

inspire

WAYZATA COMMUNITY CHURCH

SPRING 2023

The answer was yes.

BY JOHN ESTREM

"Before the question was even finished, the answer was yes."

When Lisette and I were asked to lead the mission trip to Costa Rica for Bricks to Bread — one of WCC's mission partners — there was a sense of a call right from the start. Follow up questions immediately filled our minds: Who else would be called to join this team of ten from Wayzata Community Church? How would the work that this team does touch the lives of the family and community we serve in Costa Rica?"

Our job on this trip was to open ourselves up completely, to empty our cups, to open our eyes to God's presence all around us. Only then would we be ready to give ourselves in every way we could — physically, emotionally, and spiritually — to serve the people of Costa Rica, each other, and God.



Clockwise from top left: Showcasing the nearly-completed brick oven! Amy Lori (Bricks to Bread volunteer), George, Tad, Lorie, Lisette, John, Mary Jane, Ceydi, Zeneyda, Liliana, Ann, Josefina, Louis, and Marshall. (Not in this photo is Spencer Holmes.)

In March 2023, eight people from WCC (Louis Robards, George Robards, Spencer Holmes, Ann Stewart, Marshall Trees, Mary Jane Hochstein, and Tad and Lorie Dyrdaahl) joined me and Lisette Chapman as we travelled to Bijagua, Costa Rica with Bricks to Bread, a nonprofit organization and Dough Grant recipient that helps build brick ovens for Costa Rican families seeking a sustainable source of income. Brick ovens not only help provide a family with an income, but they also bring communities together. The ovens are often a focal point in these towns, becoming a gathering place for community events, and encouraging camaraderie by welcoming all to participate in the build. Through donations, collaboration, and volunteerism, Bricks to Bread helps provide a sustainable source of income for a deserving family in need by educating and assisting them in the construction, maintenance and expansion of an outdoor brick oven used to make and sell fresh baked goods to their community.

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WAYZATA COMMUNITY CHURCH

BRICKS TO BREAD MISSION TRIP
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Reflection from **Ann Johnson**

I love how Bricks to Bread is filling a need with a well-developed and practical solution. I like to think of this kind of mission as “pulling up” not “lifting up”. What I mean by that is this: many people needing to improve their lives need just one thing to make it happen.

That may be time, money, information, etc. We think about lifting or pushing people up from below, but what so many really need is a pull from people who have those things. It’s easier to pull than to lift. So, Bricks to Bread doesn’t just fund classes or supplies — they take action to remove a huge barrier (getting an oven built), and in the process draw in others to both do the actual work and provide the funds. I love that the work feeds the volunteers, the staff, the families and women who get the help. And I love that we do the work in their homes, so we can see how they live and meet them as humans.

The Costa Rican country is glorious. We stayed on a farm that was like the Garden of Eden, and everywhere we looked there was bountiful food. I thought of how God provides all we need if we just notice it and share.

If you volunteer on an oven-building trip, be ready to drop your expectations and ideas about what you will be doing. Every team member is equal in value from Day one. There is no specific job for anyone based on gender, age, profession or expertise. I loved that the project work is led by the women who have built the program and who know the culture and the realities of the families we are helping.

Humility is important. Everyone has value and brings a gift to the project. Doing the work is more important than doing the work perfectly. I can’t wait to go back. And I need to learn Spanish!

Above: Ann with Ceydi, Liliana and Zeneyda Loria at their home, where the brick oven was built. The Loria women are well known and respected in their community for their organic farming techniques and delicious home-baked treats! Left: the team enjoying lunch at the build site. Lunch was provided by the Loria family each day.





“ There is no better way to bring peace to the world than by sharing smiles, tears, and hugs with new friends in a faraway land. While we have gained a new experience with some very special, humble, and hard-working Costa Ricans, they too have a new view of us as Americans. They will share this experience with their friends and community — as will we.
—*Spencer Holmes* ”

Reflection from **Marshall Trees**

Bricks to Bread is an excellent organization in Costa Rica. The women seeking support have many avenues to get the application to them. Josefina and Amy Lori (representing Bricks to Bread) are boots on the ground, and they are responsible for vetting possible candidates. They are smart, efficient women who know what they're looking for.

I was amazed by the topography in Costa Rica, and all the volcanoes that are not active, but visible. The site where we were working was surrounded by thriving vegetation, and was breathtaking. The culture was as I anticipated — resorts on the ocean side, the Caribbean side, and wealth— and then alot of farming and poverty on the interior of the country.

I felt a lot of joy seeing the women as they do their daily work. They were proud of their work— “look at us and see what we're doing!” and showing their big smiles. I know that what we were doing every day in Costa Rica was helping them change their lives.

I told Nancy (Alvarez, founder of Bricks to Bread) and her husband, Chato this would not be the last time they see me in Costa Rica. I definitely want to go back. I could see some of the tools they had were wearing out, and I have purchased some to give to Nancy for the next oven build.

It's great to be back in the USA. Although I like being bussed around, it's always good to be back in my own bed!



Above: Spencer Holmes and Marshall Trees with Zeneyda Loría. Below: Lisette Chapman, Ann Stewart and Lorie Dyrdahl enjoyed some baking lessons from the Loría women. They have dreamt of owning a pizza and bakery business, offering artisanal products with home-grown toppings and fillings.



Reflection from **Louis Robards**

Bricks to Bread is a non-profit mission program in which volunteers help build outdoor brick ovens to create a sustainable income for women in rural Costa Rica. Last year the WCC Dough program awarded Bricks to Bread a grant to support their projects. Last summer they had a booth at the WCC Wednesday evening outdoor services showcasing their bread and pretzels. I told John Estrem of my interest in participating in one of their mission trips.

I had been to Costa Rica in the past and knew that its people are very welcoming, and the country is beautiful. This trip offered a unique opportunity to work directly with one family building an outdoor oven. By working and interacting daily with our host family, we were able to get to know them very well and experience their culture on a more personal level.

There is so much to learn from the Costa Rican people and their culture. They enjoy simplicity of lifestyle and freedom from distraction which we seem to often neglect in our culture. We left our comfort zone, but we experienced a deeper, more meaningful comfort zone. Perhaps this was God speaking to us through our host family.

Traveling to a different culture allows us to see the world from a new and enriching perspective, if we are open to it. If we suspend our own expectations and biases and enter fully into a different culture, we can receive much more than we give.

It was difficult to re-enter everyday life in Minnesota, even though we were gone for only ten days. The normal daily patterns soon return, but we can still recall the good life — the “Pura Vida” — the pure life of the Costa Rican people and culture.

Top left: the team in the mid-stage of the oven build. Top right: George Robards at work. Middle: adding a cement layer to the top of the bricks. Below: Bricks to Bread team t-shirts drying in the tropical breeze.

Reflection from **Mary Jane Hochstein**

Bricks to Bread provides opportunities for women, many are single, heads of households, to own their own small business and achieve financial independence. Bricks to Bread empowers women to become leaders in their community. I was impressed that they provide long-term support after the oven is built and functional so that women will have a network of women supporting women.



What I learned about Cost Rican culture that I didn't know before the trip was Pura Vida. Pure life. Simplicity, blending into the environment. Excellent cooks and bakers. While serving in Costa Rica, I felt God's presence every morning at 5:30 a.m., sitting outside for my God-time with the roosters, dogs, and birds. Deep breathing in God in the lush greenery and colorful flowers, surrounded by feelings of peace, purpose and belonging.

As I prepared for this trip, I wanted to leave any preconceived ideas or expectations at home and look at everything without my American eyes, to be open to being in the present. When out of your comfort zone, you can be liberated from things you think you have to have. With liberation comes joy and hope and engagement.

Since returning home, there hasn't been a day when I haven't thought of the Loria women in Costa Rica and how our team worked together and with the family to build with them, not for them. It all comes down to love — loving your neighbor. I left a part of my heart in Costa Rica.



Top: Spencer Holmes, Louis Robards, and Mary Jane Hochstein measuring twice, and sawing once! Above: John Estrem, Josefina, and Ann Stewart exhibiting joyful teamwork as they place layers of bricks. Right: the team in the rainforest on an excursion to visit another oven project build.





People, Purpose and Pause

BY JOHN HALLBERG
IMMEDIATE PAST MODERATOR

By the time you read this, my term as Moderator will have ended. However, I wanted to offer some parting thoughts on our life-changing church community. Consistent with my prior columns for Inspire, I'll frame up my comments in the context I have used all year – People, Purpose and Pause.

People – I could fill this whole Inspire magazine with stories about the people of Wayzata Community Church. We are blessed to be part of a community that believes deeply in the power of faith formation and the importance of following Jesus into a changing world. From members who have been volunteering their time for decades to members who have just joined one of our many boards or committees, we are a community that cares for each other and for the world at large. I'd especially like to thank the members of the Church Council, and Vice Moderator Christen Christopherson, for all the passion, energy and time they give to our church.

But the people I want to highlight in this final column are our wonderful church staff. As Moderator and a member of Council, one gets an inside look into the life of the church and all that our staff and clergy do to develop and deliver our many ministries. There isn't space to thank each person individually for their many contributions, but we are blessed with a wonderful team. Some, like

Jodie Nyberg or John Estrem, have been here for decades, and their passion for their ministries is truly a gift. Others, like recent additions Mike Solberg and Ann Hunhoff, are new to our church, but are leading youth ministries that are vital for our church. I am truly grateful for ALL that this great team has done to support me, the Church Council, and the congregation at large.

Purpose – If there was one over-arching theme that came out of the work our church members, clergy and staff did with Tod Bolsinger on our strategic plan, it is that our church wants to have a positive impact in the world. Some of that energy starts right in our own building through worship, education, and other faith formation programs. But there is a deep interest and passion to make a real difference in our broader community and the world. Our members want to support the new residents of Cranberry Ridge, help refugees get resettled, and provide assistance to others in need.

As the Council and staff look to the future, I am confident WCC will continue to find new ways for members to be the heart, hands and feet of Jesus in our world. I can't think of a higher purpose than that.

Pause – Thanks to the thoughtful and intentional efforts of our clergy, we have all been exposed in the last year to new ways that we can pause, reflect, and discern what God is call-

“If there is one over-arching theme that came out of the work our church members, clergy and staff did with Tod Bolsinger on our strategic plan, it is that our church wants to have a positive impact. There is a deep interest and passion to make a real difference in our community and the world.”

ing us to be. For me, this is still an area that has room for improvement. I admire those people who have the discipline and presence to meditate in the morning or spend time each day in prayer. They bring a sense of peace and serenity to every aspect of their lives. I would encourage each of you to find that practice that works for you, and if you are so inclined, share it with others (like me) who are still finding ways to pause.

Finally, a deep note of gratitude to all of you for giving me the privilege to serve as Moderator of WCC. I stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before me, and it's been an honor to play a small part in the life of Wayzata Community Church.

See you in church!

A WORD OF GRATITUDE

We are so grateful for John Hallberg's leadership as he served as WCC's Moderator during a season of great transition in our church community. John, THANK YOU for your enduring and contagious passion for our church! Our community is immeasurably blessed by you.



Sustainability

We are thrilled to announce that the City of Wayzata recently named Wayzata Community Church the first recipient of the city's new Wayzata Sustainability Champion Award.

"The City feels this is an important award because businesses and organizations have the potential to make significant positive impacts in sustainability," Wayzata Parks Planner Nick Kieser said. "We want to show how organizations are making progress so other groups can learn from them."

John Estrem has been WCC's Director of Building & Grounds for 41 years, and throughout his years in this role, sustainability has grown to become a front-of-mind consideration. "The church has a commitment to being a leader in taking care of the Earth," John said.

John has led sustainability initiatives for more than 20 years. Other key leaders in this work include WCC members Laura Babcock, Chad Gehrman, Jason Parks, Leigh Kallestad, Brian Trunk, and Don Miller all past or present members of the Building & Grounds Board.

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

In 2003, Wayzata became the first city in Hennepin County to begin offering curbside organics recycling. As a neighborhood leader who championed that effort, John recalls wanting to bring that same mindset to WCC. "That's what really engaged me in wanting to implement an organics programs at WCC — so we started having a dumpster for organics as soon as it became available for a commercial account," he said.

John also saw an opportunity to bring sustainability practices to Wednesday community meals, which serve an average of 180 guests every week. The church decided to no longer use or offer disposable items, and instead began using reusable plates and silverware. WCC also started to prioritize placing waste into the organics bins, and have also eliminated individual servings of butter in plastic containers. The changes also led to the development of the "Kitchen Krew," a group of dedicated members who wash dishes after every meal.

WCC also began sorting through waste after each community meal to gather information on what was working and what could be done better. The efforts became such a priority that the weekly events were named "Zero Waste Community Meals."

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SUSTAINABILITY (CONTINUED)

John shared that one of the biggest surprises came when WCC used waste sort and purchasing information to learn that more than 1,700 pounds of paper towels had been going from the church to landfill each year. “That kind of blew our minds!” he said. That allowed church leaders to put organics labels, which were provided by Hennepin County at no cost, on all restroom containers and pair them with trash containers.

Among the most important improvement in sustainability made was switching to LED for all exterior lighting and most interior lighting. Boilers are tuned every year, HVAC filters are replaced on a regular schedule, and almost all fans and pumps have been equipped with variable frequency drives. Additionally, staff is encouraged to turn off office equipment when it's not in use, and motion sensor lights have been installed in offices and common work areas.

SOLAR INSTALLATION

WCC is getting closer to realizing a goal that John has had for more than a decade: solar installations in the church. “It was always such an expensive project,” he said. “It almost seemed unreachable.”

But, thanks to grants that are now available through Xcel Energy and the US Department of Energy for non-profit organizations, the reality of a solar installation on the roof has suddenly become a very affordable and compelling opportunity. “The availability of these grants was a complete game changer,” said John. “It’s like a dream come true for me.”

And thanks to a years-long series of studies conducted by the Buildings & Grounds Board, WCC is well positioned to act quickly to pursue these grants with a solar provider already selected. We expect that the installation of the project could begin in August and be fully functional by later this fall. Our project of around 60 solar panels will provide about 10% of our electric energy needs and will pay for itself in less than 5 years, with an estimated total life of up to 25 years. And of course, much consideration of the placement of the panels has been given to allow for good functionality but also for a minimal impact on aesthetics for our beautiful building.

We are grateful for John, for his longtime vision of sustainability and care for the Earth, his team leadership through the years, and his dedication to seeing that dreams come true. Congratulations on this well-deserved Sustainability award!



Ina Jantzen, WCC's amazing housekeeper and kitchen coordinator, shows off the organics label meant to help maintain the church's sustainability efforts.



For his Eagle Scout project, WCC member Cody Clark built a rain garden to help roof drainage between the church's East entrance and Mithun Hall. The rain garden has also improved the ground-water quality and reduced runoff to rivers and streams.



BAPTISMS

- Hailey Aletta Whiting, daughter of Melissa & Mitchell Whiting.
- Risto David Arola, son of Jamie & Andy Arola.

CARES

If we can be helpful before or during your hospital stay, please call our Pastoral staff at the church, 952-473-8877.

CONDOLENCES

- To the family and friends of Ann Howard, on December 7, 2022.
- To the family and friends of Max Wilhelm, on February 1, 2023.
- To the family and friends of Mary Davis, on February 10, 2023.
- To the family and friends of William Bieber, on April 7, 2023.
- To the family and friends of Elizabeth (Betsy) Ellgren, on March 29, 2023. A celebration of life service will be held on September 23, 2023.

*celebrations
& transitions*

Inspire Magazine

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COMING UP AT WCC



Next Chapter with Chris Thibodeaux

Entrepreneur – Pastor – NBA Chaplain

Thursday, June 8, 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Prior to the event, Clint Clark, Emmy award winning pianist, will present a concert at 6:00 p.m.

Chris Thibodeaux is an award-winning corporate professional with an extensive career in Sales, Marketing & Communications. He has managed teams from 10 to 100's in the Pharmaceutical Industry stretching over 20 years. He is the Senior Pastor of Family Life Center Ministries where he continues the work started by his parents over 40 years ago. He also serves as a Chaplain for the Minnesota Timberwolves. He is also the Founder & Owner of the Career Fitness Center, where he provides Executive Coaching services and offers a unique self-paced online learning platform for professionals looking to advance in their careers. His client portfolio includes companies like United Health Group and the NFL and he works with CEO's, Athletes, Managers, Entrepreneurs and more. Chris is also the author of "Get Your Career in Shape". Read more about Chris on our website at www.wayzatacommunitychurch.org/next-chapter.



Girl's Night Out

Let's gather for some Girl Time as we head to The Muni (Wayzata Bar & Grill) Wednesday, June 7 in Wayzata immediately following our first Music + Message on the Lawn (around 7:45 p.m.) Open to all women of every age and stage, whether new to WCC or a longtime member. Single, married, young adult, seasoned, and everywhere in between — ALL are encouraged to attend. We hope to help women find connection and friendship in community, as well as look ahead toward our WCC Women's Ministry launching this Fall. We value your ideas, and we'd love to connect. Hope to see you there!



Guys Night Out

Let's gather for some Guy Time as we head to The Muni (Wayzata Bar & Grill) Wednesday, June 14 in Wayzata immediately following Music + Message on the Lawn (around 7:45 p.m.) Open to all men of every age and stage, whether new to WCC or a longtime member. Single, married, young adult, seasoned, and everywhere in between — ALL are encouraged to attend. We hope to help men find connection and friendship in community, as well as look ahead toward our WCC Men's Ministry launching this Fall. We value your ideas, and we'd love to connect. Hope to see you there!

COMING UP AT WCC



We're gearing up for another great season of Music + Message on the front lawn, beginning June 7!

- 5:30 p.m. Gathering + Food
- 6:30 p.m. Music + Message
- 7:30 p.m. Fellowship + Adele's Custard
- June 7: Power Tap with Special Guest Kenni Holman
- June 14: Scottie Miller and Band
- June 21: 2 Girls and A Boyd with Richard Kriehn
- June 28: Low Company, featuring Pat Frederick

We'll be grilling hot dogs again this summer, served with chips. Or you are welcome to bring your own picnic dinner! There will be a special children's play area with games, arts & crafts. And of course, Adele's Custard will be served every week! Look for more details to come on our website and in the Summer Catalog!



**From the Heart:
Passages that Inspire Us**

June Sermon Series

From the Heart: Passages that Inspire Us

June 4, 11, 18 & 25

Join Steve Wiens, Lindy Purdy, Dan Stark and special guest Osheta Moore as they each share a scripture passage that has inspired them over the course of their lives. It's our hope that reflecting on these passages together will encourage our entire congregation to consider which Scripture passages most inspire them.



Boat drivers/fun providers needed for a few Camp days!

We are looking for a number of experienced boaters to assist with the recreational boating operations at our WCC Summer Camp in June and July 2023. If you're comfortable and experienced to operate our 19-foot Bayliner Runabout to tow campers on our towable devices and provide lake excursions, we'd love to see you at camp! We have five camp sessions this summer and each session plans for lake days. The camp is only an hour west of WCC in Annandale, so it's a quick, easy drive!

Each shift is from 12 noon to 4 p.m. for any of the boating days scheduled. You could do one day or multiple days, and you can sign up with a friend to form a driver/spotter team. We'll provide lunch or dinner with the campers and staff. It's a great afternoon on the water, and it's also guaranteed fun and a great way to connect with campers and directly experience our WCC Summer Camp excitement. Days we will need volunteers are: June 14-15, June 21-22, June 25-26, July 7-8 and July 11-12. Please contact Dave Knoll with your availability at 952-246-1176 or at Dknoll@wayzatacommunitychurch.org to volunteer!

WAYZATA COMMUNITY CHURCH
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PERIODICAL
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL



WISH

Widowed in Social Harmony

Are you looking for a group to join for in-person activities and social support after losing a spouse or significant other? Not a grief group, but a group of women and men who understand the complex process you have been through and are going through?

WISH is a faith-based social group that meets monthly (or more often, as ideas arise!), and members enjoy taking turns hosting anything from a movie night, enjoying a meal together, doing service projects, attending concerts, exploring museums, and just chatting over coffee — the sky's the limit! The group is open to all ages and stages of loss of a significant other. Visit WC-Connect and look for the WISH group, or contact Laura Lagenaur (llag@comcast.net) or Rev. Dan Stark (dstark@wayzatacommunitychurch.org) to find out more!