

VBP Connects

SUMMER 2026

Please look at all of the information about ways to connect with one another and our community this summer!

VBP Connects Summer Small Groups

Sip & Sing

Leaders: Pastor Ashley, Christine Weatherman, & Dan Miller

Location: Pastor Ashley's House in South Minneapolis

Dates & Time: Thur, June 25 and Thurs, Aug 20 from 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Description: Join us for a relaxed and spirit-filled evening of community, conversation, whiskey tasting, and singing together. This small group is an opportunity to slow down, share life together, and enjoy the gift of music and companionship in a welcoming and faith-centered setting. Whiskey beverages will be provided, and you are welcome to bring another beverage of your choice if you prefer. Please also bring an appetizer or hors d'oeuvres to share. Part of the evening will include a casual time of singing together – favorite hymns, meaningful songs, and music that brings joy and connection.

Sign Up: Space is limited to 14 participants per night, so reservations are required. Please RSVP to Pastor Ashley and let her know what date you are attending. Her e-mail address is aosborn@valleyofpeace.org

Food for the Journey

Leaders: Tom Ewald and Shennon Jay

Location: Valley of Peace Fireside Room

Dates & Time: All gatherings are on Wednesdays beginning at 7 pm: June 17, July 1, July 15, July 29

Sign Up: To help prepare, please RSVP to Tom Ewald at tcewald@msn.com

Description: Join Tom Ewald and Shennon Jay for some bread for the body and the soul. Each session we will explore practices for embodying our core values. The world may not be as we would like it to be, and the question is before us, of who we want to be in the midst of it all. Bring an appetizer to share, if you are able, so we can begin each session with some communal time with tea, bread and nosh.

Session 1: Values Clarification Exercise

Clarify core personal values in light of faith so they become an anchor for resilience and hope when stress arises. Living aligned with God-given values (love, justice, peace) gives strength and direction.

Session 2: Centering Prayer

Experience centering prayer—a simple Christian practice of consenting to God's presence and action within. It builds resilience by training us to release stress and return gently to God.

Session 3: Present Moment Awareness

Cultivate awareness of the present moment as a doorway to God's constant, loving presence—reducing worry and building hope right where we are.

Session 4: Mindfulness Meditation

Integrate the prior practices into a full Christian mindfulness meditation, strengthening resilience by abiding in God's love and extending it outward.

Faith & Neighboring Practices

Neighborhood Walks

Leaders: The VOP Faith & Neighboring Team: Pat McGraw, George Johnson, Laurie Eaton, Sara Hoge, Ellory Roske, and Pastor Ashley

Dates & Time: Sundays at 10:30 am (after worship) on June 7, July 12, and Aug 2 and Wednesdays at 6:30 pm on June 17, July 22, and August 19

Description: Join our Valley of Peace community as we walk around our neighborhood and pay attention to the gifts of creation, neighbors, and our community around the church!

Sign Up: No need to sign up - just show up in whatever way feels right for you! Children and friendly pets are welcome to join! And, if mobility is an issue, please know we can help you find a place to sit and observe.

Blacktop Bash

Leaders: The VOP Faith & Neighboring Team, Lake Area Discovery Center, and the Whole Church!

Location: Valley of Peace Parking Lot

Date & Time: Wednesday, June 24 from 5 - 7:30 pm

Description: All are welcome to this family friendly event as we throw a party for our neighborhood! Our time together will include food, games, opportunities for connection, and a concert by a local neighbor. This is a family friendly event with family friendly activities!

Sign Up: No sign up needed, just come and enjoy and meet some of our neighbors! If you are interested in helping host, serve food, or participate in any way, please let Pat McGraw, Sara Hoge, or Pastor Ashley know.

More Small Groups

Java for Mama & Papa

Leaders: Pastor Ashley & VOP Members

Dates & Time: Every Thursday in June, July, and August from 7:30 am to 9:00 am.

Description: We will offer coffee, treats, and connection to the parents of All God's Children Discovery Center. This is a wonderful way to meet these families, form relationships, and build a connection with the church. We will be outside weather permitting.

Sign Up: You are always welcome to show up, but if you would like to help host and/or provide a treat, please let Pastor Ashley know.

Pray Without Ceasing

Leaders: Laurie Eaton & Pastor Ashley

Location: Outside of the Sanctuary

Date & Time: Wednesdays from 5:45 pm to 6:30 pm

Description: All are welcome as we gather in weekly prayer for one another, our community, our nation and our world. Our time together will include scripture reading, opportunities to share, prayer, lighting candles, and singing. This is a reflective and spiritual place to connect with God and one another.

Sign Up: No sign up needed.

Question or 2 and a Brew

Leader: Wes Syverson

Location: Changes Monthly - check monthly newsletter and website for location.

Date & Time: Second Saturday of the Month at 4:30 pm

Description: Looking to know who you are worshipping with on Sunday? We will meet in local breweries and test their beer. All of our breweries have food. The evening is informal, but we will have one question to share each time. After Saturday, you should know others better on Sunday at church! And, most places we meet have non-alcoholic options and other drinks available!

Sign Up: No sign up needed.

Bible Studies

Rebecca's Circle

Leaders: Elaine Lofquist and Pastor Ashley, along with VOP Women!

Location: Party Room at Elaine's apartment building (near Valley of Peace)

Dates & Time: Second Tuesday of every Month. Bible Study is from 10:00 am to 11:30 am with fellowship time starting at 9:30 am

Description: Join Valley of Peace women for Bible Study and fellowship. Our Bible Study follows the Gather Magazine, but we are also Spirit-led and follow where the Spirit takes us. There is always a lot of laughter and a safe space for authentic sharing.

Sign Up: No need to sign up, but if you would like to know more information please reach out to Elaine Lofquist or Pastor Ashley

Text Study

Leaders: Laurie Eaton, Elizabeth Hermeier, Pastor Ashley & all of the voices of those gathering - there is no expert in the room as we all share!

Location: Valley of Peace Fireside Room

Date & Time: Thursday mornings from 10:00 am to 11:30 am

Description: We will read the upcoming Scripture reading for Sunday worship and spend time in conversation sharing what we wonder and notice about. There are no experts in the room as we all bring our own experiences, interpretations, and questions. This is a thoughtful space where we see new ways to engage the Biblical story and where God is still speaking to us.

Sign Up: No sign up needed! And, you can always check the schedule in the announcements if you want to read the Scripture ahead of time, but no prep needed!