



# THE VOICE

## Valley of Peace Lutheran Church



### A WORD FROM PASTOR ASHLEY

On January 25, Valley of Peace celebrated 10 years as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) church. In worship on Sunday, January 26, we spent time reflecting on this journey that began over a decade ago and shared our continued commitment and call to the intentional work of welcome, inclusion, and advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community in our church and beyond.

*Con't inside, pg. 2*

#### *Our Mission*

Living in God's love and compassion, we are called and sent by God to be disciples of Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit works through us for healing, justice, and peace.



**valley of peace**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

763-588-4611

[www.valleyofpeace.org](http://www.valleyofpeace.org)  
[office@valleyofpeace.org](mailto:office@valleyofpeace.org)  
4735 Bassett Creek Drive  
Golden Valley, MN 55422

*A Word from Pastor Ashley con't*

Being an RIC church is not just a mere declaration but a profound commitment to live out Christ's love in tangible, meaningful ways. It matters because, as the body of Christ, we are called to affirm the dignity and worth of every person. It matters because there are people longing to hear that they are loved and seen, without condition, without exception. It matters because inclusion is not just a value; it is a practice that transforms lives, communities, and the world.

During worship, everyone was invited to write on post-it notes why being an RIC church matters to them. The responses were heartfelt and inspiring, a reminder of the impact this commitment has had on individuals and our congregation as a whole. I invite you to read these responses that are now posted near the lower-level entrance.

These notes are not only a source of encouragement but also a call to action. They remind us that our work is not done. The world continues to need voices that proclaim boldly: *All are welcome. You are beloved. You matter. You are seen.*

This milestone is both a celebration and a challenge. It is a moment to give thanks for how far we have come and to recommit ourselves to the path ahead. May we continue to be a beacon of hope and a witness to the inclusive love of Christ.



## QUESTION OR TWO

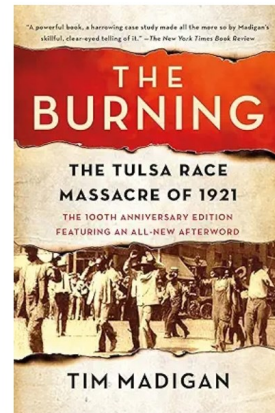
Please join us on **February 8** for food, fun and fellowship! We will meet at Broken Clock Brewing at 4:30 pm. The address is 1712 Marshall N.E., Minneapolis

# February Book Club at VoP

Our VoP Book Club will meet at 7:00 on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month via Zoom.(Feb 5 and 19). We look forward to seeing our regulars, plus anyone else who feels like joining us! You needn't have read the book, just drop by for small group conversation, and hear a little about some of the books we choose to read! It is a great way to connected, share, and learn!

## ***The Burning, by Tim Madigan***

"I began to suspect that a crucial piece remained missing from America's long attempts at racial reconciliation," Madigan wrote in 2001 in the author's note to *The Burning*. "Too many in this country remained as ignorant as I was. Too many were just as oblivious to some of the darkest moments in our history, a legacy of which Tulsa is both a tragic example and a shameful metaphor. How can we heal when we don't know what we're healing from?"



## **LENT SOUP SUPPERS RETURN!**

Just as a reminder of how important our kitchen remodeling project really is, we're going to gather for one more Lenten season for soup suppers and mid-week worship in Fellowship Hall. Search out your favorite soup recipes and dust off your crockpot! Beginning on **Wednesday, March 12 at 5:45 PM**, small groups led by council members and their teams will take turns providing soup, salad or fruit, bread and dessert. Watch for a sign up in the Narthex in the coming weeks and choose a date that works for you to contribute to our shared meal. We'll serve from crockpots, using only compostable tableware, cups, and cutlery. No dishwashing!



## **A RACIAL JUSTICE REFLECTION**

*Laurie Eaton, on behalf of the VOP Racial Justice Committee*

The annual recognition of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Inauguration of the 47<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America both fell on Monday, January 20 of this year. The contrast between the two observations could hardly be more dramatic. Many articles and editorials reflected on the significance of these events falling on the same day. As we enter February, with its focus on African American History, I share with you an excerpt from one such article for your consideration and pondering. The essay is entitled **Creative Non-Conformist**

*(An edited version of my MLK speech)* by Eddie Glaude, Jr., who writes at a **native son**, his blog page on Substack.

“As we stand on the eve of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation, we must say no to those who clamor for the days of old, when people like me supposedly knew our place. We must say no to those who want to shudder the doors of institutions of higher learning to a diverse student body. We must say no to those who long for the days of the 19th century and explicit empire. We must say no to a kind of nostalgia that arrests our imaginations and, instead, fight for the America we want, for the world we desire where every human being has standing and dignity.

Despite the howling winds, despite the depression that threatens to overwhelm, we must be creative non-conformists and hold off our elegant despair.

What does it mean to have Dr. King and the movement that made him shadow Donald Trump’s inauguration. It is a startling representation of two Americas, and the choice that confronts each of us. Which America will you choose? Whose legacy will you claim?”

## **WORSHIP AT TAPESTRY – MARCH 16, 2025** *(From the Racial Justice Committee)*

In March of 2024, Pastor Melissa and Deacon Josue Gonzalez, from Tapestry Ministry, visited Valley of Peace. They shared about their ministry community during our Adult Faith Formation and then brought the Word for the sermon in worship. On **Sunday, March 16**, we plan to worship at their community. Tapestry worships at 5:00pm each Sunday and invite us to stay for dinner following worship. They are located at 7045 Lyndale Ave So, Richfield (Oak Grove Lutheran Church). Mark your calendar now for this chance to build relationships across cultures through our shared faith tradition.

Here's a brief description of Tapestry and their multicultural ministry:

Guided by the Spirit and led by Creator God, [Tapestry](#) shares the love of Jesus through **food**, **music**, and **education**. We build bridges and provide opportunities for people to cross them with those different from themselves.

### **Food**

Because some of our best conversations happen over a meal, Tapestry's Sunday evening worship has always been followed by dinner. We are people from Bolivia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the United States, and Venezuela, with eight teams that serve food after worship. Tapestry also serves homemade food during Community Meals before Spanish and English classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

### **Music**

The Tapestry Band just completed a year-long project with a grant from the [Calvin Institute of Worship](#). Musicians composed 12 new songs (10 of which have been recorded so far) that will be available soon to listen to and to use as recordings in worship! These talented musicians are from Puerto Rico, the United States, and Venezuela and songs are in English and/or Spanish! The band is often available to lead worship and other events with a large repertoire of music from the ELW, ACS, LLC, our original music, and other songs played with Latin rhythms!

### **Education**

Tapestry began teaching Spanish and English (ESL) courses in 2017 and has continued to share this ministry with the Church and the community! These courses help us learn about each other, our cultures, hopes, dreams, joys, and struggles through language learning. Our teachers come from the Tapestry community, and it is a joy to be able to teach and learn from each other!

In addition, Tapestry offers Bible study led by Deacon Josue Gonzalez every Wednesday.

Tapestry was blessed to celebrate 10 years of ministry in September, 2024, with an ecumenical conference that included leaders from various Latin American countries along with a special worship service, both featuring Dr. Sandra Montes, author of [Becoming Real and Thriving in Ministry](#). We give thanks for this wonderful gift of a loving and gracious God.



## **FEBRUARY ADULT FAITH FORMATION**

### **Feb 2: Faith and Religion in Art, with Barb Mikelson**

What a treat to have a Sunday morning exploring how faith has been expressed in art throughout the ages and around the world with our very own MIA docent, Barb! All are invited to regroup at MIA for tour at 2:00 led by Barb. Come early and grab lunch in the cafe if you wish! Please sign up at the Welcome Center for the tour, so Barb will know who all is coming.

### **Feb 9: Manna and Mercy with Jon and Ruth Larson**

Manna and Mercy is a 100-page hand-printed paraphrase of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation -- a graphic novel of sorts, written with imagination, clarity, humor, and cartoons. Built around the twin themes of food sharing and forgiveness, it helps us to look at scripture with new eyes and rediscover how it can become a means of life and grace rather than destruction and death. We have extra books for use in class.

### **Feb 16: Huston Smith: Tribute to a Religious Visionary**

Dan Johnson will be hosting a video viewing which includes the late Huston Smith, one of the world's most knowledgeable people on world religions. After the video we will have time for reflection and discussion.

### **Feb 23: Growing up in a Christian Family in Taiwan, with Hsu-hui Wang**

Hsu-hui will open with a brief history of Christianity in Taiwan followed by her own personal reflections.





**It's a new year! Are you looking for a new volunteer opportunity? It's a year when doing something good for our community can make a huge difference!**

Our local food shelf organization, PRISM, has a number of volunteer opportunities! Volunteers are the heart of PRISM, and help provide dignity-centered resources of food, housing, and clothing. To get involved, start by filling out an application and selecting an orientation date. Colette, Volunteer Manager will be in touch about next steps!

Just check their website at <https://prismmpls.org/volunteer/>  
Questions? Contact Colette at [colette@prismmpls.org](mailto:colette@prismmpls.org)

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

PRISM has a variety of opportunities to get involved. Check out all the different ways to volunteer with them below.

**Front Desk:** The Front Desk Volunteer is the critical first point of contact with participants. Front Desk volunteers welcome participants, answer and direct phone calls to appropriate people, complete data entry tasks, and help maintain lobby space.

**Food Shelf:** The Marketplace Food Shelf utilizes a "choice model", meaning participants are free to shop just as they do in a traditional grocery store by choosing exactly the food they need from the shelves within Food Shelf guidelines.

*Con't on p. 10*

*VoP Cares, con't*



**Food Shelf - Rescue Driver:** Volunteers use the PRISM van to pick up rescue food from our grocery store partners daily. Food donated to PRISM, is nearing expiration or has some blemishes. Donations are returned to PRISM, sorted, and distributed to the participants visiting PRISM.

**Food Shelf - Check In:** Volunteers check in participants visiting the food shelf. This includes checking to see if the participant has utilized PRISM services, connecting them with the right services, and welcoming them to the Food Shelf.

**Shop for Change:** Shop for Change is PRISM's social enterprise. All items are donated, processed, and sold to the community at affordable rates. Volunteers accept donations, sort and price items, display items on sales floor, and are cashiers checking people out at register.

## **YOUTH ROOM CLEAN-UP CREW NEEDED!**

Exciting changes are on the horizon, and we're gearing up for building updates! To kick things off, we're giving the Youth Room a much-needed refresh and relocating items from the Sunday School Office Storage Room into the Youth Room.

### **We need your help!**

We're looking for volunteers to join us in:

**Cleaning out the space**

**Moving furniture and items**

**Recycling or disposing of unneeded materials**

If you're interested in lending a hand, please reach out to **Pace Warfield** at [cyf@valleyofpeace.org](mailto:cyf@valleyofpeace.org).

**A note about furniture:** Some of the furniture in the Youth Room was generously donated by VOP members. If you'd like to reclaim any of your items, please contact Pace directly.

Let's come together to create a fresh, inviting space for our youth community!

**REBECCA CIRCLE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH**

**9:30am - 11:30am**

The Bible Study is from the January/February issue of Gather magazine published by the Women of the ELCA. WINTER/SPRING BIBLE STUDY: FAITHFULNESS Session Two: Psalm 22

The Bible Study led by Pastor Ashley begins at 10:00am. David testifies that God is God and worthy of praise, even as David is in despair. It's no wonder that Jesus cries out to God during the crucifixion using these very words. In our worst times, this psalm gives us a way to contemplate God's holiness. The Bible Study led by Pastor Ashley begins at 10:00am. Come at 9:30am for social time.

We meet in the 4th floor Party Room at South Wirth Apartments, 501 Theodore Wirth Parkway in Golden Valley. A greeter will be in the lobby to welcome you and direct you to the meeting. **Mark the second Tuesday of each month on your calendar and join us.**

Whether you can come monthly or occasionally, you are always welcome. You don't need a copy of the magazine to participate. If you have any questions or need directions contact - Elaine Lofquist  
em.lofquist@comcast.net 763-432-7966 (home) or 612-816-5591 (mobile)

## INTRODUCING ALL GOD'S CHILDREN DISCOVERY CENTER!

We are so excited to collaborate with Lake Area Discovery Center for the launch of All God's Children Discovery Center which will officially open this fall. Enrollment has opened for current families and will be opening soon to the public. All are welcome to a special event at Valley of Peace on **Thursday, February 20**. This is an opportunity to meet current families, introduce community members and new families to our space, and celebrate our commitment and care to the families and children in our neighborhood. Please share this information with anyone you know who might be interested, and again, all Valley of Peace Members are welcome!

**DJ Howie**  
**DANCE PARTY!**

LAKE AREA  
Discovery  
Center

**FREE** Family Event  
• Activities/Games  
• Snacks • & Fun!

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN  
Discovery Center

**Celebrate the opening of  
our *NEW* Preschool Site!**

**Thurs., Feb. 20th**  
**5:30-7pm**  
**Valley of Peace**  
**Lutheran Church •**  
**Golden Valley**

## Wildfire Update

Transitions are on the horizon with the Wildfire congregations as we accompany one another into the years ahead. We are looking to the near and far future together, trusting that God has a plan for our collaboration. Together, the Wildfire congregations are the ELCA presence in the Robbinsdale School District between Highway 169 and Brooklyn Boulevard to the west and east. The southern and northern boundaries are I-394 and I-694 respectively. We are eight **vital** faith communities walking alongside one another for over ten years. Now the Holy Spirit is nudging us to explore new possibilities with hope-filled purpose.

The Wildfire Planning Group was formed in late 2024 to continue building relationships between the congregations and to work strategically towards discovering the ways our congregations might enhance one another. The group is comprised of two lay members invited by the pastors from each of the eight Wildfire congregations: Cross of Glory, Elim, Faith Lilac Way, First of Crystal, Holy Nativity, House of Hope, St James, and Valley of Peace. Deacon Kirsten Kessel (First of Crystal) has begun serving as the Rostered Minister Liaison with the group.

On December 12, 2024, the Wildfire Planning Group met at House of Hope for an initial grounding time. In addition to liaising with the rostered ministers, Deacon Kirsten will accompany and provide guidance to the group, holding the purpose in focus. The team members serve as congregational liaisons grounded in discovering God's preferred future for our congregations individually and together. They will be transparent communicators and apply their gifts and skills to the work of enriching collaborative efforts.

Revelation 21:1-6 was the dwelling scripture for the grounding meeting, which includes, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell among them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them.....And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'" Despite changes and challenges in our congregations, we can trust that God is always accompanying us and creating anew.

*con't on pg. 15*

*Wildfire Update con't*

Dean Funk (First of Crystal) illustrated the work like this:

**Wildfire includes many individuals within the eight congregations, and each congregation has its own culture. We're aware of a variety of gifts among us, but many more that have yet to be unwrapped. As we deepen our relationships, what resources and opportunities will present themselves? God knows, and the Holy Spirit will aid us in our discovery. Don't we all enjoy opening presents?**

The Wildfire Collaborative has combined efforts on Confirmation programming, Vacation Bible School (VBS), youth and adult mission/service trips, special worship services and musical offerings, as well as a shared Parish Nurse, shared seminary intern, and a shared Youth Director. As each congregation has changed, our needs and possibilities are also changing. Our work is to intentionally follow the path God rolls out before us.

It will take time and intention to go together, getting to know each other and appreciating the gifts of each congregation. The best outcomes rely on the participation of all along the way. Your gifts, passions, and skills will be needed too. Watch for opportunities to participate, such as the emerging Wildfire Men's Group, currently meeting every Saturday, 8:30 AM at St James for bible study and conversation.

It is an adventure like sailing across the ocean. We cannot see the end of the horizon or what we may encounter, and the path is not straight. There is no clearly defined or easy way forward. We must journey as the Spirit's wind blows us, tacking along on this adventure into God's preferred future; "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Jeremiah 29:11

Respectfully submitted,

Deacon Kirsten Kessel



### **Birthdays:**

Ajax Ruffin, 2/1; Bob Maland, 2/21; Kirsten Kessel, 2/4;  
Mary Hovden, 2/6; Catherine Martignacco, 2/7; Wes Syverson, 2/9;  
Liam Foy, 2/12; Declan Schneider, 2/15; Grace Flikke, 2/19;  
Seth Flikke, 2/19; Ben Brandt, 2/22; Kelsey Dabe, 2/22;  
Connie Dow, 2/23; Mike Belko, 2/27; Pam Gullick, 2/27

### **Anniversaries**

No anniversaries this month!

*We invite you to remember in prayer:*

The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria/our Congregation partner -  
LCCN, St. Luke Cathedral, Mayo-Gwoi, Jalingo, Nigeria and  
Pastor Talmon Yakaba

The children and youth of Valley of Peace and the members of the  
congregation who pray for them daily.

The congregation of Valley of Peace, that we extend an open welcome to  
all people and model in our community the reconciling ministry of  
Jesus Christ.

Those who have health concerns or are receiving treatment.

---

***Prayer requests are listed with permission.***

*If you would like to be included in the prayers please contact the church  
office. Names will be included for 4 weeks unless otherwise asked for.*

*Confidential prayer support is also available.*

## **Valley of Peace Staff**

### ***Pastor***

Ashley Osborn  
(she/her/hers)  
[aosborn@valleyofpeace.org](mailto:aosborn@valleyofpeace.org)

### ***Organist/Pianist/ Accompanist***

Beth Brandt  
(she/her/hers)  
[organist@valleyofpeace.com](mailto:organist@valleyofpeace.com)

### ***Director of Music***

Hsu-hui Wang  
(she/her/hers)  
[music@valleyofpeace.org](mailto:music@valleyofpeace.org)

### ***Ministry Support Coordinator***

Sally Herron  
(she/her/hers)  
[office@valleyofpeace.org](mailto:office@valleyofpeace.org)

### ***Director of Children, Youth and Family***

Pace Warfield  
(they/them/theirs)  
[cyf@valleyofpeace.org](mailto:cyf@valleyofpeace.org)

Valley of Peace is  
committed to Racial  
Justice & is a  
Reconciling in Christ  
Church.

