still in our faith. But take heart - there are well-established, highly effective United Methodist practices to aid our spiritual progress. "The Path" is a 6-session series that empowers you to be honest, to explore, to experiment, and to hopefully take a step or two forward on your journey of discipleship.

- What kind of prayer works for you?
- What are your spiritual gifts and where can you share them?
- Is your Bible an untouched relic on your shelf or a useful life-giving manual?
- What other holy readings are there for your spiritual style?
- Why is belonging to a faith community vital to your spiritual health?
- What's all this about tithing?! Is there more to it besides paying the church's bills?
- How do you let others know what God has done for you without freaking anybody out (including yourself)?



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# Congregational Care

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With discussions like these taking place, small groups of 8-10 people will be better than large groups. So, start now looking for a couple of trusted friends with whom you might feel safe sharing your honest journey ... might it be a Senior Women's Group, a Men's Group, a Couples Group, a Homebound Group, a Young Families Group, a Zoom Group, or a New-to-Good-Sam-Group? Don't know who to ask? No worries! We can help.

There will likely be 3-5 separate groups meeting at different times over the 6-week period (Lent runs from Ash Wednesday, March 5, to Easter Sunday, April 20). A trained facilitator will be assigned to each group. Timing is flexible, as is location. All of this will take a bit of coordinating; therefore, registration will take place a bit earlier than usual. Go to [tinyurl.com/GSThePath](http://tinyurl.com/GSThePath) for further information and to get started. All groups will hopefully be set by Sunday, February 23.

This has been one of Pastor Jim's best-received Spiritual Formation courses in the past; it is hoped that it will be just as impactful for you!

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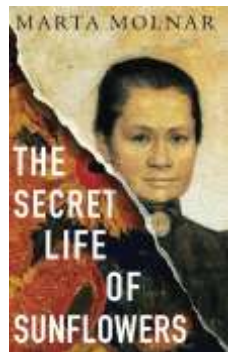
## Welcome

### Exploring Membership

Our next new membership exploration classes will be offered on February 9 and 16 (new dates!) following worship in Fellowship Hall (new location!) 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.

### Thursday Afternoon Book Group

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, February 13 at 1:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. The discussion title will be *The Secret Life of Sunflowers* by Marta Molnar. This historical fiction title explores the lives of Vincent and Theo Van Gogh and Theo's wife, Johanna. Please join us for an interesting discussion, refreshments and fellowship. Questions? Contact Vicki Dunn 952-930-3431 or [victoria.dunn@q.com](mailto:victoria.dunn@q.com).





# Missions



Serving  
Opportunity

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

Wednesday, February 12 @ 9:30-11:15 a.m.  
Friday, February 21 @ 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Sign up with Jane Heimerl at  
[jane.heimerl@yahoo.com](mailto:jane.heimerl@yahoo.com)  
by two days ahead. Space is limited!

Thank You from the Missions Team!

Because of your generosity in 2024, including the Christmas Offering, the following distributions were approved by the Missions Team at our January meeting:

- UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief):
  - ◊ \$1,605.00 for Hurricane Relief
  - ◊ \$2,000 for California Fire Relief
- Joyce Uptown Food Shelf: \$1,211.67
- Edina ABC (A Better Chance): \$866.66
- Emma Norton Services: \$1,500
- The Ecuadorian Family we have been helping: \$ 541.67
- Rent Relief for Stonebridge School Families: \$2,000
- Two Coats for Stonebridge School Students: Up to \$100

Thank you for being GOOD SAMARITANS!

THANK  
YOU

Your Generosity is Appreciated!  
And More Ways to Help

Generous donations from church members brightened the holidays for our Asylum-seeking Ecuadorian friends. The Missions Team gathered and delivered clothing, winter gear, household goods, bicycles, food, and Christmas decorations. The next step of support is to secure Minnesota IDs for the adults as they await their next immigration hearings in summer 2025. At the current time, this extended family of seven feels blessed to have sufficient clothing, winter gear, and household items. However, as the cold of winter remains, the family seeks fresh proteins and produce to supplement food shelf visits. (Aldi gift cards or donations directed to the Mission Committee are welcomed.) Julia, Benjamin, Helen, Jonathan, Tito, Alexander, and Hernan extend deep appreciation for the continued support of the church. Please contact Charisse at [charisse.litteken@gmail.com](mailto:charisse.litteken@gmail.com) if you have any questions or would like more information about how you can help support our Ecuadorian friends.



## Reconciling Report



Minnesota Reconciling Congregations (MRC) met on January 9, and one of the agenda items was scheduling the Spring Social Gathering. It will happen on Saturday, April 5, at Eden Prairie UMC, located at 15050 Scenic Heights Rd, Eden Prairie. The event is expected to include lunch and a program and typically runs from about 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Save the date and watch for additional details.

# Children, Youth and Family Ministries

## Serving Together on Valentine's Day Teaching Children to Share God's Love

And over all these virtues put on love,  
which binds them all together in perfect unity.  
- Colossians 3:14

Valentine's Day is not a liturgical (church) holiday, but it's a great time to share God's love with a neighbor and brighten someone's spirit. This year, why not find a way to share love with neighbors, friends, or the community? Whether you do this with young children, teens, or on your own, doing something good for others on Valentine's Day can help solidify the connection between love and service.

Here are three ideas and tips to make your Valentine's Day service activity a success:

- Keep it simple: A family service project doesn't have to affect a lot of people.
- Involve children/youth in the planning: Say "I was thinking we'd do something kind for our neighbors this Valentine's Day. Here are three ideas, which do you like the best?"
- Reflect afterwards: Take a moment to debrief after your service activity. Ask "How did it feel to share God's love in service?" or "What did you like most about today?"

Some ideas for Valentine's Day Service:

- Bake cookies, bread, or another treat to share with a neighbor.
- Make a birdfeeder to feed the birds. (Make two and share one with a neighbor!) Jan has many easy birdfeeder ideas if you need a suggestion or Pinterest has a bunch too!
- Color handmade Valentines for our Good Sam members with mobility issues, public service workers, or anyone who could use a cheerful note.



Jan M. Russell (she/her)  
Director of Children, Youth  
& Family Ministries

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- Donate pillows, socks, or blankets to a shelter. Our missions team has a great relationship with Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative and Simpson Housing Services.

Valentine's Day offers a special opportunity to remind us all that love is more than words or gifts - it's something we do. Through simple acts of service, your family can celebrate love in a way that reflects your faith and makes a lasting impact on others.





# Children, Youth and Family Ministries

## Need a Sub for the Super Bowl?



You can still order a sub sandwich and support the 2025 ASP Missions Trip youth! They will be taking orders for sub sandwiches on Sunday, 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!

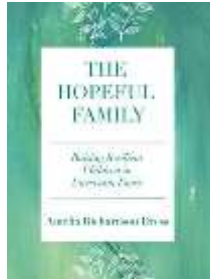
Cost: \$10 for a 6-inch sub.

Options: ham, turkey, or veggie

## Lenten Book Study for Care Givers

Wednesdays, March 12 through April 16  
6:00 p.m. Room 201  
Child care available

*The Hopeful Family:  
Raising Resilient Children  
In Uncertain Times*  
by Amelia Richardson Dress



Raise hopeful, grounded and action-oriented children in a time that feels full of uncertainty. Kids and parents alike are feeling the weight of these troubling times. Anxiety disorders are on the rise in teens and children. "Climate anxiety" is a phrase entering our cultural lexicon.

Ancient practices of Christianity, both internal and external, can be a guidepost for parents navigating this uncharted territory. They give us a way to be grounded as well as provide a way of living with purpose in a time of urgency. *The Hopeful Family* is the guidebook for parents who are building a life of meaning and hope even in a time of unease. Readers will be reminded of the hope that is part of the Christian story and find both inspiration and evidence to step more fully into a framework of abundance and optimism.

## BFF – Building Faithful Families!

We all have such crazy schedules. Making it to church can sometimes be difficult. To help you build your family's faith, each month we will have a new resource for you to try at home with your family. These resources don't need a theology degree, just a desire to become closer as a family and to strengthen your family's spirituality. You can pick up these resources at the Welcome Desk in the Narthex or Jan can email them to you! Let her know at [jan@good.org](mailto:jan@good.org) if you would like a copy.



## Vacation Bible Camp June 23-27

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! Register your child to attend or sign up to volunteer at [goodsamaritanedina.mycokesburyvbs.com](http://goodsamaritanedina.mycokesburyvbs.com).

# Finance Team

## A Good Year

Financially, we had a good 2024. We finished the end of the year with welcome donations. Thank you to everyone for your continued financial support.

For those who have not yet done so, please send your pledges for support in 2025. We will NOT be rolling over 2024 pledges into 2025 as we have historically done, so if you haven't turned in a 2025 pledge card, your pledge will not be entered. Pledge cards are available on the Welcome Table in the Narthex or by the Church Office. Pledges can also be made online at [good.org/give/make-a-pledge](https://good.org/give/make-a-pledge).

Year-end Income without reserves came in slightly ahead of expectations. Expenses were below expectations, with about \$15,000 (30%) lower than expected costs for Building Gas & Electric – in part due to last year's mild winter. Church Programs for Children, Youth and Adults were about \$4,500 under budget. Our staff is our largest cost area at 53% of our 2024 budget and came in as budgeted. We are grateful for the leadership and support they continue to provide us.

With lower-than-expected costs, we were able to contribute \$2,207 to the Church's Reserve Fund, compared to a budgeted draw on the Reserve of \$15,031. That is great news.

Here are the financial results through Dec 2024:

	2024 Actuals	2024 Plan
Revenue, w/o Reserves	\$717,756	\$715,418
Expenses	\$715,549	\$730,449
Net Result (Reserves)	\$2,207	(\$15,031)



Many thanks to the Office staff for their continued capable attention to our finances. Timely visibility for Income and Expenses enables review and perspective of the programs, leadership, facilities and community that make up Good Samaritan.

We would welcome additional members to our Finance Committee where interesting reviews and discussions of how we are doing take place. Prioritizing budgets and monitoring Church finances is a satisfying way to support our Church. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please let Byron Olson or Mac Lewis know. We have a great team.

# Trustees

## Maintenance Minute: New Chairs!

Hi all, I hope everyone had a great holiday season! My family and I sure did!



Some of you may have seen that Good Samaritan got new chairs! They are on a large portable rack in Fellowship Hall making it easy to move all at once if needed. These are replacing our old wooden fold-up chairs that are original to the building in 1960.

Since getting some new chairs with armrests in Fellowship Hall a few years ago, our old chairs have been used only for larger gatherings where more than 100 chairs are needed. They



also have continuously been used every Monday night by the youth orchestra that rehearses in Fellowship Hall. I would put a screw driver in my pocket ready to tighten the screws that would continuously come loose on the old chairs hardware anytime I would have to

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(he/him)

Building Engineer

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take them off or put them on their carts. It will be nice not to have to worry about this anymore. It took us a while to find the right new chair but it worked out great! I want to thank the Memorial Committee for providing the funds to purchase these chairs, Joann Knutson for helping find the right chair, and all the staff that helped with providing input and resources on finding the right one.

If anyone knows of a good home for the old chairs, please let me know!







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)

6:00-7:15 p.m.

- Chancel Chimes Rehearsal

7:00-8:30 p.m.

- Chancel Choir Rehearsal

7:00-8:30 p.m.

- Youth Group (2/12 & 2/26)

**GOOD SAMARITAN OFFICE HOURS**

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