



Anchor Magazine Staff

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Special thanks to Jessica Bandelin, Alex Boltz, Madeline Cieslak, David Goudzwaard-Vaught, Scott Jones, Aaron David Miller, Jan Parkman, Tim Short, and Elly Verhagen

About the Cover

“Summer” Stained Glass (1992)

The season windows in the chancel were created by Rowan LeCompte between 1990 and 1997. “Summer” contains a representation of poet Emily Dickinson, whose frequent themes of nature, death, and love are referenced in the window. In this poem, Dickinson compares her blooming garden to a beach, using the simile to evoke the arrival of summer:

*My Garden—like the Beach—
Denotes there be—a Sea—
That’s Summer—
Such as These—the Pearls
She fetches—such as Me*

We are grateful that we have a great community of artists, dreamers, and creators as members in the congregation.

This cover has been made with no generative AI and with human hands. Real hands make real art; the House of Hope Presbyterian Church supports the need for artists locally, nationally, and spiritually.

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THE HOUSE OF HOPE STAFF
Celebrating 1 Year of Senior Pastor Scott Jones’
leadership at House of Hope!

June 7, 2026

Guest Preacher

Rev. Jim Mitulski



“I know of no living pastor who is more experienced in cultivating resilient communities of care and belonging in challenging times.” So said our Senior Pastor Scott Jones about the Rev. Dr. Jim Mitulski, our guest preacher and adult enrichment leader for Sunday, June 7.

Jim is currently Pastor of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula in Belmont, California. He was ordained in 1983 in the Metropolitan Community Church and has served churches in San Francisco, New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, Duluth, and more. He’s a graduate of the Pacific School of Religion, was a Merrill Fellow at Harvard Divinity School, and received an honorary doctorate from Starr King School for the Ministry in Oakland. He also published the first theological material reflecting on HIV/AIDS.

In his 15-year pastorate at MCC San Francisco in the eighties and nineties, the church grew from 100 to 500 members and provided leadership and pastoral care through the very difficult HIV/AIDS years. That ministry was featured recently on the Peabody Award Winning podcast *When We All Get to Heaven*.

After the service, Jim will speak to us from his wisdom and experience about cultivating a community of care **(11:15 a.m., Assembly Room)**.

A Note from Scott



One of my favorite activities, during a break in the workday, is to walk around the building here at House of Hope and discover some detail in the stonework or windows that has previously escaped my attention. Of course, it doesn’t take long for one to discover anchors everywhere—in the statue outside, in the stained-glass window of the chancel, in the tiles on the chancel floor, painted on the walls of the Elizabeth Chapel, and more. No wonder that the anchor was chosen as an image for this congregation.

I’ve been reflecting recently on the image of the anchor, as we’ve been working on this fresh design for our mailed publication.

Kelly Hayes and Mariame Kaba write about the importance of having anchors in any work of organizing people for social and political change. They write that we need anchors in catastrophic times to “help people maintain their values and commitments.” They describe anchors as “anything that helps ground people in a shared sense of history, compassion, and purpose.”

The leadership coach Aiko Bethea teaches that if we are going to experience transformation, then we need to first be anchored into our values. Her work is directed more at the business sector, but the basic idea is helpful for us.

If we are “striving for a transformational life that provides connection, learning and expansion, and rest and spaciousness,” then

we “must identify what we want, who we want to become, and what truly matters to us.” To be anchored is to have clarity on our core values. Then transformational change becomes possible.

Our goal with this new design of *The Anchor* is to better share our story. What all are we doing at House of Hope, and how is that affecting people’s lives? We hope that the feature stories, news articles, beautiful photos, and appealing layout will communicate what anchors us. And, that you’ll want to share what you see here with family, friends, and neighbors.

You’ll also find valuable information about upcoming major events. Because we are publishing this for the entire summer season, this magazine format won’t be your primary place for finding last minute logistical details on every single goings-on around House of Hope. We have many other avenues for communicating that information in a timely manner.

In this issue you’ll find reflections of past activities, shared memories, and stories from our community. I hope that you will enjoy what we’ve created and will feel that it better anchors you to this congregation.

Peace,



Summer Worship Theme

How do we make a way when no way seems clear? The characters in the stories of First Samuel must learn to persist and survive in a challenging world if they are going to thrive. This summer, Senior Pastor Scott Jones will be preaching from these Old Testament stories. And he’ll be using as a guide *A Women’s Lectionary for the Whole Church* by Wilda Gafney, who is our next Didier Seminar Lecturer, scheduled for April 17-18, 2027.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Pride Heroes



Saturday, June 13 | 2-4 p.m.
House of Hope Park

Come celebrate Pride by learning about heroes—past and present! Join us as staff, clergy, volunteers, and community partners share the inspiring stories of prominent LGBTQ+ heroes throughout history who showed courage, resilience, and love in the face of adversity. Then unleash your creativity

and craft your very own Pride Cape before joining a joyful hero's parade through the park! This event is packed with energy, color, and community spirit. And don't think you know what to expect—surprises and special guests are waiting around every corner! If there is rain, we will move to the Great Hall.

Washington Enrichment

Sunday, July 5 | 11:15 a.m.
Assembly Room

When George Washington retired from the Presidency in 1796, his Farewell Address was so rich in wisdom that historians regard it as one of the most foundational documents in American history. Its principles on national unity, liberty, and prosperity remain so enduring that Congress still reads it aloud every February 22.

On July 5, as a way of celebrating 250 years of American independence, House of Hope welcomes David Johnston, who will bring Washington's timeless address to life as a George Washington re-enactor. David holds degrees in History and



Divinity and has spent 30 years teaching American History to adult learners across the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota. A passionate storyteller who leads historical tours as "The Traveling Professor," he promises to make Washington's vision compelling for our own day.

Summer Celebration



Sunday, June 14 | 11:15 a.m.
House of Hope Park

Enjoy the unofficial start of summer after worship! We'll celebrate with hotdogs, hamburgers, sides, and ice cream from Sweet Fruci's Frozen Delights truck. Red Balloon Bookshop will host a Book Fair, and lawn games and fellowship round out

the fun. Stop by the Community Garden, where our volunteers grow organic produce for the Hallie Q. Brown and Neighborhood House food pantries. Inclement weather moves us to the Great Hall.

National Night Out

Tuesday, August 4 | 5:30-8 p.m.
House of Hope Park and Parking Lot

The 19th annual House of Hope National Night Out will be our largest neighborhood gathering of the year, welcoming residents from the surrounding community along with several of our mission partners for an evening of fellowship, food, entertainment, and community

connection. This event is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen relationships with fellow congregation members, meet our immediate neighbors, and celebrate the spirit of hospitality and community that defines House of Hope.





In February, 1,153 members, friends, and community members filled our Sanctuary and Assembly Room for Songs of Hope and Justice, a collaboration of Hope Arts Center, House of Hope, artists-in-residence The Singers, and six Twin Cities choral organizations

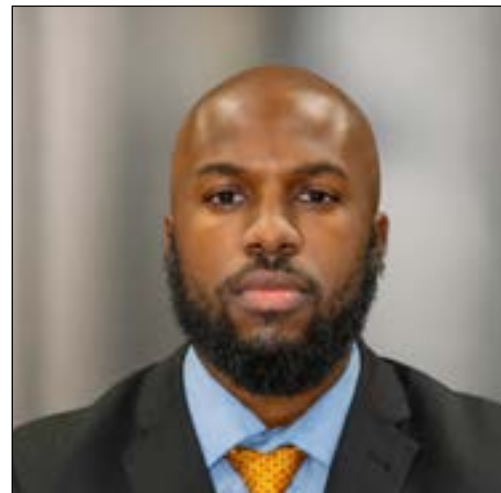
Van Dyke Scholar Graduates

We are delighted to congratulate Zantavious Graham, the most recent recipient of the Ujamaa Place Van Dyke Scholarship (funded by House of Hope), on his recent college graduation. Zantavious graduated from Concordia University on May 8 with a major in psychology and double minors in sales and business management.

This summer, he will begin a role with Ujamaa Place as a high school mentor. A highly-motivated and entrepreneurial individual, Zanta-

vious has also launched several community focused initiatives, including a neighborhood “run club” that some may have seen passing by House of Hope in the evenings. In addition, he founded a company called “FRM” (Forever Remain Motivated), which currently includes both a clothing line and a juice line.

We celebrate Zantavious’s many accomplishments and look forward to all that lies ahead for him.



Solar Panel Blessing

On Earth Day, April 20, House of Hope gathered on the roof between the Elizabeth Chapel and the Garth for a special blessing and commissioning of the solar panels installed last year. Senior Pastor Scott Jones, Associate Pastor for Spiritual and Community Connection Phil Romine, Earth Care Committee members Deborah James and Elly Verhagen, and other congregation members participated in the celebration.

A total of ninety-seven panels were installed, each rated at 390-410 watts. Together, the system is expected to generate approximately 110–220 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity per day, depending on weather and seasonal conditions. To put that in perspective, the average Minnesota household uses about 27–31 kWh per day, meaning the system could power the equivalent of three to eight homes daily.



Earth Care

“Bee” Pollinator Friendly

Over the past 40-plus years, pollinator populations have suffered serious losses due to invasive pests and diseases, pesticide exposure, habitat loss, reduced genetic diversity, and climate disruption. Pollinators (bees, ants, flies, beetles, and birds) are critical to our food system and the diversity of life on Earth.

To create a pollinator-friendly yard:

- Focus on healthy surroundings, not a “perfect” landscape
- Choose plants that provide food and habitat for pollinators
- Replace hard-to-mow lawn areas with shrubs and flowers
- Eliminate pesticide use and adopt practices that improve plant health

These same principles guide our community food shelf garden here at House of Hope. The garden is pesticide-free, and native flowering plants along its perimeter attract pollinators directly to the vegetable beds. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/FlowersPollinators>.



On Saturday, May 16, more than 500 people visited the House of Hope campus for the annual Eco Fair, the largest event of its kind in the region outside of the Minnesota State Fair.

Visitors of all ages experienced the electric future firsthand: test drives of electric vehicles

and e-bikes, and up-close tours of electric fire trucks and buses.

More than 40 companies and nonprofit organizations were on hand as well, offering energy audits, pollinator garden resources, and information on clean energy legislation.



Summer Service Music

Aaron David Miller

During the summer months, our liturgical year moves deeper into the season of Pentecost, a time set apart for celebrating the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their work in the world.

Musically, our hymnody and liturgical selections turn toward the church's many missions and callings, reflecting on how we are sent into the world, guided and emboldened by the Spirit. Hymns such as *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending* remind us of our shared call to

serve our neighbors and communities with generous hearts.

As the Motet Choir enjoys a well-deserved rest during August, worship music continues to flourish through the artistry of guest instrumentalists drawn from across the Twin Cities. This seasonal transition is itself a gentle reminder that music in worship need not always be sung; it can speak just as powerfully through instrumental voice, inviting quiet reflection and renewal.

God, whose giving knows no ending,
From your rich and endless store:
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,
Costly cross, grave's shattered door,
Gifted by you, we turn to you,
Offering up ourselves in praise;
Thankful song shall rise forever,
Gracious donor of our days.

Skills and time are ours for pressing
Toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
All at peace in health and freedom,
Races joined, the Church made one.
Now direct our daily labor,
Lest we strive for self alone;

Born with talents, make us servants
Fit to answer at your throne.

Treasure, too, you have entrusted,
Gain through powers your grace conferred;
Ours to use for home and kindred,
And to spread the Gospel Word.
Open wide our hands in sharing,
As we heed Christ's ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming,
Serving you by loving all.

- Robert Lansing Edwards (1915 - 2006)





HOPE ARTS CENTER

SUMMER IN THE PARK



June 2-August 25, 2026

A new outdoor series bringing arts, wellness, and community together in the House of Hope Park at Portland Ave. and Grotto St. Enjoy live music with Tiny Porch Concerts, family-friendly movies, outdoor yoga, a puppet show, and opportunities to help shape the park's future renovation. Bring a blanket, invite a friend, and enjoy summer evenings with neighbors in a beautiful outdoor setting. Most events are free or invite a free-will offering in support of performers.

Tuesday, June 2, 7:00 p.m.
Tiny Porch Concert: **Choro Borealis***

Tuesday, June 16, 7:00 p.m.
Tiny Porch Concert: **Dan Chouinard***

Monday, June 29, 5:30 p.m.
Imagine the Park: **Yoga, Music, Food Truck,**
and Park Visioning Activities (Free)

Tuesday, June 30, 7:00 p.m.
Tiny Porch Concert: **Phil Heywood and Tim Sparks***

Thursday, July 9, 7:00 p.m.
Open Eye Theater Puppet Show: Tucker's Robot (Free)

Tuesday, July 14, 7:00 p.m.
Tiny Porch Concert: **The High 48s***

Tuesday, July 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tiny Porch Concert: **Erik Brandt and the Folksingers**
(featuring members of the **Urban Hillbilly Quartet**)*

Thursday, August 6, 5:00 p.m.
Goat Yoga, ages 8 and up (ticketed - see below)

Thursday, August 6, 6:00 p.m.
Goat Yoga, ages 18 and up (ticketed - see below)

Tuesday, August 11, 7:00 p.m.
Tiny Porch Concert: **OK Factor***

Thursday, August 13, 7:00 p.m.
Tiny Porch Concert: **Selby Avenue Brass Band and Thomasina Petrus***

Wednesday, August 19, 6:00 p.m.
Movie Night: **Encanto** (Free)

Tuesday, August 25, 7:00 p.m.
Tiny Porch Concert: **Duo CORDA***

**Free, with a "pass the hat" invitation to contribute
in support of the musicians*

for Goat Yoga tickets:
visit our.show/goatyoga



Save the dates! Park Design Workshops: July 20, August 3, August 17, and August 31

You are invited to participate in community design sessions exploring the future renovation of the House of Hope Park. These collaborative gatherings will bring together neighbors, community members, and designers to share ideas and help shape the park's future. More details available at hohchurch.org/hope-arts-center

All Cats Enjoy Guacamole

Jessica Bandelin

The Choir School Room at House of Hope is a place where, for decades, children have found their voices through music. It has been a home base for me for most of my life: as a student from 4th grade through high school and as a teacher at the Choir School since 2000.

As choristers, we would sing, dance, and play Orff instruments (a specialized set of instruments designed by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman to offer a child-centered approach to learning music.) Rehearsing with my classmates, rhythms overlapping, all of us learning to listen and collaborate, these were formative to my musical education, and I follow this same child-centered philosophy as a teacher.

Throughout my career I have watched generations of children move through the same room where I once sat. This is where the children start learning music theory through both small and large motor activities, play instruments, and work on listening. Sometimes, I will play the piano and ask each child to draw how the music makes them feel, or what image it evokes.

About fifteen years ago, I was teaching the space notes of the bass clef (A, C, E, G) alternately using the mnemonics “All Cars Eat Gas” and “All Cows Eat Grass.” A chorister raised his hand. Some cars are electric, he said, and they don’t eat gas. Fair point. And not all cows eat grass; many eat corn. Could

“
If it could speak, I hope the Choir School Room would say: I am full of joy, kindness, beauty, and music.
”

we change it? His suggestion: “All Cats Enjoy Guacamole.” We couldn’t think of a reason this wouldn’t be true, so that’s where we settled. I’ve used it ever since, and have added “Good Burritos Don’t Fall Apart” for the line notes, just to stick with the theme.

Choir School has long-standing traditions: going back as far as I can recall, the director will sing a note on an “oooh” to get everyone’s attention- the idea being that you stop what you’re doing and sing along. Those really committed to their chit-chat don’t always join immediately, but their peers will sort them out. Another tradition is ending rehearsals with *Jubilate Deo* (Rejoice in the Lord), a piece we have been singing since I was a child, often as a grace before dinner. The beauty and simplicity of it make it enjoyable for singers of any level to sing in canon, often in 3 or more parts.

For me, music itself is sacred. Infants hum and vocalize before they speak words; they move to a beat before they walk. Music is that elemental: it lives in us before language does. To sing with children here, to help them find a way to express what words cannot yet reach— this is some of the most important work there is.

If it could speak, I hope the Choir School Room would say: “I am full of joy, kindness, beauty, and music.”





Young Musicians of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, a House of Hope community partner organization, rehearse in the Sanctuary.

Symbols in Worship: The Tree

Alex Boltz

These past months, the symbol of the tree has taken a central place in our worship. Placed beneath the pulpit, our sanctuary tree grew from sapling to budding branch across the Lenten season and into Eastertide, capturing our community's own thawing and blossoming from winter's cold.

Rich in biblical tradition, the tree appears throughout scripture as a bearer of life, growth, and renewal. For this reason, it was woven into our weekly worship. Each week, the youth examined the tree for changes in appearance and foliage, making it a living medium through which our

year's journey could be felt and understood. The tree's influence extended beyond the sanctuary into Sunday School and confirmation classrooms. We used it to explore the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary, the nature of Christ's greeting to his disciples, and the grounding of spirituality in the physical world. It conveyed the centrality of symbolism in our tradition and the importance of tangible reminders of God's love.

The tree was also a collaborative creation. Staff and volunteers recycled paper from our worship bulletins into the tree's budding leaves— a transformative act of taking the

tools of worship and returning them, decorated and renewed, to the life of our community. During Sunday School, the youth cut leaves prayerfully, reflecting on what prayers to add, mindful that even small acts of creation deserve care and intention.

Like nature itself, this tree is still in bloom. As with many symbols in our tradition, its meaning will grow and evolve with its people. Whether you see it as a beautiful addition to the sanctuary or a sign of our community's deepening connections, let it deepen your reflection and strengthen your prayer.



Children And Family Weekend

This September, House of Hope and Hope Arts Center invite you to a community celebration of the arts: exploring how creativity nurtures imagination, confidence, resilience, and connection in children and families. Join us on September 19 and 20, 2026 for speakers, performances, workshops, and

hands-on experiences for all ages. Special guests include:

- **Kwame Alexander**, #1 New York Times bestselling author and advocate for literacy and creativity
- **Erin Walsh**, nationally recognized expert on digital media, the teenage brain, and raising connected, caring kids



SUMMER MUSIC

The July Carillon Series

Four Performances in July

Now in its 32nd year, the July Sunday Carillon Series celebrates one of the Twin Cities' most distinctive musical treasures: the historic 49-bell carillon housed House of Hope's soaring tower. This landmark neo-Gothic structure provides a breathtaking backdrop for a beloved summer tradition.

Four afternoons throughout July, nationally recognized carillon-neurs perform a 50-minute concert beginning at 4 p.m. The repertoire spans a delightful range of styles and composers—from classical masterworks and beloved

hymns to folk tunes and popular favorites—offering something to enchant every listener.

Best of all, admission and parking are completely free. Guests are encouraged to bring a lawn chair and a picnic basket to settle in and savor the music at their leisure. Complimentary ice cream is also served at each concert. Public restrooms are available on site. Come enjoy a perfect summer afternoon in the heart of St. Paul.

All recitals begin at 4 p.m.

Saturday, July 4 Timothy Short
Music Associate/Carillonneur
House of Hope

Sunday, July 12 Amy Hamburg-Mead
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN

Sunday, July 19 John Gowens
Culver Academies
Culver, IN

Sunday, July 26 Margaret Pan
Boston, MA



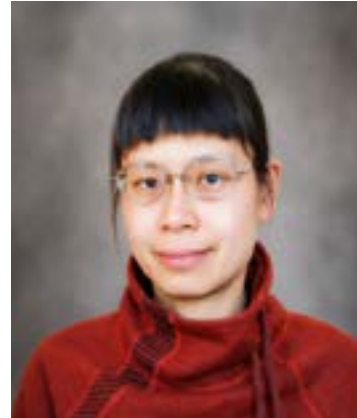
Tim Short joined the House of Hope staff as Music Associate in 2018. He holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Mount Union University, and a Master of Music degree in organ performance from Drake University, where he was a Graduate Fellow. In November 2023 he was named the eighth carillonneur at House of Hope, continuing a century-long legacy.



Amy Hamburg-Mead began her carillon studies with Albert Gerken at the University of Kansas while earning a B.F.A. in Music Theory with minors in composition and piano performance. She continued graduate studies at the University of Michigan and is now based in Bloomington, Indiana at Indiana University.



John Gowens is now retired as carillonneur of the Culver Academies. He studied at Indiana University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Kansas. He has performed extensively throughout North America and is a highly regarded teacher in carillon studies in the United States.



Margaret Pan is a Boston-based freelance carillonneur who has performed nationally and internationally. Dr. Pan holds degrees from Cal Tech and MIT and is presently an astronomer at the Smithsonian Institution. She studied carillon at Princeton University and at the Mechelen Carillon School in Belgium.

Reminiscences of a Chorister

Ann Elliot began singing at the House of Hope as a child, and is now a proud member of the Motet Choir...

My earliest memories of singing at House of Hope are tied to the steady rhythm of rehearsals with Mr. Eugene Nordgren, who was both our choir director and my piano teacher. After school, my mom would pick me up with a snack for the drive—usually graham crackers and milk—and I would come in through the Summit Avenue doors and run upstairs to the big Choir Room to practice.

Every week we learned the hymns and other music we would sing in worship. Mr. Nordgren directed from the piano, and he taught us everything about music. But he also taught us how to behave properly in church. We were not supposed to pass notes or whisper during the service, though of course my friends and I sometimes did anyway. The following week, Mr. Nordgren would quietly pull us aside and



gently remind us that we should try not to talk in church. He was a very kind man.

Sunday mornings had their own special routines. All of the mothers would come to help us get dressed because there were so many pieces to our choir attire: robe and surplice, a little beanie cap, and large purple bows. The hats sometimes had to be pinned in place, and the mothers would help us tie our bows before the service. Looking back at photographs now, it's easy to see that some bows were certainly fluffier and tied more beautifully than others.

Growing up in the choir gave us remarkable opportunities. As children, we sang beautiful works by composers like Johannes Brahms and Johann Sebastian Bach, and I remain deeply grateful to Mr. Nordgren for giving us those experiences at such a young age.



Eugene Nordgren was Organist and Minister of Music at House of Hope from 1946 to 1966. This photograph was taken in 1952/53 before the Merklin organ was installed in the chancel in 1987. Ann Elliot is in the front row, third from the right.



Sunday Series: Rev. Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock

July 19 at 2 p.m. | Sanctuary

On Sunday, July 19 at 2 p.m., as part of our Sunday Series, we welcome the Rev. Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock to speak on *Moral Injury during Operation Metro Surge*. Dr. Brock is a leading theologian whose groundbreaking books include *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*; *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering*; and *The*

Search for What Saves Us (with Rebecca Ann Parker). Her book, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* was among the first published works on moral injury as a concept, and she co-founded the Soul Repair Center at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University.



Guest Preacher/Enrichment Dr. Sheryl Johnson

August 16 at 10 a.m. | Sanctuary | 11:15 a.m. | Assembly Room

Sheryl Johnson (she/her) is a Lecturer at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada. Her book *Serving Money, Serving God: Aligning Radical Justice, Christian Practice, and Church Life* focuses on the intersections of social justice (racial, economic, gender, etc.) and ecclesial practices (specifically stewardship, finance, and polity).

Sheryl has served several congregations, campus ministries, ecumenical advocacy organizations, and global church partners.

Senior Pastor Scott Jones said, “Sheryl will help us think carefully and theologically about how we shape church finances and budgets to better express our justice and spiritual values.”



Pride Enrichment

June 28/ July 26/ August 30 at 11:15 a.m. | Assembly Room

What is the queer perspective on the Bible and theology? This summer, Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Scott Jones and Director of Children and Family Ministries Dr. Jimmy Hoke will present a three-part Adult Enrichment series exploring that question.

On Sunday, June 28, Scott will lead an introductory session on queer theology and spirituality. On Sunday, July 26, Jimmy—who is

currently writing the first lectionary commentary from a queer perspective—will discuss queer Biblical interpretation. On Sunday, August 30, Scott and Jimmy will lead an in-depth panel conversation.

Celebrate LGBTQ Pride this summer by joining us for these enrichment opportunities.



House of Hope members and friends enjoyed a restorative Women's Retreat at Saint John's Abbey Guesthouse in late April that included the creation of a group mandala of natural items gathered during a reflective outdoor hike.

The Schemper/Vorhes Family

Abram, Erik, Erica, Zora, and Hazel



House of Hope is made up of people with remarkable stories, and Member Profiles exists to tell them. In their own words, families and individuals share what brought them here, what keeps them here, and what this community means to them. In this issue, we meet up with the Schemper/Vorhes family.

How did your family find House of Hope, and what were your early impressions?

We came to House of Hope during the COVID-19 lockdown, so our first impressions were virtual. Everyone in our family is a pastor's kid, and after eight years of being very involved at a small Lutheran congregation, we found the idea of a larger, stable congregation appealing. We figured we could fly under the radar for a while and get to know our new home. Instead, Erik and Zora almost immediately found themselves involved—with Deacons, Session, Choir School, and various task forces and committees. In retrospect this made it easier to connect with this community.

How has your faith grown or shifted during this season at House of Hope?

It has been rewarding to be here during a time of transitions, to learn or relearn with

others here that we treasure God's love for us, for our city, and for the whole world. Seeing Abram grow towards a mature faith focused on justice and liberation gives us hope for the future, as does seeing our neighbors welcoming and loving Hazel no matter where they are in their own journey. We delight in how Zora is welcomed when she is home from college.

How is your family involved in the life of the church?

From the beginning, Erik and Zora threw themselves into the work of the congregation—serving, leading, and showing up in ways that quickly made House of Hope feel like home. That pattern has continued: Abram is currently serving a year-long term on Session and participating in the Ministry Transformation Lab. Even so, we sometimes find ourselves wishing we could say yes to

more than our schedule allows—there is so much happening here that draws us in, and it can be hard to step back from things we love.

What does life look like for your family right now, and how does the church fit into it?

It's a full season: Erica serves part-time at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church and is finishing her MSW at the University of Minnesota while holding a half-time internship; Zora is traveling and continuing to grow and learn at St. Olaf College; Hazel is starting middle school and pursuing art, piano, and soccer; and Erik is working full-time and holding down the fort at home. In these hectic times we are grateful to be part of a warm and welcoming church.

The Underground Railroad

Christopher Freeze

House of Hope Presbyterian Church traces its roots to two sister congregations. First Presbyterian Church was founded in 1849, and House of Hope followed just six years later in 1855. The two congregations eventually merged when the landmark Summit Avenue house of worship was completed in 1914.

Decades before that union, First Presbyterian Church played a quiet but significant role in one of the most urgent moral movements of the era. According to Joseph Farr—born in Washington, D.C. in 1831 and a longtime resident of Saint Paul until his death on December 29, 1910—the church served as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Farr had come to Saint Paul as a young man to work in his uncle’s barbershop.

His uncle was a prominent figure in Saint Paul’s small but active African American community and one of the principal organizers of the local Underground Railroad network—the informal but remarkably effective system of individuals, safe houses, and routes that helped liberate enslaved people from the American South. In a 1905 interview with the *Saint Paul Globe*, Farr recalled those years with striking detail:

“There were two places of secretion which the officials of the ‘underground’ depended on. One of these was the First Presbyterian Church at Third and St. Peter streets. Here in the belfry of this

church a number of fugitives were concealed while the officers were searching around for them. It seems that this hiding place was never discovered, being considered so unlikely. The sexton of the church was in the circle, and aided in the work. Fugitives were concealed here for weeks at a time. At night the sexton would rescue the unfortunates from the cramped quarters, take them for a walk around the dark part of the city, and return them and carry food and drink.”

Farr’s account offers a rare and vivid window into a chapter of Saint Paul history that might otherwise have gone unrecorded— and a reminder that the congregation now known as House of Hope has long been shaped by a conviction that faith and justice cannot be separated.

Freedom and Remembrance *A Pilgrimage and Art Installation*

Kip Beardsley, textile artist and member of the House of Hope community, is participating in the **2026 Freedom Walk** from May 4 to July 4— a modern-day re-tracing of the Underground Railroad, on the 250th anniversary of America’s independence. The 750-mile pilgrimage is organized by the Menare Foundation and historian Anthony Cohen.

Along the journey from Maryland to Canada, Kip will be weaving panels incorporating artifacts offered by communities along the route. These textiles will become part of a September installation in the House of Hope gallery. Inspired by themes of resilience, ancestry, and liberation, the final installation will evoke a symbolic forest interspersed with woven cloaks, commemorating the courageous self-liberators, abolitionists, and secret networks that fought for freedom.

The Menare Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Underground Railroad and creating experiential programs that use history as a spark for human potential. Members of the House of Hope community are invited to follow the journey and engage with the project through updates and reflections: <https://www.menare.org>.



1855 Sketch of First Presbyterian Church by Robert O. Sweeney

THE ANCHOR

Periodicals
St Paul, MN

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**Children pet goats at the Eco Fair on Summit 2026.
These adorable goats are used to eradicate harmful, invasive plant species.**



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