

Image: Vacation Bible
School 2025



Better Together 'One World'

Issue No.3,
August, 2025

PASTOR'S ARTICLE

Some of my most cherished Bible stories are nestled into the awful and confusing time between when Jesus died and when the disciples learned about or bore witness to his resurrection. Which might be a strange thing to say, since most of these are not – or don't start out as – happy stories. We meet the disciples in locked rooms and empty gardens and along the road toward Emmaus, and each time we find them in confusion, grief, and fear. They don't know what's coming; they are way too familiar with what just happened; and they don't know what they are supposed to do about it. They simply know that what *they* thought was supposed to happen turned out so differently than they'd imagined so far.

A portrait of a woman with long brown hair, smiling, wearing a dark jacket over a patterned scarf. The background is a solid blue color.

Pr. Korla Masters

I think I gravitate toward these stories because of how familiar the opening moments, deep in the uncertain in-between, tend to be. Being a pastor who was born the same year as the ELCA was formed means that I grew up in a denomination that had recognized that what came before was not what was gonna persist forever. But it also means that I grew up in a church that had committed to following the gospel of Jesus into the New Thing that God was up with in our little corners of the world. What a gift!

These stories of in-between times – and the courage it takes to step out not quite knowing what the destination looks like, but knowing the journey will make demands of us – have been clamoring for my attention a lot this summer as we've continued in our process of conversations and collaboration toward unification on Reformation Day 2026. There are so many parts of this process that are in formation, but the exact shape of the final decisions is still murky to us. We know God is calling, but we don't know where (even literally in our location!); we know there will be great gifts along the way, but the losses inherent in the process feel especially near and especially tender. We know that there will be opportunities (like the time Thomas was out for groceries when Jesus showed up, all resurrected) when we will have utterly different experiences of what's true, and those differences will drive us nuts; they may even break our hearts a bit.

What we also know is that not a single one of those disciples or communities of disciples was ever *actually* alone, even when it felt like God had died and that was it. One of the gifts of this journey we are embarking on together will be the opportunity to preach the good news to each other, right here as Woodlake and House of Prayer. To remind one another that it's God, and not our budgets, who is calling us together; it is God who is stirring us up to try a New Thing even before we know exactly what it'll look like (and sound like and smell like); and it is God whose stories feed us already and will continue to feed us, in the Word and at the Table, and God whose promises meet us at the Font and then every time we touch water and remember whose we are.

If it sounds like I think these gifts will be easy, I've messed up. They won't be easy. But they will be enduring; and they will be ours. Our congregations are in in-between times, it's true; but as it happens, we belong to a God whose stories come to life right in the midst of uncertainty, right in the time between one way of being disciples and the next. Thanks be to God.

SHARED MINISTRY TEAM ARTICLE

Your Shared Ministry Team

Cindy Hanson
Caity Wright
Cindy Jacobs
August Schauer
Orv Holland
Brent King
Karen Amezcua
Kristi Gay
Muriel Holland
Kim Houle
Andry Jurcich
Tim Riley
Scott Dahlquist
Heidi Thomas
Betsy Paradise
Gary Nix
Laurie Nix

What is SMT?

(Shared Ministry Team)

The Shared Ministry Team meets monthly to thoughtfully plan and support the vitality of our collaborative efforts, ensuring they are sustained with care and intention.



Augie Schauer

Called to Unity: An Update on Our Congregational Journey

To the friends and members for the congregations of House of Prayer (HOP) and Woodlake (WL) Lutheran churches, good day. I am Augie Schauer currently serving as the Vice President of Woodlake Lutheran church and a member of the joint leadership team of our HOP/WL leadership group. I am sharing an update on some of our recent activities. As you all should be aware we are looking to combine congregations by October 2026.

As you can imagine this union will engage us all in some form or capacity as we work in grace to attain this goal. Your leadership boards have been busy coming together to begin the workings needed. Each traditional team or commission has been busy meeting together and making plans to determine what is required in this 'New Congregation'.

We have divided up into the following groups to begin this work. Below is an outline put together by one of our members, Brent King, and highlights some activities to date.

*[*Please see the next page (pg. 4) for the descriptions and connections.]*

At both House of Prayer's Feedback Forum on May 18 and Woodlake's Town Hall on June 1, the message received was that our congregations are energized by the collaborative activities and feel led toward unification of our congregations in order to live out a shared mission for the sake of the Gospel.

On Wednesday, June 11, the leadership teams of both House of Prayer and Woodlake met for a joint conversation about what the next steps in coming together for our congregations might look like. Based on feedback from the congregational gatherings and guided by the question 'What is God calling us to do next?', the Joint Leadership determined that **House of Prayer Lutheran Church and Woodlake Lutheran Church are being called to become a faith based community in Richfield that is inclusive of HOP and WL focused on putting our faith into action for the benefit of the Richfield community.**

On July 17th leadership boards were together again, and one outcome was both leadership teams approving to move forward with interviewing a shared worship and music director for House of Prayer and Woodlake churches.

- Augie Schauer
WLC Vice President

LAST MONTH'S MINISTRY

Highlighting services and events

The Shared Ministry Team invites all HOP and WL members to join Better Together Task Forces as we work toward unification by Reformation Sunday 2026 (October 25). Each team, guided by pastoral and lay leaders, focuses on a specific ministry area. Your input is essential!

To participate, fill out a form in the narthex or email:
office@woodlakechurch.org | office@hoplc.org

Task Forces & Leaders:

- Worship – Joint schedule & resources (Kim Houle, Scott Dahlquist)
- Dream Team – Mission, Vision, Values (Heidi Thomas, Jacob Thompson, Kristi Gay)
- Shared Staffing – Staff support & structure (Cara Wright, Betsy Paradise, Cindy Hanson, Augie Schauer)
- Constitution/SMT – Leadership & governance (Caity Wright, Cindy Jacobs, Cindy Hanson, Augie Schauer)
- Children, Youth, Families – Unified CYF ministry (Andry Jurcich, Rachel Larson)
- Finances – Systems, budgets, procedures (Brent King, Orv Holland, Cara Wright)
- Service & Justice – Outreach and engagement (Kim Houle, Laurie Nix)
- Care Ministry – Support for members & community (Muriel Holland, Pr. Korla)
- Property – Building use and stewardship (Gary Nix, Cara Wright)

The goal is for this unification work to be completed by Reformation Sunday 2026 (October 25, 2026)

We have much more work to be done between now and October 2026 and will ask many of you in both congregations to help us reach our goal. I look forward to working with all of you as we put our 'faith into action' to better serve our community.



Youth (Rochelle) holding up some of the delicious dinner served at the community dinner

VBS and Summer Stretch Community Dinner for Families

HOP and WLC members signed up to help prepare and serve meals to the facilities participating in both summer stretch and VBS programs. Thank you Heidi Thomas for being the head volunteer this community dinner.

VBS Sunday Worship

We shared worship at Woodlake on July 6 to kick-off the Vacation Bible School week. Counselors from Luther Park shared about camp ministry and lead some awesome camp songs. Pastor Micah invited us to consider our place in the global community as we explore the theme "One World" through the month of July. An impromptu drum circle added to the music led by Monica and Clarence.



UPCOMING EVENTS: AT A GLANCE

**see more information on the following pages*

August Events & Programs

July 25-August 2 – Senior High Mission Trip

August 1 – Game Meet Up 1:30pm hosted at HOP

August 4 – Rainbow Wardrobe Drop Off & Tour*- Visit 1

August 5 – Pastor's Bible Study 9:30am - Pastor Eric's Office + Zoom

August 6 – Prayer Group 9:30am - WLC Fireside Room

August 10 – Veteran's Park Collaborative Service*

August 10 – Gather Young Adults Lakeside Bonfire / Worship at Diamond Lake*

August 12 – Pastor's Bible Study 9:30am - Pastor Eric's Office + Zoom

August 17 – WLC/HOP Night at the Twins Game (different than Lutheran Night at the Twins)*

August 18 – Rainbow Wardrobe Drop Off & Tour*- Visit 2

August 19 – Pastor's Bible Study 9:30am - Pastor Eric's Office + Zoom

August 19 – Veggie Table 4-6pm at Season's Park Apartments*

August 26 – Pastor's Bible Study 9:30am - Pastor Eric's Office + Zoom

August 28 – Faith and Fiction Book Club - WLC Heritage Room*

Looking Ahead

September 1 - Labor Day (buildings closed)

September 2-3 - First day of School (Richfield)

September 7 - Rally Sunday

September 10 - First Wednesday of RALY Programming 2025-2026

September 21 - Pennfest

September 21 - First Confirmation class for 2025-2026

UPCOMING EVENTS: THE DETAILS

Grief Coalition Summer Session

Thursdays, July 3rd - August 21st

4:30pm to 6:00pm - Transfiguration Lutheran Church
11000 France Avenue South, Bloomington, MN 55431

Rainbow Wardrobe Drop Off & Tour

Monday, August 4th from 5:30-7:00pm & August 18th from 11:30am-1:00pm

Woodlake and House of Prayer are invited to help deliver over 40 bags of clothing donations to Rainbow Wardrobe in Minneapolis. We'll meet at Woodlake to load vehicles, carpool to the Wardrobe, and get a tour of the space while learning more about their important work. If you'd like to join, please contact Laurie Franklin at franklinle@msn.com.

Twin Cities Gather- Young Adults

Sunday, August 10th at 6pm - Diamond Lake Lutheran Church

Join us for tie dye, outdoor games, a bonfire, snacks, and worship by the lake! Bring your favorite outdoor activities to share. We'll be tie-dyeing Gather Twin Cities T-shirt. Fill out the form below to let us know your size. Shirts are about \$15. If you're able to help cover costs, you can indicate that on the form too.

<https://forms.gle/9UVjKmQ7z9YaP4XK8>

Take me out to the Ball Game

Sunday, August 17th @1:10pm- Target Field

Join fellow baseball fans from Woodlake and House of Prayer at Target Field as the Minnesota Twins take on the Detroit Tigers! Tickets are \$45 per person, please make checks payable to Woodlake Lutheran Church and include "Twins game" in the memo line. You can also pay online at <https://woodlakechurch.org/give/> under 'Congregational Life Events'.

Card Making for Make-A-Wish

HOP members put their creativity to work on Sunday, June 29, making cheerful greeting cards for Make-A-Wish MN. Sponsored by Thrivent, the event featured fun themes like "I Bee-Lieve In You" and "Stay Strong" to remind recipients they are special children of God. Thanks to all who participated! Interested in similar activities?

Contact Kim Houle at wifeofadrumnerguy@gmail.com.



Veggie Table with VEAP

Third Tuesday of the month @4pm-6pm- Season's Park Apartments (8/19, 9/16)

July Recap: Tuesday, July 15, was our first Veggie Table event at Season's Park Apartments. A great group of folks came out on a very hot summer night and helped serve 65 households with 139 adults, 118 kids and 16 seniors with lots of fresh produce, much of which came from the farmers market. For questions, contact Christine Barneson at cmillerdance@gmail.com. Come join the fun!

Faith and Fiction Book Club

Aug 28 @7:00 pm Heritage Room or over zoom

My Friends' by Fredrik Backman (author of 'A Man Called Ove'). The Faith and Fiction book club is a group that meets monthly. Participants take turns leading discussion either in person or over Zoom. If you would like to join, connect with Laurie Nix at nixbloomington@aol.com



Summer Collaborative Worship in Veterans Park

Sunday, August 10th at 10am - Veterans Park

House of Prayer, Woodlake, Oak Grove, and Richfield Lutheran Churches will gather for a collaborative outdoor worship service at Veterans Park. We'll meet at the main picnic shelter, with music led by Josh Countryman and Musical Wallpaper. Refreshments and fellowship will follow the service. Bring a chair and invite a neighbor as we worship in God's creation.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Photographers All Call

Do you often attend HOP & WL worship services and events? Please help us out by snapping a few pictures and sending them to the HOP or WL church offices. Folks love seeing God's work in action! If you are interested in our collaboration photo team, please contact Cara Wright at cwright@hoplc.org or Jason McGovern at jmcgovern@woodlakechurch.org.

Loaves and Fishes NEW sign up

We've been getting some questions about volunteering for Loaves and Fishes and the link we had was incorrect. This is the new link:

<https://volunteer.bloomerang.co/volunteer/#/join-party?k=qmyp8klmcvg9pa>

This July, we've collected over 90 lbs for VEAP

"This impact is why I keep volunteering—getting donations where they're needed most."
—Kandy Gerber, WLC VEAP Volunteer

VEAP is seeing record demand but receiving 30% less food due to federal cuts. With more SNAP and Medicaid cuts coming, the need will only grow. How you can help? Become a monthly donor (details in e-news): new gifts matched by the Winker Family Trust, Donate fresh produce from your garden, and Contact legislators: real stories make a difference.

VEAP Birthday Bags

On Rally Sunday, September 7, our youth will assemble birthday bags for VEAP to help families celebrate their children. We're collecting cake mix, frosting, and birthday candles—our biggest needs. While shopping this summer, consider adding a few extras like balloons, pencils, or erasers (multi-packs are ideal). Help us bring a smile to a child's face!

If you have any questions, they can be directed to office@woodlakechurch.org and they will then be sent to the CYF team.



*The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop-elect of the ELCA*

New Presiding Bishop of the ELCA - Rev. Yehiel Curry
After multiple rounds of voting, discussions and discernment, the ELCA voted on the new presiding bishop of the ELCA. We thank Bishop Elizabeth Eaton for her leadership.

"We are pleased to announce the election of the Rev. Yehiel Curry as presiding bishop of the ELCA! Bishop-elect Curry was elected on the fifth ballot with 70.34% of the vote.

Ever-living God, strengthen and sustain Bishop-elect Curry, that with patience and understanding he may love and care for your people. Grant that together we may follow in the way of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA)

BUILDING REPORT

HOUSE OF PRAYER

Exterior and Landscaping

- New weed whacker has been put to good use by Dave Steenson, Chuck Hughes, and Steve Sather.
- Parking lot weeds have been treated and clipped.
- Repaired roof over elevator shaft to stop water leakage.
- Replaced parking lot timers to more efficiently regulate parking lot lighting.



Interiors

- Working on mandatory insurance inspection on big boiler to check fire wall and ensure proper operation, safety, and efficiency.
- Changed all HVAC filters building-wide.
- Repaired Parish Hall HVAC cooling tower.
- Completed fire inspection to maintain code compliance: included sprinkler inspection, fire alarm panel, and Parish Hall Kitchen fire suppression system.
- Broken window (brick thrown through window) is being repaired in the conference room at the end of the Education Hall. A vandalism report was filed with the Richfield Police department. They will increase evening patrols in the neighborhood.
- Education Wing was prepped for Luther Park Staff to stay overnight during VBS week. The showers were fixed, kitchen cleaned, and large muscle room was made ready for our guests.



Rental Partner Updates

- Just for Kix will return Monday, Tuesday, Thursday nights to rent space for dance classes in Parish Hall and Fellowship Hall.
- Iglesia Nuevo Pacto will move from Parish Hall to Fellowship Hall on Tuesday / Friday nights and Sunday afternoons with an increased rental fee.
- Prospective rental meetings ongoing.

THE NUMBERS

The Numbers for June 2025

Envelope Offering	\$28,463
Rental income	\$ 1,500
Other	\$ 701

Total Receipts	\$30,664
Properties Expense	\$ 4,776
Personnel Expense	\$27,852
Other Expenses	\$ 1,273

Total Expenses	\$33,901
----------------	----------

Monthly Net Receipts over expenses	(\$3,237)
------------------------------------	-----------

Worship Attendance in June

	Liturgical Worship	ReFuel Worship	Online
June 1	64	12	52
June 8	171	One Service WL	142
June 15	45	13	72
June 22	62	8	55
June 29	60	12	41



**House of Prayer
Lutheran Church**

BUILDING REPORT WOODLAKE



Interior & Exterior Updates

- Ecolab completed their quarterly perimeter and interior pest check.
- Bi-annual seasonal treatment is scheduled to prep for fall and winter critters.
- Ash tree treatment for ash bores has been approved by executive board.

Interior

- Air conditioning was properly adjusted following an electrical storm.
- Boiler was cleaned by Yale Mechanical.
- Ongoing scheduling coordination with Ryan from AMT for the Sanctuary TV installation.
- Darren is continuing the security camera installation and has created "Surveillance Footage Request Forms." If you ever need to request footage, please contact the office for a form.
- Ashley, our Business Director, is auditing building-related contracts, reviewing quotes, and ensuring our building needs are being addressed.
- Thank you to Chad Hardy for stepping in to unlock the building temporarily.
- The Properties Commission is preparing for a new bush to be planted near the south door.



THE NUMBERS

The Numbers for June 2025

Envelope Offering	\$ 24,463
Electronic Giving	\$ 8,294
IRA's	\$ 1,484
Holiday	\$ 425
Rental income	
Other	\$ 26,608
Total Receipts	\$ 1,423
	\$ 62,697
Properties Expense	
Personnel Expense	\$ 11,858
	\$ 31,045
Other Expenses	
Total Expenses	\$ 6,675
	\$ 49,578
Monthly Net Receipts over expenses	\$ 13,119

Worship Attendance in June

	Summer Worship	Online
June 1	119	49
June 8	171	142
June 15	92	51
June 22	95	43
June 29	90	42



WOODLAKE
LUTHERAN CHURCH



Luther Park + RALY Summer Stretch 2025

RALY RECAP

Summer Stretch. Vacation Bible School.

July was full of young people in community, trying follow along on Instagram and Facebook (found on linktr.ee/raly55423)



Luther Park Counselors teaching "Electricity"



Worship at VBS



Mid-bowling snack break



Rock climbing adventures



Mall Scavenger Hunt, "Find the biggest hat"

Vacation Bible School

"God is good, all the time! All the time, God is good!" RALY VBS was a huge hit with youth, volunteers, and Luther Park counselors. We learned how God's Word comes near in the Creation around us, how we show up for our neighbors, and how we show up for ourselves. It was amazing to see the campers blossom into their faith through bible study, games, and many, many colorful crafts!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this week possible: volunteers, campers, helpers, and counselors!

Summer Stretch

We bowled, we swam, we escaped! RALY Summer Stretch was incredible this year. Our bowling skills improved (not only with the addition of bumpers), we leapt into the deep end at the pool, escaped an ancient tomb after returning a gem that our great-grandfather stole! And channeled our inner "friendly neighborhood spiderman" while scaling walls, cheering one another on.



AUGUST CALENDER



What's happening next with RALY?

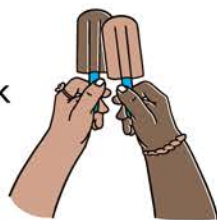
Scan the QR Code for the full Google Calendar! More information and registration available at linktr.ee/raly55423

"Popsicles in the Park"

Bring your friends of all ages for cool sweet treats at different parks around Richfield! Find Rachel near the playgrounds then grab and go or stick around for a chat. She may even have some games!

August 13 Taft Park

August 27 Christian Park



Summer Stretch Part 2

August 7 | youth
 entering 6-12 grades

Join RALY, Oak Grove, and Christus Viktor youth for a full day of programming split in two parts: packing meals at Feed My Starving Children and Valley Fair!

Registration required by July 31!

(found on RALY's Linktr.ee, or <https://forms.gle/5ve2W7rCDScnTb bu9>).

Where's Rachel?

This month, I was blessed to be surrounded by our amazing Vacation Bible School volunteers! From decorating to photography, check-in to making sure everyone had food on their plates, our volunteers helped make VBS a welcoming space for young folks to learn about God's Word. Shout out to Sara, Dave, Scott, Sandy, Cindy, Kirsten, Bev, Andry, Linda, Annie, Wayne, Anne, Mona, Lenny, Heidi, and Caity! Thank you all!



Rachel Larson
 RALY Director
rlarson@hoplc.org
 612-409-7275





Bowling Crew, RALY Summer Stretch 2025

Looking Ahead

FALL

NEW Church Mouse Program

We're excited to introduce the Church Mouse Program. Connecting congregation members with young adults pursuing life after high school. Help us continue the relationships built in RALY by staying in touch beyond graduation. Interested or have ideas? Contact rlarson@hoplc.org.



Fall RALY Programming

- RALY Wednesdays | Grades 6-9 | Kickoff September 10 | 6-7:30pm | Woodlake Lutheran Church
- GLOW | Grades 9-12 | Schedule TBA
- Confirmation (see Rachel's email)

Fall Coat Drive

RALY is hosting a coat drive for Richfield Middle and High School students! Every year, new students arrive without gear to keep them warm during the winters. We will collect coats in sizes for children, teens and adults. Look for a collection at both HOP & WL later this fall!

Plan for Summer 2026

We have some exciting possibilities for next summer. We aren't quite ready to announce them yet, but we are starting to get some ideas out to our RALY families for general interest.

Check back here for updates as we are able to give them out. If you're interested in being a part of the conversation, please email rlarson@hoplc.org.

***RALY; a place for youth
to be themselves, build
community, & have fun!***



Scan the QR Code
for registrations,
year-long calendar,
& social media

Or go to linktr.ee/raly55423

Woodlake Lutheran Church

2120 West 76th Street
Richfield, MN 55423
612-866-8449
office@woodlakechurch.org

House of Prayer Lutheran Church

7625 Chicago Ave
Richfield, MN 55423
612-866-8471
office@hoplc.org

9:00am Sanctuary Worship

10:30am Modern Worship

Pr. Micah Pearson

Pr. Neal Cannon

9:30am Traditional Worship

11:00am ReFuel Worship

Pr. Eric Luedtke

Pr. Korla Masters

Summer Worship Schedule

June 1st - August 31st

One blended worship service

10:00am at Woodlake

2nd Sundays on the Lawn

Summer Worship Schedule

Will stay the same

9:30am Traditional Worship

11:00am ReFuel Worship



BETTER TOGETHER

The Better Together Newsletter is published by both House of Prayer and Woodlake staff and volunteers. Any questions can be directed towards Cara Wright at cwright@hoplc.org, or the WLC office office@woodlakechurch.org.

All submissions for next month's newsletter are DUE to either office on the 20th of the month.

House of Prayer Lutheran Church
7625 Chicago Avenue South
Richfield MN 55423

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 2944

Woodlake Lutheran Church

2120 West 76th Street
Richfield, MN 55423
612-866-8449
office@woodlakechurch.org

Pr. Micah Pearson
Pr. Neal Cannon

Summer Worship Schedule

June 1st - August 31st
One blended worship service
10:00am at Woodlake
2nd Sundays on the Lawn

House of Prayer Lutheran Church

7625 Chicago Ave
Richfield, MN 55423
612-866-8471
office@hoplc.org

Pr. Eric Luedtke
Pr. Korla Masters

Worship Schedule

June 1st - August 31st
9:30am Traditional Worship
11:00am ReFuel Worship



B E T T E R T O G E T H E R

The Better Together Newsletter is published by both House of Prayer and Woodlake staff and volunteers. Any questions can be directed towards Cara Wright at cwright@hoplc.org, or the WLC office office@woodlakechurch.org.

All submissions for next month's newsletter are DUE to either office on the 20th of the month.