



Saint Luke Lutheran Church

1807 Field Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55116 | 651-698-9443 | saintlukechurch.org

July 2026 Newsletter



The Pastor's Perspective

Pr. Bristol Reading

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

We will hear the above words, well-known and beloved by many, as part of our Gospel reading on Sunday, July 5. They feel especially fitting for me to reflect on now as I've been experiencing some burnout myself. In addition to serving as St. Luke's pastor $\frac{3}{4}$ time, I coordinate a synod-wide young adult internship program on behalf of the bishop's office. You can learn more about the internship program here if you'd like – spas-elca.org/summer-internships. It's a very important ministry lifting up and empowering young leaders across our faith communities.

This is my fourth year balancing these two jobs, and lately I have been finding myself feeling a little weary and empty. I'm taking some extended time off in August to recover from this burnout and spend more time with family. I'll be away four consecutive Sundays from August 9 through 30, like a mini sabbatical. You will have some wonderful guest preachers leading worship during that time, and I'll look forward to

July Volunteers

Thanks for your participation!

ONLINE USHERS

1st Sunday: David Tews
2nd Sunday: Sue McNeill
3rd Sunday: Raulie Ruiz
4th Sunday: David Nedrelov

IN PERSON USHERS

First and Second Sundays:
Volker Landenberger,
Aidan Tarpenning
Third and Fourth Sundays:
Mike and Nancy Hegdahl

READERS

5 Sue McNeill
12 Wendy Bjorklund
19 Christine Olson
26 Laurie Smith

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

5 Kyle Ulrich
12 Wendy Bjorklund
19 Christine Olson
26 Kyle Ulrich

ALTAR GUILD

Nancy Hegdahl, Christine Olson

COUNTERS

5 Katy Eggert
12 Carol Hornung
19 Katy Eggert
26 Wendy Bjorklund

sharing more when I return about what I've learned in my time of rest.

Because I do think Jesus is speaking here about *learning*. When I hear this passage, it always strikes me how surprising it is to use the image of a *yoke* when speaking about rest. Yokes are, of course, used by beasts of burden doing hard field labor. Typically, they help two animals work together to plow a field. The yoke not only helps them share the load of the weight they carry, but it also helps them move easily in the same direction, ensuring that they don't have to exert any additional effort to stay coordinated and unified.

When I've led embodied prayer practices to encourage rest, I've done things like holding stones and then putting them down to symbolize releasing burdens. Perhaps next time, I should try an exercise in which people pick up a yoke, put it on their shoulders, then walk around and do some work. After all, that's the imagery Jesus decides to go with!

Why does Jesus use this surprising image of a yoke to describe discipleship? It almost sounds as though Jesus is inviting us to be yoked with him and to labor side-by-side with him. So the invitation is not to do nothing (although that's also a needed practice from time to time) but rather to make the load easier to bear by sharing it with Christ and following his lead. If we're yoked to Christ, we go where he goes. If we labor alongside Christ, we are never alone in what we carry.

This is why we can find "rest for our souls," as Jesus says in Matthew 11:29, in the life-long effort of learning from Christ and embodying Christ with our actions. When Jesus speaks about his yoke being "light," the Greek word he uses does clearly mean something that is light in weight. But the word he uses to say his yoke is "easy," *chrestos*, is a little more interesting. It carries a connotation of pleasantness or kindness. The work we share with Christ isn't an imposition but a welcome joy. Walking the path of faith doesn't need to feel overwhelming or heavy. It can feel enjoyable and gentle!

I think about Jesus' words in John's Gospel: "I have come that they [my sheep] may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd." (John 10:10-11). Whether we imagine Jesus as a good shepherd, or as a fellow hard-working ox, we can be reminded that God's intention for us is goodness, wholeness, and abundance. Christ is leading us on the right path that leads

COFFEE HOSTS

- 5 Wendy Bjorklund,
Robyn Rongstad
- 12 Doug and Jo Klein,
Kay Reich
- 19 Christine Olson,
Julie Gaarder
- 26 Karen Larson,
Junella Litzkow,
Bonnie Jellinek



Bun Run

Many thanks to our Bun Run volunteers for July: Ken McGrew, Doug Klein, Kay Reich, Julie Ellingson,

July Birthdays

- 1 Katie Anderson
- 7 Carol Hornung, Ian Walter
- 8 Joyce Bluel
- 16 Wendy Bjorklund
- 23 Jo Klein
- 26 Jill Burchill, Tatum Herrmann
- 27 Violet Allen
- 28 Dan Grzywinski
- 29 PJ O'Kane

July Anniversaries

- 6 Kevin and Mary Jo Brandt
- 13 Larry and Bev Eckstrom



Notes from the Music Director - Becca Ruiz

We have a couple of fun music dates coming up!

Sunday, 7/12, 8:30am,

One Hour Choir:

1 hour, 1 song to learn and we sing it that day. All skill levels are welcome!

Sunday, 9/13, 4:00pm,

Piano Concert:

to true life – both on earth and into eternity. That is good and comforting news!

Here are two ways you might pray with this Gospel passage, using the bolded lines as a repeated mantra:

[1]

<p>I am weary And carrying heavy burdens LORD, I need your rest</p> <p>I come to you You are gentle LORD, I need your rest</p> <p>Your burden is light Teach me your ways LORD, I need your rest</p>	<p>I accept my limits And I don't have to understand everything. God's presence is enough. I have made a choice to rest in the LORD</p> <p>Draw near to God You will find rest and peace God is holding us And we don't have to hold it all together I have made a choice to rest in the LORD</p>
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In Christ,
Pastor Bristol

[1] Both of these prayers come from *Little Liturgies* for Year A by The Soil and the Seed Project, a wonderful *free* resource for reflecting on the lectionary texts; you will find it [here](#).



Benefit for Gwen Brummund Please join us for a community benefit to support Gwen Brummund in her fight against stage 4 glioblastoma brain cancer. Since her diagnosis in August 2024, Gwen and her family have faced significant medical expenses, and all proceeds from this event will help ease the cost of treatments and bills. The benefit will be held on Saturday, July 25, from 2:00–6:00 p.m. at St. Luke Lutheran Church. Activities include a

Our new member, Katherine Jacobson Fleisher, is an accomplished concert pianist who has played internationally and will be performing at our church with her concert partner, Thomas Hecht. Save this in your calendar so you don't miss this great opportunity!



National Night Out We are looking for volunteers to help at the National Night Out event being hosted by St. Luke on August 4th. The event begins at 5:00 p.m., so we need people to set up tables and chairs between 4:30 and 5:00. We will also need helpers to take down and put away the tables and chairs after the event is over (this would be sometime after 8:00 p.m.) If your neighborhood does not celebrate National Night Out, why not come to church, and help us welcome and get to know our church neighbors? We will be providing hamburgers, hotdogs and water; all we ask is that you bring a dish to share. Come join the fun. If you can help in set up and/or clean up, please contact Joyce Bluel (651-690-4614). Thanks!



All are invited to Game Day at St. Luke, Friday, July 3 and 17. Bring a snack to share and your favorite game and settle down to an afternoon of fun...join us!

spaghetti dinner, silent auction, bake sale, meat raffle, and games for kids. Dinner prices are \$15 for adults, \$8 for children ages 4–8, and free for children 3 and under. For more information, contact Janel (651-239-9952) or Vesta (612-578-4415). We hope you'll join us in supporting Gwen and her family.



Pastor Bristol will be away the following Sundays, when we will welcome these wonderful guest pastors (note an interesting fact about each of their bios):

- August 9: Michael Burke, former Bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod ELCA (who also previously served as the ELCA's executive for Worship and Liturgical Resources, helping craft the current hymnal!)
- August 16: Jon Anderson, Director of Rural Ministry at Luther Seminary (another former bishop - he led the Southwestern Minnesota Synod ELCA for 18 years!)
- August 23: Chris Thomforde, former President of St. Olaf University (who was once on the cover of Sports Illustrated because of his basketball career at Princeton!)
- August 30: Kirsten Fryer, former Pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in the Midway (who also previously served a call as a pastor and missionary in Cairo, Egypt, where her daughter was born!)



Baseball fans can now sign up for Lutheran Night at the Minnesota Twins. St. Luke has reserved a block of seats for the Twins game on Tuesday, Aug. 11 at 6:40 p.m., when the Twins take on the Baltimore Orioles. The tickets are \$34 each, and the seats are in Section 126, the same location as last year. If you're interested, let David Tews know at church, or call or text him at 612-590-4184. To pay, either write a check to "David Tews" or pay him through his Venmo account (@David-Tews). Deadline is July 19.



School Tools for Kids in Need

Announcing our annual School Tools Drive at St. Luke! Items may be dropped off at St. Luke every Sunday until August 16. Or you may place a check in the offering plate, made out to Interfaith Action with "School Tools" in the memo line. Or you may donate online at www.interfaithaction.org/school-tools-drive. School Tools is a school supplies drive for East Metro children from low-income and homeless families. The drive is sponsored by Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul. Please donate some school supplies and help a child begin the new school year right! Detailed flyer available on the donation table in the Social Hall. Thanks for your participation in this worthy cause!



Supper with Saints for July will take place on July 23rd at 5:30 pm at Carbone's Pizza, - 1350 Hwy. 96 E. #7, White Bear. Please let Joyce Bluel know by Sunday, July 19th if you plan on attending, so we have a number for the reservation.

**SAVE THE DATE:
38th Annual Fall
Bazaar, October 10!**



Farmers' Market

Thank you to everyone who contributed money to St. Luke's Farmers' Market through jar donations (\$134) and member designated donations (\$400) during the month of May. These donations go a long way to help cover the costs of operating the market. All of us at the market including vendors, customers, and volunteers appreciate your generosity! Please come visit us at the market on Saturday mornings through October 3 (except July 4th)!
-Wendy Bjorklund

***Connect,
Grow
and
Serve.***

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