

Oak Leaves

APRIL 2024

Care for God's Good Creation

Our faith urges us to defend and heal creation while working to assure justice for all of creation and the human beings who live in it. This call is rooted in the human vocation of “tilling and keeping” the garden from Genesis 2:15, as well as Christ’s charge to work with and for the most vulnerable. Because of their love for Christ who is firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), churches are challenged to live in a manner consistent with God’s call to not only care for creation, but commune with creation. In 2018, Oak Grove Presbyterian Church became an Earth Care Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and each year since we have committed to the following:

Earth Care Pledge

Peace and justice is God’s plan for all creation. The earth and all creation are God’s. God calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family. As God offers all people the special gift of peace through Jesus Christ, and through Christ reconciles all to God, we are called to deal justly with one another and the earth.

1. Our **worship** and discipleship will celebrate God’s grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect and restore this earth.

2. In **education**, we will seek learning and teaching opportunities to know and understand the threats to God’s creation and the damage

already inflicted. We will encourage and support each other in finding ways of keeping and healing the creation in response to God’s call to earth-keeping, justice and community.

3. Our **facilities** will be managed, maintained, and upgraded in a manner that respects and cherishes all creation, human and non-human, while meeting equitably the needs of all people. In our buildings and on our grounds, we will use energy efficiently, conserve resources, and share what we have in abundance so that God’s holy creation will be sustainable for all life and future generations.

4. Our **outreach** will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the vulnerable and degraded earth as well as oppressed and neglected people. We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can positively or negatively affect our neighborhood, region, nation, and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships.



OAK LEAVES

Official publication of Oak Grove Presbyterian Church is published monthly.

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LOVING GOD... CHANGING LIVES!

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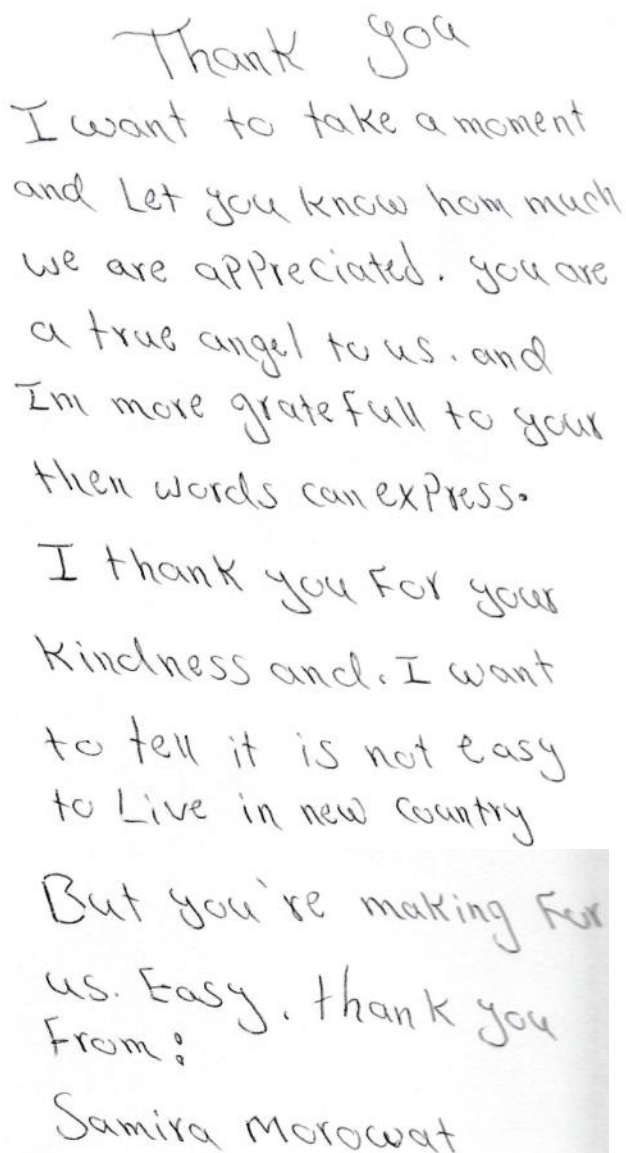
Afghan Resettlement Update

Early in Oak Grove's partnership to welcome the Sharifi family, refugees from Afghanistan (January 2022), Samira, in her very good English, introduced herself to Sue Greimel and Kathy Howell. Samira, her husband, and their three children lived in the same apartments as our partner family, but they did not have a co-sponsor.

Her family has networked really well due to their English skills and fabulous hospitality. Oak Grove has partnered with them on a few things, like finding and moving to a new apartment, guidance regarding school extra-curriculars for the kids, and most recently, financial assistance for adult root canals and crowns, since public insurance only covers removal of problem teeth.

Recently Carol Long delivered a card from her neighbor to Oak Grove (at right).

If you would like to contribute to Oak Grove's fund for assistance with this type of dental care, it would be welcome and well-utilized.



Thank you
I want to take a moment
and let you know how much
we are appreciated. you are
a true angel to us. and
I'm more grateful to you
then words can express.
I thank you for your
kindness and. I want
to tell it is not easy
to live in new country
But you're making for
us. Easy. thank you
From:
Samira Morowat

Presbyterian Women

The Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area are hosting the 2024 Spring Gathering on Saturday, April 20 (9:30 am to 1:30 pm) at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Austin, Minn. The event is open to all Presbyterian Women at no cost.

If you would like a registration form, contact either Maureen Switzer (952-948-2414) or Meg Robles (612-798-5935). The guest speaker is Louella Voight who was part of the USA Mission Experience that went to the Arizona-Mexico border to learn about those who are migrating to the U.S. and their needs and issues. Lunch, discussions and worship are included in the day's schedule.

Golden Spotlight: Lou Traeder

Submitted by Nancy Kachel

Each month a member from our "Golden" age group (90 years plus) is selected at random to be interviewed. It is a joy to share stories from the lives of our "golden" members whose lives shine with faith and love.

Let's get acquainted with long-time member Lou Traeder. She was born in 1929 near Welch, Minn., near Red Wing. Lou had a brother and sister and was fortunate to have cousins and grandparents nearby. The kids played a lot down by the Cannon River all day. Lou would help Grandma with food during threshing time. Who can remember one-room schools? Lou went to one and even an INDOOR pit toilet. This was during the depression years and her Dad worked as a manager in the lumber yard. Lou grew up in the Lutheran Church in Welch.

Her high school years were in Red Wing, and she would stay in town for the school week. She stayed the first year with an aunt and uncle. After that, her parents paid for her to stay with others. She worked and paid her own way her senior year. She received \$7.00 a week working in the hospital. Lou wanted to become a nurse, so she went to Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. the first semester and then Bethesda School of Nursing in St. Paul. The students lived in old houses, and she earned her degree in three years. She then worked at Bethesda and Miller hospitals for two years. Off she went to California with no job. She found a job at Children's Hospital UCLA and lived with a friend until she got married.

There was a club at the YMCA in Santa Monica for people over 21. Lou met Blake there who was in college at the time. He was from Wisconsin, and they soon fell in love and got married. Blake served five years in the navy. They came to Minnesota during the summers for him to get a master's degree in education at



the University of Minnesota and lived with her mother. All told, Lou lived in California for 14 years. She and Blake moved back to Minnesota in 1965 with three children and one more on the way.

Blake worked at UNIVAC. During the recession, he was laid off and returned to teaching in the Minneapolis school system until retirement. Lou worked part-time at Masonic Home. They joined Oak Grove in 1967. Three of their children were married here. Lou is grateful she was raised in a church and has been nurtured there all these years. Her faith has helped her through losing two daughters, a son-in-law, and her husband. Blake died at age 69 after a stroke and living unable to communicate for a year. The others died at 34, 48, and 58; all relatively young.

Lou has been very active through the years at Oak Grove; two times a Deacon, church school, Presbyterian Women, Mod Mids, Sturdy Oaks, and church bridge.

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Lou also did blood pressure checks at church for a number of years, and she and Blake were part of a fishing group that went up north each year.

In her younger years, she loved gardening, golf, bridge, and skiing. She moved to 7500 York in 2013 and did gardening there for a

few years. Lou is still active there socially. When I think of Lou, it is first her lovely smile which seems to always be on her face, and her positive attitude. She says she has lived a full life and fortunate to be a part of the Christian family at Oak Grove. Oak Grove is blessed to have her also.

Community Corner

Come Together for Racial Justice:

Join Come Together the third Thursday of the month (7–8:30 pm) via Zoom in building relationships across boundaries in a community centered in BIPOC leadership. Ground yourself in conversations with others committed to racial justice and systems change.

Each month, Come Together features one or more neighborhood-based BIPOC leaders reflecting on themes like racial healing, leading in diverse contexts, asset-based community development and more.

We aspire to create a space for mutual learning and building relationships, being intentional about cultivating trust, welcome, safety, and a sense of belonging. For more information, visit: <https://www.cne-mn.org/cometogether>

Passive Housing Construction Tour: Thursday, April 4 (11 am to Noon)

Join Urban Homeworks for a tour of one of their passive homes currently under construction! Passive-certified homes are the most rigorous energy standard today, following a specific set of rules and guidelines that make them up to 80% more energy-efficient than standard code-built houses.

Touring this home while still under construction allows a "behind-the-scenes" look at some of the innovative and efficient components.

The exact location for the tour will be shared with attendees a week in advance. Please plan to wear good shoes/boots and dress warm. To sign up, visit: <https://bit.ly/3vwqbhp>

Sacred Sites Tour: Sunday, April 21 (1–5:00 pm)

The tour is led by Rev. Jim Bear Jacobs and offers an opportunity to learn about Minnesota history from a Native perspective through storytelling and experiencing the sites in silence, meditation, and reflection. Sites include Fort Snelling State Park, Dakota Internment Camp, and Pilot Knob Hill.

The cost is \$70/person and space is limited. Tours meet at Church of St. Peter, 1405 Sibley Memorial Highway, St. Paul 55120.

To register, visit: <https://bit.ly/3IS65dK>

Opportunity Fair

Sunday, April 14 (8:45–10:15 am)

Learn What Your Neighbors Are Doing in the Community!

After weeks of hints and videos, the Oak Grove Opportunity Fair is just around the corner. We will have the unique opportunity to meet representatives from 17 of our neighboring organizations. Like any good neighbor, we will want to learn how they are making a difference in the community and find out how we might help them, possibly through volunteering or other types of support.

You will have the opportunity to visit their display tables which will be set up in Gideon Pond Hall. Please visit and learn about as many organizations as possible but don't forget to stop by the kitchen serving window to sample the sambusa and cookies.

Sambusa comes from the Hoya company and is made by Somali women and men in the commercial kitchen at VEAP. The cookies come from the Cookie Cart and are made by youth of the North Minneapolis and St Paul areas. Refreshment donations will go to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

Come early so you have time to meet and learn how these 17 neighbors are improving our community and how you might help them. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors to this event.

Here is a snapshot of the neighbor organizations attending the event:

- **Brigging:** Provides furniture and household items once affordable housing has been obtained.
- **Bloomington Schools:** Offers opportunities to volunteer within the school environment and help kids.
- **Cornerstone:** Offers emergency housing and services to those in danger from domestic abuse.
- **Every Meal:** Provides weekend bags of food for school children in need.
- **League of Women Voters:** Provides education for voters and advocates for voter's rights.
- **Loaves & Fishes:** Provides evening weekday meals for individuals and families in need.
- **Meals on Wheels:** Provides home delivered weekday meals for homebound people.
- **Minnesota Council of Churches Refugee Services:** Assists refugees on a path to self-sufficiency.
- **Moms Demand Action:** Provides education and advocacy to change gun laws.
- **NAMI:** Provides support, education, and advocacy to build better lives for those experiencing mental illness.
- **Oasis for Youth:** Provides a safe haven, services, and community support for at-risk and homeless youth.
- **One Heartland:** Provides various camps for youth with HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ youth.
- **Aeon:** Provides affordable housing in Bloomington and the larger community.
- **Agate:** Provides advocacy as well as housing, food, and services for those experiencing homelessness.

ARTICLE CONTINUED ON **PAGE 7 >>**

- **START Senior Solutions:** Offers advocates to help seniors cut through the RED TAPE aging can bring.
- **Urban Homeworks:** Transforms neglected properties into dignified affordable housing.
- **VEAP:** Provides access to healthy food and connects clients to a network of services.

The Mission Committee is pleased to sponsor this event. We thank you for your interest in learning about our neighbors and how you and our Oak Grove community can help them as we work to be good neighbors to those in need.



Housing & Economic Justice

Oak Grove participated in the “Coldest Night of the Year” walk in downtown Minneapolis on Saturday, Feb 24. The purpose of the walk was to call attention to hunger and homelessness in our community and to raise funds for Agate Housing + Services. Agate is a nonprofit in Minneapolis that Oak Grove has worked with on hunger and housing issues in the past.

There were eleven “walkers” from Oak Grove, which was the most of any of the 37 teams that participated. The walk started and ended at the Agate Food Centre on Park Ave, across from Hennepin County Medical Center. The walk was about a mile in length, and passed by two Agate properties, an apartment building and a shelter, where residents

described their lived experience of being homeless, and highlighted some of the services provided by Agate.

Following the walk, there was a short program and a chili supper at the Food Centre. The 171 folks who took part in the walk raised more than \$34,000 for Agate Housing + Services, of which over \$1,400 was contributed by Oak Grove’s walkers. If you missed the walk this year, no worries, you can join us next year! Mark your calendars for March 8, 2025, and get ready to have fun and make a difference.

Financial\$

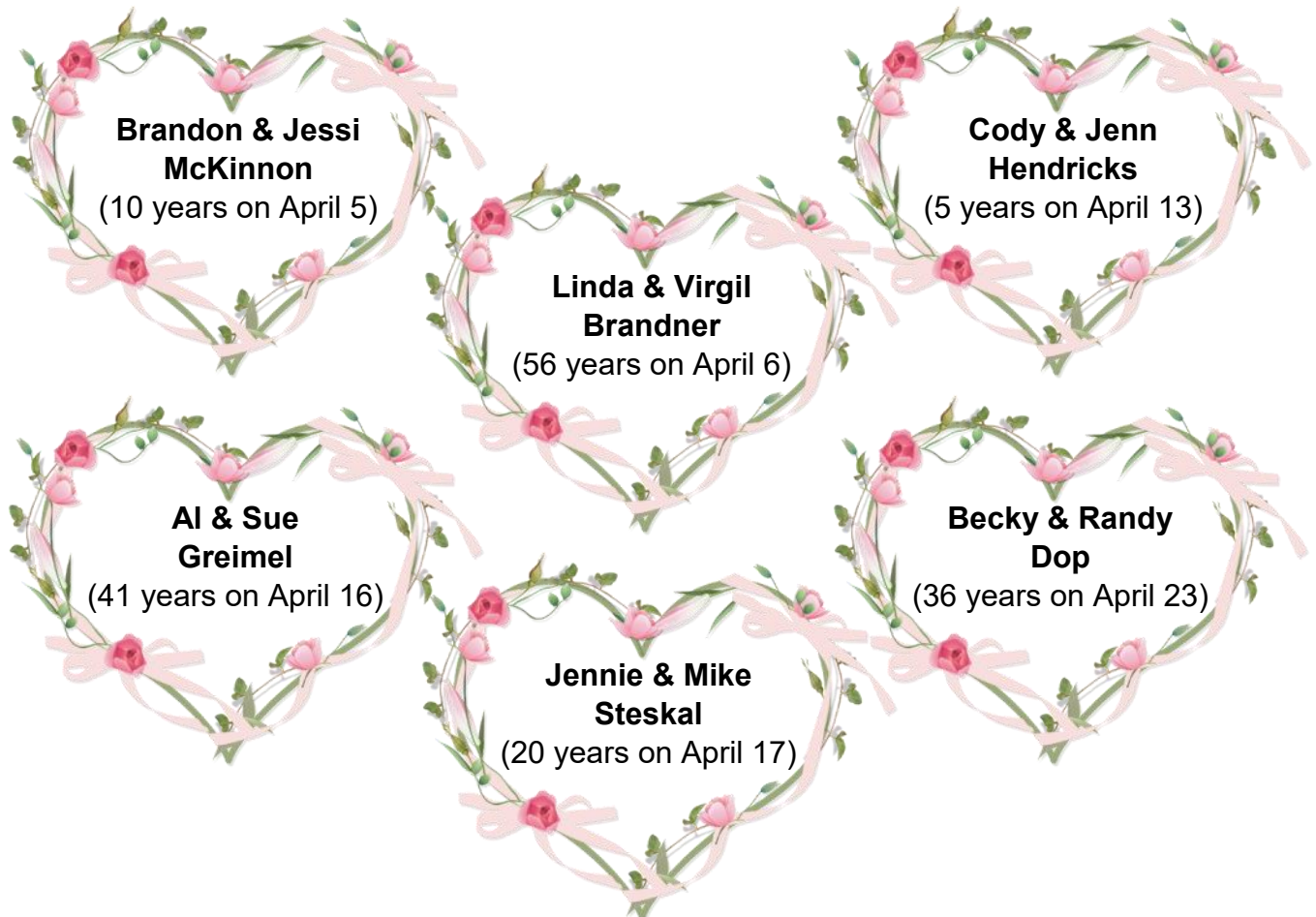
Submitted by Sue Greimel, Treasurer

Through Feb. 29, 2024	2024 YTD		Actual vs Budget	2023 YTD
	Actuals	Budget	Fav/(Unfav)	Actuals
Income YTD	\$198,090	\$185,280	\$12,810	\$191,504
Expense YTD	\$129,388	\$131,589	\$2,201	\$130,614
Income – Exp	\$68,701	\$53,691	\$15,011	\$60,890

Financial Summary:

February income was \$11.5K higher than budget, while expenses were over by \$2.1K (due to Technology computer purchase ahead of schedule). The yearly surplus of \$68.7K is \$15K better than expected.

Significant Anniversaries: 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30+ years



Condolences to Family and Friends of:

Isabel Zsohar (March 3), aunt of Amy Zsohar, at the age of 73 in San Antonio, Texas.

Dave Brennenstuhl (March 6), brother of Terry Taylor, at the age of 80 in Sheboygan, Wis.

Barb Ritchie (March 25), wife of Bob Ritchie and friend of Oak Grove.



VEAP Donations

Oak Grove's support for those in need in our community has always been awesome! We as a church will continue to collect donations year-round for VEAP, so please take note of the collection bin each time you come. There is a sign with suggested donations by week of the month, but any and all non-expired food items are welcome, as well as diapers, toilet paper, cleaning items, etc. Monetary donations are also always welcome. Thank you for being the incredible people you are!



April Birthdays

If you don't see your birthday, we either don't have that information or you requested that your name not appear. Important (1–21) and significant (85+) birthdays are listed in parentheses.



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1: JJ Johnson (16), Heather Duvall, Polly Johnson, Tammy Kaplan, Stephanie Larson, Karolyn Lee | 14: Helena Lefebvre (8), Sylvia Moore |
| 2: Vera DeLaHunt | 15: Liberty Bliss (9), Carol Brightman |
| 3: Ada Mee (5), Micala Burns | 16: Caden Hendricks (3) |
| 4: Carol Dykstra (90), Dawn Acker, Mary Render | 17: Jim Dutcher (91) |
| 5: Bob Horvath | 19: Jake Krey |
| 7: Brian Ebeling | 20: Sarah Orr (9), Carmen Roberts |
| 8: Cindy St. Martin | 21: Josie Greimel (3), Kay Lancette |
| 9: Verona Stoesz (92) | 22: Barb Nelson (93), Judy Acker, Lizanne Ham |
| 10: Al Gebhard | 23: Vanessa Davidson (9) |
| 12: Jan Lichtenberger | 25: Andy Snyder |
| 13: Nora Kelly (7) | 26: Jennifer Pol |
| | 28: Joy Langer, Bob Ritter |
| | 29: Gail Sudman |

Adult Faith Formation

SUNDAYS

Please join us on Sunday mornings (9–10:00 am) in the Fireside room for interesting presentations, good discussions and faithful topics.

Unable to attend in person? Then join us via Zoom at: <https://bit.ly/opgc-aff>.

April 7: We will gather around tables in the social hall for conversation. No speakers are scheduled for this day.

April 14: Volunteer Fair in the social hall

April 21: Join Gloria Larsen for an hour of earth-day reflection through expressive art. This is open to everyone and we promise to unleash your inner artist!

April 28: Join Reverend Jimmie Hawkins, the Director of the PCUSA Office of Public Witness as he shares about the church's advocacy in Washington and the United Nations.



We are excited about our April offerings for children. Sunday School will continue to meet throughout April.

Messy Church is coming on Sunday, April 21. The children will lead worship in song, bells, story, and offer the message. The theme for this year is "One World – An Earth Day Celebration."

WoW will meet three times in April! April 3 will feature Messy Church practice and games, April 10 will feature an all-ages concert, and

Jimmie is a speaker in high demand, and we feel lucky that he'll be joining us via Zoom from Washington, DC.

WEDNESDAYS

Join us Wednesday evenings for dinner at 5:45 pm and WoW! programs at 6:15 pm.

April 3: Adult Bible study

April 10: Concert in the Sanctuary for all ages!

April 17: Adult Bible study; this will be the final WoW for the program year.

Please see the WoW! insert for the menu.

April 17 will be our final WoW with Messy Church practice and party.

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, May 5: Family nature hike at the Old Cedar Bridge.

Sunday, May 19: Open House/End of year party for Sunday School.

June 10–13 (9 am to noon) VBS: Our theme this year is "I Love to Tell the Story!" Come learn about the stories of the Bible and how we are part of God's story.

August 4–9: A group of Oak Grove children will attend Presbyterian Clearwater Forest camp that week! If your child/grandchild is a rising third grader or above and would like to be part of the fun, please contact Karen Diller (763-772-8857)!

Fellowship Opportunities

Here at Oak Grove, there are lots of ways to engage with fellow members on a regular, monthly basis.

Men's Fellowship: April 2 **First Tuesday at Noon**

Join us for "*Burgers 'n' Brew*" at Zeke's Place (7700 W Old Shakopee Rd). This event pairs young(er) and old(er) men for a time of fellowship while enjoying lunch. Pick up someone who needs a ride and develop new friendships. Questions? Contact Jim McCarl (952-948-2991).

Soul Sisters: April 8 **Second Monday at 7:00 pm**

Please join us at Oak Grove for a time to check in and share fellowship and support. All women are invited, no need to RSVP. Questions? Contact Pastor Mary.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: April 23 **Fourth Tuesday at 10:00 am to Noon**

We meet monthly at church. The patterns, yarn and needles are provided. We are looking for more people who love to knit or crochet. All are welcome. Questions? Contact Nancy Kachel (952-884-1895).

Singles Fellowship: April 8 **Second Monday at 5:00 pm**

Singles Fellowship is a group of single adults who get together at Zeke's Place (7700 W Old Shakopee Rd) for socialization and support. No need to RSVP. Questions? Contact Jane Jacobson (612-267-9068).

Ladies Who Lunch: April 17 **Third Wednesday at Noon**

Please join us at the home of Sylvia Moore to discuss the book, "Braiding Sweetgrass," by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Please bring your own bag lunch, beverages will be provided. Questions? Contact Pastor Mary.

Men's Prayer Breakfast **Every Thursday at 7:30 am**

Join other Oak Grove men for a time of fellowship while enjoying breakfast. The group meets weekly at Denny's (4209 American Blvd W, Bloomington 55437). Questions? Contact Jack Kley at 952-831-4138.

Adult Bible Study on Thursdays (12–1:00 pm): Starts up again on April 11!

Join Pastor Bart and/or Pastor Mary via Zoom for Bible study to look at the scripture that will be the basis for the sermon the following Sunday. No pre-reading is necessary. We will read the scripture together and then dive in.

New Opportunity for Spiritual Growth Starting in May!

First Wednesday of each month, Noon, at Oak Grove – all genders welcome and encouraged to come.

There is a new monthly book club designed to explore and develop our spirituality. Our first meeting will be at noon on May 1 where we will discuss *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr. On June 5 we will discuss *Living Buddha, Living Christ* by Thich Nhat Hanh.

Future books will be determined by the group. All are welcome to this new adventure. Please plan to eat lunch prior to the meeting or bring it if it's easiest for you! Questions? Contact Pastor Mary.

Spring Clean Up: Saturday, May 4 (8 am to Noon)

Please join the Building & Operations Committee for our annual clean, rake, sweep, wash, put away, get ready for better weather time at Oak Grove. We need your help whether it's just for an hour or longer. We encourage you to bring your own rake, gloves, and smile. Snacks and liberal breaks will be provided.



Bloomington-Richfield Grief Support Coalition

Churches in the Bloomington-Richfield area are working together to provide free support and education for adults who are grieving the death of a loved one. You can start any series at any time. There is no commitment on attendance and no cost, just show up! Group meetings are held on Thursdays, 4:30–6:00 pm.

The Spring Series, April 4 through May 16, will be hosted by Oak Grove Lutheran Church (7045 Lyndale Ave S, Richfield 55423).

Visit <https://brgriefcoalition.com> for more details.

April 4: Growing Through Grief & Multiple Loss

April 11: How Families Grieve

April 18: Sibling Loss

April 25: Mindfulness as a Tool for Working Through Grief

May 2: Writing Through Grief

May 9: Myths of Grief

May 16: Navigating Life After Loss