

VOL. 1 ISSUE 4 · SEPTEMBER 2024

CONNECTION

Official Newsletter of Camphor Memorial UMC



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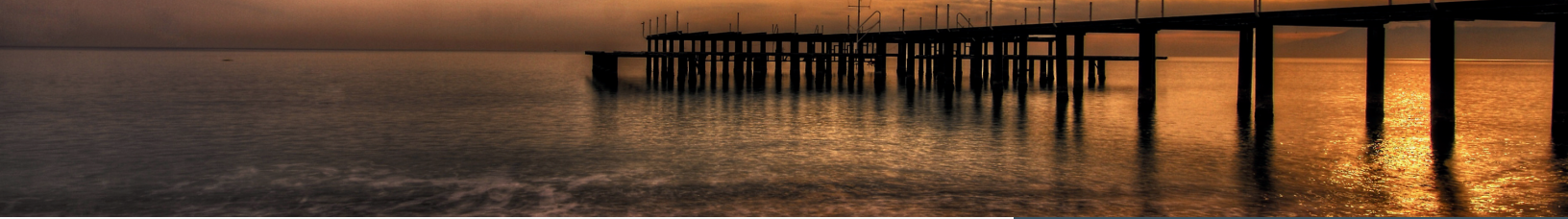
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Journeying through Grief

BY REV. ISIAH DENNIS. PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FOR
ADMINISTRATION AND TECHNOLOGY

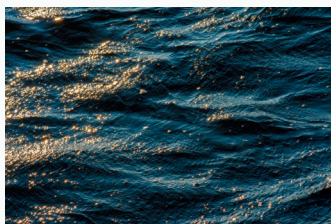
If we look back on the summer of 2024, Camphor, we have been through it. Month upon month, we have received news that someone we loved has gone on to glory. We find ourselves in a time of deep grief and are seeking solace from God. Some of us may ask, "Why, God? Why did you take those we loved away so soon?" or "How can we move forward?"

Personally, I am still grieving, longing to hear their voices, seek their wisdom, and enjoy their presence once more. When Pastor D passed, I was overwhelmed with sorrow because he was not just a mentor but a father figure to me. I wished for more time, hoping he would be there for my ordination and offer his guidance.

In my search for answers, I have come to understand that grief is a journey rather than a race. Throughout this journey, I am reassured that God is with us, understanding our pain as we navigate this difficult period. I find comfort in the Psalms, particularly Psalm 23 and Psalm 34:18, which says, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." These verses remind me that in our grief, Jesus is present, compassionate, and accepting of our tears, frustrations, and cries for help.

I encourage us all to find rest in Jesus's arms. Though this journey will not be easy, we can take solace in the fact that God is with us. Let us continue to support and pray for the families and our entire community.

Remember the words of Vicki Harrison who likened grief to the ocean: "Grief is like the ocean; it comes in waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes, the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim." Let this serve as a reminder that grief is a natural process that we must navigate, allowing ourselves grace on the difficult days.



The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down
in green pastures;
He leads me beside the
still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths
of righteousness
For His name's sake.

-PSALM 23:1-3 (NKJV)





Back to School Message

FROM THE DESK OF BISHOP LANETTE PLAMBECK

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As we find ourselves at the beginning of a new school year, the excitement and anticipation of what lies ahead are palpable across our communities. I witnessed this optimism of hope while on a recent trip to Target. Though I entered the store on what was intended to be a quick stop for dry-erase markers, I found myself captivated as I watched young families gather their school supplies. It wasn't only about checking items off a list, but you could feel the joy and expectation as children selected these supplies that would enable learning. I am aware not all can afford the items and am so thankful for the many churches in our area stepping up to fill this gap. Back-to-school season is a time when we, as the body of Christ, are called to be especially attentive to the needs of our children and youth, our educators, and our communities.

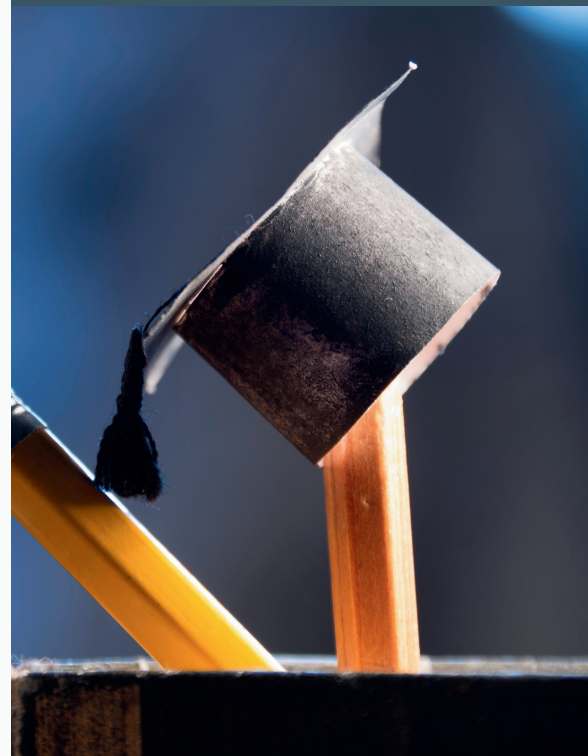
In his sermon “The Education of Children,” John Wesley reminds us of our profound responsibility in nurturing and guiding the young. Wesley emphasized that the education of children is not merely the imparting of knowledge but also the cultivation of virtue, the fruit of the Spirit, one's moral compass, and part of our journey of sanctification. As he wisely noted, “When we train up children in the way they should go, we are laying the foundation of all happiness, both in this world and that which is to come.”

Reflecting on the Wesleyan commitment to education, historian Gary Best wrote: “John Wesley was as much an educator as a preacher. Methodist involvement in education stems from his passion for education, which was rooted in his understanding of the Bible and centuries of Christian tradition—that the Church should be engaged in constantly seeking and understanding what is the truth by which we should live...[For Wesley], education at its best was a life-long process guided by the Holy Spirit towards personal and social holiness, and it was the best possible tool for evangelism, for training in godliness, and for the betterment of society.”

With these words in mind, let us consider how our churches can actively engage in the education and formation of children in our communities. This is an opportunity to extend our reach beyond the walls of our sanctuaries, to connect with local schools, neighborhoods, and families in meaningful and transformative ways.

**Train children in the way
they should go; when
they grow old, they won't
depart from it.**

-PROVERBS 22:6 (CEB)



Back to School Message (Cont'd)

FROM THE DESK OF BISHOP LANETTE PLAMBECK

Opportunities for Connection:

Partnerships with Schools: Reflecting Wesley's call to cultivate virtue in our youth, we can establish or strengthen partnerships with local schools. By volunteering as mentors, providing essential resources, or offering spiritual support to students and staff, we participate in shaping not just the minds but the hearts of the next generation. Individuals and groups from our churches could consider adopting classrooms or grade levels to ensure each teacher has what they need, and each student has what they need to create an optimal learning environment. Clergy and church leaders should be intentional about meeting with principals, counselors, and school board members to dream about ways in which we can partner.

Community Outreach: Wesley urged us to care for the physical and spiritual needs of others. In this spirit, consider organizing back-to-school drives, offering meals, or creating spaces where families can find both material and emotional support. We need not wait for the next crisis—on the front end, we can connect with a school's PTO/PTA to become intentional partners. Further, we can offer gift cards to school counselors for children so that they and their families can have agency and dignity when selecting their supplies or clothing. These acts of service are embodiments of the love of Christ and echo Wesley's teachings on the holistic education of children.

Prayer and Support: Prayer is foundational in Wesleyan theology, and as such, we should commit ourselves to praying for students, educators, staff, administration, and families. Host a blessing of the backpacks or school buses, or organize local prayer groups dedicated to lifting up the school community throughout the year.

Building Relationships: Wesley believed in the importance of a nurturing environment for children, one that fosters spiritual growth and moral character. Encourage your congregation to build relationships within the community by engaging with schools, attending local events, and supporting families. Throw on your favorite school colors or your church T-shirts and show up to games, concerts, and plays. Tailgate together. Pay attention to what is on your school calendar. Be present when your school board meets. These relationships are critical in guiding our children.

“When we train up children in the way they should go, we are laying the foundation of all happiness, both in this world and that which is to come.”

-JOHN WESLEY
“ON THE EDUCATION OF
CHILDREN”



Back to School Message (Cont'd)

FROM THE DESK OF BISHOP LANETTE PLAMBECK

Mental Health: As excited as children may be for the year ahead, going back to school also marks a change in routine, uncertainty that comes with meeting new friends, and possible anxiety over being separated from parents or siblings. Share spiritual practices with students, parents, and guardians that may help. Additionally, consider children's messages that remind them how to be a good friend, how to care for and share with others, and that Jesus is with us always. As the church, take time to talk openly about bullying and connect your children and families with anti-bullying resources.

Our churches in the Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area are already beacons of hope and support. This school year, let us deepen our commitment to the holistic education and well-being of our children and communities, just as Wesley envisioned. By doing so, we not only follow his teachings but also answer Christ's call to love and serve our neighbors.

As your Bishop, I am committed to walking alongside you in this important work. Together, let us pray for wisdom, compassion, and courage as we strive to make a difference in the lives of our children and the broader community.

May God bless and guide us all as we embark on this journey.

In Christ's service,

Bishop Lanette Plambeck
Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area
The United Methodist Church

BACK TO SCHOOL

“This school year, let us deepen our commitment to the holistic education and well-being of our children and communities, just as Wesley envisioned.”

-BISHOP LANETTE PLAMBECK



LEADER

Leadership Corner Leadership is a Vital Ministry: The Call for Christian Leaders (Clergy+Laity=Church Vitality)

BY THERESA NEAL, LAY LEADER

We live in challenging times, and the importance of Christian leaders cannot be overstated. Our task as members of the United Methodist Church is to identify and develop Christian leaders for our church and the world. Christian laity leaders extend beyond those called to ordained ministry. Laity leaders are vital to our church community, helping to create a vibrant and spirit-filled Christian community, being in a healthy relationship with God, and seeking the transformation of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

The UMC lays out a pathway for both ordained and laity leaders:

1. We are to proclaim the gospel, seek, welcome, and gather/fellowship
2. We lead persons to commit their lives to Christ
3. We nurture persons in Christian living
4. We send those persons into the world to make other disciples of Jesus Christ

Through this pathway, Christian leaders embrace the core process of HOPE (Hospitality, Offer Christ, Purpose and Engagement)

Consider your spiritual gifts as we invite you to consider an opportunity for laity/leadership ministry. Camphor seeks spiritual lay leaders who are growing in their faith, strengthening their partnership with God and supporting God's work within and beyond the four walls of the church.

Each one of you are the most valuable resource in the life of Camphor Church. Are you being called to lead?

Peace and Blessings

Theresa Neal, Lay Leader



Methodist Corner

Camphor Memorial UMC is a predominantly Black/African American Church who is part of the United Methodist Church, a global connection whose mission is "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the World". Being rooted in Jesus,

Grounded in Wesleyan theology, inclusive of all people and being engaged in the work of Justice and Reconciliation, we strive to grow in our love with God, with one another and the community we are called to serve. Check out to see what is going on in our connectional system



MN Annual Conference of the UMC ABIDE Summit

BY CHRISTA MELAND, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, MN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In 2023, the Minnesota Conference conducted a racial audit involving surveys, conversations with clergy and leaders of color, and church visits. The audit highlighted a gap between congregation demographics and community diversity. To address this, the ABIDE initiative was launched to help churches become more inclusive.

The ABIDE Summit is a vital part of the initiative, featuring four cohort-based sessions over the next nine months. The first summit, "Setting the Foundation," was held on September 14 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Grace UMC in St. Cloud. .

Sabrina Tapia, Director of Racial Justice and Equity, states, "We aim to transition from being a 'welcoming' church to one that genuinely 'includes' and 'values' everyone, as commanded in Matthew 22:37-40." The summit will guide churches in enhancing their diversity and inclusion practices.

Partnering with the Science Museum of Minnesota, the conference will tailor the summit's curriculum to each church's context and integrate current diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies. Participants will also have access to the Science Museum's RACE exhibition.

The summit is ideal for churches seeking to engage diverse racial backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ communities, multigenerational families, or multilingual groups. It provides tools for assessing community demographics and developing inclusive outreach strategies.

Topics include:

- Self and Social Justice 101: Examine identity, privilege, and social justice.
- Creating Fellowship with the LGBTQIA Community: Learn about terminology and safe spaces.
- Restorative Justice and Peace-Keeping Practices: Explore restorative justice practices.
- Community Outreach and Family Engagement: Effective methods for community engagement.

Tapia hopes participants will create environments where everyone feels accepted and valued.

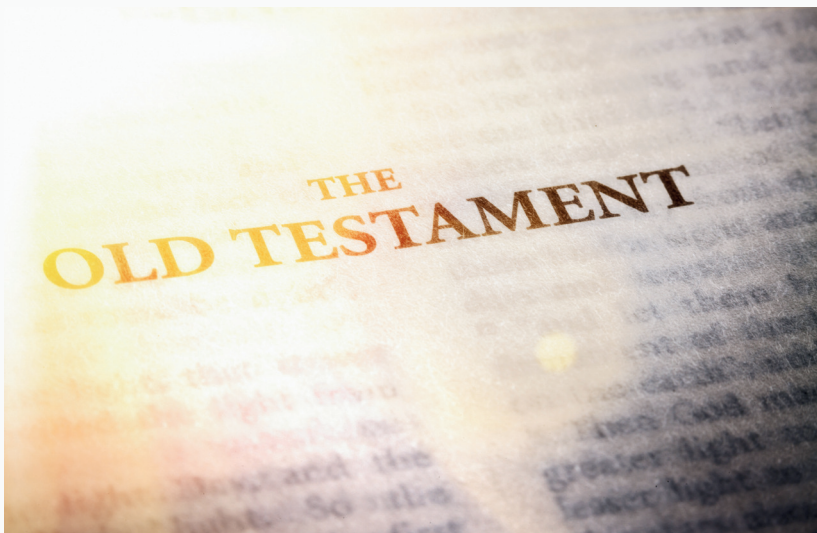
"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

JOHN WESLEY

Fun Corner-May's Answers

Here are the answers to May's Fun Corner

1. How many books are there in the Old Testament?
2. What is the longest book in the Old Testament?
3. What is the shortest book in the Old Testament?
4. What is the first book in the Old Testament?
5. What is the last book in the Old Testament?
6. Who is the oldest man in the Old Testament?
7. What man is mentioned more often than anyone else in the Old Testament?
8. Which six books of the Old Testament tell the stories of Israel's Kings?
9. What book in the Old Testament is composed primarily of hymns, songs, and poetry?
10. What five books are called "The Book of Moses"?



May's Answer Key

1. 39
2. Psalms
3. Obadiah
4. Genesis
5. Malachi
6. Methuselah, who lived to be 969 (Genesis 5:27)
7. David
8. 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles
9. Psalms
10. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (Ezra 6:18)



Fun Corner

Test your knowledge of the New Testament with these questions:

1. How many books are there in the New Testament?
2. What are the names of the Gospels-The first four books of the New Testament?
3. What is the last book of the New Testament?
4. What is the longest book of the New Testament?
5. What is the shortest book of the New Testament?
6. What Old Testament book is referred to most frequently in the New Testament?
7. What Old Testament verse is most frequently quoted in the New Testament?
8. What is the shortest verse in the New Testament?
9. Who wrote more New Testament books than anyone else?
10. What person is mentioned more often than anyone else in the New Testament?



Answers will be given in the October Edition!

Write Answers Here

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



Prayer Corner

When we unite in prayer and openly share our needs with God, a profound sense of strength emerges. Let's invest some time in prayer, lifting up the concerns and requests listed in our prayer corner:

Prayer Requests

Oglesby's Family
Sylvah Family
Richburg Family
Dr. Joi Lewis
LaTonya Ross Hughes
Calvin Morgan
Karen Morgan
Willie P. McCoy, Jr.
Sharon Martin
Gary Martin
Clifton Fuller
Alton Campbell

Seniors and Homebound

Verlene Booker
Glenice Booker Butler
Margaret Carter
James Cummings
Shirley Cummings
Ginnie Dennis
Doris Douglas
Charlotte Drake
Johnette Houston
Pat Jemie
Carrie Lewis
Barbara Wulf

“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

-HEBREWS 4:16 (NIV)

Prayer of the Month

"Prayer to the Holy Spirit"- Traditional Native American Prayer (UMCH #329)

O Great Spirit, whose breath gives life to the world, and whose voice is heard in the soft breeze; We need your strength and wisdom. Cause us to walk in beauty. Give us the eyes ever to behold the red and purple sunset. Make us wise so that we may understand what you have taught us. Help us learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

Make us always ready to come to you with clean hands and steady eyes, so when life fades, like the fading sunset, our hearts come to you without shame. Amen



September

Learn about what is happening at Camphor this month!



Ongoing

Sundays

10am= Worship (Sanctuary & Live-Stream)

Wednesdays

6pm=Camphor Connects Wednesdays (Camphor UMC)

Events

Saturday September 7th

9am= United Church Ushers of Minnesota Training (Sanctuary & Large Sunday School Room)

10:30am=Worship Team Meeting (Conference Room)

Thursday September 19th

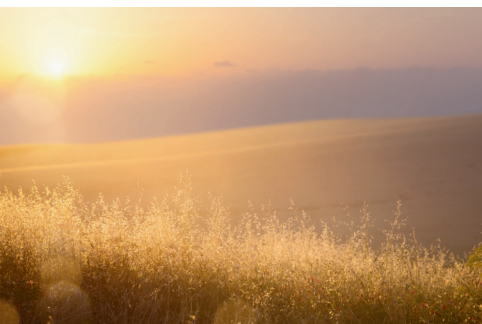
3pm= COVID Vaccination Clinic (Lower Level)

Saturday September 21st

9am: UWF Twin Cities District Fall Gathering (Camphor UMC)

Saturday September 28th

10am= SPRC Meeting (Conference Room)





October

Save the Date for these Events!

Events

Thursday October 3rd

3pm= COVID Vaccination Clinic (Lower Level)

3pm Resource Fair

Friday October 4th-5th

UWF Retreat

Sunday October 13th

Crop Walk

Sunday October 20th

Children's Sabbath/Laity Sunday

Saturday October 26th

6pm: All Black Affair (Camphor UMC)



Volunteer Corner

Please be on the look out in a future newsletter and Sunday bulletin, for a request for volunteers. As we usher in this new season, there are multiple ways that volunteers can support the ongoing operations of the church.

Please be prayerful on where you might be able to offer your time, skills and talent to support Camphor.



Camphor Connects Hub

Social Justice Ministry

Vote 2024: Make Your Voice Heard!



As election season ramps up, the Social Justice Ministry and ISAIAH are focused on maximizing voter turnout among Black Minnesotans. We believe in the power of our vote to improve our lives. Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church is encouraged to join and support these crucial efforts in the next 70 days!

Here's how you can get involved:

Voter Pledge Sundays

From Sunday, Sept. 8th to Sunday, Nov. 3rd, in the Narthex after services, we aim to collect 200 voter pledges. Commit to vote your entire ballot and engage others about the importance of voting. Track our progress on the Democracy Builder Goal Tracker in the Narthex. Ensure you and your eligible household members are registered to vote between Friday, Sept. 20th (start of early voting) and Tuesday, Nov. 5th. Sign the pledge!

Free Family Night - Movie on the Lawn

Join us on Friday, Sept. 6th, from 6-9 pm at Rice & Arlington Fields (1500 Rice St.) for a family-friendly screening of Inside Out 2. The event, in partnership with Ramsey County, focuses on mental health and wellbeing. Camphor will also be on hand to help with voter registration and provide information. Volunteer to assist with registrations and enjoy a free evening with your family.

Black Minnesotan Research Briefing and Messaging Training

On Thursday, Sept. 19th, from 6-8 pm, join our virtual briefing to learn about recent statewide research on Black Minnesotan voters. We will provide insights and messaging strategies for effective civic engagement leading up to the November elections. This event is open to non-partisan organizations led by or serving Black communities in Minnesota. Register at bit.ly/BlackMNVote.

Your vote is powerful—let's make it count!

Camphor Connects Hub

UWF Retreat (October 4th and 5th)

The Camphor UWF 2024 Retreat will be held from Friday, October 4th, to Saturday, October 5th, at the Mt. Olivet Conference and Retreat Center in Farmington, MN. The theme is "Better Together" - mind, body, and spirit.



Scan the QR Code to fill out the Google Form if you plan on going. Make checks payable to "United Methodist Women" and put in memo line "UWF 2024 Retreat". Any questions or concerns please talk to Rena Moran (President) via renamorán413@gmail.com or Akudo Omega (Vice-President) via omeog006@gmail.com

All Black Affair (October 26th)

Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church proudly presents its inaugural "All Black Affair" on Saturday, October 26, 2024, from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM at 585 Fuller Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55103.

This elegant evening will feature the dynamic T. Mycheal Rambo as Master of Ceremonies, performances by the soulful W Rayford Johnson and The Tangents, and a special appearance by T. Mycheal Rambo himself. Guests are encouraged to "Be Fabulous in Black" by wearing their finest black attire.

Enjoy a night of sophistication with an assortment of hors d'oeuvres and a selection of beverages. Tickets are \$75 per person; all proceeds will support Camphor Memorial UMC's community programs. To purchase tickets, visit camphorconnects.org.

The event also honors Greta and Pastor Dennis Oglesby, Jr., celebrating their profound contributions to the community.

For more details, contact Karen Carey Bonner at 612-221-9067 or kcbonner@comcast.net.

All Black Affair
Be Fabulous in Black
A Tribute to Greta and Rev. Dennis M. Oglesby

Featuring
Soulful Tunes from Emcee
T Mycheal Rambo
Live Music from W Rayford
Johnson and the Tangents

Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church
Saturday, October 26, 2024
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Tickets \$75

camphorconnects.org

Camphor Connects Hub

Worship/Music Ministry

- Rehearsals (All held in Sanctuary):
 - Sanctuary Choir:
 - Every First and Third Wednesday (4pm-6pm)
 - Every First and Third Saturday (1pm-3pm)
 - Woman's Chorale
 - Every Second Wednesday (4pm-6pm)
 - Every Second Saturday (4pm-6pm)
- Rose of Sharon Praise Dance Rehearsal: Every Second and Fourth Saturday (9am in Sanctuary)



UMM and UWF



United Women in Faith

General Meeting: Every Second Saturday at 10am
(Fellowship/Narthex Area)



United Methodist Men

General Meeting: Every Second Saturday
at 10:30am (Conference Room)

Ministry Teams Events

Usher Team Meeting: Every First Sunday
(12pm in Conference Room)

Trustee's Meeting: Every First Saturday
(10am via Zoom)

Congregational Care Team: Every Third Sunday
(11:30am in Conference Room)

Christian Education

Camphor Connects Wednesdays:
Every Wednesday at 6pm (Camphor Memorial UMC)

Adult Sunday School:
Every Sunday from 8:45am-9:45am (Conference Room)

(Stay tuned for information on when it will start back up)



CAMPBOR MEMORIAL UMC
585 FULLER AVENUE
SAINT PAUL, MN 55103

651-224-0341 | www.camphorconnects.org

**Office Hours (effective 9/22/24)
Tuesday & Thursday 8:30am-4pm**

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"Growing in our relationship with God, one another, and the community God has called us to serve."

