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.
A Letter from Pastor Judy

Change, change, change. For every season there is a time...the writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us. Life is never dull at Hennepin Avenue UMC! Things are always moving because the Holy Spirit is always moving. We had a wonderful Hennepin Expo in September to welcome in the new ministry season, and now our programs are going full-speed ahead. Earlier this fall our series, Passion and Practice: The Heart of Methodism, explored the life of John Wesley. Wesley’s emphasis on God’s unconditional and transforming grace revealed in Jesus Christ, and the call to engage in acts of piety AND acts of mercy and justice, create a wonderful foundation for faith that really can transform the world.

And doesn’t the world need transformation now more than ever? How will we do that? Our next sermon series, Let Love Be Our Aim, asked the question, “If I make love my aim, how will that shape my decisions about how I use my talent, my time, my treasure?” Thank you for spending these Sundays with us, pondering and praying about what life would look different if we commit to making love your aim every day.

We aim to make love real every single day and our staff helps pave the way. Our wonderful staff is deeply committed to making love be our aim. Take time to thank them. Each one is a gift to us.

On Sunday, October 20, we welcomed Don Livingston back to Hennepin as Principal Organist. He is back to the Twin Cities after living in Texas for several years. We love a homecoming! This summer and fall, we have been blessed to have Michelle Gehrz as our interim organist—and she has agreed to continue on as Assistant Organist. We are blessed!

We are happy to announce that Joe Polach is our new Director of Facilities. Joe has a deep love for Hennepin and he is excited about this new venture. He is using his well-honed skills in management, supervision and teaching to manage our building. He is off to a great start. Welcome Joe!

Kathleen Ambre has returned to our staff, but has moved from being Lynne Carroll’s assistant to becoming a member of our Communications team. Kathleen is a gifted graphic artist and she has a gift for producing videos. Welcome back, Kathleen! Who is assisting Lynne Carroll, Director of Children and Family Ministry? Leslie Wille has joined our team to assist Lynne and we are so grateful. Welcome Leslie!

Dawn Brefle, our Executive Assistant for clergy and program directors is moving to Tennessee with her husband, Cliff. Cliff has a wonderful job offer and they couldn’t turn down the chance to winter in a warmer climate. Danielle Schaffer is our interim Executive Assistant, and we are so grateful for her energy and skills!

Warren Seta, our Kitchen Manager, is starting a new restaurant in Northeast Minneapolis. We are so excited about this! Warren will continue to prepare our Sunday Brunch on a contract basis. We are thankful for Warren’s commitment to our Brunch ministry. Finally, Sarah Doebler joins the staff as the Director of Development for The Dignity Center, as Becky Boland transitions into other responsibilities as our Certified Lay Minister.

So many talented and dedicated people dedicate themselves to Hennepin’s ministries. Their love of God and of our Hennepin community make an impact every day! Putting the desire to love first in our lives isn’t always easy but it is transforming. We are transformed when we give ourselves fully to God each day.

Please pray each day, “God, I thank you for all that I have. Work in me so that you can love the world through me as I offer my talent, my time and my treasure to you today. Amen.”

As we move into the holiday season, I am especially thankful for each one of you!

I give God thanks that I am called to be your pastor. Many blessings,

Judy Zabel
When I started attending HAUMC in 2012 with my now husband, Darin Riedel, and I were surprised to learn that there was no kids’ handbell ensemble, especially considering what a rich musical tradition exists here at Hennepin. Since then we’ve been working in the hopes that one day, we could bring it back (there was a youth handbell choir here many years ago).

Over those years we have been involved with many of the youth choirs here including the Altar Choir, our children’s vocal choir for grades 4-7. Last year we incorporated handbells into Altar Choir as a standing part of their rehearsals, and realized that we had enough kids interested in ringing to make a standalone, independent youth handbell choir for this year. We brought the idea and vision to Mark Squire, Hennepin’s Director of Music and Fine Arts, and here we are!

I’m excited to say that our Youth Handbell Ensemble has 14 ringers (and counting) this season. The youth range in age from 4th Grade through 12th Grade. The kids have put a lot of work into this fall season already, especially a few of them who’re not only learning bells but how to read music as well. So far, we’ve been able to perform in worship at least once a month, which is a testament to the ringers’ dedication and drive to learn and contribute to our community. Our rehearsals include activities focused many skills such as learning how to sight-read music, how to listen to each other ringing, and building a connection as an ensemble.

In the past two months, I’ve also witnessed some inspiring peer mentoring. These kids truly understand and exemplify what it means to be in this type of ensemble each rehearsal; it’s not like singing in choir where there is someone else singing the same part as you, with handbells you are usually by yourself on 2 bells (sometimes more).

On the national level, youth handbell programs are having trouble recruiting and maintaining enough interested children to keep those programs going. Seeing fourteen kids excited about handbells is such an amazing thing to witness on the directing side, and it’s also kind of nostalgic as I myself started ringing in the 4th Grade and 20+ years later, I am still ringing! Maybe in 20 years some of these young ringers will still be connected to their churches and music through handbells.

Once I knew I had enough kids this season, I had to get them to some type of ringing event with other youth bell choirs. On November 2, they attended KidsRing, hosted by Handbell Musicians of America. It was a great opportunity for young ringers to experience massed ringing, meet other ringers and have a great time. They were led by Sandy Mullaney, a local director here in Minnesota. At the end of the event, there was a concert with the pieces they learned together during the day and our ensemble performed a solo.

Thanks to a grant from the United Methodist Women, I was able to send all ten of our ringers who were available that day to this event. As part of this experience, the event organizers added a service project component to their plans. For KidsRing, the youth made sandwiches for The Sandwich Project MN, with the goal to help feed as many homeless in Minneapolis as possible. In total, 42 youth were there in attendance at KidsRing and they made 300 sandwiches!

This event was an incredible experience for our youth ensemble. This group has shown an understanding of how to ring musically, support each other as young Christians, and be willing to take risks. I’m very proud of the work and beautiful music they have already shared with the church, and I’m excited about the future ministries of this ensemble.
Photos courtesy of Krista Riedel
Sharing Stories, Sharing Dignity at The Dignity Center’s Fall Luncheon

by Mary Martin, Director of Outreach & Dignity Center

The Dignity Center Luncheon, “Share the Journey,” held on October 8 at Hennepin, was more than a fundraiser. The gathering was an important opportunity to raise up the voices of people whose lives have been transformed by The Dignity Center. The luncheon featured one participant of The Dignity Center's stability program who shared her own story directly with the audience. It also showcased a video highlighting people who are experiencing homelessness and how they are benefitting from the program at The Dignity Center.

While seeking donations, it is important to show the real-life impact on individuals who are making progress toward stability, moving out of crisis, gaining employment, improving and maintaining housing, and building community. The picture of a person sleeping in a doorway or holding a sign at a corner does not reflect the plight of all. At the luncheon we shared information and examples that brought the challenges of homelessness to light, and reported the powerful results of The Dignity Center's program in rising to and overcoming those challenges.

The 124 guests in attendance at the luncheon included members and friends of Hennepin Avenue UMC, the eighteen congregations in The Dignity Center Network, and even some Dignity Center graduates!

Our planned Keynote Speaker, Mayor Jacob Frey, was unable to attend due to problem solving issues of financing President Trump's visit to Minneapolis. But we were fortunate that Owen Metz from Dominium Inc., an affordable housing developer, was with us to explain the realities of building affordable housing and to share his enthusiasm for finding creative ways to partner with The Dignity Center.

Featured speaker Sherry Shannon, a participant of the Dignity Center and recipient of the Dorothy Richardson Award for community leadership, told her story—her journey to stability. Her story reflects suffering from PTSD due to abuse, a single mother of two boys, a chaotic life. Encountering housing and job insecurity, she struggled with finances and the pitfalls of payday loans. Sherry has testified at the Minnesota State Capitol describing what she calls the “Death Cycle” of payday loans: her $150 loan morphed into $500 debt.

When Sherry first came to The Dignity Center, a singing group called StreetSong, which is sponsored in part by HAUMC, gave her a place to experience community and purpose. StreetSong is comprised of people with lived experience of homelessness. By working with her Advocate at The Dignity Center, Sherry found support and structure to turn her life around. Sherry herself says she is thriving! Sherry concluded her story with her achievements: good credit, a part-time job at HAUMC, graduation from Twin Cities Rise! technical program—and she still sings in StreetSong, and leads a group with Street Voices for Change.

Sherry received a sustained standing ovation from luncheon guests.

As the luncheon drew to a close, we introduced Sarah Doebler, the new Director of Development for The Dignity Center. She has worked in client development with businesses such as Atomic Data and non-profits for over 15 years, and has volunteered at The Dignity Center for the past seven years. We’re excited to welcome Sarah into her new role!

Together, participants, clergy, staff and guests had the chance to Share the Journey of transforming lives through love, hope, community, and support. It was a remarkable event!
If you would like to learn more about The Dignity Center’s program, visit our website at www.thedignitycenter.org.
To support the work of The Dignity Center with financial or in-kind donations, visit www.haumc.org/give and select “Dignity Center.”
United Methodists from Hennepin Avenue UMC and many other faith congregations took part in the Minnesota Youth Climate Strike’s march and rally on Friday, Sept. 20, 2019. Six thousand people showed up to support the youth-led rally at the State Capitol, joining an estimated six million worldwide taking to the streets to demand immediate action to address the climate crisis.

The youth-led global movement, inspired by 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, held rallies in 111 countries from Australia, Japan and India to Germany, Britain, the U.S., and even Afghanistan. Just over a year ago, Thunberg took up a solitary vigil at the Swedish Parliament with her sign, “School Strike for Climate,” and she sparked a movement of students walking out of school once a week to focus the world’s attention on the existential crisis of a rapidly changing climate.
The September 20 event began at the Western Sculpture Park where people gathered with friends, some with banners identifying their church, organization, school or other group, and many carrying hand-made signs: “There is No Planet B!” “Why Should We Go To School When You Won't Listen to the Educated?” “I am the Lorax, I speak for the Trees.” “Curb Greenhouse Gases!”

Chants energized the crowd as the park filled to overflowing, and continued as the 6,000 marchers walked to the Capitol. On the steps, activists, most of them high schoolers, spoke with poise and eloquence of the dire situation the world is facing as continual burning of fossil fuel is heating the atmosphere and oceans. They made it clear that their future is at stake, and demanded that the Minnesota Legislature enact a transition away from fossil fuels to all-renewable electricity generation. They also asked that Governor Tim Walz declare a statewide climate emergency and stop the construction of Enbridge’s Line 3 oil pipeline in northern Minnesota, a project that Native American tribes have been resisting along with climate activist groups such as MN350.

After the speeches, the youth went inside the Capitol and staged a “die-in,” lying perfectly still and quiet covering the entire rotunda, to signify the fate that will befall billions of people if world leaders refuse to take dramatic action immediately to reduce carbon emissions.

The message woven throughout the rally, from chants to speeches to the die-in, was that the climate crisis is a crisis of racial and economic justice as well as an environmental issue. This perspective fits well with United Methodism’s focus on social justice and inclusivity, as well as care for creation. The work to be done includes strongly pressuring elected bodies to enact bold and significant legislation to greatly reduce carbon emissions and to deal compassionately with the suffering and loss that is already happening, mostly to people who are poor and darker-skinned.

The fact that this rally led by students, most of them under 18 and many of color, should make it clear that we adults, not just policy-makers but all of us, have failed to give adequate consideration to our descendants, and they are growing up on a planet in crisis. There is much that needs to be done to remedy the damage, and it is important as we think about what to do that we listen to the young and to communities of color, to those who have been affected most direly by the crisis of climate change, and follow their lead as we all work together to find a way to a regenerative future.
Can you imagine all the pieces needed to build and open a school in a third-world country? Here is a story of how Hennepin Avenue UMC people got involved in a risk-taking and complicated ministry.

**The Birth of HAUMC’s School Sponsorship Ministry**

In December 2017, Revs. Judy and Lyndy Zabel led a group of eight Hennepin Avenue UMC members to meet Pastor Judith Banya in Baiwalla, Sierra Leone. Their mission was to identify opportunities for the Hennepin community to support Pastor Judith’s ministry in a community ravaged by famine, poverty and epidemic disease.

Pastor Judith shared her own story of severe poverty when growing up in Baiwalla. An opportunity to attend the United Methodist Mission School in Bo transformed her life! There, she received three meals a day, had her own bed, and experienced small classes with dynamic teachers who showed love and compassion. She was so grateful for her schooling that she promised God that she would return to Baiwalla to help provide education opportunities for the children of Baiwalla.

We also learned that parents must pay school fees of $150 per year for their kids to attend school. On daily incomes of $2.00, few families have enough money to pay the school fees. Without an education these kids are effectively sentenced to a life of ignorance and poverty. When we asked what HAUMC could do that would support her Baiwalla ministries, Pastor Judith immediately said, “pay school fees” and “provide help with the school feeding program.”
As an educator and member of Hennepin, I saw Pastor Judith’s challenge as a great opportunity to expand Hennepin’s outreach ministry. Other missioners felt the same way, so we took action. We immediately gathered names and stories of the 40 neediest kids in Baiwalla. Kathleen Ambre, a professional photographer, took photos and videos the Baiwalla community so we could introduce them to HAUMC members and launch the Child Sponsorship Program. Hennepin members responded! In 2018, HAUMC sponsored 110 students, and in 2019 we sponsored 157 students.

**Baiwalla Secondary School Construction**

At the same time, Rev. Lyndy Zabel (Director of International Outreach Ministries for Minnesota United Methodist churches) engaged other United Methodist churches to provide funding to help build and staff a secondary school. As of earlier this summer, the principal and five teachers have been hired. Housing for all staff has been secured. The new school will be the only secondary school within 2 hours of Baiwalla. When the school opens, nearly 100 students will attend.

In March 2019, five Hennepin members went to Sierra Leone. Our Mission was to meet with local church and government officials, and visit secondary schools to help Pastor Judith visualize the type of school program she wanted to develop in Baiwalla. Also, Pastor Judith identified a candidate to be the school Principal. She invited him to be with the mission team during our 10-day visit so that we could discuss school philosophy and plan for its opening. After getting to know Mr. Fomba, we urged Pastor Judith to hire him immediately so he would have for 6 months to prepare for the September opening.

**Hennepin Community’s Response**

Upon returning from Baiwalla in March 2019, I committed to working with OC Ministries to raise the money needed to open the school. I have told the story of the educational needs of the Baiwalla kids to many people in and beyond the Hennepin community. Hennepin members have responded with amazing generosity and creativity. One person, a passionate educator, donated $20,000 towards start-up costs. A family guaranteed to pay the Principal’s salary for three years. Another individual guaranteed a teacher’s salary for three years. Two families donated over 50 DVDs and a DVD player so movies could be shown. Together, HAUMC and Messiah UMC donated six boxes of school supplies. HAUMC kids donated over 100 pounds of beans for school lunches. People on the mission trip donated money for a motorcycle, a computer and a cell phone to facilitate the Principal’s work.

It is thrilling to announce that after all this visionary and spirit-filled work, the Baiwalla Secondary School opened its doors on September 16, 2019! It takes a village...a global village! Thank you to all of the supporters of the Baiwalla ministry. Stay tuned for additional reports and ministry opportunities!
Hennepin Church celebrates diversity — even theological diversity. Over the years, the focus of membership has moved from two identical, traditional Sunday morning worship services to a variety of services and styles, and to faith expressed outside worship through active volunteer projects. Liturgical correctness has been tempered with warm spirituality, and the insights of other religions have enriched worship services.

That diversity also has been expressed in classes that have been skeptical about various traditional beliefs. Skeptical, for example, of belief in a Supreme Being with personality, emotions, and intentions. Or skeptical that the Jesus presented in the Gospels has not been colored by the later interpretation and elaboration of the early church. These are skepticisms expressed in seminaries if not among general congregations.

“Progressive Christianity” is the name of a current class in that skeptical tradition. It meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month in the Harrison Room at 11:15. Anyone wanting to know more about the class is invited to visit. Preparation is not required, since the class format is to discuss material as it is read aloud by the participants. The class has considered the words of theologians such as Paul Tillich, scholarly efforts such as the Jesus Seminar, popularizers such as Bishop John Shelby Spong, and writers such as Richard Rohr.

Although class participants have lively discussions about details and differing points of view, they tend to believe that Jesus represents the ultimate in human potential. They tend to believe that divinity undergirds all creation without stepping in to manipulate physical laws or human affairs. They tend to believe that the universe is an amazing wonder; that religious experience is personal and unique (so there are no “right” answers regarding God); that freely sharing religious experiences helps all to grow spiritually; that organized religion has value, and that Hennepin Avenue UMC is a proper home for theological diversity.
On October 13, Hennepin Kids For LYFE children’s ministries once again had the honor of partnering with United Methodist Women to celebrate Bible Sunday with our young people. Our bible ministry is possible because of the generous financial support of UMW, who purchase bibles that are presented to our 3-year-olds, 3rd Graders, and new Confirmation students. Our 3-year-olds receive the Children of God Storybook Bible, written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu; 3rd Graders receive the Deep Blue bible, and this year our Confirmation students received The Message bible. Special care is given to select bibles for each group that are both age appropriate and that reflect the diversity of God’s people. UMW and Hennepin Kids also partner to provide Frolic First Bibles for all of the babies that are baptized in our church. We are blessed to be able to wrap our children in the Word of God at all of these milestone ages in their lives.
HOLIDAY FUN FOR EVERYONE!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
10AM-1PM
HENNEPIN AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Join us for the Hennepin Kids Family Advent Festival in the Social Hall. Gingerbread creations, holiday ornaments, and so many cookies! Your family will decorate and bake 6 dozen to take home.

Cost is $20/family. Register at haumc.org/register. Please bring donations of baking supplies for Groveland Food Shelf. (Children age 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.)

This holiday season, Hennepin members are invited to take an angel ornament off the Angel Tree, and purchase gifts for refugee children new to the United States.

Please follow these steps:
1) Choose an ornament off the tree.
2) Sign up on the registration sheet, leaving your name, phone number and email next to your angel’s name.
3) Purchase 3 gifts per child — something warm, something educational and something fun! (This will ensure that each child receives the same number of gifts.)
4) Return your angel ornament and UNWRAPPED gifts by December 8.

Thank you for your extreme generosity in welcoming our refugee community!!!
Open Yourself to the Miracles of Christmas

Blue Christmas
Sunday, Dec 15 | 4pm in the Art Gallery
Feeling blue this holiday season? Gather to share words and songs of comfort, consolation, and hope at this subdued service of soothing music and gentle prayer.

A Great and Mighty Wonder:
A Musical Celebration
Saturday, Dec 21 | 4pm in the Sanctuary &
Sunday Dec 22 | 10am in the Traditional Worship service
Celebrate the joyful surprises of Advent & Christmas with the Hennepin Avenue UMC Sanctuary Choir, soloists and orchestra. Free and open to all.

Christmas Eve Worship: Tuesday, December 24

Contemplative Christmas
2pm in the Art Gallery
Walk the labyrinth and be uplifted by carols and poetry of the season in this contemplative worship service.

Christmas Pageant
4pm in the Sanctuary*†
Lively, family-friendly worship service featuring our children’s and youth choirs and nativity pageant.

Carols & Candlelight
7:30pm in the Sanctuary*†
(7pm Prelude Concert)
Traditional worship celebration featuring Hennepin Singers and carols by candlelight.

Candlelight Communion
11pm in the Sanctuary†
(10:30pm Prelude Concert)
Traditional worship celebration featuring our Sanctuary Choir, brass and handbells, carols by candlelight and Holy Communion.

*Free nursery care available. †Worship from wherever you are! Watch the live stream at haumc.org/live.
Hennepin Kids for LYFE

Dinner Theater

December 21 • 1-6pm in the Social Hall

Parents go, Kids stay! $20 per child.
For ages 3 years through 4th grade.
Teen helpers welcome!

Register at haumc.org/events