

# AUMC Connections

July-September 2023



Our Mission: To **grow** disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world  
 Our Vision: To **grow** and live in the Spirit of Christ

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**Greetings good people of Pentecost!**

Be sure to update your contact information for me:

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On Sunday, June 25, we had the privilege of hearing Rev. Christa Forsythe "PC", of Immanuel Lutheran (Atwater, MN), my mentor and friend, preach from our pulpit. We listened intently to a reading from Genesis (21:8-21), hearing about "super hard messy situations" as we took in an insightful message about the nature of God in the time of Hagar and Ishmael and that same nature of God is present in our lives today. PC specifically spoke to her life; and how her family are navigating her husband's *stage four cancer diagnosis* and what that has been like ~ a "super hard messy situation!" To hear her complete message, visit our YouTube channel @AlexUMC, or use this URL to bring you directly to the June 25th service: [https://youtu.be/y7kH\\_ufd9nk](https://youtu.be/y7kH_ufd9nk).

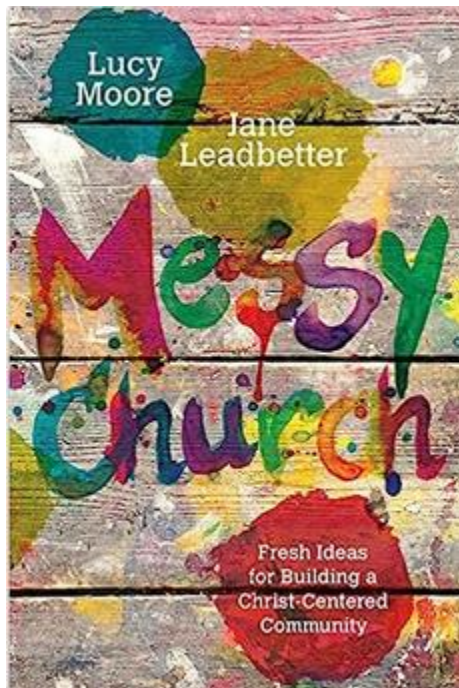


"The beauty of our God is in our messy families, messy churches, and messy institutions. *All of who you are is beloved to our God* who calls you and invites you to partner with this amazing God in bringing love to the world that God can only do through you and your gifts...I can't wait to hear and see what God's going to do through your congregation here in the upcoming months and years!"

~Rev. Christa Forsythe,



The commentary below, from *Rev. Dr. Carolyn B. Helsel* (bio information is included after her commentary), has helped me continue to process the "super hard messy situation", as PC puts it, that Hagar and her son found themselves in and how God's abiding love remained faithful. (see pg

**Messy Church**

As we continue to digest the chapters from "Messy Church", I want to share these quotes/thoughts with you from our most recent distillation of the story of church:

*Celebration is about the joy of being a child of God and a member of this marvelous body we call the church. p. 40*

*It's a good reminder to think about being both Martha and Mary" - sometimes we receive and sometimes we give - we are not always one or the other - intergenerational activities help us remember to understand the world in this way. It is only then when we operate beyond ego, letting go of self-centered activity and instead, cling to Christ-centered activity. (p. 42)*

*Hospitality means shaping what we do around the needs of those who are marginalized, and being open and ready to be changed by them. (pp. 44-45)*

And finally, through creative work and play, *something in our spirituality is restored*. Messy Church suggests a connection to Genesis - after all, God is the Master Creator! So, through imagination and creation, we can connect to God in new and

different ways that can lead us deeper into our faith journey. Let's keep opening - open hearts, open minds, open doors!

### Church Spaces

I want to be clear that no amount of redecorating will increase our membership numbers - at least not in a sustainable way. Church membership is far more complex than that. People and relationships are complex and complicated! That said, when people gather, how spaces feel matters.

Check out our offices ~

even Ginger has shared with me that moving things around, adding her family pictures and such, made her feel more welcome in her own office...and that was before her and I had a conversation about *feng shui*. I'll just let you Google that term. What I've been learning these past several weeks in seminary is some stuff I already know...

but also some is very new for me - when we think of how things work for those of us who are very *churched*, it pretty much looks like this, in this order:

1. Believe
2. Behave
3. Belong

...this is no longer the way people are engaging any institution. With so much now being revealed about the abuses on people by institutions - and that includes the church universal - transgressions of all kinds - fraud, abuse, neglect, (and that's not even the half of it) - many are wary...and for good reason. The whole *Believe, Behave, Belong* has been flipped on its head; systemic change is needed...not so unlike Jesus flipping the tables at Temple. We have been and are becoming very astute, critical thinkers who desire our institutions to also reflect our values, and if they don't, we are not quick to be interested, engage, and/or support...I do believe that people are *seeking* and are on a faith journey; I would say that today we are meeting people in the stages of *Belong* first...that most people want to *belong* before anything else...Belonging is primary - then believe, and then maybe behaviors change...but "behave" is likely going to look differently than the "behave" of yester-years. Behaviors are more mission minded and less about building institution. In today times, we see the new way to engage is:

1. **BELONG**
2. Believe
3. (Behave)

"Behave" has all kinds of cultural nuances, along with diversity in family systems...like PC said on Sunday, there is not such thing, nor was there ever, as the "nuclear family". On that note, a seminary course I am taking now is about programming/ministry that is trauma-informed and gender responsive. What is trauma?

- Gender affects how you respond.
- Trauma occurs when an external event overwhelms a person's physical and psychological coping mechanisms.
- It is a normal reaction to an abnormal or extreme situation.
- Type 1 (single) and Type 2 (complex)
- Root word of trauma is WOUND.



Pr. Amy's Office

Ginger's Office



You may have noticed some changes around here - in the physical spaces. We've been curious about many things, including these questions:

What is hoped regarding our church spaces?

How does "open doors, open hearts, open minds" manifest in how our church spaces?

How can our church be a gathering place on Sundays *and every day*?

How and why did some of the transformation of some of space happen:

Before I arrived, I am told the former youth room was lined with recliners and swivel rockers. It was a bit durgy. With lots of help and the approval of trustees, chairs were given to "Caring and Sharing", and some were given through Facebook. New spaces were designated as youth rooms closer to the narthex. We inquired with youth and received their input along with donations of foosball and ping pong tables, bean bag chairs, high-top stools, as well as games, food, and soda donations. The space has a microwave, pop machine, and a Keurig machine. Keeping these in mind:



Our "new" lounge space off the sanctuary – open to all!  
Before-after-during service ~ anytime!

- The building had minimal use throughout the pandemic.
- It has been a journey to better understand how our congregation is using the space; everything has been done with lots of conversation, observation, and intentionality – everything has been done with hospitality at the core.
- I am thrilled with the beauty of this building, and I also cringe to think that we are heating and cooling an empty building most of the week when it can be used by so many and truly live into being a place where the community feels welcome and meets on a regularly.
- Our mission and measure of success *cannot* be getting as many people as possible to stand in this building one day a week for one hour – that is not a mission, *that is institution*.
- I don't know about you, but I am not interested in building institution - if Jesus were here in the flesh today, from my understanding of scripture - building institution was not what Jesus was about - Jesus as interested in relationship, community building, gathering with all kinds of people
- The more meals served here, the more events of any kind held here *are points, or better, opportunities of joy to be celebrated*. The more opportunities that get created give us more opportunities to show the joy of the Good News!

Do we have as many young people in the space on Sunday mornings as we'd like? NOT YET! But recently, when a celebration of life event took place it brought many youth - the and they bonded in our youth space. What a gift we gave the family!!! This space is used during the week and this is just the beginning! And now that the youth have a welcoming space, what about other groups? The former choir



room had limited use, so seemed a likely space for a lounge. It is located conveniently off the sanctuary and the service can be heard from that room. Also, we have some members that like to sit during coffee fellowship; now they will have a comfortable place.

Let's continue to imagine together what our spaces can be for what is the vision for our spaces? Open for small group meetings? A place for people to meet during the week, have a coffee from the Keurig machine in the adjacent room - generally just enjoy the welcoming space. With the comfortable furniture from our former lounge, our church from the Narthex LOOKS more welcoming!

## Building a Library

In these strange times, when book bands mirror times we would rather leave in the history books and not have repeated in today times, I welcome a call on my heart to build a library at our church that represents our congregation and our community. A few people have offered to help review what we currently have in stock - is this something on your heart too? If taking an inventory and making decisions about what we can refresh, donate, and buy new is on your heart too, please let me know. I hope we can inspire our church to help in this endeavor. What would you like to see on our shelves? Please share your thoughts with me at [pastor@alexumc.org](mailto:pastor@alexumc.org). Use the word "library" in the subject line of your email. Thank you in advance for your servant-heart!

## Call Stories

In our sermon series this summer, we have been exploring relationships, discipleship, and what those mean in our call stories. I've mentioned my thoughts around how relationship precedes discipleship and how discipleship has to do with our identity in Jesus, God, and the Cosmos. I have asked during worship, and now I am asking here, for volunteers to share their call story/stories with us on an upcoming Sunday in worship during the time we set aside for the offering on scripture. All of us have a call story/stories - these are not only for clergy. Our work as believers comes in many shapes and forms and through many occupations/vocations. Would you be willing to share your call story with us and tell us the impact it has had on your life and perhaps those around you? Send me an email and let me know, I can connect with you. Put "Call Story" in the subject line of your email and I will reach out to you, [pastor@alexumc.org](mailto:pastor@alexumc.org). Thank you in advance for considering this *witness* to our community, a form of discipleship in and of itself! Peace, Pr. Amy



Screenshot of new website here

Alexandria UMC's Website refresh is set to be released July 15. The URL will remain the same, [www.alexumc.org](http://www.alexumc.org).

# Fellowship

*Thank You!*

**Joy circle** says thanks to all that participated in our Annual May Day Salad Luncheon. Eighty guests enjoyed wonderful salads, good conversation, and fellowship, in a beautiful setting. Butterfly Hill children entertained us with the May pole dance prior to the luncheon. The proceeds of \$800 will be used for mission support, namely Emma Norton House and locally Someplace Safe. Thanks to Linda DeWitt for securing a Thrivent Action grant which covered our expenses, including advertising and some food which resulted in the ticket sales being all profit. Way to go congregation.

Joy Circle will not be meeting during the summer months. Joy circle will reconvene the third Thursday in September. We hope everyone has a wonderful summer and we hope to see you all back in the fall.



**DO NUT Coffee Group** meets In the Narthex the second Tuesday of every month. Please Join Us for coffee, treats and fellowship.

**Friends Gathering** women gathering for friendship~food~creating memories~ we share stories and our lives in fellowship and camaraderie. We welcome newcomers and we meet monthly at The Lure Lakebar, 2800 N. Nokomis NE, Alexandria, MN 56308, on Lake Le Homme Dieu. Watch emails and Remind about our next meeting dates. Since its summer we will be out on the patio enjoying the fresh air. July 24<sup>th</sup> is our next meeting date.

PEO Crafting day is July 25<sup>th</sup> at 1 Pm



# Vacation Bible School

Monday - Thursday,  
August 7-10, 5:15-7:00 p.m.

All are welcome!

You do not have to be a member to join our VBS program!

AGES: Pre-school to Grade 5

Sign up sheet in Narthex for meals. We recommend 2 households partnering up to provide a meal - many hands make light work!

8/7 Monday Tacos in a bag  
8/8 Tuesday Hotdogs/chips (Freier/Holm families)  
8/9 Wednesday - (pizza oven)  
8/10 Thursday - Sloppy Joes/chips

Stations include a Bible Story, Science, games, crafts, and more.

VBS Nightly Schedule:

(subject to change)

We begin the welcome at 5:15pm

Meal, 5:30pm

Large Group, 6pm

\*Stations, 6:15-7:00

Large Group, 7-7:30 p.m.

\*Station Schedule: 6:15-7:00

Bible Story, 10-12 min

Games (this will move around in our schedule)

Science, 15 min

Craft, 15 min



**Alexandria United Methodist Church  
Church Council Minutes  
Monday May 8, 2023**

**Members Present:** Ginger Mayer, Scott Garvin, Chuck Holm, Cori Lecy, Heidi Ryan, Ron & Kathy Reiber,

**Meeting Called to Order:** Tom DeWitt called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**Opening Devotional:** Pastor Amy opened with prayer and Devotions

**Minutes:** Heidi Ryan approved the April 17<sup>th</sup> Minutes Carol Meyer 2<sup>nd</sup> it. Motion carried.

**Treasures Report** Motion made by Kathy Reiber to approve the Treasures report. It was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ron Reiber. Motion carried.

**Old Business:** Water heater cost is \$2500 dollars Aquarius 84 is installing. Michael will remove old water heater. Potential date of May 15<sup>th</sup> for installation. Salad luncheon brought in \$800

**New Business:** Carol made a motion to proceed with a Chili feed in October for the benefit of Jason Olson (Gingers brother). Tom 2<sup>nd</sup> it. Motion carried.

**Team Reports**

Worship: Pr. Amy mentioned that worship has been going well

Conversations with Pastor: Pr. Amy mentioned that she was going to be gone next week for her relicensing retreat. She reported that she will be finishing up her internship for school and that the last meeting will be May 15<sup>th</sup> She has started calling people in the directory. Sue H. is helping with the bible study at Windmill ponds. We have started the book Messy Church. Amy mentioned that Ginger would like to get certified through PAUMCS. The cost of the course is \$300. John Heydt made a motion that we pay the certification fee. Kathy Reiber 2<sup>nd</sup> it Motion carried. Janet will be playing for VBS

Butterfly Hill: Kathy reported that Butterfly Hill has put a deposit down on a new bus. They will be doing some fundraising to help cover the cost as well as financing.

Staff- Parish Relations: Heidi reported that quarterly meetings with staff have been completed today. Final internship meeting is coming up for Pr. Amy. Also discussed PAUMCS for Ginger.

Fellowship Groups: Coffee Group meets on tomorrow May 9<sup>th</sup>. Joy Circle will meet at 9:30 on Thursday May 11<sup>th</sup>. Friends Gathering will meet at the Lure on May 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 5 pm.

Adult Sunday School: Chuck Holm and Scott Cummins have finished the series. Half Truths by Adam Hamilton will be started in the fall.

Missions: Chuck Holm reported that 13 people showed up to pick ditches. Love offering is in the works and will be sent to conference with Scott Garvin along with the items collected for the disaster relief.

Lay Leader: had a zoom meeting on the topics for the Annual Conference in St Cloud. Disaffiliation, Bylaws to automatic weapons and diversity are some of the topics.

Trustees: Ron Reiber reported that he will be leading the lawn mowing teams this year. Tomorrow May 9<sup>th</sup> the lawn will be rolled. The door project is in the works as we are waiting on parts. Trees removed and stumps ground at parsonage.

Finance and Stewardship: Carol reported that the safety deposit box contents have been removed and put in our safe at the church. She reported that all committee chairs and along with the finance secretary and Lay leaders. Prior to council meeting will be the finance meeting next month at 5 pm. Carol made a motion to pay an Organist \$125 to play one time per month from the memorial fund. Kathy Reiber 2<sup>nd</sup> it motion carried.

Wood Fire Brick Oven: John reported that the wood has been spit and are in the process of building a 6x12x8 shed for it. Also looking at shade possibilities as well. On May 17<sup>th</sup> will be looking a new dough to use in the oven. They will have 4 teams of 4 bakers at the oven this year and rotate teams. The 31<sup>st</sup> will be the first community bake as a trial for the dough and oven. Free will offering.

Congregational life VBS will be June 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>. Working on ordering a banner for VBS for advertising. There will be a picnic at Brophy Park next Month.

Community Gardens: the beds have been cleaned up and some are still available. They need to replace 8 beds with they will contact Adam Zins to see if he would be willing to fix them.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM

Kathy Reiber made a motion to adjourn.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm next meeting is July 10 at 6:30 pm

#### Upcoming Committee Meeting Dates

SPRC 5:00 p.m. — no meeting in July, August 7, Sept 4

Administrative Council 6:30 p.m. – July 10, August 14, Sept 11

Missions and Social Concerns 2:00 p.m. – July 19, August 16, Sept 20

Trustees 5:30 p.m. – July 13, August 10, Sept 14

Finance 5:45 p.m.: normally the second Monday of month but no meeting in July. Meeting schedule as follows: August 14, Sept 11

A *Discipleship Seminar Series* will come alongside the work we've been doing with our Messy Church all-church book read. More information to follow Fall 2023.

**SPRC (Staff-Parish Relations Committee)** has been meeting monthly and as needed to support our pastor and employees and to serve as the human resources team for our church. In the past year, we've revised job descriptions and established regular meetings with our staff to set goals, review training and resource needs, and give performance feedback. We were pleased to recently recommend additional training for Ginger that will be helpful in her role as Administrative Assistant. We plan to provide an all-church review of 'Rule of Christ' training later this year. This training was last taken about 10 years ago, so it's time for a refresher! Rule of Christ reminds us all how to effectively collaborate and problem-solve. Good skills! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact an SPRC member: Ron Schutte and Heidi Ryan (co-chairs), Sharon Slack, Scott Garvin, Bruce Jordan, and Chuck Holm.

# Pizza Ministry

Please join us every Wednesday in July and August, 4:30-7:00PM. We serve pizza Rain or Shine. Your order can be placed online to pick up at the time needed or the usual walk-up order. If our online ordering system is sold out for the night, know you can always walk up and order your pizza. All proceeds go to support a wide variety of nonprofit organizations.



July	August
July 5 - Veteran's Honor Flight and Alex Cardinal Dance Team <b>Activity: Drone show/ Dance Performance</b>	August 2 - Lakes Area Humane Society and Liberty Live Wires 4H <b>Activity: games/animals from humane Society</b>
July 12- Alex Swim Club and Alex Boys and Girls Swim Team <b>Activity Water balloon fights</b>	August 9 Alex Cross Country and Osakis Public School <b>Activity: Are you smarter than a 5<sup>th</sup> grader</b>
July 19- Friends of Nordic Meadows and Special Olympics <b>Activity Face painting and bubbles</b>	August 16- Let's Go Fishing and Alexandria Art Guild <b>Activity: Magnet fishing/Craft art fair/chalk art</b>
July 26- Alex Boys Hockey and Alex Girls Hockey <b>Activity: Puck Shots</b>	August 23- Matthew Kjelland Memorial Fund and Alex Soccer Boosters <b>Activity : soccer tic tac toe</b>
	August 30- Alex Community Christian School and Friends of Magnet <b>Activity: Musical chairs/Cycle Up</b>



### Commentary: Hagar and Ishmael ~ the greatest underdogs in the patriarchal narrative.

Among the patriarchs, Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob, the multitudinous nations of the people of Israel emerge. Yet God promises to Hagar here in this text, “I will make a great nation of [Ishmael]” (21:18). God even



Carel Fabritius, Hagar and the Angel Residenzgalerie Salzburg, Austria, Vanderbilt Divinity Library, <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/>. All images available via Creative Commons 3.0 License.

comforts Abraham with these same words, so that Abraham is not distressed at the second and final departure of Hagar and his eldest son, Ishmael. For this is indeed Hagar's second leaving—the first occurring soon after she conceives her son Ishmael with Abraham (16:6). In that first story, Hagar is treated so badly by Sarai that she runs away into the wilderness. It is there that God meets Hagar and speaks to her—indeed, before the text reports of God speaking to Sarai—and God comforts Hagar with the first promise that her son will be the father of multitudes (16:10). Hagar names God “El-Roi,” the God Who Sees (16:13).

So while Hagar has been mistreated, God sees her and brings her comfort and strength to go on. For her own protection, and for the safety of her unborn child, Hagar needed to return to Abraham and Sarah in order to benefit from the security of living within a larger clan. She would not have lived long giving birth to a baby by herself in the wilderness. God saw her, and so she named

God “El-roi,” the God Who Sees. In this Sunday's lectionary text, God hears (21:17). While it is Hagar who lifts up her voice in verse sixteen, it is her son Ishmael whom God hears: “God heard the voice of the boy”

(21:17). And turning to Hagar, the angel of the Lord inquires of her, “What troubles you, Hagar?” God calls Hagar by name; God has seen Hagar again, and God has heard the voice of her son, whom Hagar fears will die. But God reassures Hagar, just as God did on her first escape, and the angel of the Lord tells her: “Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation from him” (21:17-18).

When my colleague, Song-Mi Suzie Park, and I co-taught a course based on our book *The Flawed Family of God: Stories about the Imperfect Families in Genesis*, one of our seminary students preached on this text, Kailen Soncksen, who pointed out how the Hebrew word for “hear” in this text, is as in “when God hears Hagar,” is not a word that connotes passive listening. The word is *shema*, which may be familiar if you know the passage in scripture known as **the Shema**: “Hear O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One” (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Shema is a prayer within Judaism, and it is called so because of the first word of the verse: *shema*.

As Kailen preached to us from her study of the text, this word for “hear” is not about simply passively taking in, but actively listening and following through with action. This kind of hearing is associated with obedience. The call to “Hear O, Israel” is a call to hear-and-obey. So when God **hears** the voice of the boy, God is obeying what that voice is crying out for: acting on the cries of the child and coming to the rescue. And yet Kailen also pointed out that God does not seem to hear Hagar: God hears her son, but not her. This is the last we hear about Hagar; her son's story continues, but the last we read about Hagar is that she got her son a wife. As is the case with many marginalized groups, we only see them in their stereotypical roles: mothers as caregivers, perhaps matchmakers, but not history-makers. There are many people whose stories continue to go unheard in our society. We may see them, but do we hear what they are trying to tell us? Do we hear and actually feel moved to act and obey?

The story of Hagar has long been seen by women descended from enslaved Africans as a story they can relate to; the forced surrogacy of Hagar is not unlike the experiences of enslaved women living in the antebellum South or the modern underpaid childcare jobs of women of color caring for white women's children. Perhaps the most famous of these reflections is by Delores Williams: *Sisters in the Wilderness*.<sup>1</sup>

God continues to reassure women who are marginalized: God sees them. The question remains, do we **hear** them? And are we as a church willing to support them in the ways they need? To fight for greater equity in the healthcare system, where women of color have much higher rates of maternal mortality than their white counterparts because staff discount their complaints and ignore their concerns? To work for greater access to childcare and better public schools, so that their children will have a greater chance of success? To challenge the school-to-prison pipeline where children of color are disproportionately targeted for stricter punishment in schools and viewed as “delinquent”? Can we hear the weeping of the mothers of Black and brown boys and girls when their children are victims of police brutality?

If we hear them, then we must not remain passive, but must act accordingly. We must not only listen, but truly hear-and-obey, living out our faith in the world.

Biographical information about the commentary's author:

The Rev. Dr. Carolyn B. Helsel is author of *Preaching about Racism: A Guide for Faith Leaders*, and *Anxious to Talk about It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism*. Both of Dr. Helsel's books were named the “Book of the Year” for 2019 by the Academy of Parish Clergy, and she speaks across the country at churches, conferences, and university campuses in order to facilitate conversations about racism. In addition to speaking and leading retreats and workshops, Dr. Helsel teaches preaching at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Texas.

You can find the commentary posted at this URL (link) on the Working Preacher website:

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-12/commentary-on-genesis-218-21-5>



Save the Date!

Imagine Day with Rev. Dr. Michael Beck, a United Methodist pastor and director of re-missioning for Fresh Expressions US

When: Sept. 30, 2023

Where: Hub sites across the Dakotas and Minnesota Conferences

Across the United States, amid a Christian landscape that looks and feels like a desert of decline, God is up to something. Inherited congregations with long histories, deeply rooted in their traditions, are experimenting with cultivating “fresh expressions” of church. Bring your teams and join Rev. Dr. Michael Beck as we imagine new ways to reach new people in new places.

For many churches, there is a wondering: Where are the young families, children, and youth? We’ve come to notice that people are making different choices about time and investment. And yet, on a Saturday afternoon, hundreds will come out for an event in local area. So how do we meet people where they are and begin to build relationships in new ways?

That is the heart of the Fresh Expressions movement. It started in England in 2004, and moved to the United States in 2010. It is a simple movement of helping churches see the people in their relationship circles and communities, connect around mutual interests, and be church together. It may happen at a dinner table or through a hiking club or photography group. It blends the best of an existing church with fresh ways of going out of our buildings to meet people in a relaxed and friendly environment and share Jesus in everyday, ordinary ways.

<https://www.minnesotaumc.org/eventdetail/fresh-expressions-imagine-day-17439670>

# Butterfly Hill

What a beautiful start to summer we have had here at Butterfly Hill Nature Preschool! Not only have we been able to fully enjoy the large outdoor classroom but we have also been making some fun and exciting additions out there as well. The aim of these changes is to enrich the play and enjoyment of all who use the outdoor space.

One of the most noticeable changes to the outdoor space is the tree house that is currently under construction. We are lucky to have a former parent who has the knowledge and skills to create wonderful play structures out of tree pieces. What fun it will be to have a literal tree house for the children to play in!

While we are excited about the whimsy of our treehouse we are also working with a contractor to revitalize some of our existing features, such as our beloved boat. Like most things that are loved by children, our boat has experienced some wear over the years. So the aim is to update the interior and add some seating to make it both safe and fun to use. Our contractor will be working on other various repairs and helping us with the upkeep of all the structures outside.

Additionally, we had a clean up night in the late spring with parents donating plants and helping to clean up our butterfly gardens. It was quite the undertaking by both families and staff but is now established and blooming. We invite you to venture out there and admire the flowers and plants.

Lastly, we will be kicking off a community fundraiser in July to help us acquire a new vehicle for our offsite programs. Perhaps you will hear more about it in the community, or you can check out the details on our website once we kickstart the campaign.

Julie Dahlseid  
Butterfly Hill Nature Preschool Director  
2210 Sixth Avenue East  
Alexandria, MN 56308  
320-763-0130



*Hilary with Jason at the June Benefit*

**Thank You** to everyone here at the Church who donated money or items for my brother Jason Olson's Benefit. Although it was a lot of work it was very successful. So again, thank you, it was greatly appreciated. He currently still has to have blood transfusions every week to keep his hemoglobin up and he is currently awaiting a bone marrow transplant which will hopefully stop the need for the blood transfusions, and he can get back to a somewhat normal life at home instead of a care facility. I will keep everyone updated as time goes on. The money that was raised at the benefit will be used to purchase a handicap vehicle that the family can use to take him out into the community. -Ginger Mayer and Family



<https://www.lindfamilyfh.com/obituaries/clifford-emmert>

## **You're Invited: Cliff Emmert ~ Celebration of Life**

An informal celebration of life for Cliff Emmert will take place August 5, 1-4:00 p.m. at the Lake Brophy County Park Shelter. Share your stories with us over coffee.

Thank you, Gaye Mounsdon

# Family & Friends

The May 31, 2023 Finance Report was approved at the June Administrative Committee meeting. Year to date we have received \$99,022 in offerings and \$8,049 for building use and miscellaneous fund raising. Year to date operating expenses and apportionments totaled \$112,341. Year to date operating expenses have exceeded income by \$5,270. The available general fund balance as of 5/31/23 was \$1,441. Thank you for your continued support of our church.

Thanks, Cori

Day/Date	Ministries			
Sunday or other holiday as specified	Treats for Coffee Fellowship & Clean up	Greetings/Ushers	Liturgist	Communion Steward First Sunday of the month unless otherwise specified
<b>July</b>	Bruce Jordan	Otto & Phyllis Freier Connie Springman (Greeter)	Tom D.	Viva Lelm
9	Rick & Barb Keepers	John Philliops; Arlana Langner	RosAnn F.	
16	Scott & Cindy Schlapkohl	Chuck & Sharon Holm	Bruce J.	
23	Sally Vano	Scott Schlapkohl & Sharon Slack		
30	Darlene Lunemann	Bruce Jordan & Viva Lelm		
<b>August</b>	Steve & Merry Luchau	Scott Schlapkohl & Sharon Slack		Viva Lelm
13	Mel & Dave Nomsen	Otto & Phyllis Freier	Bruce J.	
20	Pr. Amy & Thomas	Bruce Jordan & Viva Lelm	Scott G.	
27	Linda & Tom DeWitt	John & Sue Helgeson		
<b>September</b>	Kathy & Ron Reiber	Steve & Merry Luchau		Susan Brede & Connie Springman
10	Heidi Ryan	Otto & Phyllis Freier	Sue H.	
17	Bruce Jordan	John & Sue Helgeson	Dave N.	
24	Linda & Tom DeWitt	Mel & Dave Nomsen		

We welcome your ministry with open arms. To join a Sunday worship ministry (Ushers/Greeters, Liturgists, Communion Steward, and Coffee Fellowship/Treats), please contact Pr. Amy, [pastor@alexumc.org](mailto:pastor@alexumc.org). Visit us online to see the entire 2023 schedule, [www.alexumc.org](http://www.alexumc.org) and use left-hand navigation to find "ministerial schedule".

## Missions / Social Concerns

# Missions and Social concerns

As we look back over the Mission Outreach of the last six months, the word "Koinonia" comes to mind. The word Koinonia comes from the Greek word "Koivwvia;" which appears in different forms about twenty times in the New Testament. It is usually translated as "Fellowship." However, it also refers to joint participation — partnership - the share one has in anything - a gift jointly contributed - a collection - a contribution. Every missional outreach that we accomplish is the result of your participation as we fellowship together in reaching out to our community and the world.

On January 1<sup>9th</sup>, we joined with United Methodists around the world in participating in Humans Relations Day. This was followed by UMCOR Sunday on March 19<sup>th</sup>, Native American Ministries on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Peace with Justice Sunday on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Through your gifts, we reached out with millions of other United Methodists in ministry around the world.

In March, we collected food and monetary contributions for five local food shelves. Though your generosity we delivered 107 pounds of food to the Outreach Food Shelf. In addition, some food was delivered to the Free Little Pantry at the Free Methodist Church. Your monetary donations of \$1,101.75 were distributed four ways. \$100.00 each to Kalon Prep Academy, the High School Food Shelf, and the Tech College Food Shelf, and \$801.75 to the Outreach Food Shelf.

On May 6<sup>th</sup> we put our hands and feet into action and we did our semi-annual cleanup of the road ditch on Highway 82.

On May 1 4<sup>th</sup> we had a packet of treats for Mothers. And on June 1 8<sup>th</sup> we had Root Beer Floats for Fathers.

This year's Annual Conference was on May 3 1<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup> and we collected monetary donations for this year's Love Offering. Ninety percent of this year's Love Offering was designated for Mental Health initiatives and programs in Minnesota. In addition to donations for the Love Offering, we collected items

for UMCOR'S disaster relief cleaning kits. Through your generosity, Scott Garvin, our Lay Delegate, delivered a check in the amount of \$450.00 for the Love Offering and several boxes of disaster relief supplies to Annual Conference.

In the coming months, we will continue to collect supplies for the Food Shelf. A basket for placing your gifts is located in the narthex.

Starting in July, we will be collecting items needed by Someplace Safe to support their clients. This is a new outreach for us and you will be hearing more about this over the next few weeks.

This fall we will collect school supplies for United Way's "Stuff the Bus" campaign.

Looking way ahead, there are two more UMC Special Giving Sundays. World Communion Sunday on October 1<sup>st</sup>. and United Methodist Student Day on November 26<sup>th</sup>.

As we said in the beginning: Every missional outreach that we accomplish is the result of your participation as we fellowship "koinonia" together in reaching out to our community and the world. Thank you for your ministry. Missions / Social Concerns Committee: Pastor Amy, Ann Heydt, Kay Kortlever, Ginger Mayer, Chuck Holm