

March
2026

The Samaritan

Worship Themes

March 1 - Lent 2 / Communion / "The good news is...great love for God and neighbor"

March 8 - Lent 3 / "The good news is...together, the impossible is possible"

March 15 - Lent 4 / "The good news is...protection and care for the vulnerable"

March 22 - Lent 5 / "The good news is...rooted in justice, mercy and faithfulness"

Holy Week at Good Samaritan



Sunday, March 29 | 10:00 a.m.

Palm/Passion service with Chancel Chimes

From the palm processional to the beginning of Jesus' final journey toward the cross, we begin Holy Week together.



Thursday, April 2 | 7:00 p.m.

Maundy Thursday service with Holy Communion and Chancel Choir

We remember Jesus' last night with his disciples around the table. Child care provided.



Friday, April 3 | 7:00 p.m.

Joint Good Friday service

We will join Lake Harriet and Church of Peace UMC (Richfield) for a joint Good Friday service featuring the Seven Last Words of Christ and a combined choir. Music and scripture will be woven together throughout this "lessons and carols" style service. Lake Harriet is hosting the service at 4901 Chowen Avenue South, Minneapolis.



Sunday, April 5 | 10:00 a.m.

Easter Festival Worship with Chancel Choir, Jubilee! Bell Choir, and Chancel Chimes

Come celebrate the Resurrection with our annual traditions of the Easter Garden, the Hallelujah Chorus and a joyful service for all ages!

OUR STAFF

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Pastor's Page

In our Good News series this Lent, we started the season with the story of the Wedding at Cana in John's Gospel instead of Jesus' temptation in the desert as we find in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Along with the call to self-examination and repentance this season, we have a call to embrace joy that catches us by surprise as well.

John 2:1-11 (New Revised Standard Updated Edition) The Wedding at Cana

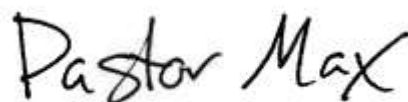
On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to me and to you? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the person in charge of the banquet." So they took it. When the person in charge tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), that person called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

As I mentioned in the sermon on February 22 for the first Sunday of Lent, we don't exactly know the tone of the exchange between Mary and Jesus. Was it exasperated, playful, or something else? As I have pondered this text over the years, I picture Jesus and Mary having a mother/son dance at some key point in the party. Mary has studied the room and knows what needs to happen lest the host and both families suffer a significant faux pas by running out of wine, and the servants be scolded and blamed. I imagine Mary whispering to Jesus, "You've got this," and her standing back with a knowing smile for the rest of the festivities.

How does this story set a different tone for our Lenten journey? Within the call to repent and change directions, are we fully present for Divine Joy when it shows up in unexpected ways? How do we share this gift with others?

May God bless our longings, growth, and celebration as we move toward Holy Week together.

Best,



**Please note that Pastor Max will be on vacation March 4-10. Pastor Jim is preaching on March 8 and is on call for pastoral emergencies at 763-300-9626.



Congregational Care



University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, 2021. Photo by PJ Beard

Pastor Jim Beard
(he/him)

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Seeds Now, Abundance Later

To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance....”.

- Matthew 13:11-12a NRSVUE

In Chapter 13, Matthew provides seven illustrations from Jesus on the nature of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus tells us that the kingdom of heaven remains a mystery to three out of four people who hear the good news; it is like a field with wheat and weeds; it is like a mustard seed, yeast, and a net; it is like a hidden treasure and a prize pearl. The kingdom is something that may start out very small (e.g. seeds, yeast) but will grow and grow to great size and abundance; it will be the most highly valuable thing you'll ever have (e.g. treasures, pearls); and it will grow up side-by-side with all that is undesirable or evil (e.g. weeds, bad fish) but the bad will be disposed of in the end.

Many lessons can be gleaned from His words.

One inspiration which came to me is that we must remember to grab onto even the smallest signs of the kingdom of heaven and make them a part of our lives. An attitude of gratefulness, a small gesture of grace, a simple act of unconditional kindness – **these won't** seem like much at the time, but in the kingdom of heaven, they will grow and multiply into **great abundance**. In God's hands, seeds and bulbs have the capacity to become so much more; in God's hands, the same can be said about us.

Believe in the spring which is coming; believe in the secrets of the seeds under the snow; believe in the kingdom of heaven.

Creator of all things great and small, let me hear your words, the seeds of the kingdom of heaven, and plant them into the good soil of my soul where you will help them to grow. Amen.

Aldersgate History

A Long Legacy of Ringing

Aldersgate's rich handbell traditions span several decades. They date back to 1964, when Aldersgate's Pastor, Bennett Brudevold, asked Betty Fletcher, Aldersgate's Director of Children's & Youth Vocal Choirs, to attend a handbell festival in Ames, Iowa. She was tasked with learning about handbells as an alternative to a vocal choir for junior high-age boys whose voices were changing. She fell in love with the musical instrument and immediately ordered a set of Schulmerich handbells from Pennsylvania, making it one of the very first sets of Schulmerich bells in Minnesota. Aldersgate went with an American company because of the lower cost, but it also meant receiving the bells sooner, as well as ease in sending bells for repair and ordering replacements or additional octaves. The bells were purchased for \$1,000 from a memorial gift and dedicated on November 1, 1964.

The first choir formed was "The Belles and Bellboys," initially consisting of only 7th graders. Due to the limited number of bells, auditions were held until additional bells were purchased. Betty required "the ability to read rhythm," "strong dexterity," and a "strong constitution." The ability to read notes was considered helpful, but strong rhythm was "an absolute necessity."



Over the years, many other groups formed, some for only a few years. The shorter-lived youth groups were formed to accommodate youth of different ages and skill levels. They were Brassy Lassies, Clapper Snappers, Carillons, Brass Class, Beginners, Wonder Ringers, and Tintinnabulators. The shorter-lived adult choirs were formed for ringers who wanted to play a greater variety of musical styles and challenging arrangements. They were Take Five and Ring Around the World.

The longer-lasting bell choirs have been the Holy Tollers (junior high), the Chapel Chimers (senior high), and the adult choirs Ding Dong Dollies and Jubilee!. The newest group, the Razzlin' Dazzlers, is a quartet ensemble.

There was so much demand for ringing bells that a second set of handbells was purchased in 1975 from Malmark, another Pennsylvania handbell company. New chimes were purchased in 2000, and we've expanded with more and more bells and chimes over the years.

The original choirs flourished during Betty's 19 years of leadership. They immediately began attending bell festivals and conferences across the country. At least one choir traveled every year from 1965 through 2016, with over 52 trips! Even now, ringers continue to attend local and regional festivals as a full choir or small groups. Betty, from the very first year, took bell choirs into the community to play free concerts. She was particularly talented at arranging music for her choirs and was especially known for her fun, ringing-and-singing medleys.



Betty Fletcher and the Ding Dong Dollies, established December 1964

Aldersgate History

Sandy Stoneking, Aldersgate's longest-running director, began as the sole director in 1982 after co-directing with Betty for three years. Sandy directed right up until her passing in 2018. Sandy's joy and love for others made a profound impact on hundreds of ringers. Christina Herold and Sandy Mullaney took over Sandy's choirs after her passing, with Christina directing the church choirs and Sandy Mullaney leading the community group, the Ding Dong Dollies.

Ask any ringer their favorite (and probably most stressful) time of the year, and they're likely to say Spring Ring. Sometimes, with standing-room only, the Spring Ring is the culmination of a year of hard work. It signifies the end of the ringing season and features performances by each choir, along with massed pieces encompassing every ringer and all bell choirs. The Spring Ring is a bell showcase and fundraiser for bell trips and festivals. Following the concert, a highly anticipated appetizer and dessert bar is held. Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 26 at 4:00 p.m.!

Several Aldersgate bell traditions have made their mark over the years. Sandy Stoneking began the tradition of a senior song at Spring Ring, a piece performed by that year's high school graduates, with an accompanying slideshow with photos of each ringer as they were growing up. Graduating seniors also made a wooden plaque with their senior pictures to add to the bell room wall. The "Thank You Song", written by Betty Fletcher, has been sung at the end of Spring Ring since 1973. It is a call-and-response between ringers and the people that support them. The Spring Ring audience is also invited up to ring at the end of the show – no experience required!

Other traditions include the fundraiser homemade cookie walk in mid-December. A highlight is the bells playing at the candlelight Christmas Eve service, concluding with an entrancing rendition of "Silent Night". Fun facts include that Gail Miller has been playing at the same part of F5/G5 for her entire bell career, and Ann Wood and Cleo Bonham have been stand partners at part 9 and 10 since they were teenagers!

We are very excited to continue the long history of handbell traditions at Good Samaritan and create new traditions together.

- Kaitlyn Steffenhagen

with assistance from Jan Nyberg & Christina Herold

Aldersgate Bells History

1964 – The first set of handbells was purchased

1965 – The first bell trip was to the National Festival held that year in Washington, D.C.

1966 – The first bell concert was held

1968 – The Aldersgate bell choirs helped host a regional festival at the University of Minnesota with more than 300 ringers from seven states

1975 – First 2-octave set of Malmark handbells purchased

2000 – Malmark chimes purchased; Jubilee! Bell Choir is formed

2014 – 50th anniversary of bells at Aldersgate

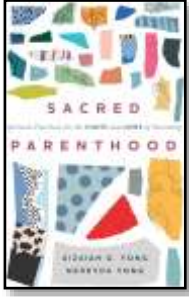
2016 – 50th Spring Ring - the program insert listed 413 current and alumni bell ringers.

2019 – "Spring Ring Eternal," commissioned for long-time director Sandy Stoneking, makes its world premiere

2023 – "Razzlin' Dazzlers" make their first appearance

Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Sacred Parenting



Our parenting book for 2026 is *Sacred Parenthood* by Aizaiah G. Yong and Nereyda Yong.

In this book we will look at a contemplative parenting practice. It uses an acronym SACRED: settling, acknowledging, being curious, restoring, enjoying, and dancing.

- Settling - engages the importance of identifying practices that foster a sense of safety for us.
- Acknowledging - noticing what is present in our minds and bodies and working not to judge it.
- Curious - we can learn to welcome layers of our experience that we may have previously missed.
- Restoring - overcoming individualism through deep care, reciprocity and genuine inner freedom.
- Enjoying - does not always mean that things feel good or are positive. Instead, enjoyment suggests that there may be a deeper gladness in our lives that is not ultimately about things always going the way we desire.
- Dancing - this is one of the most original and longstanding spiritual practices from across cultural and spiritual traditions.



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The heart of contemplative parenting is about being present in the here and now, open and available for the sacred encountered in previously unforeseen ways. Next month we will do a deep dive into Settling!

I am praying for you and your family.
Jan

This month's resource 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 is \$500 and scholarships are available. More information is at good.org/event/appalachia-service-project-asp. Contact Jan with questions - jan@good.org.



Vacation Bible Camp 2026
June 15-18

This program invites kids to an exciting winter sports event, where they become Challengers, gearing up for frosty games, snowy surprises, and hands-on lessons about resilience and faith.

News & Events

Sing for joy and healing!



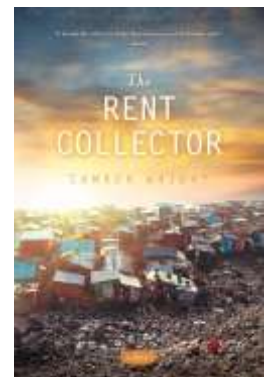
Thinking about getting involved in the Chancel Choir? This is more than just a place to make music - it's a place to build meaningful community, grow in faith, and use your voice to heal and uplift others through worship.

Whether you're a longtime chorister, coming back to it after many years, or brand new, all are welcome. Join us Wednesdays from 7:00-8:30 p.m. downstairs in the Choir Room as we lift our voices together. Rehearsals for Easter will begin on Wednesday, March 11, 7:00-8:00 p.m., if you're interested in singing just for Holy Week. Email Carey at carey@good.org for more information, or just show up on Wednesday.



Book Group March Meeting

The next meeting of the Thursday Afternoon Book Group will be on March 12 at 1:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Our discussion title will be *The Rent Collector* by Camron Wright. This novel centers on a Cambodian woman who lives with her family in a municipal dump in Phnom Penh. Please join us for fellowship, discussion and refreshments. Questions: Contact Vicki Dunn, 952-930-3431, victoriadunn@myctl.net.



Missions & Reconciling

What have we been doing?

A huge thank you to all who responded to the call for family assistance for families of students at Stonebridge World School. We continue to use the funds to assist them with rent, food, and distance learning supplies while many of the families continue to shelter at home. Donations can still be made directly to Good Samaritan Missions marked for Stonebridge.



Education: With leadership from JoAnn Knutson and Leigh Hamersten, Good Samaritan volunteers set up and ran the Scholastic Book Fair at Stonebridge this past month. Thanks to all who helped out! Good Samaritan volunteers continue to run the school's library throughout the year.



Food Security: On January 30, nine Good Samaritans were part of a group of 97 persons at Crossview Lutheran Church in Edina packing 121 boxes and 26,136 meals through Feed My Starving Children, enough to feed 71 children a daily meal for a year. And on February 11, 15 Good Samaritans and friends gathered with others at FMSC to pack 132 boxes containing 28,512 meals, enough to feed 78 children a daily meal 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.

Immigrant Support: Benjamin, Julia, and Gelen have all made it back to Ecuador. Please keep them in your prayers, as they had left their home originally because it wasn't safe, and conditions there have not changed. Thank you to all who supported our efforts to help them while they were seeking asylum in Minnesota.

Coming Up in March

Upcoming Feed My Starving Children dates: For Wednesday, March 11, 9:30-11:15 a.m., contact Claudia to sign up - claudialboysen@gmail.com. For Friday, March 27, 7:15-8:45 p.m., contact Jane - jane.heimerl@yahoo.com.

We will deliver Meals on Wheels on Friday, March 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 Zoom meeting is on Wednesday, March 4, 8:30-9:00 a.m. Each month they include an advocacy action that typically takes only a few minutes. Go to beaconinterfaith.org/events/ to register.

On Wednesday, March 11, Beacon is joining the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless to sponsor and participate in Homeless Day on the Hill at the State Capitol, an annual event that brings together groups working on housing and homelessness. This year, the event will focus on supportive housing.



The Minnesota Reconciling Congregations (MRC) bi-monthly meeting will be on Thursday, March 12, at 7:00 on Zoom. Save the date for their Spring Social on Saturday, April 18, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Holy Trinity UMC in Prior Lake. Our own Max Richter and David Litteken will be part of a panel discussion on "Welcoming LGBTQIA+ Clergy to Your Congregation" following a potluck lunch.

MRC is looking for new people for their leadership team. Would you like to find a way to be more involved? For more information, contact Brian Boysen at bteambackup@earthlink.net or visit the reconciling website at mnrccumc.org.

Missions

March is Minnesota Food Share Month



This year, we are highlighting the food shelf at STEP (St. Louis Park Emergency Program).

STEP provides emergency food packs for clients who are in immediate need of food. Some of these clients are unhoused. STEP provides easy to use, small-sized options, which are not often donated. We would like to create a supply of these items so STEP can meet the increasing requests for emergency food. We will be collecting your donations through the month of March. Watch for a collection basket in the Narthex.

Items needed:

- mac & cheese cups
- easy-open canned vegetables
- individual cereal boxes/cups
- tuna or chicken pouches
- chicken salad pouches
- snack-sized trail mix/nuts
- shelf-stable almond milk



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.

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. Our local food shelves have all stepped up to deliver food when people cannot come to their locations. Interested in volunteering at one of the food shelves? Check out their websites for information.

- STEP: stepslp.org
- VEAP: veap.org
- Joyce Uptown: joyceuptownfoodshelf.org

Sharing the Good News

Rev. Sarah Horsfield is a member of our Annual Conference and long-time colleague and friend of mine. We are in two clergy groups together. Sarah recently asked our Covenant Group if we had any extra youth Bibles she could have for her patients at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. We were happy to share 27 extra ones with her from Good Samaritan. This is a thank-you note we received.

- Pastor Max

Dear Pastor Max, Cindy, Jan, and the people of Good Samaritan UMC,

Thank you for your kind gift of Bibles. We at Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation are so grateful. With so many moving pieces in health care and limited funds, Bibles can fall through the cracks. And I know that for our patients – young people who are navigating trauma life and the hardest seasons of their lives – the Bibles you generously gave will represent an anchor in the labyrinth. Thank you so much for helping us.



Sincerely yours,
Rev. Sarah Horsfield, Spiritual Care Provider, Plymouth and St. Paul

The Good Samaritan Foundation

Helping Now and Investing in the Future



The Investment Committee met in January and reviewed the year-end statements of each of The Foundation's funds. The 2026 draw from The Evergreen Fund will be \$19,000, as the Finance Committee has budgeted. The draw from The Outreach Fund will be \$15,900. The Evergreen amount will be available to the Finance Committee as

needed, which typically is in the summer months or at the end of the year. The Foundation Board typically approves grants at its quarterly meetings throughout the year.

The first quarter meeting of The Foundation Board was on February 19. After a review of each fund's January statements and approval of the 2026 allotments from The Evergreen and Outreach Funds, board members had a discussion on how to plan the Outreach Fund giving. Recognizing the great needs in Minnesota for food, transportation, rent, everyday expenses, immigrant legal and safety concerns assistance, we turned our attention to ways to assist in the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota for first-quarter giving. Several organizations have been recommended via the Wednesday Good Samaritan e-news Highlights and on the Minnesota Conference website. The Board members felt it was important to make a grant with impact to help those needing legal help to navigate the immigration system and those being wrongfully detained in Minnesota. They voted unanimously to grant \$4000 to Mid-Minnesota Legal Services' Immigration Law Project working from their offices in the Twin Cities, St. Cloud, Willmar, Duluth, and Mankato areas.

The next meeting of The Foundation will be on Thursday, May 21.

Finance Team

A Good Start

We are off to a good start in 2026. January always looks good as many pre-pay their pledges for the year. Details can be found in the table below. If you have yet to turn in a 2026 pledge card, it is not too late!. Either contact Cindy in the office - cindy@good.org - or pledge online good.org/give/make-a-pledge.

	January Actuals	January Plan	Year-to-Date Actuals
Income	\$138,966	\$143,216	\$138,966
Expense	\$65,685	\$65,558	\$65,685
Net	\$73,282	\$77,657	\$73,282

Trustees

Maintenance Minute: A Leaky Situation

Hi, Good Sam friends. A recent event I encountered in the building was a significant roof leak. It happened during a warm day at the beginning of February. I came in on a Friday morning, and while walking into a dark Aldersgate Hall, I could hear multiple dripping noises.

When I turned the lights on, I noticed an area on the south side of the room with a line of multiple leaks coming in. I had to grab any unused bins and trash cans I could find to catch the drips. The area was already very saturated, so I also grabbed our carpet extractor to suck up any of the water I could. I went up on the roof to assess the situation. The problem is that roof in Aldersgate Hall has a small slope, then has about four feet of flat roof on the edge of each north and south side. The flat part has river rock laid down, which keeps the rubber membrane taut and prevents it from flapping in a windy situation. The leak was coming in near the flat spot, which consisted of

the rock but also a 4"-6" layer of ice. I called our roofing company out since it was such a large area. Before they got here, I used our electric power shovel to blow the snow off the roof in the area where the leak was, in hopes of slowing down any of the melting snow water from getting in. The roofers found three small holes in the rubber membrane and patched them. It helped, but unfortunately, it is still slowly leaking. There is a high chance that there is another hole under the ice and rock. Currently, we are waiting for the ice to melt. They will be back to assess the situation after this melts and the rock can be moved.



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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