5 CORE Practices of a Fruitful Congregation

- Radical Hospitality...
  encourages Christians to offer the absolute utmost of themselves, their abilities, and their creativity to welcome others into the faith.

- Passionate Worship...
  explores how the ingredient of passion can transform a worship service and offers insights and ideas on how to have worship that deeply touches souls and changes lives.

- Intentional Faith Development...
  shows how high quality learning experiences for all ages mature the spirituality and faith of congregational participants.

- Risk-Taking Mission and Service...
  reminds us that by reaching out and taking risks, churches become the resources God uses to change lives and transform the world.

- Extravagant Generosity...
  shows how generosity enlarges the soul, realigns priorities, connects people to Jesus, and strengthens congregations to fulfill Christ’s ministries.

Our Mission
To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our Vision
We will grow in our love of God and neighbor, reach new people and heal a broken world.

Our Strategy
We are committed to the five practices of a fruitful congregation.

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on the Cover:
Angel Honora Amos at the Christmas Eve Pageant
Photo by Adele Dahm
A Letter from Pastor Judy

Dear Hennepin Friends,

Truly 2018 was a great year for Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church. It is important to look back to see how God has been moving with us and through us. Here are some highlights:

- We experienced a 2nd Mile Miracle in our capital campaign! By next Spring we will have completed $6.4 million dollars of work to strengthen our building.
- Children’s Ministry kept growing and growing! Now we have two nursery rooms on Sunday mornings.
- Young Adult ministry partnered with Garrett Seminary and the Lilly Endowment to fund the new University of LYFE.
- We have trained more lay caregivers to minister to our homebound seniors.
- We restructured our committees and ministry teams, and we unified and aligned our budget to do our work more effectively.
- With the Blaisdall YMCA we gave 3000 lbs of food to Groveland Food Shelf during Minnesota FoodShare.
- We resettled a refugee family, and gave hundreds of coats, mittens and hats to those who needed them.
- We sent a team to Detroit to work in the Motown Mission, and another to Henderson, KY.
- We sponsored 129 children in Sierra Leone for school and provided funding for 900 kids to eat every day in Baiwalla.
- We celebrated the ministry of Rev. Sally Johnson and welcomed Rev. Frenchye Magee and Mark Squire.
- We launched a new logo and brand, and revamped the InSpire Magazine.
- We ministered to the community through Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness (DCEH), The Dignity Center, Community Meals, VetTouch, MNIC Charter school, Hennepin Brunch, Habitat for Humanity, OC Ministries, Old School by Steeple People, Hennepin Outreach United, and Hennepin United Methodist Women.

Coming in 2019:

- Sunday, January 27 we will pass a balanced budget. Please turn in your commitment card for 2019 if you haven’t already. Thank you for giving generously.
- Sunday, February 17 we will invite Brooklyn United Methodist Church to join us for worship at 10:00am. We will bless the Minnesota Annual Conference delegation to the Special General Conference of the United Methodist Church in St. Louis. The Twin Cities Gay Men’s Chorus will sing at this special joint service.
- We will focus on growing our Youth Ministry.
- Mark Squire and the Music Team are going to try some new things with the Music at Hennepin series.

These are just a few of the things ahead. God has plans we can’t even see yet that will unfold as we take our next steps of faith together. Please continue to pray for God’s guidance and blessing as we minister together to make disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world by growing in our love of God and neighbor, reaching out and welcoming new people, and healing a broken world.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Judy

It is important to look back to see how God has been moving with us and through us.

—Pastor Judy

INSPIRE / 3
When is a Poinsettia Not Just a Poinsettia?

by Rev. Frenchye Magee, Associate Pastor of Congregational Care & Invitational Discipleship

Hennepin Avenue UMC has a bevy of traditions for Christmas. The Advent Concert; the 4:00pm Christmas Eve service with its cadre of little voices filling the sanctuary during the Children’s pageant; the choir spilling out into the aisles to lead the verses of “Silent Night;” the meditative Labyrinth service, where music and poetry music enfold walkers as they find their way into the center and out again—all these have their unique place in the minds and hearts of worshippers who come year after year to participate in them.

These are a part of “Hennepin Happy,” and the backdrop for all of them is the beautiful poinsettias that fill our worship and gathering spaces. Anyone moving through the building can’t help but notice the bright blooms that punctuate the corridors with a burst of color and create a canopy of red that highlights the sanctuary. It’s a sight worth coming out to see!

But, what if you can’t leave your house? What if your days of worshipping in person are behind you? Can you still be a part of Christmas at Hennepin?

The answer to that question is a quiet, emphatic ‘Yes,’ spoken in the language of love and care through another deeply significant part of HAUMC Christmas tradition: the poinsettia delivery.

As part of their ministry each year, the Congregational Care Team shares a personal bit of Hennepin Christmas with homebound members by delivering a poinsettia to each one. These deliveries, which always involve some conversation (and maybe even a cup of hot chocolate) are a highlight for members who still love HAUMC and want to remain connected even if they can’t attend. In bedrooms, assisted living facilities, and every place a homebound member is for Christmas, the poinsettia from Hennepin becomes a personal token that says their congregation loves them too, and wants to stay connected with them. Year after year, our Care Team members return to share stories of how this ministry of presence deepens their own love and commitment. Each year, we hear from members and their families that the small red plant means that they haven’t been forgotten.

The poinsettia delivery ministry (along with all the poinsettias throughout the building) is made possible by the extravagant generosity of poinsettia dedications. While many dedicate in memory or honor of loved ones, there are also many anonymous dedications to the glory of God or the desire to see the ministry continue. In 2018, one long-distance dedication thanked Hennepin for finding a way to let them be part of a Christmas that had only existed in their memory since they had moved away.

So, at HAUMC, a poinsettia is never just a poinsettia. Behind each beautiful plant is a story of a congregation that is committed to staying connected, living out our core value of love and care, and dedicated to the idea that every member can share a Hennepin Christmas...even if they can’t be in the building!
Thank You to the many volunteers who provided radical hospitality to our guests at the Race, Religion, Response event!

Volunteers:
Carol Bergh, Jan DeSirey, Charlotte DeVaughn, Mike DeVaughn, Deb Green, Jadah Green, Dwight Haberman, Janet Jacobs, Gail Johnson, Deane Manbeck, Kay Nelson, Anita Nerhus, Deb Roberts, Kimm Schneider, Mark Schneider, Keith Sjoquist, Nancy Sjoquist, Judy Tucker, Mark Tucker, Linda Ruetz, Dot Lilja, Marcia Brinkley, Kathleen Chesney, Pam Pettit, Debra Ricci.

Task Force:
Dennis Behl, Becky Boland, Karen Brubak, Michelle DeVaughn, Cheryl Gibbons, Cheryl Hauser, Rev. Nate Melcher, John Roberts

Action Zone Partner Organizations:
The Minneapolis chapter of the NAACP, the Minnesota Council of Churches, the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Showing Up for Racial Justice - Minnesota, the Minnesota Annual Conference chapter of the General Commission on Religion and Race, and the Racial Equity Action Support Network of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.
Junail has been participating with The Dignity Center for nearly 2 years and is thankful for the connections she has made to empowering organizations, including Street Voices for Change and Tiny Houses, part of the Envision Community project. During her first sessions with Street Voices, Junail explained her need to vent anger over the unjust treatment of homeless people she had both witnessed and experienced. Over time, Junail was able to transform that anger into strength as she connected with fellow Street Voices members about their aspirations for change. Highlights of her experiences made possible through Street Voices include speaking on the city council board regarding issues related to affordable housing, and meeting Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey. Her involvement with Tiny Houses further contributed to what one could call Junail’s emotional emancipation by giving her a way to focus on housing needs and obstacles for stability for people experiencing homelessness. She spoke of the common guilt that people feel once they secure housing and face the reality that their friends and loved ones are still out on the streets. There is a sadness of once “you have a home and can’t let them in.” Junail’s story reflects the despondent reality of thousands of individuals who face homelessness due to the lack of affordable housing.

Junail plans to continue to advocate for homeless adults by finding power in their collective voice. She stated at the end of our interview, “Come on in and join us.”

Matt and Diane celebrate their success of securing a one-bedroom apartment after a long struggle through homelessness due to drugs and alcohol. The Dignity Center was able to pull them out of their substance abuse through continued support from their advocate, Bill. Matt described Bill as an information highway who served as their backbone as they navigated treatment and housing options. The Dignity Center also connected Matt with our cherished nurse, Marcia, who prescribed him Antabuse, an alcohol antagonist drug, that helped him to stay sober. Matt is now able to reflect on his substance abuse and confidently states, “anything you can try to get right you have to be sober.” When asked the best part is of finally having a home, Matt broke into a smile and explained how the shame of not being able to take care of himself has gone away. Diane described a similar relief in being able to have pride once again. Matt concluded our interview on a lovely note, stating that “The Dignity Center gave us our dignity back.”

Jesse also celebrates the security of having a place to call home with his 8-year-old son after being homeless for several months. Jesse was left homeless after being unable to find a new apartment within the time limit of his Section 8 placement. Jesse entered The Dignity Center in June and was connected with his advocate, Jane. Jesse displayed gratitude for Jane’s constant support throughout his journey, including her conversations with landlords to advocate for Jesse, and transportation assistance. The Dignity Center also paid for the security deposit of Jesse’s new apartment, which was his final barrier to securing housing. Jesse’s son is now happy to be playing videogames in his own home, and Jesse enjoys “the peace of mind in being stable.”

The Dignity Center serves not only to support all people on their path to stability, but functions as a welcoming and challenging setting for students like me to develop advocacy skills and become educated on the common barriers contributing to widespread homelessness. I have gained incredible insight as a social work intern regarding the resources available to adults experiencing homelessness and the common components of helplessness and shame that these people face. American society commonly feeds into
the phenomenon of blaming the victim without recognition that homelessness is a complex issue faced by people from all walks of life. The Dignity Center is fueled by volunteers who are proud to walk with people as they navigate not only their personal obstacles, but the systematic barriers that contribute to homelessness.

Sabbath to End Homelessness


At our 8:30am Sacred Journey worship service, hear from Joe Kreisman, Director of the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness.

At 10am, experience special liturgy and a social justice sermon by Senior Pastor Judy Zabel.

At 11:15am, join the Sunday Forum with Dr. William Walsh of Envision Community, a collaborative offering housing and healthcare solutions to persons without homes through tiny house communities.

All morning, visit Carlson Hall to learn how to participate in actions to help end homelessness led by representatives of The Dignity Center, Street Voices of Change, and the Homes for All Coalition.

These gatherings are free and always open to everyone. Bring a friend!
When the people you want to trust break that trust, where do you turn? For some, the answer is the church. But what if that broken trust is with the church?

That’s a question many young people ask themselves and it’s one The Liturgists are attempting to answer. An artistic squad of spiritual and scientific thinkers have built a worldwide online community of podcast listeners who are seeking something together: healing broken trust. Our church hosted The Liturgists Gathering on November 16-17, and around 600 young people from Minnesota and beyond were in attendance. The Liturgists describe their podcast as “a chart-topping, genre-bending exploration of faith, science, and art for the spiritually homeless and frustrated. It attracts a diverse listenership of believers and skeptics including denomination Christians, atheists, and religiously unaffiliated. The show hosts a global, safe discussion about what it means to be a follower of Christ in the 21st century.”

Occasionally, they go on tour, hosting a roving conference called The Liturgists Gathering. I’ve personally been a longtime listener of the podcast and am grateful for the way our church stepped up to be a Gathering host venue. As a result, our hospitality volunteers and I had the amazing opportunity to meet hundreds of people who felt welcome as the Liturgists created “a safe place to have honest discussions about doubts, hopes, fears, and faith. A place where no question is off limits, but you can find a burgeoning community of people who will welcome you with all your strangeness. A place where the unlikely gather around a table and find a place to belong.”

Maybe part of you reads that and thinks, “Wait a minute, the church can be that. In fact, our church is that!” And I’d completely agree with you. Yet a lack of belonging is exactly what many feel when it comes to church, sometimes naming it as being “spiritually traumatized.” I personally had dozens of people come up to me to thank our church for hosting this gathering. “Radical Hospitality” isn’t just a buzzword, it is an embodiment of the radical love that God has for everyone. It is especially powerful for us to live this value because there are many people who think church would be the last place they’d find love and welcome. How do I know? Because they told me:
The crowd wasn’t all young or spiritually-traumatized. On the first night of the Gathering, I sat with Bob Brinkley, longtime Hennepin member, taking in some of the various spiritual practices such as lectio divina, primal shout-screaming, and meditation by singing bowl. At one point, I turned and asked him what he thought about all of this. He smiled and told me, “This is exactly what I hoped it would be.”

As the church—including our church—hears the voices of the spiritually disenfranchised who are seeking heroes of faith, we will have to learn how to intentionally create spaces that help them feel welcome and valued. They have thoughts on the matter, and in the absence of space to share those thoughts in organized religion, many choose to create their own platform or simply opt-out.

We do well to listen.

The live podcast recorded at Hennepin isn’t online yet, but until then you can learn about the hosts and listen to episodes at http://www.theliturgists.com/the-liturgists-podcast.

“I never feel welcome in the church and this church is welcoming me, thank you.”
“My home church would never host something like this!”
“If I lived in Minnesota, I’d worship here.”

Photos by Jeff Achen
Passionate Worship

The Spirit of Young Voices
by Mark Squire, Director of Music & Fine Arts

Border Chapel comes alive on Sunday evenings. From all over town, energetic older elementary-school-age hearts and voices converge in this special place. Some come sliding in as if taking an extra base on the ball field, others come in deep in friendship conversation. These older elementary students are each greeted by name by a pair of dedicated adults, husband and wife team Darin and Krista Riedel. Immediately, through animated instruction and loving interaction, the group “comes together” as the Hennepin Avenue UMC Altar Choir. Fun songs, serious songs, games and peals of laughter, these are all part of singing in choir! Krista has added a handbell component to this talented group, and they have already played beautifully for the Christmas Eve Pageant! There’s plenty of special attention to support students learning challenging parts, and growing in musical skill is as much play as it is concentrated effort. This group sings with a confidence that comes from both experience and strong community, and blesses the worshiping community at Hennepin through their song!

In the Choir Room, another ensemble assembles--Journey Choir! High School and Middle School students are welcomed into energetic music-making under the leadership of Rev. Stephanie Escher. Already the group has sung in Sunday morning worship and at the Christmas Eve Pageant. There’s more ahead--and it’s not just musical growth. Stephanie shares: “I look for music that has a relevant and meaningful message the youth can sink their teeth into and turn around and offer it with authenticity and passion to the congregation in worship. For example, we sing ‘Child of God’ by Mark Miller and here are a few of the lines: ‘No matter what people say, say or think about me, I am a child. I am a child of God. No matter what people say, say or think about you, you are a child of God.’ It’s a reflexive, poignant message for both teenagers and the church.”

So what is the “why” of this ministry? Like so many people who have gone before them, those participating in the children’s and youth music ministries have opportunity to give expression to their faith journey through music, through serving in worship, and through participating in a sense of community with valued peers. Their dedicated directors have come from this very same experience to now offer themselves as leaders for the next generations. Stephanie continues: “Music has always been a big part of my life. It is where I experienced community and connection. It helped me grow in love of God, self and neighbor. Music inspired, impassioned, and emboldened me to live fully into the image of God in which I was created.”

Right now is a wonderful time to join Altar Choir and Journey Choir--new members are always welcomed and celebrated. Contact Darin (riedel.darin@gmail.com) Sundays 6:15pm, Stephanie (stephaniemescher@gmail.com) Sundays 6:30pm, or Mark Squire (mark.squire@haumc.org) for your treasured young person to join in the fun!
Imagine living with your family in a tent in a refugee camp, perhaps for years. You likely eat one meal a day, or less. Some days you have access to clean drinking water, but some days you don’t. You almost certainly do not have a private latrine. You and your loved ones fight disease brought on by dehydration and the lack of sanitation. You work with NGOs and volunteers to apply for asylum in any country that will accept you. You wait. Perhaps for years.

It may come as a shock when you learn that you and your family have been cleared to come to the United States. Even as your heart swells with hope, you grieve for the people you leave behind, and perhaps grieve too for the place, the country, the continent, that is all you have known. Everything that you own fits into a small bag or backpack. The journey is baffling, even frightening. You face the strange and unfamiliar landscapes of airports and foreign languages, you travel for many hours, and you are overwhelmed with questions about what you will find when you finally arrive in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

This is the frequent history of the refugees who are greeted by Refugee Services, a division of the Minnesota Council of Churches, and these are the families whom we serve when we provide gifts for our Angel Tree participants each Advent. This past December, Hennepin members provided over 350 gifts of toys, learning activities, and warm winter clothing for 118 children who have come to Minnesota in the past year and are experiencing their first Minnesota winter.

Our partners at the Minnesota Council of Churches are deeply grateful for the generosity of our Hennepin community. On December 12th, our volunteers drove three car-loads of gifts to Refugee Services. Each year, the MCC staff makes it their Christmas tradition for the entire staff to take a morning “off” from their regular duties to wrap each and every gift, and then the entire staff has the privilege of distributing gifts to the refugee families. Every year, they tell us that it is the very best part of their Christmas season!

In 2018, MCC Refugee Services welcomed a total of 209 refugees from 15 countries, including 12 people who arrived in December. MCC Refugee Services hopes to welcome 10 individuals this January. The MCC Refugees Services explains, “Minnesota is an important state for refugee resettlement, and has resettled more than 90,000 refugees since 1970.” In the 70s and 80s, many of these refugees came from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Now most of them come from Somalia, Iraq, Burma and Bhutan. All of them have survived persecution and danger that few of us can fully imagine. All of them are children of God, and when we share our gifts with them, we help to show them God’s love.

The extravagant generosity of Hennepin families reaches far beyond the walls of our building to many kids, families and neighbors whom we may never meet. Hennepin friends, thank you for your extravagant generosity. Truly, there is no better way to celebrate the hope of Christmas—not only in December, but throughout the year—than by welcoming a fleeing refugee family!
FIRST PERSON PLURAL
a new film by Eric Tretbar

Join us for a
MOVIE & MEAL
Sat 26 January 2019

SPECIAL PREVIEW SCREENING
followed by Somali dinner
and discussion with actors & director
Tickets $25 (meal included)

HENNEPIN AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
511 Groveland Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403
4:30pm Doors
5pm Screening
7pm Dinner

FIRST PERSON PLURAL is the story of two Minneapolis filmmakers--the son of a Somali imam and daughter of a white Baptist preacher--who fall in love through their lenses and bring their estranged families together on Thanksgiving Day.


TICKETS & INFO - www.facebook.com/firstpersonpluralmovie

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