

CAMPUS CHAPEL

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## INKLINGS

the newsletter of campus chapel ministries

[www.campuschapel.org](http://www.campuschapel.org)





## FIVE-YEAR PLANS

“Where do you see yourself in five years?” or “What’s your five year plan?” might be my least favorite question. I’ve always had a difficult time processing and answering this question in interviews or even casual conversations. Growing up, my family was deeply rooted in one place with absolutely zero intention to move. No five year schemes or plans. They were florists and factory workers and farmers, living out their various tasks faithfully and diligently, but I don’t ever remember any grand projections, elaborate future timelines, or five year plans. We were always striving to grow and do better, but it was never measured by the five year metric that seemed to consume many people once I entered college and went on to seminary.

As August approaches, so does the five year anniversary of my relocation to the Ann Arbor area and the beginning of my life as one of the Campus Chapel pastors. I never expected to live outside of Iowa, and when I made the move to the east side of Michigan, I had absolutely no idea what life here would hold. Thankfully, the Chapel was one of the best places to interview and they never asked that dreaded five year question.

Professionally and personally, the last five years have held a lot. I was ordained, served on committees, helped to host and facilitate countless Wednesday Night Dinners, planned social events, preached and led liturgy and presided over communion, organized book studies, had countless cups of coffee and shared many meals, spearheaded the building and grounds committee, helped to organize the community garden, and much more. All this while living in a new place, weathering a global pandemic, reconnecting with and marrying my husband, acquiring three pets, losing and grieving the unexpected loss of several family members, expecting our first baby, and much more. I’m not sure if any of

these things would have made my theoretical “five year plan” if I had had one, but I’m thankful for many of them.

However, the thing that may have surprised me most about these last five years is just how quickly you can grow to love a place, and how quickly it can feel like home. Aside from my own



personal journey these last years, I’ve been invited into the journeys of others and it’s been an honor. The Chapel community is an incredibly special place. In the last five years we’ve celebrated new lives, grieved losses, witnessed new marriages, found ways to stay connected during a global pandemic, worshipped outside, arranged flowers and painted by numbers, volunteered at Food Gatherers, had deep theological conversation and conversations about ridiculous things, listened to interesting and engaging scholars, played board games and puzzled, removed inva-

sive species, been fed around the communion table and feasted around a dining table, celebrated graduations and new jobs, and lamented and prayed when we've received news of scary medical diagnoses. We've laughed and we've cried. Over the last five years, I feel like I've been invited into the Campus Chapel community's deep way of living, one that doesn't simply settle on the surface, but digs in deep, one that experiences the depth and breadth and full scope of life. It's a community and a space steeped in honesty that comes from a place of love. It's a place that takes the incarnation seriously, especially the incarnation's call to be with and for other people. The Chapel community loves and embraces one another well out of a love and desire to follow Christ and to be Christ's hands and feet in this world. I never would have expected that in five years I could grow to love and know a place so much, and also feel so loved and known by a place.

I won't quite make it to the five year anniversary of my ministry at the Chapel in August. My husband and I are expecting our first baby in June, and to my great surprise and with some delight, grief, and tenderness, I'm experiencing a shift in my call—a pivot towards staying home with our child in this season. So when she arrives, I plan to step away from my ministry at the Chapel. It feels impossible. But I'm so grateful to know that these relationships I've made are ones that will last. And I'm even more grateful to rest in the assurances that it's not my Chapel, but God's, and God has remained faithful to this truly special place for over eighty years and will continue to do so. I am proud and grateful to have my name added to the list of people who have loved and been loved by this special place, and I'm excited to see what God does in and through the Chapel community in seasons to come.

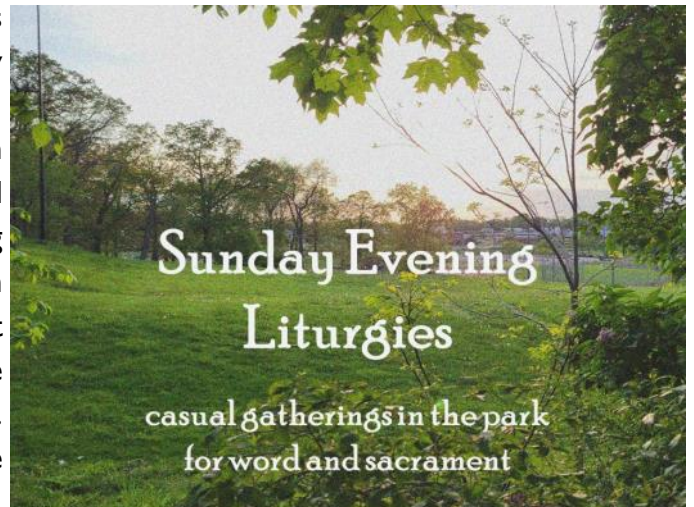
- Pastor Bailey

## SUMMER CHANGES AND BEYOND

Things around the Chapel are changing... again! Often it feels like the nature of campus ministry is constant change, but in this season we are particularly feeling this reality. Our community numbers have fluctuated wildly as we've returned to in-person activities again. Our financial situation is shifting as denominational funding streams are starting to dwindle and our sizable grant from the Lilly Endowment comes to a close; we have had to draw significantly on our financial reserves last year and this year. And as you just read, our staffing situation is changing again as we say goodbye to Pastor Bailey. These are hard realities to face.

But we move forward in hope and trust, God has been faithful to this ministry for over eight decades, and God will continue to sustain us. The Campus Chapel board is taking some time to assess our current ministry model and discern how God is leading us to carry out our mission in this next season of the Chapel's life. To facilitate that process we are scaling back some of our programs, especially this summer. We hope this will provide a little more time and space for the reflection, prayer, and visioning we need right now.

So, for the first time in a long time, there will be no Sunday morning worship at the Chapel this summer. After a final service on Pentecost Sunday (May 28) we will shift to a different worship gathering we're calling Sunday Evening Liturgies. This scaled-back outdoor offering will still feel like a Chapel service, but more casual and requiring far less staff and community energy to prepare. We anticipate regular Chapel worship returning in mid-August, just in time for the arrival of new students. Please be in prayer for our board and staff as we seek to navigate these challenging times faithfully. We are grateful for your continued support and encouragement.



## KUDOS AND FAREWELLS

This month we say goodbye to the **Lenko Family**. Matt and Rachel have been part of the Chapel community since they wandered in for a Sunday service which happened to be



Pastor Bailey's ordination, and Anya is one of our newest community members! Matt has been a dedicated worship leader who single-handedly kept us singing through pandemic Zoom worship, and he quietly tackled all kinds of building projects (sometimes without the pastors even realizing he'd been there). Rachel has been a member of the Chapel Leadership Team and the UM Interfaith Student Advisory Board, and we will miss her thoughtful and wise presence. They head to Grand Rapids where Rachel has taken a nursing faculty position at Calvin University.

**Kitty Oppliger** graduated from the School of Public Health where she completed her Master of Public Health Administration with a specialization in nutrition and sustainable food systems. Coming from the UP where she completed her undergraduate degree at Michigan Tech, Kitty is deeply passionate about food justice, creation care, and nutrition. She is also deeply involved around campus participating in a couple of campus ministries, working multiple jobs, gardening, and dabbling in foraging. She's also an avid yoga practitioner and instructor. We will miss her kind, curious and passionate presence in our community!



Pastor Matt and Marianne (and Maggie!) were thankful to celebrate the **Baptism of Mirielle** at the Chapel in March. Miri is now eight months old and a happy and healthy little girl. Pastor Matt says there is nothing quite like baptizing your own child! This was the third of four infant baptisms that we'll have in the Chapel community this year!

## BLAST FROM THE PAST

Last month's "Blast from the Past" photo was, of course, Rev. Leonard Verduin, the first chaplain at the Campus Chapel, performing a wedding ceremony in the building in 1957. We were not able to track down the name of the couple, but if you recognize them, please let us know! We'll have a new photo for you in the next newsletter.



As we approach the end of our fiscal year, we are facing a significant budget shortfall. It has been an exciting year of ministry, and we would love for you to be a part of this work by supporting us financially. Thank you!



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