

February
2026

The Samaritan

Worship Themes

February 1 -
Communion /
"Rejoice and Be
Glad"

February 8 - "Salt and
Light"

February 15 -
Transfiguration
Sunday / "Fear Not"

February 22 - Lent 1 /
"The good news is...so
good it catches us by
surprise"



Our Lenten worship series for this year is "Tell Me Something Good" from A Sanctified Art. (Sanctifiedart.org). Each week will focus on key scriptures and themes of Jesus' life and ministry. Here's an overview from the creative director, Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity:

What are the essential tenets of Jesus' ministry? They could include: radical inclusion, love for neighbor, communal care, protection for the vulnerable, redistribution of wealth, mercy in the face of injustice. As we study scripture and Jesus' words and actions, some questions arise: Who was this good news for then? Is it still good news for us today? What makes it good? These questions challenge us to assess our own internalized biases about who Jesus was and what his message can mean for us today. May the church show up as a force for good. May we all have good news to share in a world that desperately needs it.

We look forward to a meaningful season of Lent together as we move toward Holy Week and bring the good news of Jesus into our community and world.

OUR STAFF

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Pastor's Page

Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent are right around the corner. We'll gather for worship on Wednesday, February 18, at 7:00 p.m. with imposition of ashes and an opportunity to write down prayers we want to release to God by safely burning them. We'll also share in Holy Communion.



As we begin the Lenten season, the suffering of our neighbors with the presence of ICE in our community and subsequent violence and community trauma continues to deeply impact lives.

Please see the Missions information on pages 8 and 9 for opportunities to support our neighbors in need.

In the midst of everything happening, please take care of yourselves. This is a long haul that we are walking together. We'll keep moving forward as the new Good Samaritan UMC as we are faithful to the great love we have to share.

Best,

Pastor Max



Interested in helping lead our worship as a liturgist, usher, AV tech, fellowship host, or prepping/serving communion? Sign up on our website at good.org/ministries/volunteer-signup-opportunities.

Music

Make a Joyful Noise!

Good Samaritan's Music Ministry now includes five ensembles! We look forward to all of the beautiful music leading our worship.

Below are our groups, their directors, and when they rehearse. All groups meet in their respective rooms in the Music Wing on the lower level.



- Chancel Choir - Carey Shunskis, carey@good.org
 - Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- Chancel Chimes - Kate Graber, kate@good.org
 - Wednesdays, 6:00-7:15 p.m.
- Jubilee! Bell Choir - Christina Herold, christina@good.org
 - Tuesdays, 6:45-7:45 p.m.
- Homeward Bound Band - Brad Carlin, bradleypcarlin@gmail.com
 - Thursdays, 7:15-9:00 p.m.
- Faith Alive Band - Serena Steffenhagen, serena@good.org
 - Rehearsals to be determined

Carey is also the Music Coordinator. Reach out to any of these great folks to learn more about getting involved.



Aldersgate UMC History

From Serena Steffenhagen, Small Group Leader and Faith Alive Director

The History of Small Groups



Small groups grew out of a long tradition of Adult Education at Aldersgate. In fact, the first group initially met for a Lenten study offered sometime in the

early 2010s. The group decided to continue after the Lenten study was completed and dubbed themselves Tuesday Testaments.

The Monday night small group first began in 2015 as a moms' support group that also included reading the past Sunday's scripture and discussing the questions provided regarding the message that week. Over time, this group began participating in Advent and Lenten curriculum, and then branching out to topics of interest, selecting, as a group, the next book to read and discuss.

As is one of the tenets of small groups, both created a caring community while also growing in faith. All are looking forward to new voices and perspectives as the small groups are expanded at Good Samaritan.



The History of Faith Alive

The need for a band arose in the early 2000s when Aldersgate added a contemporary service to the Sunday morning worship schedule. Faith Alive consisted of both congregational members and musician friends of members.

Grounded in the excellent music tradition of Aldersgate, Faith Alive introduced contemporary Christian music to the worship experience. Band personnel included piano/ keyboard, lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass guitar, drums, and three vocalists.

Around 2010, Aldersgate decided to go to one worship service on Sunday mornings. Because Faith Alive and the music it provided were so well-liked, it was decided that "band Sundays" would occur on the second and fourth Sundays of each month and "regular Sundays" would be the first, third, and fifth Sundays. That schedule continued through 2025.

Some members of the band have been together for over 20 years. The current musicians of Faith Alive have been together close to 10 years and delight in making music together. Although personnel have changed over the years, the level of musicianship has remained high.

The postlude, or "closer closer" as Faith Alive likes to call it, has become a signature ending to worship. At the Thursday night rehearsal, the band reads the scripture for the upcoming Sunday and brainstorms a secular song that speaks to the theme or message of the scripture. They can usually play the song at the mere mention of it. The Aldersgate congregation has come to look forward to this as much as the band looks forward to musically challenging themselves.

Aldersgate UMC History

History in Glass

We thought it would be interesting to find out the history of some of the significant items that came over from Aldersgate. Many thanks to Jan Nyberg for collecting a lot of information that we will be sharing in the coming months. Today we'll learn about the three panels of stained glass windows that came from their building. We have them sitting in Aldersgate Hall now and look forward to finding a creative way to display them. Suggestions are welcome!

pieces of the broken colored glass. Eight of the windows were offered for auction, raising \$9,083. After the cost of removal of the windows, \$5,883 was donated to Simpson Housing Services and Bridging.



In Judy and Pete Chirpich's yard in Edina. Judy grew up at Good Samaritan.



In Gail Miller's garden in St. Louis Park.

The Aldersgate stained glass windows were installed in 1971 during a remodel of their existing building. They were designed by Eugene Marggraff, an artist who studied stained glass design in Vienna, Austria, in the Dalle de Verre ("slab glass" in French) style of cemented stained

glass, which was part of the midcentury modern design movement. They were built and installed by Winona, Minnesota-based Conway Universal Studios Inc. The windows were designed with an upward movement to show Christian growth. The large altar window had dark shades at the bottom representing the earth, and the colors spiraled upward to the heavens, representing the spirit of Christians who are not bound by earth but created for the heavens. The windows on the sides of the sanctuary were designed to show movement and balance, with "color in motion, creating a fourth dimension in space," according to the artist's statement. The design is bold, yet with a childlike quality.



Before the building sale was finalized in summer 2022, several of the windows were removed from their frame and offered to members. Many more members were able to take home

John Croxford grew up at Aldersgate and drove from Seattle to pick up the windows from one side of the main doors. He now enjoys this view in his home office on Bainbridge Island, Washington.

Congregational Care



Perrot State Park overlooking the Mississippi River, Trempealeau, WI 2024. Photo by PJ Beard

Pastor Jim Beard
(he/him)

Director of
Congregational Care

jim@good.org
952-452-9396



The View from a Hillside

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these.

~ Matthew 6:28b-29 NRSVUE

For the last two months, we have looked into Matthew's conviction that Jesus is not only a king, He is more; Jesus is God's own son! Now, Matthew can get down to passing along the messages of this Holy One, messages we should all take to heart. And so we have this simple lesson to seriously consider.

This passage from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount addresses the people's anxiety over money and wealth. Instead of chastising them for worrying so much, Jesus turns their attention to all the riches which continually surround them. This teaching moment is not in a temple, an arena, or even a synagogue; it is not in the palace of the king or in some great temple built to "house" God. Jesus speaks to the people on a hillside, overlooking the beautiful Sea of Galilee and gorgeous hillsides bedecked with radiant wildflowers and birdsongs. This natural world is God's true temple and home; this temple is open to all, free for all, and adorned for all with unequalled beauty. And yet the people worry, worry, worry about gaining more money and miss these riches which are ever before their eyes.

How much of our time is spent in the pursuit of money? How much of our anxiety stems from

counting our wealth? At what cost? Spiritual author Wayne Muller answers it this way: "... Stop counting. How do we count friendship or laughter? How do we count the value of honesty, or bread from the oven? How can we count the sunrise, the trusting clasp of a child's hand, a melody, a tear, a lover's touch? So many truly precious things grow only in the soil of time; and we can only begin to know their value when we stop counting. During Sabbath, things that grow in time are honored at least as much as those things we would buy and sell. At rest, we can take deeper measure of our true wealth."

I am well aware of the nagging pull of the anxiety over not having enough money. But I need to remind myself to count my "wealth" beyond my bank account, and realize again just how rich I am. Like George Bailey at the close of *It's a Wonderful Life*, we all need to heed the words of the angel Clarence ... "Remember, no [one] is a failure who has friends."

Most Gracious Provider, help me to look around and count the wealth of life, wealth which is mine not because I have toiled but because I have been gifted by you. Refocus my attention so that my soul may regain a non-anxious peace and joy. If I must count anything, let me count my blessings from you and others. Lay forth the way of life for me which can be found with you on a hillside. Amen.

News & Events

Upcoming for Lent



In times when change swirls around you, leaving you unstable and unsure, it is good to remember where you have come from in order to focus you for where you are going. In times of trouble and strife, it is good to remember the troubles that you have already overcome. In times of concern, it is good to remember your times of joy. In times like these, it is good to remember who you are.

This Lent, let us remember together. Let us remember our Judeo-Christian faith, our denominational heritage, and our local church lore, so that we can remember that we are God's own people. Let us remember "in order that we may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

This six-week series begins immediately after Ash Wednesday, February 18, and runs through Holy Week. Classes may be attended either Sunday mornings following worship, or Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.

Registration for these Lenten classes are now open! Go to tinyurl.com/GSRemember. Contact Pastor Jim with questions - jim@good.org or 952-452-9396.

Tuesday Bible Study (TBS) Welcomes All!

We gather from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room. Our upcoming sessions are:

February 3: *Ways We Encounter God: "God's Fidelity and Trust"* (from the book by Tom Berlin)

February 10: *Ways We Encounter God: "God's Righteousness and My Work for Justice"*

February 17: *Ways We Encounter God: "God's Graciousness and My Love of Others"*

February 24 - March 24: Lenten Study: "Remember Who You Are", led by Pastor Jim Beard (see above)

No sign up in advance is necessary. Just come! Any Tuesday! If you have questions or would like to have your name added to our TBS group list for more detailed information and announcements, please contact Lynn Timmer, timmerlynn@gmail.com.



Thursday Afternoon Book Group

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, February 12, at 1:00 in the Fireside Room. We will be discussing *Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame* by Olivia Ford, a story that celebrates life, friendship, love, family, and food. Please join us for fellowship, refreshments and discussion. Questions: Contact: Vicki Dunn, 952-930-3431, victoria.dunn@myctl.net.



Pancake Brunch Update



The Pancake Brunch on January 11, 2026 was a terrific success! It was great to see everyone in that social setting. We collected \$557.00 and our expenses were \$124.27, so \$432.73 will go to our Mission Team. If you have any suggestions for future meals or would like to assist, please contact JoAnn Knutson (612-240-9372, joannknutson@hotmail.com) or David Knutson (612-859-2940, dhknutson73@gmail.com).

Missions

What Have We Been Doing?

A huge thank-you to the congregation for the Christmas offering to support our Mission efforts. In January, the merged Missions Team met to learn about the focus of each of the congregations. There is a great deal of overlap, especially with food security and housing security, and even some common organizations are supported. We'll share more as we blend our outreach efforts over the coming months.

Food Security: Feed My Starving Children –



Over two events in late December and mid-January, Good Samaritans joined with others to pack 204 boxes of

food. That is enough to feed 123 children for a year. Good Samaritan drivers delivered meals twice in January for Edina Meals on Wheels.

Housing: We continue to advocate with Beacon Interfaith Housing on the importance of affordable and supportive housing to keep people in their homes. In January, Beacon held its Convening at Hennepin Avenue UMC with a panel of county and state representatives talking about the drive to maintain supportive housing despite federal cuts.

Immigrant support: Benjamin, the father of the family from Ecuador that we have been helping, has been detained by ICE, and it is anticipated that he will be deported. We are continuing to assist Julia and Gelen navigate their return to Ecuador without fear of separation.



Coming Up in February

Upcoming Feed My Starving Children dates – Wednesday, February 11, 9:30-11:15 a.m., and Friday, February 20, 7:15-8:45 p.m. To sign up, contact Jane Heimerl at jane.heimerl@yahoo.com.

We will deliver Meals on Wheels on Friday, February 20. Interested in being added to the list of potential drivers or need a different date to participate? Contact Vicki Dunn at victoria.dunn@myctl.net or 952-930-3431 for more information.

Beacon's monthly "Rent is Due" is on

Wednesday, February 4, 8:30-9:00 a.m. on Zoom. Each month, they include an advocacy action that typically only takes a few minutes. Go to beaconinterfaith.org/events/ to register.

The Minnesota Reconciling Congregations (MRC) is hosting "Gender Liberation is For Everyone: A Path Toward Stronger Allyship with LGBTQ+ Congregants", an online training on

Thursday, February 26, 7:00-8:30

p.m. The training supports participants' capacity for LGBTQ+-inclusive community building. It

offers a lens that breaks down hard and fast boundaries between trans and cis experiences to assert that

gender liberation is for everyone and that such a perspective can spur more effective allyship.

For more information, contact Brian Boysen at bteambackup@earthlink.net or visit the reconciling website at mnrccumc.org.



With So Much Happening in our community with ICE keeping many of our neighbors at home from work, school, and shopping due to fear, regardless of immigration status, we all want to find meaningful ways to help.

Good Samaritan has had a 30-year partnership with Stonebridge World School in south Minneapolis. The

families served at this PreK-6th-grade school have already been struggling with

food and housing insecurity before the ICE surge. Now, many are afraid to go to work and to have their children go to school. The Stonebridge staff have been busy collecting food from food shelves, buying food with

STONEBRIDGE
World School



Missions

donations, and delivering it to families. They provide iPads for online learning and hotspot devices to those without internet access. The Good Samaritan Missions has set up a GoFundMe page to help meet these critical basic needs and to provide rent assistance for those unable to work. Good Samaritan is acting as the fiscal agent, but the school administration and social workers will identify the families in need who will receive assistance. Please consider donating to this fund and sharing it with your own social network. Go to gofund.me/de3f8e709 or search "Good Samaritan GoFundMe."

Food Security Highlight

How can I volunteer?

Good Samaritan supports three food shelves: Joyce Uptown Food Shelf in the Uptown area of Minneapolis, STEP in St. Louis Park, and VEAP in Bloomington (serving Richfield, South Minneapolis, and Edina as well).

All three organizations rely heavily on volunteers to carry out their work. Volunteers do all kinds of activities from answering phones to sorting, stocking, and packing groceries, meeting and assisting shoppers, and even delivering meals. Volunteers can have regular weekly shifts or other commitments that fit their availability.

It speaks volumes for our wider community here in Minnesota that both Joyce and VEAP are currently 'at capacity' and cannot take on new volunteers at this time. However, that can change, so check their websites for opportunities to sign up. STEP does appear to be taking new volunteers. Go to stepslp.org, joyceuptownfoodshelf.org, or veap.org.

Dios Habla Hoy ("God Speaks Today") Church at 5728 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis is collecting and delivering food to people in need. As of this writing, they've had over 20,000 families request help and have served over 14,000. Go to dhhmn.com/operations to

donate, request food, or volunteer to pack or deliver food.

Because this has been an evolving situation in Minnesota, new opportunities may pop up, so please watch the weekly e-news from the church office for additional ways to be the Good Samaritan to our neighbors.



Contact Our Legislators

To contact Congress regarding the ICE surge in Minnesota and the funding of ICE and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), call the Capitol switchboard and ask for the representative or senator to whom you wish to speak. They will connect you to the appropriate office, where you can leave a message. [A suggestion is to write out your message before you call.](#)

Capitol Switchboard :

- Senators - 202-224-3121
- Representatives - 202-225-3121

Calling is most effective, but if you also want to send an email, you must go to each **congressperson's website and fill out a form**, which becomes an email message. The websites are:

- House - last name.house.gov (e.g. emmer.house.gov)
- Senate - last name.senate.gov

To find your congressperson or other senators or representatives, go to their websites:

- senate.gov
- house.gov

We need to raise our voices together. Even if our congressperson agrees with our stance, it strengthens their position to hear the voices of their constituents.

Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Important Conversations

Our parenting book for 2026 is *Sacred Parenthood* by Aizaiah G. Yong and Nereyda Yong. I had intended to recap the first chapter this month. However, I think the information about talking to your kids about ICE is more Helpful this month.

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



I am praying for you and your family. ~Jan

START THE CONVERSATION

Begin by asking: "What do you know about ICE?" This gives you insight into what they've heard or seen. If they say "I don't know," you can gently explain:

"ICE is a government group that checks if people are following immigration laws. Some families are scared of them because they help decide who can stay in the U.S. Have you heard about people moving to new countries?"

AGES 3-6

"Some families are being treated unfairly because of where they were born. You're safe, and I'm here with you."

- Keep it simple and comforting
- Provide extra hugs, reassurance, and routines.

AGES 12-18

"It's not right for people to be treated unfairly because of where they're from. This hurts kids and families."

- Acknowledge their awareness
- Encourage healthy ways to process: writing, talking, art, advocacy.

AGES 7-11

"Some families are being separated because of how they came to the U.S. Even kids are getting hurt, and that's not okay."

- Be honest without overwhelming

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ALL AGES

"It's okay to feel scared or frustrated. What matters is we talk about it and help each other feel better."

- Encourage breathing, drawing, or journaling

WHAT **NOT** TO SAY

- "Don't worry about it." Dismisses their feelings
- "That won't happen to us." Creates false reassurance

WHAT TO SAY **INSTEAD**

"You're not alone in this. People are trying to help, and I'm one of them. If you ever feel scared, we can talk about it together."

Plan for emergencies. Use our Family Preparedness Toolkit: childnet.org/immigration-resources



This month is an activity to help your family process traumatic events. It is available in the Narthex at the Welcome Table or let Jan know if you would like a copy emailed to you - jan@good.org.

Our next Intergenerational Mission Trip is scheduled for June 20-28. The cost \$500 and scholarships are available. More information is at good.org/event/appalachia-service-project-asp. Contact Jan with questions - jan@good.org.



The Good Samaritan Foundation

Year-End for 2025

With the year-end numbers in, The Foundation Board is pleased to provide the beginning and final balances of the funds of The Good Samaritan Foundation for 2025.

	01/01/2025	12/31/2025
The Evergreen Fund	\$349,131.83	\$379,506.43
Cornerstone Fund	77,550.19	88,769.93
Outreach Fund	<u>292,657.74</u>	<u>316,873.94</u>
	\$719,339.76	\$785,150.30



Donations to The Foundation were \$19,289.47, with the remaining gains from dividends, interest, and market gains. Withdrawals were \$35,800.

The bylaws of The Foundation allow a percentage of The Evergreen Fund to be transferred to the church account at the request of the Finance Committee, and The Outreach Fund at the direction of The Foundation Board of Directors for grant requests. Traditionally, this amount has been 5% of the fund balance on December 31. For 2026, the Finance Committee is requesting \$19,000, and the Board expects to be able to approve grants totaling \$15,900. The Investment Committee will confirm these requests at their next meeting.

The next meeting of The Foundation board is Thursday, February 19, at 5:00 p.m. Please contact Claudia at claudiaLboysen@gmail.com with any questions.

Finance Team

Great News!

We finished 2025 with a surplus of \$6,948, without having to use any Reserve Funds – Celebration! Details can be found in the table below.

The Finance Committee finalized the 2026 budget for a vote at the All-Church meeting on January 25. If you have yet to turn in a 2026 pledge card, please consider doing so as this helps the Finance Committee in our church's financial planning. Either contact the office - Cindy at cindy@good.org - or pledge online good.org/give/make-a-pledge.

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 if interested.

	Dec Actuals	Dec Plan	Year-to-Date Actuals
Income	\$60,146	\$93,331	\$719,451
Expense	\$59,440	\$61,355	\$712,503
Net	\$706	\$31,976	\$6,948



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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

GOOD SAMARITAN OFFICE HOURS

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