Lake Nokomis
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Current Word - 2024 #2 Fall

A new season begins – meteorologically, liturgically, educationally. Seasons of our lives together and individually are moving inexorably ahead. How grateful we are to have a community with which to share it all!

Read on to hear some of what's in the works…

The Great Bible Read Begins!

For the next two years, we are journeying together through the bible. This year is our year of the Old Testament. Next year we will move through the New Testament. A timeline in Art Space - the hallway outside the sanctuary - will mark our progress and share our thoughts along the way.

The central theme of our Christian story is God's *SHALOM*- God's wholeness, peace, connection and life for all people and creation. Belonging to God and each other, loving God and neighbor, the Way of God (instead of the Way of Fear) are some of the ways we've described this. God's intentions for the world, and invitation to all people, is this fullness of life, *shalom*.

The Old Testament tells of God's *shalom* in the lives and stories of those gone before us, and these stories are part of our own lives and story with this same God who continues to minister to the world *shalom* and invite us to be sharers in *shalom*.

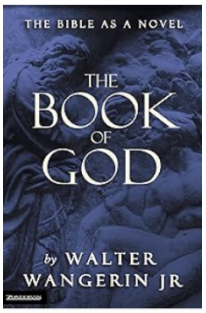
Need some instrumental support? Compiled by Erin, the Fall Playlist is here. (or at lakenokomispc.org /music-mixes---playlists.html).

The Peace Table

We have a copy of *The Peace Table* – a chronological collection of over 140 bible stories – for every household! Worship will move through stories directly out of this book. We will read 1-4 stories between each Sunday service as we progress through the book together. After each story is a short section with discussion questions, wonderings, and tidbits for chatting or journaling at home.

For GOING DEEPER we have lots of additional resources and recommendations:

Reading through the bible: when we move from story to story, we will chart how far we've progressed from week to week through the bible, so if you'd like to read along through the scriptures in between (eg, in the NRSV, or The Message, or some other version of the bible), you can.

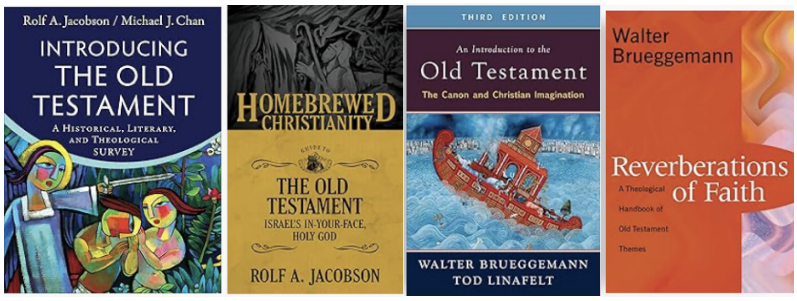


Bible as novel: For those who would enjoy a more narrative progression through the bible, by Walter Wangerin *The Book of God* is recommended for adults and *The Bible for Children* is great for kids 8-12. They are in our library, but you can pick up your own if you'd like to follow along all year at home.

Bible as graphic novel: The Action Bible is a good one for adults or reading kids. There's one in our library, pick up your own to follow along all year at home.

Bible lesson book: For a framing of bible stories with distinct take-aways for today, especially for kids 8-12, *Growing in God's Love* (written by two former colleagues of Pastor Kara- excellent Presbyterian educators!) is in our church library. Also a good resource to have at home for families with younger kids.

Context and background: Check out these helpful books that will set the stage and give historical and theological background to what we are reading, now in our church library:



We'll have other opportunities, such as Church Chat and guest lecturers, to dig into the story of our faith in scripture this year. The Great Bible Read begins Rally Sunday, September 15! **PICK UP YOUR COPY OF *THE PEACE TABLE* IN THE TEAL ROOM!**

Pitching in: *The Peace Table* costs $29. Extra offerings to the "Life and Ministry of LNPC" fund help cover the cost of providing this to every household, but are not required.

Coffees with Kara Continue!

Most of the adult extroverts among us jumped right in, and now it's the introverts' turn. This is just meeting with Kara for an hour with no agenda but connection. (Guaranteed to be not horrible). Every five-or-so years Kara meets with every single person in the congregation – this is round four! No requirement to wait five years - more often is great, but for some of us it takes that "All Aboard! call" because maybe we wouldn't initiate reaching out, or we think of meeting with a pastor as something that only happens in a crisis. It's not!

Most open times are Wednesdays or Fridays during the day, but if you need a weekend or evening, let Pastor Kara know. All ages! (*Ice Cream is a suitable substitute for coffee*).

Kara begins her PhD !!

On August 29 Pastor Kara was in Aberdeen, Scotland, to meet her advisor and some fellow students to kick off her six-year PhD in Divinity program. Kara will be exploring the contemplative tradition of Christianity as a lens for leading and being church together in modern times.

We've been drawing from sociologist Hartmut Rosa's concept of "resonance" for some time. He asserts that modernity is defined as a time of "dynamic stabilization" which requires that all components of society are always increasing to maintain equilibrium, meaning moving faster and faster, acquiring more and more, despite this being an unsustainable practice for humans and the earth (leading us into what he calls a "frenetic standstill" – a modern crisis). In the midst of this, the constant pursuit of more self-actualization, bigger bank balances, or wider access to resources, do provide deep fulfillment or true connection.

Rather, it's in uncontrollable moments of encounter, when something from outside us reaches us, and we feel ourselves respond, that we are most alive. These moments of what Rosa calls "resonance" leave lasting change, but so rarely are we attuned to them or intentionally receiving them. Pastor Kara will be exploring how mystics in our history, and other congregations like our own today, cultivate an openness to resonance. She's interested in the kind of action that begins in passive waiting, readiness for God to meet us in unexpected ways.

Kara's study will shape our life together, and our life together will shape her research and writing. The synergy we've experienced together as a congregation as we seek to live in a responsive way has motivated Kara to want to go deeper and put some theory to, and more learning around, how communities of faith can people live grounded, attentive lives in the cross-pressures of modern life.

Session Discernment and Invitation - Serving & Connections

The work of Session is to discern what God is up to and how the church is being led to join in. Currently we are specifically praying and holding hands open with the question, *how are we being called to serve more intentionally in our community?*

Some examples from the past include our congregation's many-year involvement with Meals on Wheels, and our many years serving meals quarterly at Our Saviour's Housing. We led 5th Sunday worship at St. Joseph's Home for Children, building a partnership there with first Chaplain Marty then Chaplain Amy. For nearly ten years we also hosted Movie Camp for St. Joe's emergency shelter teens. They came to our building every day for a week where they read the parables of Jesus with Rev. Dean and Dr. Kristen Seal (and then Jeremiah Gamble) and, wrote, acted, directed and filmed a movie, then debuted it to the St. Joe's Community in a red carpet event each summer. For many of these kids this was the first time they'd been invited to do something that tapped their creativity and trusted their leadership. This program was the only off-campus activity St. Joe's offered. Cooking them lunch and watching the work of God among, between and through them was a blessing to our congregation. Our relationship with St. Joe's expanded into our helping to install a labyrinth there with Umo Udo (Presbyterian pastor, long-time friend of LNPC, and Catholic Charities Chaplain who'd hooked us up with St. Joe's to begin with) and MN's "Labyrinth Lady" Lisa Moriarty, and our blessing and assisting the beginning their gardening ministry. The garden expanded into a program that involved community master gardeners and volunteers, and chefs who trained the kids in cooking with the produce they grew.

We have helped put food in backpacks across the street at Hiawatha Academy for kids to take home to their families over the weekend with EveryMeal. We've collected diapers for Mosaic, assembled bags of necessities to share with people asking for money on freeway overpasses, and packed meals for tornado clean-up workers. We collected food and money every month for Simpson Shelter for over 25 years. For ten years we tithed (gave 10% of our income) to other ministries, such as Marnita's Table, ARC Retreat Center, Clearwater Forest Camp, Exodus Lending, EveryMeal, TRUST Network of Churches, Presbyterian Disaster Relief and many other places. One Pentecost we used our tithe to send $100 home with 17 members of the congregation with the assignment to pray and ask God how it should be used, then to come back to us and share their stories. Currently we give six $1000 gifts a year to partners in ministry (see "Giving" article in this newsletter for more on this).

All ways of connecting and serving as a community in our community have natural life spans. Our Meals on Wheels team's capacity to serve dwindled, and we brought our participation with them to a close with celebration and gratitude. St. Joe's stopped having chapel on Sundays (and now no longer exists – the building was sold to the Minneapolis school district). When the pandemic hit, many opportunities paused or ended, and our attention shifted to responding to emergency needs. Our own congregation then lost 13 people in less than two years – including Norm Petrik, Dennis Johnson, and Jen Rainey, whose battles with cancer meant we rallied around their families with care, and bore with them the holy work of dying. During those months and the time since then, the congregation has grown, so that over half of current LNPC participants started attending in the last three years.

One of our guiding convictions is that we serve from our passions and particularities, and another is that we all share the ministry of the church. So, who are we now, and how is God calling us to serve? While we deeply believe each of us is ministers in our own relationships and daily settings, and we're committed to empowering one another to serve every day in the concrete context of our lives, (eg, each of our families, neighborhoods, work, and volunteering, etc.), we also believe our belonging to God and one another means our faith community is connected to other communities, and there are opportunities to serve together that are not always available to individuals. This does not mean picking random organizations or adding something to our spiritual "to-do" list. This means holding hands open, watching and waiting for God's leading into deeper connection and natural outpouring of the gifts and calling of this congregation.

- *Our Berlin trip* offered a learning and faith-deepening opportunity that involved eight people from LNPC and ten more from around the US and Canada. Our practice of sabbath and contemplative worship inspires and encourages people who reach out to us for support in their own personal or congregational contemplative practices.
- *Our holy listening groups* are shaping the way many of us relate in the world, and how we listen to others.
- *We've resumed our work with EveryMeal*, partnering with Trinity Lutheran volunteers to fill backpacks on Thursdays at Hiawatha. (Sign up on the website if you want to help!))

What might be other natural outflows of the relationships and faith life of LNPC?

In the coming weeks and months, we invite you to pray and watch with us for the ways God is calling us to serve and deepen connections of mutual ministry in our community(ies).

Serving on Session?

This fall, the nominating committee will be prayerfully seeking who may be called to be elders for the three-year term that begins in January. If you want to find out more about what being on session is like, talk to a current session member: Rachel Farris (clerk), Amy Leafblad, Jim Kendzel, Kristen Jeide, Jason DeBoer-Moran and Susan Hensel.

Our Community:

Mandala Montessori: COVID, the departure of a number of families to another preschool (not due to dissatisfaction, but opportunity) has caused Wendy to close one of the two classrooms in our building for a period (the other, at Minnehaha United Methodist, is open and full). She is working to have the vacant room certified for a toddler class (she has a waiting list of current toddlers) by the State Fire Marshall. Pray for her stress level. She has seen the school go through these swings before, but it is her first time as owner.

Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater: the company continues to love sharing space with us and performing on Nokomis Stage! Their next production will be Shakespeare's *Macbeth,* November 8-9 and 15-16. Support our neighbors and bring back the high school Shakespeare experience by attending!

LNPC Giving Practice

Each year, LNPC gives to groups serving in a few core areas where we see God at work in the world, and where we feel called to remember our belonging to God and to each other.
We direct six $1,000 gifts to organizations that focus on:

- food/housing insecurity
- financial justice
- community-based programming in South Minneapolis
- racial justice
- climate action
- emergency response or particular need

In 2023 these partners included EveryMeal, TRUST, Exodus Lending, Simpson Food shelf, ClimateGen, and East Phillips Neighborhood Institute.

In 2024, so far, we have given to EveryMeal, as we continue our relationship with them. Once school begins again, we look forward to volunteering across the street to put food in backpacks for the weekends for families who need extra support.

Where do you see God at work in the world? We would love suggestions for places you are connected, particularly we'd love suggestions from our young people the area of Climate action (stewardship of the earth). If there are the other organizations you love that we could build relationship with and give to this year, let session know!

We are also planning to invite representatives of Exodus Lending and TRUST to come and share about their work, as we seek to build stronger relationships with the places we support financially.

Simpson Food Shelf has historically been our food shelf collection donation site – and we used to collect every month in worship before the pandemic changed up our habits. We plan to return to this practice for the 3rd Sundays, with the food shelf wagon, so watch for that!

From the Treasurer: A big thank you to all members of the LNPC community for your generosity in giving so far in 2024. We are blessed to have a community that believes in supporting our church which gives us with the opportunity to provide needed outreach within our community and the community outside of LNPC. Here is a high-level summary of our financial activity as of August 31, 2024:

	As of August 31, 2024	Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
Revenue	$165,992	$235,000	71%
Expenses	$172,485	$275,390	63%
Net Gain/Loss	($6,493)	($40,390)	16%

Our current financial position as of August 31, 2024, leaves $102,782 in reserves.
With 66% of the year completed at the end of August, you will note we are on target for meeting budgeted revenue and being slightly under in expenses. As you will also note, we budgeted for a significant reduction in our reserve funds. Due to your generosity and a watchful eye on our expenses, we are anticipating a lesser use of reserve funds by the end of the year. We do anticipate the need to use some reserves so please continue to help the church through your contributions. To contribute online you can click here.

Holy Listening Groups keep growing to meet evolving needs

While they were born from a crucial need of parents of young children for support, the shape has been changing to include all of us!

Beginning with a shared dinner, we join in the following groups:

- Kids with Pastor Kara
- Women in their 30s-50s, self-directed because, well, they're good at that!
- Men in their 30s-50s with Rev. Kelly
- People in their 60s-80s with Pastor Lisa

What's a holy listening group?

This is a communal spiritual practice of listening deeply with love that goes in 3 directions:

- listening to the other/s,
- listening to what is stirred within ourselves,
- listening to the Spirit.

We are here to hold space for one another in God's presence.
We do this by,

- Waiting for God together.
- Accompanying each other in the presence of God.
- Receiving God right here with us; receiving each person and their story.

Each group runs a little differently, but leaders provide structure and perimeters that help us minister to each other through holy listening. When we are heard deeply, we are open to the connection, insights and transformation offered by the Holy Spirit. And by giving one another the gift of being heard and held, we are also practicing noticing and receiving our own lives. Holy listening moves beyond the moment by helping us become more attuned to the presence and activity of God in the world around us in our ordinary lives.

Resonance Grant Continues

This is the end of year three in a four-year learning cohort of two dozen pastors from around the US and Canada, including Pastor Kara, learning and supporting each other in cultivating communities of openness to resonance. [*Resonance*, termed by sociologist Hartmut Rosa, can be described an uncontrollable event of encounter, a jolt of aliveness, connection, and transcendence that momentarily brings us into alignment with our deepest selves and joyful attunement with the world around us].
Kara shares: *This cohort has been a remarkable experience. The leaders involved have shared stories of transformation, where people are growing in their capacity to listen and*

pay attention, to pray and seek God in the midst of suffering or conflict, to come alongside one another and their neighbors in braver ways. On a personal level, many have shared that this cohort has kept them in ministry, reduced anxiety, and provided perspective that is grounding and hopeful. We're learning to live in trust that God is indeed active in the world and eager to speak, and that shepherding the people of God is not about beating back decline or trying to "do better." It's about the slow, steady work of practicing waiting and watching for what God is up to and being ready to respond.

In October the whole group will meet up for the last time at a 3-day gathering in Maine. The project will wrap up with a final year of reading and reflection, and the insights gathered from this project will seed future projects for the Lily Foundation. But for Pastor Kara and our congregation, the work will continue—this grant inspired Kara's PhD proposal, and the other communities connected to the project will be part of her research. The cross-fertilization the Holy Spirit's activity these diverse communities will continue to impact us.

(One example of this synthesis is the gift of Mike Woods to our congregation! A recent retiree and participant in this grant, Mike has become a beloved voice in our community. He fills in to preach for Pastor Kara when she is away and joins us for worship when he is in town – not to mention sending his daughter and friends our way...!)

Some of us went to Berlin this spring.

…participating in a course led by Andy and Kara. Here are some reflections:

[Jason] At the end of June, I had the opportunity to travel to Berlin, Germany, with folks from Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church and a few others (including my mom.) It is hard to quantify this experience in a few short paragraphs. We retraced the footsteps of theologian and pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the neighborhood where he grew up, the churches he served, and a daily visit to study at the house where the plot to overthrow Hitler was planned. This act of resistance ultimately led to his death at the hand of the Nazi regime.

Here are a few significant highlights:

- An internationally renowned Bonhoeffer scholar and theologian, Andy Root, led the trip. Yes, the same Andy Root, spouse of our pastor. Seeing Andy in his element was inspirational. Andy's hyper-focused and in-depth understanding of Bonhoeffer's writings and life amidst the cultural moment of Germany in the early 20th Century was intriguing. He told the story of Bonhoeffer in an episodic manner, answering questions and pushing the group's desire to know more about Bonhoeffer and the world that formed him and his particular pastoral care for youth and the church at large in a challenging time. It has been years since I took the time to allow myself to think theologically and academically about faith and life. With the guidance of Kara and Andy, this trip pushed me into territory I hadn't been in mentally for decades.
- It was beautiful to travel internationally with this group of people. Retreating from daily routine and away from established comfort zones (and time zones) allows one to think differently. I feel so privileged to have had this opportunity, and I could not have done it without the love and support of this congregation.
- Our travel coincided with the UEFA Euro Cup games hosted in Germany. Berlin had a collision of cultures as European fans came to cheer for their teams. Evenings drew fans from every country to various restaurants and bars to watch the matches. It was fun to meld into this experience alongside other members of Lake Nokomis Presbyterian. Berlin felt festive, and we could experience the excitement of being in a different place alongside our studies.
- On the final day in Berlin, we had the opportunity to travel to Wittenberg, the birthplace of the Reformation. Many of you know I have a deep historical connection to the traditions of German Lutheranism. Exploring the tiny town of Wittenberg and standing in the churches where Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and Lucas Cranach engaged in the work of the Reformation was inspirational and challenging. From my early childhood in the Lutheran Elementary School that was connected to the church my great grandfather helped lay the bricks to build to my time studying at Concordia University under the shadow of the statue of Martin Luther, I heard about the door in Wittenberg where Luther nailed his 95 Theses that began the process of deconstructing the international church as it was known. My mom and I got to stand in front of the church and the doorway and have our picture taken. I am sure my great-grandparents and the pastors who baptized and confirmed them would be impressed with this pilgrimage.

There is so much more to share but little space to write it. I returned home feeling a stronger connection to the people I traveled with on this trip. From grabbing lunch or

dinner with fellow traveling session members to seeing my mom have the opportunity to connect spontaneously with folks in our congregation, it was so refreshing and inspirational and is easily near the top of my life experience lists.

[Rachel] It was such a blessing to go on the Berlin trip this summer with a small crew from LNPC within the larger Bonhoeffer class group. Learning about history, theology, culture, and philosophy through the prism of one person's story—right there in the room(s) where it happened—brought the past to life in a way that I haven't often experienced before.

It's the immediacy that has really stuck with me. For someone in my generation, the American mythologizing around WWII can make it seem far removed from the here and now; but here was our wonderful classmate Ingrid, who survived the bombing of Dresden as a child. Here were Bonhoeffer's desk and open window. Here were the stumbling stones and Platform 17, a monument to murdered Jews right next to the train back to our hotel. And here we are in our own political moment where Christianity is being used to justify a frightening ethno-nationalism.

In the midst of all that, the moments of grace and connection made the trip especially meaningful: Jim holding up the umbrella beacon, making sure no one got left behind during our walking tours. Talking enneagram over fat slices of cake in the shadow of the Berliner Dom. Getting swept up in Euro Cup fever in the biergarten and the hotel bar. And, of course, getting to see in real time the way that Kara and Andy's vocations intersect, challenge, and strengthen each other.
10/10: would Berlin again!

[Jim K] I had the opportunity recently to join others on a trip to Germany to learn about the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The trip exceeded my expectations! Yes, I learned a tremendous amount about the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer however, the learning experience was enhanced by having the lessons occur in the Bonhoeffer home and having the ability to experience the neighborhood he grew up in. What I did not expect was the emotionally charged experience of touring the city of Berlin and seeing so many sites related to the horrific times associated with Naziism, the holocaust and the cold war. In addition, and probably most important, the trip brought me together with my fellow church members allowing us the opportunity to grow in our spiritual relationships and brought into my life new friendships that I will always cherish. I strongly encourage LNPC community members to consider participating in future Bonhoffer trips when the opportunity arises. A big thank you to Andy and Kara Root for pulling the trip together and being are guides throughout the trip and a big thank you to Arlene Flancher for all her planning and making sure we were all where we needed to be throughout the trip.

At its most simple,
church means living that
we belong to God and we belong to each other.

"The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own." *Henry Nouwen:* Reaching Out

Kara Root – Pastor and Moderator of Session

Lisa Larges – Parish Associate

Class of 2024:

Rachel Farris	farrisrl@gmail.com
Amy Leafblad	leaf2be@yahoo.com

Class of 2025:

Sue Hensel	susanhensel@yahoo.com
Jason DeBoer-Moran	jasondeboermoran@gmail.com

Class of 2026

Kristen Jeide	jeidkr18@gmail.com
Jim Kendzel	jim.kendzel1@gmail.com

Presbytery Commissioners (2):
Sue Goodspeed and the LNPC Session

Clerk of Session:	Rachel Farris
Treasurer:	Jim Kendzel

Staff:

Krysta Niznick	Office Administrator|Bookkeeper
Erin DeBoer-Moran	Director of Music and Worship Arts
Antonio Galvan	Galvan Cleaning Services

RE-VISION STATEMENT
(October 2007)

LNPC seeks to ~

become a beacon of hope and a place of sanctuary

reach out to the needs of neighbors, sharing our selves and our resources.

Session: Session has responsibility for administration/building, worship, education, life of the community, and personnel – basically everything that isn't decided by the congregation as a whole. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, interests, or anything you'd like to share, please talk with a Session member!

Upcoming and Inside:

Reading, studying, and hearing the Bible together
Session, Community, and Discernment
Holy Listening continues to support participants
Resonance: updates on the cohort
Finances
Berlin reflections
…. and more!!!

www.lakenokomispc.org
http://www.kara-root.blogspot.com/
http://www.facebook.com/LakeNokomisChurch

"True hospitality is welcoming the stranger on her own terms. This kind of hospitality can only be offered by those who've found the center of their lives in their own hearts."

– Henri Nouwen

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TO: