

October  
2025

# The Samaritan

## Worship Themes

October 5 -  
Communion / Pastor  
Jim preaching -  
"Unexpected  
Partners"

October 12 - "Grateful  
Living"

October 19 - "Make a  
Joyful Noise" /  
Stewardship

October 26 - "Glad  
and Generous Hearts" /  
Stewardship



## OUR STAFF

Rev. Max Richter  
Lead Pastor  
max@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  
952-221-1857

Carey Shunskis  
Chancel Choir Director &  
Music Coordinator  
carey@good.org

Kate Graber  
Chancel Chimes Director  
kate@good.org

Brad Carlin  
Homeward Bound Director  
bradleycarlin@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  
Website Administrator  
dandy@good.org

Good Samaritan UMC  
Office: 952-929-0049

# Pastor's Page

Dear Good Samaritan Church Family,

Welcome to October! A season of change is in the air as the merger team began its work on September 15. Good Samaritan representatives Charisse and David Litteken, Mac Lewis, Brad Wallenberg, and I began meeting with representatives from Aldersgate and their interim clergy, Dennis Alexander.



Our proposed timeline looks like this:

- September 15 – November 23 - 9 weeks of preparation (allows for 4 to 5 meetings with more scheduled as needed)
- November 9 - Final Drafts completed and reviewed by attorney
- November 16-21 - Church Councils and Boards of Trustees approve final drafts of plans
- November 21 - Letter with both plans is mailed to congregations
- November 30 and December 7 - Announce Church Conference in Pulpits
- December 14 - Church Conference of both churches to vote on plan of merger and articles of merger



While the team does its work, we will have our stewardship Sundays on October 19 and 26 with a generosity theme. We will bless the pledges in worship on October 26. Watch for a mailing on this in early October.

Staff update: We are in the process of searching for both a permanent organist/accompanist and coordinator of online engagement. The job descriptions are posted on our website. Stay tuned for announcements on these important staff positions.

Please note that I will be on vacation from Tuesday, September 30 through Saturday, October 4, and Pastor Jim will be on call for pastoral emergencies.

I hope that you are taking time to savor the beautiful changing of the seasons with the fall leaves and all the fun that fall brings. It's important to spend time renewing our spirits in these days of much turmoil in our community, nation, and world.

We continue our ministry together of inspiring joyful faith, building a loving community, and serving neighbors near and far.

Blessings to you and yours,

*Pastor Max*

# Digital Ministry

## Digital Ministry Update



The Staff Parish Relations Committee would like to share an update regarding the future of our digital ministry and online presence. We have developed a revised job description for a part-time role (8–10 hours per

week), posted the position on online job boards, and are actively seeking qualified candidates. The interview team will consist of Megan Leill from SPRC, Brad Carlin (Digital Team volunteer), and Pastor Max.

In response to feedback from the congregation, we are moving forward with a digital ministry that prioritizes weekly live streaming of church services, rather than the previous schedule of one service per month. We also plan to offer live-streaming for special religious celebrations, weddings, funerals, memorials, and similar events. To support this expansion, we are exploring the addition of more cameras and technical equipment—potentially repurposing gear from Aldersgate UMC—and retrofitting the sound area to enhance our production quality.

In addition to live streaming, this position will continue to support the digital components of our weekly services, including PowerPoint presentations, videos, imagery, and other media.

The role will also include managing and developing content for our online presence across social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and others.

As we welcome this new staff member, we encourage the congregation to continue its spirit of volunteerism by joining the Digital Team. We have a strong core group and are eager to expand with more church members who are passionate about this vital ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

David Litteken, on behalf of the Staff Parish Relations Committee

# An Invitation from Dandy

## October is Sandhill Crane Migration Time

Each October, I drive 1½ hours northeast to “Crex Meadows” in Grantsburg, Wisconsin to view and photograph the Sandhill Cranes. Please email me, [Dandy@good.org](mailto:Dandy@good.org), if you think you might be interested in joining me on such an adventure. Once I know if there’s interest, we can all connect to work out the “who, what, when, & where” details. ~ Dandy Lewis



# Congregational Care

## The Power of Mercy

*“With these words, David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way. Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, ‘My lord the king!’ When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.” 1 Samuel 24:7-8*

Saul has been actively pursuing David in order to kill him. The military has even been called out to help. Saul goes by himself into a cave for a little rest, and lo! David and his men are hiding in the back, but Saul doesn't realize it. As Saul naps, David's men are eager to attack, but David refuses to kill, harm, capture, or threaten Saul in any way. All he does is sneak forward and cut a piece of fabric off the edge of Saul's robe. The power was his to use against Saul and yet he did not. Instead, he forfeits all his power, protection, and advantage completely and takes the position of weakness and submission.

I wonder if I could even do such a thing. It's one thing to have the power and choose not to use it, but then to step out and surrender?! It's a complete 180 degrees from where you were the moment before. Perhaps it was the evidence of power-not-used (the piece of Saul's robe), of

Pastor Jim Beard  
(he/him)

Director of  
Congregational Care

jim@good.org  
952-452-9396



mercy extended, of grace being gifted that made the difference. Divine acts of mercy may be the greatest source of power to sway an enemy from his or her ill intentions.

(And what did Saul do? See 1 Samuel 24:16-22 for the answer!)

*Omnipotent God, by following you, I receive your powerful protection. Help me to know when to use your merciful power and submit to my enemies. Amen.*



Crocodiles at Reptile Gardens, Rapid City, South Dakota, 2025, photo by PJ Beard

# Congregational Care

## Spiritual Growth Survey Results

Special thanks to all who recently completed our Spiritual Growth Survey. Surprisingly, all six options came back with an overall positive response rating! The percentage of positive responses for each suggestion were as follows:

- 83% ... One Trunk – Many Branches
- 83% ... Remembering Who We Are
- 73% ... Discovering Your Spirituality Type
- 65% ... Beyond Guilt
- 59% ... Paul's Letters to His Churches
- 59% ... Bible Basics



Even past courses and offerings showed a healthy interest in being available again. "The Path" was of interest to 10 new people and, since it comes in a small group format, it certainly could be re-offered easily. "4 Witnesses to the Truth" and "De-Mystifying the Book of Revelation" are larger group courses and would need around 10 more people each to make them worth repeating, but certainly not off the table.

Obviously, ALL of these cannot be led by Pastor Jim alone this year. He will be taking on "One Trunk..." this fall (see below), "Discovering..." this winter, and "Remembering..." next Lent. Other leaders are encouraged to step up and talk with him about heading up one of the other topics.

This looks to be an exciting year for our spiritual growth together!

## Fall Course Starting October 1



Christianity has grown into a mighty movement, with a great many denominational branches. But why did all these Christian groups emerge? What are they doing, believing, and practicing? What might we learn or adopt from them? Classes will cover eight of the main Christian faiths in America. Two class options include Wednesday evenings or Sundays following worship and will cover the same material. Classes begin on October 1 and will end right

before Thanksgiving. For more information and an easy registration form, go to [www.tinyurl.com/one-trunk](http://www.tinyurl.com/one-trunk), scan the QR code found here, 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 Amelia Richardson Dress book study—  
Chapter 7 - Generosity - Choosing Abundance

This is such a good chapter. If you read only one, read this one!

This chapter discusses the fundamental shift in thinking of “working with” others rather than “doing for” others. There is a common thought that we need to “fix” someone. When we help people we are in solidarity with them. Our help cannot come at the expense of someone else’s dignity.

I also appreciated Amelia’s thoughts on “first fruits” - giving the same grocery items to the food shelf that I would buy for my family, not a cheaper version. Yes, there is a place for quantity but quality matters too, such as giving name brand school supplies or putting the Angel Tree gifts at the top of my Christmas budget, not the end.

This blessing for Abundance really spoke to my heart:  
For stretching to give beyond what feels comfortable,  
For choosing hope in times of fear,  
For living abundance when others create scarcity,  
May you be blessed.

I am praying for you and your family. ~ Jan

**I’ll come to see you!** 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, email me and I will put it 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!



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

jan@good.org  
952-452-9398

Imagination Jar!

Suggestions of things to spark your child’s imagination. You can pick up a set at the Welcome Table in the narthex or let Jan know if you would like it emailed to you. This resource comes from [www.triumphantlearning.com](http://www.triumphantlearning.com).



**YOUTH GROUP**  
1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday  
of the month\*  
4:30-6:00 p.m.  
starting October 5

We will partner with  
Shepherd of the Hills  
Lutheran Church.

**Fellowship  
Food Fun!**


\*Mostly! Full list of dates will be given on the first night!

GOOD SAMARITAN UMC  
**DRIVE THRU  
MINI BOO!**  
DRIVE THROUGH THE PORTICO  
FOR A GOODIE BAG!  
OCTOBER 31 4PM - 6PM

# Missions

## What Have We Been Doing?



 Housing: Many hands helped in the power washing, painting and landscaping of a home in Minneapolis. The work of Hearts & Hammers helps seniors and veterans stay in their homes. This homeowner is in her 80s and had lived in her home for over 20 years.

Several members of Good Samaritan attended the "Light The Way Home" luncheon fundraiser for Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative in September. We heard from people whose lives have been deeply impacted by the supportive housing that Beacon advocates for and builds. We also worked on advocacy by making calls to our congressional representatives to share the importance of affordable and supportive housing to keep people in their homes as they work on the budget this month.

Food Security: Feed My Starving Children – In August and September, folks from Good Samaritan and Aldersgate helped pack 151 boxes that translate to 87,552 meals! That can feed 240 children for a year!

Good Samaritan drivers delivered meals to homebound folks for Edina Meals on Wheels in September. And Missions donated \$1,000 to VEAP for their food shelf.

*Thanks to all who organize and participate in these events!*

## Coming Up



This month's food packing dates at Feed My Starving Children are Wednesday, October 8, 9:30-11:15 a.m., and Friday, October 17, 7:15-8:45 p.m., Contact Jane Heimerl to sign up, [jane.heimerl@yahoo.com](mailto:jane.heimerl@yahoo.com).

We have two Meals on Wheels dates this month on Fridays, October 17 and 31. Interested in being added to the list of potential drivers or need a different date to participate? Contact Vicki Dunn at [victoria.dunn@q.com](mailto:victoria.dunn@q.com). 952-930-3431 for more information.



Good Samaritan has been a Reconciling Congregation for 30 years. Would you like to share your own story of the impact of being part of a reconciling church? Contact Brian Boysen, 612-220-3795 or [bteambackup@earthlink.net](mailto:bteambackup@earthlink.net), or Janet VanBenthuyzen at [jv.pandora@gmail.com](mailto:jv.pandora@gmail.com) to have your story included in a future newsletter.



A special opportunity on Monday, October 20 at Peace United Methodist Church in Shoreview to hear from Colby Martin, author of *Unclobber: Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible and Homosexuality*. Watch the e-news for details.



# Missions

## More Ways to Serve

No obligation, no committee meetings, but opportunities to be in service to others.



Looking for opportunities to serve without having to serve on a committee?! We're looking for you! From time to time, the Missions Team need more hands: helping a family move into new housing, delivering new furniture to a family who has found a new home, organizing our donation shelves, taking items from the donation shelves to an organization, serving a meal at Simpson. These are just a few of the things that need more hands. Are you interested in being on an email list to know when there is a need? Please

contact Brian Boysen at [bteambackup@earthlink.net](mailto:bteambackup@earthlink.net) or Janet VanBenthuisen at [jv.pandora@gmail.com](mailto:jv.pandora@gmail.com) to be added to our list of potential "Good Samaritans in Action."

Joyce Uptown Food Shelf tour and food drive – save the dates!

An Open House just for us! Come learn more about Joyce Uptown Foodshelf on Sunday, November 2 from 12 :00 to 1:00 p.m. We want to "Fill the Van" on November 2 with people to drive down for the open house and "Fill the Van" again on November 9 with food to be delivered to Joyce for their emergency food bags. Watch for details in the e-news and for a sign-up sheet in the Narthex, or contact Tony Branch at [tbranch5129@gmail.com](mailto:tbranch5129@gmail.com).

**You're Invited!**

**Joyce Uptown Food Shelf Open House**

Members of Good Samaritan United Methodist Church are invited to join us at Joyce for a casual open house where Executive Director Matthew Ayres will give a tour of the food shelf and talk about current events impacting our mission and our neighborhood. We are excited to connect and see you there! The food shelf has limited space. If you plan to attend, please write your name and email address on the sign-up sheet. Questions? Email Tony Branch at [tbranch5129@gmail.com](mailto:tbranch5129@gmail.com).

**3041 Fremont Ave S**  
**Sunday, November 2**  
**12-1pm**

[www.joyceuptownfoodshelf.org](http://www.joyceuptownfoodshelf.org)

# Missions

## Mission Highlight: More about Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative

The Beacon collaborative of congregations includes more than 70 faith communities that believe safe, affordable homes provide the basis for stable families and thriving communities.

Beacon congregations combine their energy and resources to advance equitable housing policy, provide funding for supportive services, and support the creation of new, deeply affordable homes.

Beacon has 20 buildings with over 700 affordable housing units in the Twin Cities. Over 60% of their units have supportive services which means residents have access to onsite services that assist them in parenting, financial literacy, mental health, and other areas essential to healthy living.

Good Samaritan began our involvement with Beacon as one of many congregations housing families for a week at a time in Beacon's Families Moving Forward program, which supported families experiencing homelessness with gaining skills and employment needed until they were able to find affordable housing. While that program is no longer active, we remain a collaborative member of Beacon, and Good Samaritan can claim a part of the 'We/Our/Us' in Beacon's vision and mission statement:

“As a Minnesota housing nonprofit committed to housing justice, shared values guide our work every step of the way. Every action we take—whether raising money for a new development or organizing around an issue at a local city hall—originates from the vision and values we share as a collaborative.

Our Vision: All people should have a home.

Our Mission: As a collaborative of congregations united in action, we create homes and advance equitable housing. We are more powerful when we work together.

We affirm:

- All people are valuable and deserve respect.
- Our many faiths call us to act to create more equitable communities.
- All people have a right to a quality, affordable home.
- Quality affordable homes belong in all communities.
- Our society has the resources for all of us to have a home.
- Systemic racism causes housing inequities.
- Everyone will benefit when we all have homes.
- Stable homes transform lives and communities.”

To learn more about Beacon, visit their website at [beaconinterfaith.org](http://beaconinterfaith.org). Also, you can attend one of their monthly “Rent is Due” Zoom calls on the first Wednesday of each month, 8:30 to 9:00 a.m.; sign up on their website. These meetings are always only 30 minutes and packed with information and a single advocacy opportunity well prepared for action!



# The Good Samaritan Foundation

## The Foundation at Work

The Board of The Good Samaritan Foundation is pleased to tell you about two grants that were approved at their 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter meeting. The grants were made possible because of donations to The Outreach Fund.

The first was awarded to Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative as they undertake the building of Aster Commons Supportive Housing for Youth in Richfield. Aster Commons will have 40 homes for youth with autism, traumatic brain injury, or other brain differences. Beacon is in the final steps leading to groundbreaking. The programs and services offered at Aster Commons will be designed to help young people with significant barriers to housing stability become active members of a community with onsite services that support their overall well-being and success. The grant awarded was \$4,000.

The second grant was awarded to Legado, a non-profit supporting indigenous communities in Ngilia, Kenya. This community developed a Legacy Plan to address maternity health and constructed the Samburu Maternity Shelter. Women receive traditional birth care while

increasing access to modern emergency care. The community now seeks to upgrade their solar power system, which will

enable them to have enough power for necessary shelter equipment, including a baby incubator and refrigeration units. The presence of the shelter has led to an increase in pre- and post-natal care, and inspired a community garden nearby where new moms can grow nourishing food for their families. With upgraded solarization, the shelter can operate at full capacity and continue providing interconnected benefits to the community. The grant awarded was \$3,000.

The Foundation Board will have its final meeting for 2025 on November 13. We typically categorize grants as local, national, and global, dividing one third of our yearly available grant money for each category. We are seeking grant applications for organizations with a national presence at our next meeting. Please contact Claudia Boysen at [claudiaLboysen@gmail.com](mailto:claudiaLboysen@gmail.com) if you would like to suggest a non-profit group for a grant. Thank you!



## Finance Team

### Finance Update

As anticipated, pledge payments were a little slower in August. We encourage everyone to fulfill their pledges by the end of the year. *[Editor's note: **please turn in donations for 2025 by early December** to avoid mail delays and make our accounting much easier. Thanks!]* If you are able, please consider an extra donation in 2025 to help reduce our dependence on our Reserve fund. Good Sam's financial position Year-to-Date is positive. Thanks to everyone for your support. See table below for Actuals and Plan (Budget).

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.

	Aug Actuals	Aug Plan	Year-to-Date Actuals
Income	\$48,856	\$85,888	\$479,011
Expense	\$46,690	\$52,638	\$463,309
Net	\$ 2,166	\$33,250	\$15,702

# Trustees

## Maintenance Minute: A New Zamboni!

*Editor's Note: The staff affectionately calls Dan's floor scrubber his Zamboni. :)*

I hope you all had a great summer! I spent quite a bit of time on my boat with friends and family, and went to a few concerts as well. One of them was in Waite Park, where I took my 16-year-old son to his first outdoor concert. We had a great and memorable time! While we were there, we visited a friend whose neighbor used to own a brewery that was also attached to a gift shop they owned.

Unfortunately, they had recently shut down both places and had some items for sale. One thing happened to be a floor scrubber. The Trustees and I had been looking for a new one for at least a year, as our other one had been having a few issues that wouldn't be cost-effective to fix. That, plus it being over 16 years old, it was time for an upgrade. These machines, brand new, are very expensive, especially if you buy a brand name like Hillyard or Tennant. The friend's neighbor happened to have one, only about three years old and in very good shape, with low hours of use. He set a very good price on it, so I had to jump on it, since I knew it would not last long for sale. This Hillyard brand machine is used for scrubbing the sanctuary, choir room, kitchen, and most importantly, the gym. It is also 10 inches wider than our last one, which cuts my time by almost half. It has already been very beneficial for the church!

Dan Green  
(he/him)

Building Engineer

danrg@good.org  
612-889-4015





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

- 9:45-11:30 a.m.  
Nursery - Infants - Age 3
- 10:00-11:00 a.m.  
Worship - In-person and Online
- Children's Sunday School**  
Held during worship following Children's Time. All are welcome!
- 4:30-6:00 p.m.  
Youth Group - 1st & 3rd Sundays

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

GOOD SAMARITAN OFFICE HOURS

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