

THE VOICE January 2026

Valley of Peace Lutheran Church

A WORD FROM PASTOR ASHLEY

“2026 will be our year!” This is something that Shennon Jay, our Council President, and I have found ourselves saying often lately. Not because 2025 was bad at all, far from it! But because 2025 was a very, very full year!

In 2025 we witnessed tangible signs of renewal all around us. I shared in worship on Sunday, December 28, that we have now received enough pledges to meet our Ultimate Campaign Goal for our Rejoice & Renew Campaign. This means that we have had households pledge to give \$1,300,000. What a blessing!! And this campaign is not just about the financial commitments and goals, but is also about the commitments of prayers and support for Valley of Peace’s future. Thank you!

This was also a year that focused heavily on building improvements. Our kitchen remodel has begun and our HVAC system upgrade is close to complete. Our collaboration with Lake Area Discovery Center led to improvements in our lower level and in the classrooms as we transitioned from All God’s Children Learning Center into All God’s Children Discovery Center, opening new possibilities for learning, collaboration, and community connection. Improvements to the sanctuary lighting, music office, storage space, youth room, and lower level landscaping were also part of this broader commitment to caring for the spaces entrusted to us, ensuring they continue to serve our worship life and our neighbors well.

Con’t inside...

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.



763-588-4611

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4735 Bassett Creek Drive
Golden Valley, MN 55422

A Word from Pastor Ashley con't...

We also experienced significant transition among our staff. We held space and gratitude as Kelsey Pierson, our Ministry Support Coordinator, began her parental leave in early January 2025 and we welcomed Sally Daniels Herron as Interim Ministry Support Coordinator. We also had several people volunteer to support this role and work as well. We celebrated the leadership of Hsu-hui Wang as she retired as our Director of Music in February and we welcomed Christine Weatherman as our new Director of Music in the Spring. And we said farewell to Pace Warfield our Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries giving thanks for their ministry. And, just a reminder, that we will be collecting cards for Pace until January 7.

Alongside these all of these changes and transitions, we have been deepening our spiritual practices as a community. We have added our Pray without Ceasing service every Wednesday at 5:45 p.m. And, we began work with the Minneapolis Area Synod's Faith & Neighboring Practices, inviting us to slow down, get to know our neighbors more intentionally, and pay closer attention to the assets, relationships, and signs of God's work already present in us.

Wow! What a full year it has been indeed. And, I know that my list doesn't cover all of our new initiatives and ongoing services, programs, and ministries. I am so grateful for our leaders who continue to show up and serve faithfully and joyfully.

On Sunday, January 4, as we celebrate Epiphany, we will once again share Star Words in worship, inviting each of us to receive a word and carry it through the year ahead. Epiphany reminds us that God's presence is continually being revealed.

I pray that in 2026 you may experience God's presence and God's peace. 2026 will be our year!!

Peace be with you,

Pastor Ashley

REJOICE AND RENEW—WE DID IT!



With hearts full of gratitude and joy, we celebrate that Valley of Peace has reached our Ultimate Rejoice & Renew Capital Campaign goal of **\$1.3 million!** Thanks be to God for the prayers, generosity, and faithful financial commitments that made this possible. Your support is a powerful witness to God's work among us and a gift that will bless our ministry for generations to come. Thank you for being part of this joyful moment! Let us rejoice and give thanks together!

*Come join us for
a wedding celebration!*



Tyler Martin
&
Grant Skrove

Sunday 18 *January*

Grant & Tyler will be married during
worship at Valley of Peace
on Sunday, January 18.
All are welcome to worship and celebrate!



NOW HIRING!

We are now hiring for a Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries. Please click [here](#) to view the job description. If you know anyone who might be interested please share this information with them. Thank you for your continued prayers and support in this time of transition.

ISAIAH CAUCUS TRAINING

**Sunday, January 11, 2025
1-3 pm in the Fireside Room**

You are invited to Caucus training. This is an opportunity to put our faith into action. Participants will be equipped with practical know-how and resources to engage in caucus night and local actions in the weeks ahead. Grounded in love for our neighbor, we will create a powerful community to work together so every person is treated with dignity, immigrants are welcomed, the sick are cared for and the hungry are fed. We will also reflect on the choice before us to embody a politics rooted in love rather than greed or cruelty, and to reclaim our faith in the public square. This training is open to the broader community, so feel free to invite friends and neighbors to join us! Contact Lona Froyum to attend or with questions. lmfroyum@gmail.com or (651)260-7602

LOWER LEVEL RENOVATION PROJECT

Highlights ...

- * Kitchen demolition completed
- * Salvaged and moved existing kitchen cabinets and some base units to the Youth Room. Looking at installing in the Youth Room, based on a plan from Dan Weatherman.
- * Asbestos abatement of kitchen area flooring completed.
- * Underground plumbing in various places of the kitchen area has taken place. New sanitary/sewage lines installed and approved by Golden Valley inspector and trenches poured.
- * Masonry work occurring. Old door openings filled in, new door cuts made, and door frame installed.
- * Framers will be on-site the week of December 29 installing steel studs for new walls. Will be noisy !!!!
- * With a dumpster on-site, Shennon Jay and some of VoP Youth took advantage and removed a number of items from the Youth Room that are no longer needed, and disposed of in the dumpster THANK YOU !!!
- * Over the past months a strong working relationship has been established with our General Contractor, D.J. Kranz. We meet weekly with Project Manager Josh and Site Superintendent Curtis. Communication with VoP staff and AGC Site Director Lisa has been excellent. Contractors are doing everything possible to minimize noise and other disruptions to the daily activities of the Learning Center. For this we are very appreciative!

As of this update, the project is on-schedule with a target of early March 2026 completion.

THANK YOU to all who participated in the Capital Campaign, making this much-needed renovation possible!

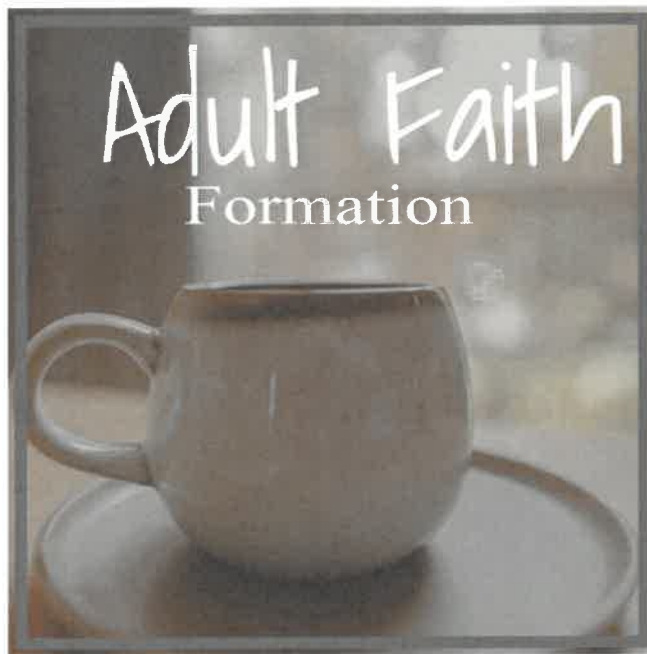


Thank you for the Christmas cards, gifts, and treats for this Christmas season. We are so very grateful for our church family and our blessed Valley of Peace! Thank you very much, Pastor Ashley, Jon, Clara & TJ Osborn

ENVELOPES ARE HERE!

Did you ask for envelopes for your offering to Valley of Peace? They have arrived and are on the chairs near the usher's cart in the Narthex. Please pick them up if you're able, and if you need us to mail them to you, just let Sally know by either calling the office (763)588-4611 or by sending her an e-mail: office@valleyofpeace.org

JANUARY ADULT FAITH FORMATION



Jan 4: Bible Study on the Book of Revelation (Part 5)

Prior to the opening of the seventh seal, Revelation delivers an amazing and hope-filled surprise – a beautiful vision of the white-robed martyrs from “every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages,” waving palm branches and singing before the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev 7:9). This is a favorite text for funerals and All Saints Day, with its powerful hymns and the promise that God wipes away our tears. In a wonderful paradox, the Lamb himself becomes the shepherd, leading people to God’s shelter and to springs of the water of life. Like a musical interlude, the vision of Revelation 7 interrupts the opening of the seals, delaying judgment so that God’s people can be protected. It also strengthens the people of God, encouraging the power of witness for those who follow the Lamb. Led by Laurie Eaton. It is not necessary to have been to previous sessions to learn.

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January Adult Faith Formation con't...

Jan 11: *Religious Intrusions on a Secular Bike Trip, with Ted Olson Would God Take an Interest in My Ohio Pedaling Adventure?* On June 11th, Ted pedaled out of a hotel garage in Covington, Kentucky (the twin city to Cincinnati) for a solo, statewide bicycle ride across Ohio to Cleveland. Before leaving the outskirts of Cincinnati he had already had an unexpected discussion of church. By the time he had dipped his front tire in Lake Erie, six days and 330 miles later, he had had seven unexpected, unlooked for, unasked for, though not wholly unwelcome religious encounters. Five of these were quite significant, and all were meaningful. That's 1+ encounters per day. An average of one every 47 miles. Is this coincidence? Is there intention? Please join Ted for the story of an un-notable bike trip that became more notable than expected. Your curiosity is invited for the story.

Jan 18: **A Bible Study on Luke 15 – Peter Geisendorfer-Lindgren** Chapter 15 of the book of Luke is known as the “Lost” chapter. This does not mean it mysteriously disappeared in an ancient cobweb filled library in an Indiana Jones movie. In Luke 15, Jesus tells three parables about things that are lost: a sheep, a coin, and a son. It is a Master Class in storytelling. Peter Geisendorfer-Lindgren, Pastor Emeritus at Lord of Life Lutheran Church will lead a discussion of this interesting chapter and about what happens when we get lost.

Jan 25: *Disaster 101 with Michael Stadie* We often assume disasters are something that happen somewhere else, to someone else. But life has a way of surprising us, and disasters can happen anytime, anywhere—often when we least expect them. During this time together, we'll explore the basic stages of a disaster as well as simple, practical steps that can help us feel more prepared and less overwhelmed if a disaster ever touches close to home. The goal isn't fear, but confidence, awareness, and caring for one another.

We meet at 9:00 am on Sundays. The coffee is always on and you are always welcome!

Rare Infant Openings for JANUARY

Valley of Peace Lutheran
(Golden Valley) - 3

Trinity Lutheran (Stillwater) - 3

Our Savior's Lutheran (Stillwater) - 1

Hosanna Lutheran
(Forest Lake) - 3

Please Help 
Spread the Word!



ladcfamilies.org

HUNGER KNOWS NO SEASON

The need for non-perishable food (and toilet paper) is so great right now! We have partnered with PRISM for many years, so if you can remember to pick up items at the grocery store and bring them to the grocery cart on the lower level (remember when we made it overflow with toilet paper!?) that would be awesome. We also have our own Blessings Box that is getting used A LOT. Here are some suggestions of what to buy that are better during these cold months: rice, noodles, granola bars, soap, non-dairy milk, salt, pepper, flour, sugar and cereal, cereal, cereal! Feel free to drop items off in the office for the Blessings Box. Thank you so very much!!



ONE AND DONE CHOIR

Come join us on Jan 4 for One and Done Choir! All are welcome. We will meet in the sanctuary at 9:30 am. Looking forward to seeing you!!!

REBECCA CIRCLE TUESDAY, JANUARY 13
9:30am - 11:30am

The Bible Study is from the December 2025/January-February 2026 issue of *Gather* magazine published by the Women of the ELCA.

BIBLE STUDY: Embodied Prayer

Prayer is an important part of our relationship with God, and one of the ways we respond to God speaking in our lives.

At the same time, we may carry all kinds of baggage or heavy questions about prayer:

Am I doing it right? Do I pray enough? Is prayer always done with words?

This two-part Bible study looks to scripture as a guide to explore some different ways we can pray with our bodies and with the body of the earth.

Session One: Praying with our bodies

Looking to the Apostle Paul, Mary, the Psalms and more, we'll learn about and try three embodied practices of prayer based on:

- breathing techniques,
- the use of beads (such as the rosary)
- praying in different postures (sitting, standing and kneeling)

The Bible Study begins at 10:00am.

Come at 9:30am for social time

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)

JANUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH

Tapestry is a “Congregation Under Development” of the Minneapolis Area Synod. A multicultural and bilingual community of faith in Richfield, they worship in both English and Spanish. Sharing the love of Jesus through food, music, and education, in their own words, they:

- ~ build bridges & provide opportunities to cross them
- ~ work together to reach out and weave together in unity the diversity of people living in our communities into what it means to be a community of faith
- ~ engage in deep listening to build compassion and trust
- ~ intentionally enter into conversations with people different from ourselves
- ~ are transformed through our relationships and through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Tapestry community and their neighbors are suffering greatly under fear from the indiscriminate deportation actions of ICE, making it difficult for members even to gather for worship in these challenging times.

But did you know that as a congregation under development it falls to the pastor to generate the funds needed to sustain their ministry? The developing congregation contributes what they are able, but it is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to create relationships and seek financial partnerships to make their work even possible. This is a challenge in any season but is a particular strain during these difficult times in their community.

**** Please consider giving generously to support the ministry of Tapestry this month ****

WILDFIRE BOOK CLUB: FINDING JESUS AT THE BORDER **BY JULIA LAMBERT FOGG**

Join our Wildfire siblings in January and February for a communal reading and study of Julia Lambert Fogg's book, *Finding Jesus at the Border*. Lambert Fogg is a professor of Religion at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, California. As an ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA) Lambert Fogg is committed to helping people of faith live out their shared mandate to welcome the stranger. Her book, published in 2020, examines the stark similarities of stories of migration and welcome throughout Scripture and with our current contexts.

We will have three gatherings to engage with this book, and we are thrilled that Julia Lambert Fogg will join us for the third one! You are welcome to attend any or all of the gatherings.

Faith Lilac Way's pastoral intern, Vicar Karla Leitzman, will facilitate these discussions. In addition to Vicar Karla's internship at Faith Lilac Way, she also works as a Philanthropic Advisor for Global Refuge/ Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Chapters 1-4 discussion:

Thursday 1/15 at 6:30 pm at Faith Lilac Way Lutheran and on Zoom

Chapters 5-8 discussion:

Tuesday 2/10 at 6:30pm at Faith Lilac Way Lutheran and on Zoom

Conversation on the entire book with author Julia Lambert Fogg who will be joining us on Zoom from California:

6-8pm at House of Hope Lutheran

Pizza at 6 with book discussion starting at 6:30

Please reach out to Vicar Karla at vicar@faithlilacway.org to receive the zoom link if you plan to join any of these gatherings virtually.

JANUARY QUESTION OR TWO

We will meet January 10th at 4:30 pm. Hope to see you there!

Wooden Hill Brewing Company
7421 Bush Lake Road, Edina, 55439
www.woodenhillbrewing.com

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Children, Youth, and Family Newsletter.**





Birthdays:

Adrian Moravec, 1/2; Clara Osborn, 1/3; Deanna Franz, 1/5;
 Violet O'Connor, 1/5; Lillian Nyberg, 1/6; Shennon Jay, 1/7;
 Marty Fergus, 1/8; Jon Osborn, 1/10; Lona Froyum, 1/16;
 George Johnson, 1/18; Audrey Stetler, 1/18; Davis Edwards, 1/19;
 Brian Schiebe, 1/21; Noah Mikelson, 1/22; Blair Loose, 1/24;
 Steve Hoge, 1/25

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

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Int. Director of Children, Youth and Family

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

