

From the Pastor's Desk

May...to June...to July the calendar moves on...and so does the pandemic. But finally, there seems to be real hope that we are close to the end. Yes, we are still worshipping differently, and elsewhere around the community restrictions are still in place. Still, there is – finally – light at the end of the tunnel! That is, of course, good news. For all of us, in so many ways. All the disruptions of life over the past year are beginning to fade away. A return to normal is on the horizon. But not everything will return to normal, and really, I hope not. Some things need to stay changed. Like an appreciation for time with family, and the discovery of new ways to do old things, and learning to persevere, even in tough, uncertain times. We need to keep all that. But what about church...and faithful disciples...and followers of Jesus...what about us? What do we need to keep? We need to keep...the Church! Of course, I want to keep the church, you know, St. Paul. I'm looking forward to the day when this is really all over, and we can worship with a full house, gather together in Sunday School and Confirmation, and enjoy time together over cups of coffee. I'm hopeful we can again have a Neighborhood Corn Roast, music from the choir, and the energy of children pulsating throughout the building. All that makes "church," church! But that's not what I said. I want to keep "the Church." Church, with a capital "C." Yes, I love St. Paul, and I love the work we do together. We make a difference, we change lives, we proclaim hope in times of fear and uncertainty. We preach Christ crucified! The work of the church, the work we do as a community of the faithful. The work of the "church." But what, then, is the work of the "Church" (capital "C")? Well, a lot of it is the same. The "Church" isn't about St. Paul, or the ELCA, or any other congregation. It's about the "Church" – the Body of Christ – God's people at work. And a lot of that work happens together – you know, you, me, and everyone else, together, in the partnership of a faith community – like St. Paul. But when the "Church" is at work, it's about much more than what happens in the ebb and flow of congregational life. It's about what the Body of Christ is up to – here, there, and everywhere. It's about what we do every day, because in the end, the "Church" is present wherever you happen to be – right now. That is to say, the Church isn't confined to a building (like 3790 W. Water St.), but rather the Church is out and about, active and

moving in our world, present wherever we happen to be, at any time, any place. And that is what the pandemic lifted up to us. For over a year the church building has been closed, locked up. A few ministries went on (like the community garden). Most, however, were on hiatus, shut down until...who knows? But the ministry of the "Church" couldn't be confined by locked doors because the "Church" was already out and about, in the world, active and making a difference. How so? In YOU – in your daily life, in the many ways in which you connected with those around you, making a difference in a world that was filled with so many unknowns, so many fears, and so many uncertainties. As YOU lived a life of faithful discipleship, in your corner of the world, wherever you happened to be, the "Church" was hard at work. That has always been the case. We have always been the "Church" out in the world. But the pandemic gave us the opportunity to realize and discover that God is still at work through the "Church," even when the "church" is restricted with locked buildings and curtailed programs. So as our world begins to return to normal, I hope – even pray – that we don't lose that discovery, that in our everyday lives, in our corners of the world, we are in fact the "Church" – hard at work, doing God's work with our hands. Imagine what realizing that we are making a difference, each of us in our own way, as the "Church" might mean to us as we gather as the "church." Each of us knowing that the other, like our self, goes out each day to be the "Church," to be God's presence in a disturbed and disrupted world. That's worth keeping! And perhaps one of the gifts of the pandemic that we can hang on to will be the opportunity to embrace this new discovery with joy, wonder, and amazement – as we see God's Holy Spirit at work in what we do, and in the "new" that we have experienced! So, as the pandemic begins to wane, look forward to coming back to church, to our worship, our gatherings, our ministries. But don't lose the Church. Keep living as faithful disciples day in and day out, wherever you are. Keep being what Covid could not prevent – keep being...the Church!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bonnie



Save the Dates: Drive-In/Outdoor
Worship July 4 & 25 @ 8:00 & 10:30
Bathrooms will be open!

Send us your email address-

We are working to stay connected with more folks in a variety of ways. We are sending out weekly emails with what is happening the coming week, devotions, birthdays and prayer concerns. Your email address will NOT be sold to a third party. Currently, we have 113 email addresses. It is our goal to reach everyone who uses email (even if you only check it once a week). Please send the church office (stpaulww@comcast.net) your email address so you can receive the latest news and updates!

New Worship Series starting July 25-

Every three years as part of the Revised Common Lectionary, we read the Bread of Life discourse. This year we will experience it slightly different as we join five pastors from our synod as they each read the Gospel and preach. If you are joining us on-line, you will see them preach. If it is a week where we are meeting for Outdoor worship, Pastor Bonnie will share their message. This promises to be an enlightening way of engaging the very familiar Bread of Life discourse – join us!



Save the Date:

Food Truck Thursday, August 19. Food distribution will begin at 11:00am. Details for volunteers will be shared next month.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

June 7, 2021

Star Word - *Loving*

Anti Racism - Marilyn presented information that may be of interest to St. Paul. For more info please contact Marilyn Knak.

Reopening Committee - The committee is reviewing data and evaluating as we move forward. A plan has been formulated to open the restrooms for outdoor worship.

Audit Committee - The committee will meet June 12th to work on the annual audit.

Air conditioning - The committee is getting bids for the units in the worship area.

West Parking lot - We are waiting or the contractor to complete the work.

Sign Repair - The sign has been repaired and functioning again. Thank you Tony Bailey.

Beyond the Bible-

We are finishing Rob Bell's "Everything is Spiritual" on July 25 at Noon in the shade of our parking lot (weather permitting). We will be selecting our next book the week prior to July 25. We enjoy reading and discussing a wide range of books. If you would like to be included in choosing our next book and joining us, please contact Lisa Schleicher or Pastor Bonnie. ALL are welcome to join us!

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

—Winston Churchill

Our Daily Bread Devotionals

The June/July/August edition of "Our Daily Bread Devotions" has arrived. We have placed a stack of them in the Neighborhood Box outside the office door. It is located next to our Prayer Box. Please feel free to stop by and pick up a copy. Large print editions are also available in the Neighborhood Box.

Re-Opening the Building Committee

We are closely monitoring the St. Clair Health Department's Covid-19 weekly report. Each month the council has conversation on the current status. We are continuing to follow the guidelines provided to us by the Synod, CDC and our insurance company for the safest way for our most vulnerable members to gather.



We're excited to share that we've launched online giving at **St. Paul Lutheran Church** through Tithe.ly, a safe and secure giving platform that allows you to give one-time or recurring gifts!

To make an online contribution go to our website, stpaul Lutheranph.com, and click on the green "Give" button in the middle of the page, select where your contribution will go (current expenses, GWIP, memorial, etc.) and whether you want it to be recurring or one time. You can use a credit card or bank account. Please consider "Cover Fees" when making your contribution. This covers the nominal fee for processing your contribution. Thank you for supporting our ministry!

"Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible." —Corrie ten Boom

Kroger Community Rewards Program. St. Paul will receive rewards from your purchases at Kroger. To use the rewards program you can register online at krogercommunityrewards.com. All **current participants** in the Kroger Community Rewards Program **do not** need to re-enroll this year in order to earn funds for St. Paul. The rewards program runs from May 2020 to May 2021. Our NPO number is RK460. **Registration is online only.** Last quarter 34 households earned \$96.54 rewards for St. Paul.

Newsletter: The newsletter deadline for the August Ray is Sunday, July 18, 2021. Articles may be submitted via e-mail (stpaulww@comcast.net), on a flash drive or in writing.

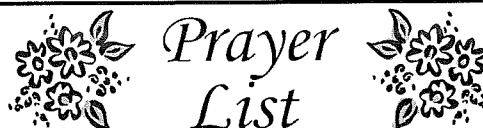


Remember Our Members In The Military

COL. THAD MIDDLETON
2205 TANKER WAY
WICHITA, KS 67210

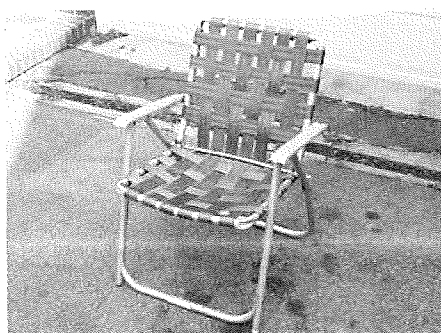


Melba Bartley
Connie Ganger
Lavina Kodet
MaryAnn Meyer



Prayer List

If you would like to add someone to our church prayer list, please email Pastor Bonnie at pastorbonniek@gmail.com. Request received by 9 a.m. on Fridays will be included in worship that Sunday. Those received after that time will be added to Pastor Bonnie's personal list and offered the following Sunday.



Join us for Outdoor/Drive-In Worship
July 4 & 25
@ 8 & 10:30 a.m.

On-line worship opportunities

While we are not able to be face to face in worship in our sanctuary there are still opportunities to gather to hear God's word, to pray, to sing and to be encouraged. Each Sunday at 9:30am on our Facebook page worship is posted for us to gather in our homes at the same time to view worship.

The service is also posted on our website stpaulwlutheranph.com under the "Worship services" tab. We also gather on Zoom each Sunday at 10:30 for a virtual social hour. Here is the link to join us on Zoom – <https://zoom.us/j/8109829853> or see the article about join us without a computer.