

September  
2025

# The Samaritan

## Worship Themes

September 7 -  
Homecoming  
Sunday /  
Communion /  
"Welcoming One  
Another"

September 14 -  
"Finding Joy"

September 21 -  
"Faithful Living"

September 28 -  
Outdoor Worship /  
Blessing of the  
Animals / "Stewards of  
Creation"



September is  
Homecoming Month!

See the next page for  
information on all we have  
planned for this month.



## OUR STAFF

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# Pastor's Page

## Homecoming Month

September is here at Good Samaritan UMC!

We look forward to welcoming you back from summer travels and we have a variety of fun events planned for Homecoming Month.



- Sunday, September 7:
  - Sunday School begins
  - Celebration and farewell for Christian Nielsen following worship
  - Pop-up mission project following worship - assembling birthday bags for VEAP
- Sunday, September 14:
  - "What I Did on my Summer Vacation" - Wear your favorite t-shirt from summer fun including Appalachia Service Project and Vacation Bible Camp.
  - A presentation on this year's ASP mission trip during worship
  - The Caring Ministries team will share more about their work during worship.
- Sunday, September 21:
  - A presentation on the missions project of the Ormsby School in Baiwalla, Sierra Leone
  - Potluck following worship
- Sunday, September 28:
  - Outdoor Service (weather permitting) in the Amphitheater
  - Blessing of the Animals - Bring your pet for a blessing or a photo of a departed pet in their memory.

The Wednesday evening Chancel Choir and Chancel Chimes rehearsals are starting up, as well as Tuesday Morning Bible Study and Thursday Afternoon Book Club. The Merger Team from Aldersgate and Good Samaritan will begin meeting as we explore next steps in the merger. We have much to look forward to as we begin the fall season together.

Yours together in ministry,

*Pastor Max*

# Online Directory

## Accessing the Online Church Directory



Some of you may not know that Good Samaritan has an online directory! And some of you may be intimidated at the thought of trying to use it. It's very easy!

There are two ways to access it - from our website, good.org, or from an app on your phone.

From our website:

- Go to good.org on your phone or computer.
- Scroll to the bottom (the purple part).
- Under "Resources" on the right, click "Member Directory."
- Sign In with your Username & Password - the user name is probably your first name.lastname, so Jane.Doe. If you don't remember your password, click "Forgot Password?" to get a new password emailed to you.

From an app on your phone:

- Search for Church by MinistryOne wherever you get your apps (Google Play Store on Android phone or App Store on Apple iPhone). Install and Open the app.
- For "Find Your Church" enter "Good Samaritan United Methodist". Click on our church and on the next page, click "Select This Church" at the bottom.
- On the next page, you can "Skip" the notifications and streaming unless you want them.
- On the next page, several boxes will show up with "Giving", "Sermons", "Calendar", etc. In order for the Church Directory to show up, you will need to be signed in.
- To sign in, scroll down to the "Profile" box and click on it.
- There are a couple of ways to sign in:
  - With Email and Mobile Phone Number (you will be emailed a code to enter)  
OR
  - "Sign In with Username & Password" - the user name is probably your first name.lastname, so Jane.Doe. If you don't remember your password, click "I forgot my password" to get a new password emailed to you.
- Once you are signed in, click the back arrow in the upper left corner to take you back to the page with the boxes. The "Directory" box should now show up.



Once you access the directory, to search for someone, you only need to type a few letters from their first name, a space, and a few letters from their last name. Their name should pop up from a drop-down.

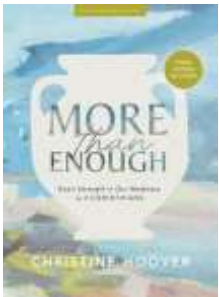
If you would like some help with this process, Janet VanBenthuisen and Caroline Carlin will be available to assist you through it on Sunday, September 21, following worship.

If you still would like a paper copy of the directory, just let Cindy in the office know and she'll make one for you - cindy@good.org or 952-929-0049.

# News & Events

## Tuesday Morning Bible Study Begins September 9

All are invited! Please join us for fellowship and learning as we begin our fall season of Tuesday Morning Bible Study. We meet every Tuesday, 9:30-11:30 a.m., in the Fireside Room. Coffee and treats are provided by participants. Our Fall Tuesdays are September 9 - December 2 (except November 25.)



You're invited to our Welcome Gathering on September 9 and then to an 8-week study of Second Corinthians starting September 16. We'll be using a book, *More Than Enough: God's Strength in Our Weakness in 2 Corinthians* by Christine Hoover.

(Available on Amazon) as the guide for this study. Purchasing the book can be an option. It's laid out with 5 days of personal study each week with reflection questions for those who wish to go into more depth. On Tuesdays, we'll

discuss Bible passages with questions, as well as view a half-hour video. If you don't purchase a book, you may read specific chapters in 2 Corinthians. Details will be forthcoming.

Questions? Lynn Timmer (timmerlynn@gmail.com) or Carol Smith (Carolsden@gmail.com)

## Thursday Afternoon Book Group Resumes

Please join us for our first meeting of the season! Thursday, September 11, 1:00 p.m. We will be discussing *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. It is the story of a gifted but autistic boy who investigates the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog. We include fellowship and refreshments! Questions? Contact Vicki Dunn (952-930-3431), victoria.dunn@q.com.



# Music

## Chancel Chimes Needs You!



Good Samaritan's Chancel Chimes handbell ensemble is looking for new members. If you are interested in ringing handbells or even just trying them, now is the time. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. and we participate in worship approximately once a month. The ability to read music and a can-do attitude

are helpful. Come to an open session of learning and trying on Wednesday, September 17, 2025 at 6:15 p.m. Contact kate@good.org for details.

Kate Graber  
(she/her)

Chancel Chimes  
Director

kate@good.org



# Music

## Chancel Choir Resumes



We're excited to welcome everyone back as choir rehearsals resume on Wednesday, September 3 from 7:00–8:30 p.m.!

Whether you've sung with us before or are thinking about joining for the first time, we'd love to have you. All experience levels are welcome - come as you are!

Carey Shunskis  
(she/her)

Music Coordinator/  
Chancel Choir  
Director

carey@good.org



We rehearse on Wednesday evenings and typically sing at two Sunday services each month. It's a joyful way to serve, express your faith, and connect with others through music.

# Conference Events



The Minnesota Conference is hosting Cole Arthur Riley, New York Times bestselling author of "This Here Flesh" and "Black Liturgies," to lead a conversation on embodiment and to honor the contributions of Black clergy and laity in the Minnesota Conference. Come for faith-filled worship, Riley's lecture, and a book signing. This event is a fundraiser organized by the Office of Racial Equity and Justice to

support Black ministry here in Minnesota. Registration with the opportunity to purchase books is now open - [mnumc-reg.brtapp.com/ColeArthurRileyEmbodiedLegacies](https://mnumc-reg.brtapp.com/ColeArthurRileyEmbodiedLegacies).

## Mission Summit 2025

October 25, 9:30 a.m.-2 :00 p.m.  
Champlin UMC

Join the Mission Promotion Team of the Minnesota Conference for an inspiring gathering to learn more about the mission programs supported by the Love Offering, which is collected at the Annual Conference each year. More information at [minnesotaumc.org/eventdetail/mission-summit-19257676](https://minnesotaumc.org/eventdetail/mission-summit-19257676).

## Lay Speaker Certification Training

November 7, 14, and 21  
9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., online

The Certified Lay Speaker program prepares laity who have completed the ConneXion online program to serve as worship leaders within their local churches and/or other churches. More information at [minnesotaumc.org/eventdetail/19145400?month=11&year=2025&day=1&display=m](https://minnesotaumc.org/eventdetail/19145400?month=11&year=2025&day=1&display=m).

# Congregational Care



Pastor Jim Beard  
(he/him)

Director of  
Congregational Care

jim@good.org  
952-452-9396



Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center,  
Yellowstone West, 2023 photo by PJ Beard

## Confident Before Giants

*“The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion, and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”* 1 Samuel 17:37a

Goliath stands taunting the army of the Lord for 40 days. David comes out to check on his brothers and subsequently enlists himself for battle. Saul is more than skeptical of David's ability to fight, let alone succeed. But David is confident, despite his deficits. He is confident for two reasons: (1) He has already fought wilder things than this man in his lifetime – he has experience against such overwhelming opponents; and (2) the credit for his victories he has given to God. David never says that he is great or able, but rather that God is great; God has delivered him in the past and will do so again.

Whenever a task relies on my personal skill or ability, it is open to failure. I am apt to lack confidence in myself, especially when confronting an overwhelming opponent, obstacle, or challenge. But nothing is impossible for God. If the challenge before me is God's, there will be victory, and I will again be delivered. I am confident of the Lord!

*Precious Savior, whatever success I have had, it is because your hand has made it so. Whatever you would have me face for you now, I am willing and able to do because of you. Amen.*

# Congregational Care



## Peace Garden Conversations

Sundays, September 14 and 21

There are only a couple more opportunities left to come join the conversations out in our wonderful Peace Garden. Intriguing discussions have been taking place which nurture our souls. Grab a cup of coffee in Fellowship Hall following worship, then hike on down to join in or just listen.

## Off-Site Social Gatherings

Pastor Jim and members of the Caring Ministries Team will be heading out for two more summertime visits with our Well-Seasoned Samaritans, and you are welcome to come along! These are simply times to enjoy each other's company, especially those who may not get out as much as before.

Refreshments will be provided. If you would like to attend, please contact the Gathering Host no later than one week prior to the date so that the proper number can be planned for. The gathering sites have been identified for the convenience of their residents, but anyone may attend. Come enjoy these special times to re-connect with friends!



Friendship Village - 8100 Highwood Dr., Bloomington

Wednesday, September 17, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Gathering Host: Carol Smith (carolsden@gmail.com)

Village Shores - 6501 Woodlake Dr., Richfield

Wednesday, September 24 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Gathering Host: Jayne Komadina (jaynecomadina@gmail.com)

## Survey to Grow Your Faith

Your opinion and your spiritual growth matter! Pastor Jim is collecting information on which spiritual topics may be of most interest. An online survey is collecting your responses and availability. The survey has been up throughout August so will be closing down soon and registration for fall sessions will open. Watch for further details and a link in the weekly Highlights. To take the survey, go to [tinyurl.com/GSSpiritualGrowthSurvey](http://tinyurl.com/GSSpiritualGrowthSurvey) to share your preferences, fill out a form in the Narthex, or contact Pastor Jim at [jim@good.org](mailto:jim@good.org).



# Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Continuing from the book study of *The Hopeful Family*  
by Ameilia Richardson Dress  
Chapter 6 - Hospitality - Welcoming What Comes

This was a great chapter on being welcoming not only to the stranger, but welcoming to who our children are becoming. The line that jumped off the page for me was "We learn to love deeply and hold loosely."

Part of being hospitable to our children is working on being more affirming than being critical. We could say "Thank you for doing the dishes" but often we say something like, "Next time please do a better job of wiping the counter." Instead of building up their skills of hope and creativity, we enforce their inner critic. We can find ways to help them build creative problem solving skills and the empathy to see things from a different prospective.

From page 116, "There are ways of practicing hospitality. We are making room for our kids to be their own people. We're welcoming them as they grow more fully into the many ways God is already working in them. When we approach this with curiosity and love, rather than a sense that we need to shape them, we are doing our part to live into God's vision for each littler person in our lives."

Ask your kids what makes them feel welcome at church! And please pass it along to me!

I am praying for you and your family ~Jan



## Building Faithful Families

September's offering is a 30 Days of Prayer tracker! It offers prayer suggestions for every day and hearts to fill in for each day you pray. You can pick up a copy at the Welcome Table in the Narthex or Jan can email it to you! Let her know at [jan@good.org](mailto:jan@good.org) if you would like a copy.



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

## Come See Me!

Our lives are so busy with activities that sometimes we don't always make it to Sunday worship. To help build our community, it is important to get to know each other. If your student has a concert, big game (or little!) or some other awesome event coming up, send an email to me at [jan@good.org](mailto:jan@good.org) and I will put it in on my calendar and bring your church family too!

Good Sam Adults: If you are interested in attending any of our youth's events let me know!

# Missions and Reconciling

## What Have We Been Doing?

We continue to respond to calls from Beacon Interfaith Housing to reach out to legislatures on issues of funding for supportive housing and other programs that impact people at risk of homelessness.

Feed My Starving Children – On Friday evening, July 25, three Good Samaritans and three members of Aldersgate joined with others to pack 44 boxes that translate to 9,504 meals - enough to feed 44 children a daily meal for a year. Then on August 13 a group of 17 Good Samaritans and friends joined with others to pack. Thanks to Jane Heimerl and all.



Good Samaritans drivers delivered meals to homebound folks for Edina Meals on Wheels on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Fridays in August. Thanks to all the drivers, Vicki Dunn who coordinates, and Jane Heimerl who helps pack the meals.

With food insecurity on the rise, funds from our Easter offering have been donated to the organizations we support that help people with food in July and August. These include VEAP, Joyce Uptown Foodshelf, Meals on Wheels and The Wesley Foundation. We also prepared and served a meal at Simpson Housing Services in July (here's the crew!).



Our Simpson Volunteers, July 27:

L-R Alex Knutson, Janet VanBenthuyzen, Cindy Bergstrom, JoAnn Knutson, Linda Hammersten, Charisse Litteken, Pat Deckas Becerra, Jane Heimerl, Jan Russell, David Litteken

## Coming Up in September



**HEARTS & HAMMERS**  
Restoring Homes. Touching Lives.

The Good Samaritan Hearts & Hammers Day, to help a local homeowner with exterior home improvements, is Saturday, September 6. Sign up for all or part of the day to scrape, prime and paint. Volunteers are also needed for landscape work to enhance the appearance of the finished project as well.

How to sign up? Please contact Brian Boysen (952) 937-0624 or 612-220-3795 or email [bteam-backup@earthlink.net](mailto:bteam-backup@earthlink.net).



**Beacon's** signature fundraising event, Light the Way Home, will be on Tuesday, September 9

from 12 noon-1:00 p.m. at Heritage Center of Brooklyn Center. This hour is packed with information, inspirational stories from people who **have benefited from Beacon's work**, and lunch as well. Janet VanBenthuyzen is hosting a table at the luncheon.

Volunteer at the Feed My Starving Children Chanhassen site, 18932 Lake Dr E, Wednesday, September 10, 9:30-11:15 a.m., and Friday, September 26, 7:15-8:45 p.m. Contact Claudia Boyson, [claudialboysen@gmail.com](mailto:claudialboysen@gmail.com) to sign up for the Wednesday date and Jane Heimerl, [jane.heimerl@yahoo.com](mailto:jane.heimerl@yahoo.com) to sign up for the Friday date.



Our Meals on Wheels date will be Friday, September 19. Interested in being added to the list of potential drivers or need a different date to participate? The Meals on Wheels site is shifting to using SignUpGenius for sign ups to drive our regular dates and on other days during the month. Contact Vicki Dunn at [victoria.dunn@q.com](mailto:victoria.dunn@q.com) or 952-930-3431 for more information.

# Missions

## School Starts Now All Over the World



Fall means school is starting up again, and at the Ormsby School in Baiwalla, Sierra Leone, a new school year is also beginning. That means **teachers' salaries, books, curriculum, lunches, and lots of other expenses for school.** The 550 students at the Ormsby School are eager to learn. Many of them walk long distances to attend school every day.

We are proud of the 26 Good Samaritan families who have donated money to help run the school, provide sponsorships and/or lunches. These eager students are counting on you.

In a place of unimaginable poverty, where most families live on \$2.00 a day, our gifts provide hope for education and nutrition to build strong bodies.

For \$500, you can provide a scholarship for a student for one year. For \$150 you can provide them with lunch for that year. For \$2,500 you can pay a teacher's salary for a whole year. But any amount will help, and payments can be made in installments. You can donate by check to Good Samaritan with a memo "Ormsby School" sent to the church office. Or give online on our website at [good.org/give/give-gift](https://good.org/give/give-gift) with the Fund "GS Missions" and Sub Fund: "Baiwalla Sierra Leone School".



On Sunday, September 21, the school will be highlighted at our church service with pictures and video from our mission trip to this African school.

In 2024, Pat Deckas Becerra and JoAnn Knutson joined Ann Carlson and Joan Jemison of Hennepin Avenue UMC to travel to Sierra Leone to visit the school. During their time there, they organized the school's new library and trained the librarian.



Ann started reading to a few students as they peeked into the library. And before long many students had gathered to hear her enthusiastic reading of *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom!*



We filled nine barrels with a thousand collected books and shipped them to the school last year to fill the library. *cont'd*

# Missions



The school is the dream of Judith Gaima, who came to study in the U.S. and was ordained and served two Minnesota churches before returning to her home. The school opened in 2019 and is named for Rev. Richard Ormsby, a retired Minnesota elder who served as her mentor and helped her through the process of becoming a pastor. Judith visited Good Samaritan at the end of August to talk about the school.

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## Share Your Story



Good Samaritan has been a Reconciling Congregation for 30 years. You are invited to do something to personally recognize this milestone. Would you like to share your own story of the impact of being part of a reconciling church? Reach out to Brian Boyson or Janet VanBenthuisen, [jv.pandora@gmail.com](mailto:jv.pandora@gmail.com), to have your story included in a future newsletter.

To learn more about continuing the efforts to be an inclusive church, visit the Minnesota Reconciling website at [mnrccumc.org](http://mnrccumc.org) for more information. Or join the next bi-monthly meeting of the Minnesota Reconciling committee on Zoom on Thursday, September 11, at 7:00 p.m. or contact Brian Boysen at 952-937-0624 or 612-220-3795 or email [bteambackup@earthlink.net](mailto:bteambackup@earthlink.net).

# Finance Team

## Finance Update

As we finish the summer and kick off another program year for Good Samaritan, the church finances through July are in pretty good shape, but August is currently coming in well short of budget. See table below for Actuals and Plan (Budget) through July.

Looking for a way to get involved in our church? The Finance Committee is seeking a few more members – no financial experience needed! Contact Byron Olson at [lolson6@comcast.net](mailto:lolson6@comcast.net) if interested.

	<b>July Actuals</b>	<b>July Plan</b>	<b>Year-to-Date Actuals</b>
<b>Income</b>	\$42,156	\$68,348	\$430,156
<b>Expense</b>	\$52,616	\$53,714	\$416,620
<b>Net</b>	(\$10,461)	\$14,634	\$13,536



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!

Youth Group  
 4:30-6:00 p.m.

**WEDNESDAYS**

(Nursery care upon request)

Chancel Chimes Rehearsal  
 6:00-7:15 p.m.

Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
 7:00-8:30 p.m.

**GOOD SAMARITAN OFFICE HOURS**

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