

WAYZATA COMMUNITY CHURCH

**SUMMER 2023** 

# Mom Circle

BY DENISE CORMANEY

Can you think of a time when you felt like you truly belonged?

I don't mean feeling like you fit in. Can you think of a time you were able to be your authentic self, without fear of rejection? A time you were with a group of people who fully embraced you as you, without judgment or agenda. A place where you felt fully seen.

This past April, a group of 15 moms went on an overnight retreat to the Episcopal House of Prayer in Collegeville, MN. Lovingly led by Michele, Autumn and Lindy, we spent 24 hours sharing, praying, crying and laughing about our lives as parents of disabled kids. It was an experience of true belonging.

Special-needs families like ours rarely feel like we belong anywhere. We wonder what it's like to send our kids to school, knowing what they need is already in place. We see typical kids



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who make friends, going to birthday parties and sleepovers with ease. We dream of being the kind of mom who can share the load with her friends, picking up each other's kids from school, dropping our kids off for playdates, taking on an extra kid for an afternoon when something unexpected comes up. We hang on the edges of mom circles, listening to them share their "relatable" experiences, smiling and nodding while feeling increasingly unseen and alone.

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# MOM CIRCLE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This reality can be really hard.

Let me be clear: none of this is our kids' fault. There is nothing wrong with them. They are beloved image-bearers of God, worthy of love and belonging like everyone else. As parents, the biggest obstacles we face come from living in a society that doesn't make room for kids like ours. Everything feels like a fight: finding the much-needed support, a decent education, the people who will accept our kids exactly as they are. Many public spaces are inaccessible to our families because we simply cannot fit in. Parents often feel isolated and overwhelmed at home, unable to find the help we need because that help simply doesn't exist. Our kids are not to be blamed, and we are not to be pitied. We just want our kids to belong, and for our communities to support our families in ways that typical families take for granted.

This retreat created a mom circle where everyone could feel seen and supported. Lindy, Michele and Autumn made us feel deeply cared for, holding space for our tender stories and our raw emotions. The sense of community was strong and the connections were powerful. We listened to each other's stories and knew we were not alone. We belonged.

This is what the Parables Ministry does best at WCC: intentionally creating a space that invites people on the margins into the heart of our community. It is a sacred space where people feel truly seen and fully loved for who they are. It is doing the work of Jesus, bringing forth the Kingdom of God, on earth as it is in heaven.

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# From our Moderator

**CHRISTEN CHRISTOPHERSON** 

here's no place like Minnesota in the summer, don't you agree? The late sunsets, the glorious North Woods, the shimmering lakes, and so many community celebrations, parades and festivals. So many places call themselves "God's country" but in my opinion, if you spend summer in Minnesota, you've found it. And at Wayzata Community Church, despite many of our congregation being on vacation or Up North during the summer months, our community is just as glorious and shimmering during this time as well.

As I noted in my introductory speech as Moderator in April, our Council wants to continue to **focus on Invitation** — the many ways we invite the world into our church, and the many ways we invite our church into the world. Summer is an excellent time for us all to extend such an invitation.

Over 200 kids ventured to Chi Rho Center on the shores of Lake Sylvia for Summer Camp this year. After weathering the tough years of "camp in a box" and pandemicrelated slow downs, it feels like we can declare: Camp Is Back! New leaders and a few old friends served on this important ministry team for the summer, and we know that they have grown as leaders, and have inspired our youth to someday serve in this fashion. Our daughter Ingrid attended camp in her high school years, aspired to be on the staff, and then served on the camp leadership team for a number of years — this is one of our churches strongest youth leadership development programs, and I have seen first hand how that opportunity has impacted her life and career path. I invite you to get to

know our camp staff and learn how multi-talented and dedicated they are. Many of the staff stay on to help with Vacation Bible School, which is another great training ground for future young leaders (and a whole lot of fun too!). As well, the Camp Board is rebuilding and we'll continue to discuss at Council and through the board how our camp ministry can continue to develop.

June Music Message on & Wednesday nights brought together excellent performances, fantastic hot dogs, and the most delicious cookies, pretzels and bread from our mission partners Bricks to Bread. I had the opportunity to work with Nancy Alvarado at her outdoor oven to make some of these items (as did many others — thank you for your help!). Nancy welcomes volunteers into her home kitchen to prepare items for the outdoor oven, which are sold to fund additional oven-building projects. She learned to build ovens at the North House Folk School in Grand Marais and now builds ovens with women in communities throughout Costa Rica, changing their ability to provide for their families and bring their communities together to share breads, pizzas and other baked goods. It is an inspiring story of her great faith to "change lives with a brick and a loaf." I invite you to bake alongside her in the future.

I've had the great fortune of spending a lot more time working at **Rummage Sale** preparation and getting to see the tremendous scope of this ministry. It's been exciting to see new volunteers and more kids and teens coming to help for the first time this summer! Part of the fun of working at Rummage is seeing what happens to some of the

66 As we move into the fall stewardship campaign and work to build a year-round culture of generosity, we invite you to think of the ways the mission of WCC has touched your lives, and how you'd like to see WCC touch the lives of this community and the world.

things we've donated. Last year I stopped the man who bought my old wooden Wilson "Miss Chris" tennis racket I had from childhood, and he told me he collected old rackets, and was so excited to find this one! I invite you to think ahead to next summer to help out on this team — your talents can be invaluable for getting these treasures into new hands.

I extended the invitation to our Council members to have our June meeting at my house in Plymouth. We had robust conversation about our work with generosity consultant Mike Ward. As we move into the fall stewardship campaign and work to build a year-round culture of generosity, we invite you to think of the ways the mission of WCC has touched your lives, and how you'd like to see WCC touch the lives of this community and the world. Additionally, we will focus our conversation in August on the work of the Engagement Task Force, working with both Autumn Toussaint and the council's Program Director Jeff Johnson in connecting people and boards in fun and meaningful ways. Everyone's invited to upcoming Brew Nights on July 27 (Luce Line Brewing) and August 24 (Boom Island Brewing). Invite a friend, make a new friend, and help us live out our middle name: Community.

I'll see you in church!

# A Vision for Parables







# 2013

#### THE INSPIRATION FOR PARABLES

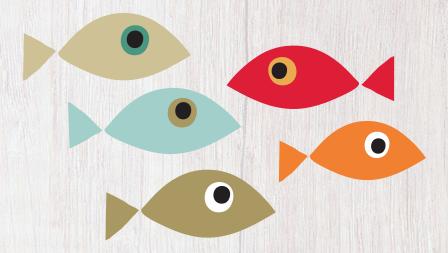
Being a "special needs parent" can include unique challenges in life.
Integrating a special needs child and their family into the mainstream of life can be a difficult undertaking. It is also true that many churches are ill prepared to serve the special needs that some families can bring. Wayzata Community Church wanted to help change that.

The inspiration for this idea came after attending a service at Wayzata Community Church. A young church member with special needs began to loudly sing "Jesus Loves Me" during a sermon. Because it was disturbing to those around him, the child's father quickly wheeled him out into the hallway. This had been such a holy moment—the child was moved by the Spirit to praise God in song, with no inhibitions, but was discouraged by our society's protocol. In that moment, we knew that this community needed a worship service of total inclusion to celebrate the unique gifts of those in the disability community and to have the spiritual support of other parents who also walk this "road less traveled." The inspiration for Parables was born.





The first Parables worship service was held in the original Chapel on October 12, 2013, led by Rev. Leslie Neugent and Autumn Toussaint, with guest musician Charles Lazarus.



THE RED FISH. Each of us is a unique and unrepeatable miracle created in the sacred image of God. The Parables Red Fish symbolizes the unique and extraordinary gifts those in the disability community bring to the world — not swimming the "wrong" way, but swimming in their own individual way.

### THE PARABLES TIMELINE



# 2015

#### A NEW, ACCESSIBLE WORSHIP SPACE

One of the major goals of the 2014 Raise the Roof Capital Campaign was to renovate and revitalize under-appreciated spaces to house growing ministries. Specifically, the Chapel needed to be a sacred space for all. The plan created a slightly larger space to accommodate side aisles; eliminate accessibility challenges; and accommodate growth for our Parables, and 8 a.m. worship services, and adult learning opportunities. The original 1968 Chapel was demolished and the footprint was expanded to create a flexible, multi-use space free of physical barriers. In December, 2015 the Parables service was held in the new Chapel for the first time with enthusiasm and fanfare! (Side note: the beautiful leaded glass windows that lined the back of the original Chapel were carefully repurposed as the top of the windows in the new Parlor!)











#### THE PARABLES TIMELINE



Respite Care

In 2016, Parables started offering monthly four-hour Respite Care for on either a Friday night or Saturday morning/afternoon, a safe place for special needs children & youth where they would be cared for by a loving, understanding staff. The program was developed and staffed by Kelly Pederson, a Minnetonka special ed teacher/Parables consultant, along with a variety of other volunteers to meet the needs of those attending. Parables Respite Care continues to this day.



# **Upstream Arts**

Parables has been collaborating with Upstream Arts programs since 2017. Upstream Arts works to integrate individuals with cognitive, developmental, emotional, behavioral, and physical disabilities into multidisciplinary arts residencies designed to develop social/emotional and communication skills vital to success in school, work and life. In their programs, local professional artists—including actors, musicians, poets, visual artists, and dancers—teach fundamental skills in a variety of art forms through fun activities that nurture self-expression, conversation, and group participation.



# Getty

One of the most precious gifts that the Parables ministry has received is our safe, furry friend, "Golden Girl Getty" (named for television's Golden Girl, Estelle Getty). She and her owner/partner, Wendy Hitch, are a nationally registered therapy team. On Sunday mornings (and at many other Parables events) Getty is in worship to greet and comfort those who are overwhelmed or just in need of some unconditional love. The children gather around her and Getty works her magic as the hands and feet of Christ in the room. Getty and Wendy were given the WCC Spirit Award in 2017 for their pastoral presence and contributions to the Parables community.



# Miracle League

Parables sponsors a Miracle League Baseball Team, The Parables Parrots! This league is truly magical in demonstrating inclusion and belonging for all. The Miracle League is about making new friends, building self-esteem and being treated just like other athletes.



# **Best Buddies**

Parables participates in the Best Buddies Friendship Walk every Spring with a team, The Parables Prophets. The walk raises money for Best Buddies Minnesota, which offers One-to-One Friendship and Leadership Development programs for individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Minnesota.



# POW & AWE

POW is a fun faith-filled hour using song, dance, art and games to explore stories from the Bible. We start with open gym to release some of the days energy and then we move into the days lesson. AWE is for our adults of Parables to come together and explore the Bible and their relationship with God, in a safe and unique space to grow in your faith. Both programs are held on Wednesdays and Parables friends often sit together for dinner at the Community Meal.

### PARABLES DISABILITY MINISTRY

# Creating a "no shush zone"

n the summer of 2013, Autumn Tousssaint sent out an email to staff at WCC with a plea that it was time to start "something" for our Special Needs families. John Ross, Leslie Neugent, Lindy Purdy, Jodie Nyberg and others responded with an immediate, "Yes! What can we do?"

That "something" began as a monthly support group, and quickly escalated into becoming part of the Raise the Roof Campaign in which the Chapel transformed into the sacred space we know today: a space that welcomes all just as they are! What was even more transformative was the relationships that began to form. They supported one another and they prayed for each other. They began worshiping together in a "no shush zone" where they weren't judged, and where they felt a deep sense of belonging. They were surrounded by people who understood their struggles. They noticed when others were absent and checked in on them. This was the beginning of Parables — Special Needs, Special Gifts Ministry.

Parables continued to evolve, growing from a Sunday morning worship service into full programming: parent/caregiver support, friendship groups and a much wider church involvement. One time, a new mother inquired about the Parables programming, but politely declined an invitation to the Parables worship service, insisting that they would attend worship in the Sanctuary. Our goal is that everyone feels like they belong, whether they are in the Chapel, the Sanctuary, attending a Wednesday class or serving Community Meal. However, one Sunday, this family decided to attend a Parables worship service in the Chapel. At the end of worship, I greeted the mother, and with tears falling down her cheeks, she simply responded, "I get it, this is so beautiful. I have never seen anything like it." Our hope is that wherever you land at WCC, you feel the inclusive love of Jesus.

#### A Big Change

The evolution of Parables has recently gone through another big change: a name change, from Parables, Special Needs, Special Gifts to Parables Disability Ministry. Language matters and it's very personal — and — change is hard. So why did we decide to make this change? It started over a year ago. A grandmother with a grandchild who attends Parables sent me several articles about language around Special Needs and Disability. The articles emphasized that it is up to every individual as to how they identify and for us to honor their preference.

Two main ways when referring to disability are: person first language (PFL) and Identity First Language (IFL). For example, using Person First Language (PFL), someone might say, "I am Maddison and I have Autism." Another person may use Identity First Language (IFL), saying, "I am Autistic, my name is Maddison." Some of our Parables friends have made it extremely clear that their disability is a huge part of their identity while others choose to not make it a part of their identity. It is entirely up to each individual.



#### **A National Shift**

As we continued to explore and become more educated on using disability vs. special needs, it became clear that there has been a major shift nationally in going back to using the word disability. A decade ago, the word disability was understood to be demeaning because it seemed to highlight what a person can't do. We now understand that a disability is not inherently bad and should not be stigmatized. The term "disability" refers to a physical, cognitive, developmental or mental impairment. It's a natural part of being human. One in four Americans have a disability. People with disabilities have the same needs as everyone else food, housing, healthcare, education, etc. The difference is not in what the person needs, it's in how their needs can be met.

WCC will continue to work on creating an accessible and welcoming environment that meets these needs. I hope you take time to attend a Parables Worship Service, there really is nothing like it!

Michele Ramert

Director of Parables Disability Ministry

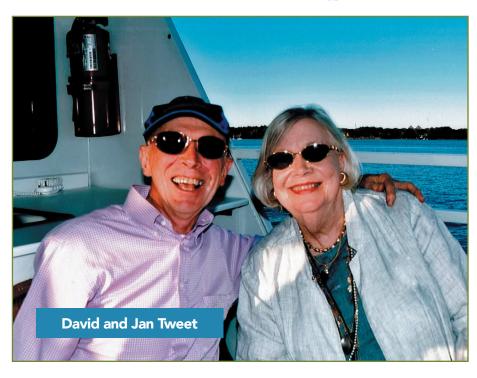
# "I promised Jan I would live a simple life."

ible Study for Dummies is what got Jan and David Tweet connected to Wayzata Community Church. The preaching, outreach, music, and community care kept them here until Jan died on June 13, 2021. Though they never joined WCC, this has been their church home since they got here.

These days, David can be found helping with the Rummage Sale, restoring furniture for people in need at his retirement community, or spending time with his friends. He lives a simple life these days to fulfill a promise made to Jan, because he has a bigger purpose. When Jan died, he promised not only that he would honor her wishes to give away 95% of their assets, he also promised that he would spend as little of their money as possible in order that the gifts made would have an even bigger impact. He says it feels really good to live this way.

Jan taught 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade for 36 years. When she died, David got phone calls from people who had her as a teacher all the way back in 1958 who had to share that she was the best teacher of their life. There are dozens and dozens of letters from students and parents who shared how she discovered their talents and improved the lives of these kids.

Jan's lessons for the world aren't done yet. Even now, she and David are teaching what it is to be a steward of the resources God has first given us and how to have what we accumulate in life be a blessing to ministry in perpetuity. They have set up a trust that upon David's death will distribute their assets to the organizations that have meant so much to them over the years. They met at St.



Olaf College. Jan's passion for music and David's lifetime as a research chemist led them to establish scholarships for music and chemistry.

Wayzata Community Church will receive a gift to benefit the music ministry here as well as the Bible Study/Faith Formation activities of the church. David's wishes for this gift are on file with the church.

For David and Jan, a trust was the best way to include Wayzata Community Church in their estate plans. There are many options for making gifts through your estate. Some of these ways pay you an income for life. Others help your heirs avoid receiving assets that will have tax consequences for them. If you would like to learn more how you can join David and Jan by including WCC as part of your charitable estate plan, fill out the form below, or contact David Knoll at dknoll@wayzatacommunitychurch.org or 952-246-1176.

I have or I am interested in including Wayzata Community Church in my estate plans.
Name
Preferred email address
Phone



#### **BAPTISMS**

- Callan Emmett, son of Anna & Patrick McMahon, on May 28.
- Cameron David & Rylan Robert Anderson, grandsons of Gillian Jeffy-Anderson, on June 3.
- Emmy Jane, daughter of Allie & Ryan Michaelis, on Father's Day, June 18.
- Cameron, son of Alli and Mark Jones, on June 25.
- Walter Truman and Everett Rise, sons of Erin & Robert Newston, on July 9.
- Rory Mac, son of Ryan and Anna McMillin, on July 9.
- Elliott, son of Mike and Sarah Solberg, on July 9.

#### CARES

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

#### **CONDOLENCES**

- A service of committal was held for Forrest A.
   Nelson, son of Marilyn Nelson. Forrest died on October 18, 2022.
- Family and friends of Dorothy Welch, who died on January 27.
- Family and friends of Marlys Riedesel, who died on May 3. A service will be held on September 15, 2023.
- Marjorie Johnson and family on the death of her son, Michael Johnson, on May 3.
- Lindy McClure and family on the death of her mother, Jacquelyn DeKoning, on May 8.
- Family and friends of Greg Marion, who died on May 26.
- Becky McAlpine and Ashleigh Kreider on the death of Becky's husband and Ashleigh's stepgrandfather, Dan McAlpine, on June 18.
- Family and friends of Christine Maxson, who died on June 23.
- Family and freinds of Dr. John Cardle, who died on June 23.
- Tracy Clark and family on the death of her mother, Jill Johnson, on June 25.

### Inspire Magazine

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## COMING UP AT WCC

INSPIRE THE WORLD WITH
THE INCLUSIVE LOVE
OF JESUS. BE A CARING
COMMUNITY DRAWN
TOGETHER BY GOD'S GRACE AND
CALLED TO PERSONALLY LIVE OUT
CHRIST'S LOVE. ACTIVELY EXTEND
A WELCOME INVITATION
TO ALL PEOPLE, EMBRACING
EACH OTHER WITH
UNCOMPROMISING COMPASSION.
BOLDLY CHALLENGE OUR
OWN COMPLACENCY THROUGH
COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION
AND TRANSFORMATIONAL WORSHIP.
RELENTLESSLY SHARE OUR
EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS
THROUGH LIFE-CHANGING
MISSION AND SERVICE—
NEAR AND FAR.

### **August Sermon Series**

# Wayzata Community Church: Why We're Here August 6, 13, 20, 27 and September 3

For over 140 years, Wayzata Community Church has been a physical and spiritual landmark in the lives of thousands of people, each with a unique faith journey and life story. Join Danielle Jones, Steve Wiens, Lindy Purdy and Autumn Toussaint as we explore the heart of why Wayzata Community Church exists and what we hope for the future.



# **August Brew Night Out**

### Boom Island Brewing Company, Minnetonka Thursday, August 24 at 7:00 p.m.

Brew Night Out — everyone is invited! A welcoming and comfortable space for new WCC folks AND long-time attenders alike — come make some new connections, and deepen current ones. Who doesn't like good conversation mixed with delicious local beverages (including non-alcoholic options) and yummy food? Couples, singles, friend groups, maybe you're in your 20's, or you're in your 90's! All are welcome — just show up! This Brew Night Out is hosted by WCC members Kris & Jim Sanford, Marie & Aaron Schutte, Chris Paulson & Hope Quinn, and Autumn & Chris Toussaint. Questions? Contact Autumn at atoussaint@wayzatacommunitychurch.org



# **Summer Camp Golf Fundraiser**

Friday August 25, 2023 2:00 p.m. Shotgun Start Pioneer Creek Golf Course in Maple Plain Cost is \$125 per person or \$500 for a set foursome.

Join us for golf, spend time with friends, and support a good cause all at the same time! The Camp and Retreat Ministry Board of Wayzata Community Church invites you to participate in the 5th Annual Summer Camp Fundraiser! Funds raised at the event will go towards camp scholarships. Visit our website at www.wayzatacommunitychurch.org/summer-camp-golf-fundraiser for more information and to register!

### COMING UP AT WCC



# **Brown Bag Bible with Lindy Purdy**

#### **Thursday, August 10**

#### 12 noon in the Colonnade and Garden

Bring your lunch and join Lindy Purdy for Bible Study and fellowship. As we gaze out over our beautiful garden we'll discuss together some of Lindy's favorite Bible passages, and hear about yours as well. All are welcome!



# **Third Thursday Readers**

# August 17, September 21, October 19 1:00-3:00 p.m., Onan Room

All are welcome to join this group of women and men for a lively discussion of a wide variety of fiction (historical, literary), and nonfiction books. Participate each month or whenever you are able. Contact Margaret Green with any questions, margyg63@gmail.com. Upcoming books we will discuss are:

- August 17: Demon Copperhead, by Barbara Kingsolver
- September 21: Love and Ruin, A Novel, by Paula McLain
- October 19: For Whom the Bell Tolls, by Ernest Hemingway



## **Summer Auditions Workshop**

Four-day audition workshop for children & youth with Good Works Community Theater and Blue Water Theater Company

### For youth in 3rd through 12th grades August 16-19 • 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Over the course of 4 mornings together, students will be immersed in the world of theater, and receive individualized and group guidance from BWTC and GWCT staff and instructors in numerous areas.

Areas include Acting, Singing & Vocalization, Stage Movement. and How to prepare and present yourself.

Cost: our suggested range is \$75-\$250. We have specified a \$75 minimum in order to cover all WCC costs. Anything above what is used to offset our costs will be a donation split equally between the two theater companies. Scholarships are available. For more information and to register, visit https://bit.ly/auditionsworkshop









# VBS Sunday August 6

Join us at 8 a.m. for our Chapel Communion Service, and at 10 a.m. for Contemporary music and VBS Sunday! We'll hear the highlights of Vacation Bible School from Miss Jodie, and Autumn Toussaint will be preaching.

Following worship, we will be creating a Snake Rock Sculpture! Join us at the paint stations in Founders Hall right after the 10 a.m. service and paint a rock as unique as you are! The rocks will be placed along the edge of our front garden to form a long snake sculpture. The concept of the rock snake originally started as a pandemic project to lift people's spirits. Now, in this inclusion activity, the effort continues as a way to create a community sculpure with images and positive messages people would like to share with the world!