Encourages Christians to offer the absolute utmost of themselves, their abilities, and their creativity to welcome others into the faith.

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.

Shows how high quality learning experiences for all ages mature the spirituality and faith of congregational participants.

Reminds us that by reaching out and taking risks, churches become the resources God uses to change lives and transform the world.

Shows how generosity enlarges the soul, realigns priorities, connects people to Jesus, and strengthens congregations to fulfill Christ’s ministries.
“Surely, the days are coming...” we say to ourselves in the months of February and March. I wake up saying these prophetic words as I look out at the cold, hard ground and begin to envision my garden coming to life again. I notice how the plants that I “winter over” in my sunroom are getting pretty spindly. The amount of sunshine in my sunroom isn’t quite enough to keep them thick and healthy. But I overwinter them because I know they’ll come back in the spring. When I take them back outside they will flourish again because their root systems are well-developed.

How is your spiritual root system? During this Lenten season, we’ll be exploring “rooted faith” together. What do strong, resilient, well-developed spiritual roots look like? How are they developed? How can they be protected during bleak times? We’ll look at the Lectionary scriptures to see how Jesus developed his rooted faith and to learn how we can follow his example.

Why is rooted faith important? Because we have some very exciting, and yet very ambitious, strategic initiatives to work on now and in the coming years. They reflect the prayerful work of our Strategic Council and Ministry Team leaders’ hopes and dreams for Hennepin Avenue UMC. They describe with more clarity how we will live out our vision to grow in love of God and neighbor, welcome new people, and heal a broken world. They describe a world that grows from spiritual roots that are healthy and deep, ready to produce fruit that can nourish and replenish all of creation. Here they are:

We will grow in love of God and neighbor by intentionally building a multi-racial beloved community inside and outside our church walls, working to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice for all.

We will reach and welcome new people by expanding the ways in which we communicate what God is doing through the ministries of Hennepin.

We will heal a broken world by working to undo the harm that church and society have caused in exclusion and discrimination through systemic forms of oppression against all marginalized people including the LGBTQIA+ community.

These initiatives will not be realized unless we are “all in.” What I mean by that is, we can’t hope that someone else will lead the charge while we stand by and cheer them on. These initiatives reflect the spiritual roots and actions of Jesus, and if we want to be followers of Jesus, we will be moved to do the things that Jesus cared about, and we’ll do them together. We are after all, his body in the world today!

Thank you for making the commitment to fund our 2020 ministry. I give God thanks for your generosity! Because you have stepped out in faith to grow your giving, we are going to be able to grow our ministries in some new ways this year. We have added two new ministry positions to help us move forward with excellence. First, we have hired Peter Nielson as our new office manager to help us ensure smooth operating functions in the office. Also, we have hired Rev. Mark Schneider, a United Methodist minister, to provide additional pastoral care. Rev. Schneider’s title is Pastoral Care Assistant. Mark will be making pastoral care visits about 20 hours per week so we can increase the number of visits per month. How are we able to support these new ministries? You have been generous! Over 48% of our giving households increased their financial giving to Hennepin Avenue UMC for 2020. THANK YOU!

God is opening our hearts, and we have some very exciting days ahead! Please continue to pray for all of our members and friends of Hennepin Avenue UMC. Continue to pray for The United Methodist Church as we move closer to the General Conference, which will be held in Minneapolis, May 5-15. We will likely have many guests during that time, and I know you will do a great job offering them radical hospitality. Thanks for being just that kind of congregation! It is a joy to be your pastor.

Many blessings,

—Pastor Judy

Judy Zabel

God is opening our hearts, and we have some very exciting days ahead!

—Pastor Judy
Sanctuary Organ to Receive Refurbishment

by John Guy, member of the Organ Renovation Task Force

For over 40 years the Robert Sipe pipe organ at Hennepin has been our principal instrument for Sanctuary worship services and concert life and is recognized as one of the Twin Cities' finest instruments. The organ is distinctive in that it is a tracker instrument (meaning the majority of its inner workings are mechanical versus electrical or pneumatic), and is scaled perfectly for its acoustical environment, which means it looks as magnificent as it sounds. The organ excels as not only a dynamic solo instrument but enhances our worship experience in accompanying choral and instrumental presentations, as well as supporting our singing congregation.

The time has come to go “under the hood” to perform not only routine maintenance but also to address an increasing number of both mechanical and electrical issues which are negatively impacting the sound and general performance of the instrument. In recent weeks you may have become aware of unusual sounds or “hiccups.”

Several months ago, an Organ Renovation Task Force, under the leadership of Chairman Steve Mahle and our Director of Music & Fine Arts Mark Squire was formed to study the needs of the instrument and what needed to be done to bring our organ up to speed. We engaged several organ renovation specialists to provide an assessment of the current conditions and provide their recommendations. We received proposals from 3 firms with national reputations for excellence in their field. After reviewing their proposals and vetting their past work with clients across the country, we forwarded our recommended proposal to the HAUMC Board of Trustees for their consideration. Due to the specialized nature of this work and the limited number of quality firms, we were initially faced with a two-to-three year wait for work to begin…and this is where we got lucky. One of the firms we were most interested in having complete this project (a world-renowned company) had an opening this spring which would allow us to have the refurbishment work completed right away. The Trustees have cleared the way for the work to begin.

Starting Monday, March 23, the Sanctuary Organ will go “off-line” with pipework, reservoirs, draw knobs, and a few other parts being shipped to the C.B. Fisk Company in Gloucester, MA, for refurbishment. At the same time, technicians will be working within the instrument on campus to replace solenoids, outdated electrical wiring, and circuitry, as well as upgrading the memory in the console.

There will be only one Sunday when worship will be solely dependent on the Sanctuary piano (March 29). Then we will be served by a digital instrument that will be brought in for the remaining length of the renovation. This rental instrument will be a brilliant addition to Palm Sunday and Easter services as well as a few weeks that will follow. The refurbishment project, without any unforeseen delays, should be concluded by the end of April. While this is an inconvenience for a few weeks, we look forward to enjoying the full scope of what our updated Robert Sipe instrument can add to our worship experience.

We can be truly grateful for all those that provided such a magnificent instrument for the enhancement of worship so many years ago, the dedicated efforts of our current Organ Refurbishment Task Force, the discernment of the HAUMC Trustees (and Carolyn Lewelling and Bill Waterman of the Trustees, who spent part of a Saturday crawling around the inner workings of the organ as task force members explained the scope of what needed to be done), and especially the generosity of those who contributed to legacy giving which has enabled the funding for this project. Special kudos to Mark Squire and Judy Zabel for their foresight, vision, and tenacity in guiding us through this process.
Palm Sunday:
8:30am Sacred Journey in the Art Gallery*†
10am Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary*†

Maundy Thursday:
6pm Supper followed by 7pm Service in the Art Gallery

Good Friday:
7pm Service in the Sanctuary

Easter Sunday:
7am Sunrise Jazz Worship Service in the Art Gallery
8-10:30am Breakfast in the Social Hall
($7 per person/$20 per family donation recommended)
9am & 11am in the Sanctuary
Celebration of Resurrection featuring bells, brass and the Sanctuary Choir*†

* Nursery Care available
† Worship from wherever you are! Watch the live stream at haumc.org/live.

For complete Holy Week event details, visit haumc.org/easter, or follow us on Facebook@HennepinAvenueUMC.
Looking Ahead to the UMC General Conference

by Judy Zabel, Senior Pastor

No matter what happens at General Conference in 2020, Hennepin Avenue UMC will continue to be an inclusive church where all are welcomed.

You may have read stories in the news recently about a proposed plan for the United Methodist Church to split over differences of belief regarding human sexuality and full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual people (you can find links to some of those reports on our website). You may have questions about what this means for Hennepin and for UMC congregations here and around the world. Please keep in mind that this plan is only a proposal at this point. All aspects of the plan must be voted on at the 2020 General Conference of the United Methodist Church taking place in Minneapolis May 5-15, 2020.

Why is there a proposal for a split?
Disagreements over human sexuality have been a source of conflict, pain, and division in the global United Methodist Church for too long. Last year, delegates from all over the world met in St. Louis for a Special Session of the General Conference, where we aimed to resolve this dispute. At that session, the Traditionalist Plan (which prohibits gay marriages and the ordination of the gay clergy, discriminates against LGBTQIA+ persons, and imposed severe penalties for disobedience to these policies) passed by a thin margin. Resistance to the Traditionalist Plan has been widespread and heated in the United States and in Western Europe. This new proposal seeks to provide a peaceful resolution to an untenable situation.

Can a split be avoided? Probably not.
Although we grieve whenever we must part ways with those we have long partnered with in ministry, there is growing agreement across the United Methodist connection from all sides that a split is inevitable. If there is no change at the General Conference of 2020 to overturn the Traditionalist Plan many churches and individuals from across the UMC from all theological perspectives will simply leave and the UMC will splinter apart. This proposal for splitting the United Methodist Church will open a clear path allowing the Traditionalists to leave the United Methodist Church and start a new, orthodox denomination, with the blessings of those who will remain in the UMC. The goal is amicable separation.

What is the plan?
The Traditionalists will start a new denomination. Many years ago, the conservative caucus groups formed an association to promote an orthodox expression of Methodism called the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA). The WCA has been planning and promoting a split for many years. The WCA has worked with Wespath, our UMC pension organization, to prepare for Wespath to service multiple denominations. The WCA has done the legal work to register a new denomination in 50 states. They have produced a new Book of Discipline and Doctrine for a new Traditionalist denomination. They are ready and anxious to launch this new expression of Methodism. They are actively recruiting churches in every conference of The United Methodist Church. If the proposal for the split passes, they will be freed to birth this new orthodox denomination of Methodism and will receive $25 million for start-up costs from UMC General Church apportionment dollars over the next quadrennium. Churches who vote to leave will be able to take their buildings and clergy pensions to the new denomination. Once a church or conference votes to leave the UMC, they will have no further claim on any other UMC assets moving forward.
Would the proposed split dissolve The United Methodist Church? No.
This proposal provides a way for the Traditionalists to birth a new denomination. It would not dissolve The United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church would continue as a global church, and the prohibitions against ordination of LGBTQIA+ persons and marriages of LGBTQIA+ persons in our churches would be removed from The Book of Discipline.

Would Hennepin Avenue UMC be required to vote to stay or leave The United Methodist Church?
If this proposal passes, only churches or conferences who want to leave the UMC will be required to vote. The default position for all United Methodist Churches is to continue as a global United Methodist Church. If we stay in the UMC, we will be free to live into our vision of being a fully inclusive church where all are welcome to receive the blessing of Christian marriage. This would be a breakthrough of the Holy Spirit, as many Hennepin Avenue UMC members and friends have prayed and worked for full inclusion for decades.

God is doing a new thing among us! This proposal is gaining support across the theological spectrum. Pray for our delegates to General Conference as they make these decisions. Pray for congregations across the whole UMC global connection as each one discerns their way forward. Let’s keep our hearts and minds open to the Spirit of God. God is stirring and shaking up business as usual, and that can create anxiety. God is with us always. Do not be afraid. Let’s move forward with a holy curiosity. God is making all things new.

Get Involved with the Minnesota Reconciling Congregations Network
Since 1984, the Reconciling Congregation movement has grown to more than 861 Reconciling Congregations, Campus Ministries, and Annual Conferences. It also encompasses over 34,000 Reconciling United Methodists who publicly witness to “open the doors” of the church to the participation of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The next meeting of Minnesota Reconciling Congregations is scheduled for Thursday, March 12 at 7pm at Hennepin Avenue UMC in the Longfellow Room. If you can’t participate in person, you can participate by phone: contact Brian Boysen at (612) 220-3795 for instructions about how to join the meeting by phone conference.

At this meeting we will discuss how to continue working with congregations that are in process of becoming Reconciling communities, review hospitality opportunities and other plans for General Conference, preview some plans for the MN Annual Conference meeting (June 10-12, Sioux Falls, SD), hear a financial update, discuss our plans for participating in PRIDE weekend, and more.

If you can’t make it to this meeting, but would like to attend future meetings, add these dates to your calendar: April 16, May 21, and June 18. Check the Minnesota Reconciling Congregations website (www.mnrcumc.org) for further details.

Annual Gathering of Minnesota Reconciling Congregations & Communities
Saturday, March 28 at 11:30 am-2:30pm at Spirit of Hope UMC 7600 Harold Avenue, Golden Valley, MN 55427

You are invited to gather with other Reconciling United Methodists beginning at 11:30am, with potluck lunch at noon (bring a dish to share) and program at 1pm.

The program will focus on General Conference 2020—how it works and how to support the United Methodist social justice organizations that are working for inclusion. Rev. Carol Zaagsma, Minnesota’s lead delegate, and others will speak. For childcare, contact Gloria Peck at 763-542-8641 by March 21.
A 2020 Budget Summary

by Brian Seim, Director of Finance

Our goal every year is to break even or have a profit. The approved 2020 Operating Budget has a bottom line slightly in the black.

Here is a short explanation of how the church finances work:
The Foundation Funds pay for ministries’ program expenses. We budget to spend a small percentage of the 3-year average of the available Foundation balances. The ministries’ programs are frugal and normally spend less than is budgeted.
The Trustee Endowments pay for regular building repairs and improvements. Again, we budget to spend a small percentage of the 3-year average of the available endowment balances. And again, we normally spend much less than budgeted.
The items in the budget that are covered by pledges, gifts, rental income, and investment income are staffing, supplies, apportionments to the Annual Conference, advertising, musicians, insurance, utilities, maintenance, and various fees.

The most notable change in the 2020 budget is an increase in pledged and non-pledged giving of about $100,000. Fifteen percent of the pledges are from people who have not pledged previously. Forty-eight percent of the pledges had an increase from the prior year. We should all celebrate these numbers!

On the expense side, the budget shows an increase of around $80,000. This is a 2.5 percent increase over 2019. We know that some of this will not be completely spent (including some Program Ministries expenses and building improvement expenses). Most of the other expense line items stayed flat from 2019, except a small increase for staffing.

For the capital campaigns: As of December 31, 2019 we had received 92% of the Steps of Faith revenue and 53% of the Second Mile Miracle revenue. Both campaigns are perfectly on track and all of the construction work has been completed successfully.

Thank you, Hennepin members and friends, for your generosity and commitment to Hennepin Avenue UMC!
Since early winter, my Sunday afternoons have been spent sorting, cleaning, and donating stuff. Specifically, stuff that belonged to my dad, who passed away in October. Together with my brother, I have been opening every cupboard, every drawer, every closet in the house my parents bought when I was 5 years old and pulling everything out into the dim winter light so we could decide what to do with it. It is exhausting, sometimes excruciating, always allergy-aggravating work. Some Sundays I’d rather skip it, but like so many things, it simply has to be done.

Many people my age are going through this, or will be soon—the work of first caring for their parents as they go toward death and then taking care of dispersing their possessions after they’ve passed. It’s work few of us are fully prepared to do. Between the practicalities (who has a car big enough to take this pile of old computer equipment to the hazardous waste facility?) and the profundities (both of my parents owned an inordinate number of rosaries), the sheer scope of decisions to make is overwhelming.

Fortunately, my brother and I were raised knowing that giving donations to people and organizations was a good way to pass along of things we no longer needed, so when it was time to get rid of my dad’s things, we already knew where the nearest donations centers were. But when we opened the coat closet, where we found a beautiful black wool topcoat, a down parka so puffy it would block the worst winter chill, a business man’s trench with the zip-out lining, and more, we both paused. They were too nice to just flop onto the growing Goodwill pile.

Then I remembered that The Dignity Center coat drive had just ended. I had seen the collection of donated coats growing by the day in the office at Hennepin. I told my brother about it, about what happens at The Dignity Center, and about how many of the participants there have lived through losses we could only imagine. And so we decided together that the best of my dad’s things would go to The Dignity Center as an in-kind donation.

The Kindness of In-Kind Donations

By Amy K. Griffiths, Director of Marketing and Communications

The Dignity Center receives many in-kind donations throughout the year. This year, they have received not only coats, but also hats and scarves handknit by incarcerated women living in a local prison, coffee beans given by Starbucks for the Dignity Center Christmas party, and items for the new Welcome Home Kits like new towels and sheets. Just ask Mary Martin, Director of the Dignity Center, and she’ll tell you, these donations make a real difference in the lives of participants at The Dignity Center. For many of these folks, items like a warm coat, hand-knit scarf, new towels, or a soft quilt are essential pieces of their path to stability.

Somewhere in Minneapolis are men wearing warm coats that belonged to my dad. I like to think they’ve gotten not only some comfort and dignity, but a guardian angel looking after them, too.
On April 19, my family is looking forward to celebrating two baptisms. That Sunday, Olivia, who will be four, and Madeline, who will be five months, will be baptized. That morning, my wife, Erin, and I will pledge to guide our children to aspire to live a Christ-like life, accept the free will God gives us to turn away from an imperfect world, and claim that we will continue to pursue Christ as the spirit pursues us.

As a parent and a Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, I understand the importance of this responsibility. My primary philosophy on how to do youth ministry is to come alongside parents/guardians to help them live into the vows they made during their youth’s baptism. An important part of doing that is consistently providing an atmosphere to youth where they are loved, safe, and supported.

One of the programs that have been added to the youth group’s weekly rhythm is youth small group. This is a voluntary, relatively unstructured time for youth to check in, share concerns, and pray for each other’s week. Over the last several months, this group has helped support each other as they tackled issues of racism, social media, homework assignments, and more. By providing a space at church where we can discuss how Christ’s example informs the way youth think about their school week, we’re breaking down the boundaries between the secular and spiritual that are ever-present in their lives. Most importantly we’re meeting their felt needs.

At Hennepin, youth are beginning to see community as an antidote for confusion. They see conversation as a response to concern, and they find a safe supportive place where they know they won’t be persecuted by their peers. Add a new coat of paint and a ping pong table to the church of youth room, and you’ll see the promises of baptism coming to life and the making of a place where Christ’s love is changing lives.
MICHÉLLE GEHRZ, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | JEFFREY PATRY, ACCOMPANIST

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 ~ 7 pm  
Vista Lutheran Church  
4003 Wooddale Avenue South, St. Louis Park  
with Con Spirito and Con Brio  
Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 ~ 4 pm  
Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church  
511 Groveland Avenue, Minneapolis  
with Journey Choir  
Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church

Sarah Foster, violin | Laura Sewell, cello | Scott Arnold, percussion | Phyllis Kerr, Native flute

Featuring the premiere of CATHERINE DALTON’S Praise Gaia  
and a new SSAA arrangement of  
J. DAVID MOORE’S Navajo Blessing with Native flute

Gratitude to our fundraising partners: Soaping With Joy and MN Brands for Good who will be present at both concerts.

TICKETS AT THE DOOR: $15 ADULTS | $5 FOR CHILDREN - AGE 12 AND UNDER
Lumina in Concert: The Veil and the Thorn

Sunday, March 22 at 7-8:30pm

The Twin Cities’ premiere women’s ensemble “Lumina” presents their Lenten-themed concert “The Veil and the Thorn” on Sunday, March 22, 7:00pm. These four talented singers are dedicated to the mystery, beauty, and hope inherent in music. Their programming draws from a rich well of musical sources, including Medieval chants, Renaissance motets, folk song traditions, and works by living and local composers.

Tickets are $15. General Admission. Purchase tickets online at Eventbrite by visiting https://luminaconcert.eventbrite.com, or haumc.org/events.