

Epistle

*A welcoming community
sharing Christ's love
in service
through relationships.
Welcome. Share. Serve.*

December 2019

REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR AMY JO

GLAD TIDINGS OF CHRISTMAS

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere we go! Stores and homes are filled with decorations, and giant inflatable reindeer and snowmen perch on rooftops. Christmas music and the seasonal scents of evergreen, peppermint, cinnamon, and vanilla fill the air with Christmas ambience. Advertisements for Christmas gifts surround us wherever we go. I've heard many people complain about the materialistic motives of the retail industries promoting the Christmas holiday. However, rather than focusing on complaints, I see the Christmas season as an opportunity to share the deeper meaning of Christmas.

At this time of year, many of the non-Christians around us are especially receptive to hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ that the angels were singing about. The world around us has a sense that there is something more to Christmas than buying the most trendy presents, putting up the most lavish decorations, and watching Hallmark Christmas movies, and they wait for us (the Church) to explain what that "something more" is to the Christmas season. The people of the Church can make the most of this opportunity and receptivity to our message. I believe that this is why our Christmas carolers are greeted with such warmth. The songs they sing tell the story of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The carols are the story of the "something more" or deeper meaning of Christmas. The invitations to Christmas Eve services that the carolers hand out are warmly received because they are a simple way to participate in that deeper meaning. Christmas celebrates the coming of Christ into the world, and as people of faith we celebrate the coming of Christ into our lives and the transformation that results.

How has your life been transformed by the power of God and by the fellowship of the Church? Have you sought guidance for direction in your life and found it? Have you experienced a life season of difficulty and had the hope of God lift you up? Have you sought one more day of sobriety/clean time and found the power of God could help you get there? Has God provided a system of ethics that give you stability in the midst of a shifting world? Has the fellowship of the Church been a positive

community for you when you needed support, accountability, or compassion? All of these things are ways that lives can be transformed by the power of God. As we share the glad tidings of Christmas, it's a wonderful opportunity to share the deeper meaning of Christ in our own life.



SAINT PAUL'S UMC CENTRAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

Chairperson:	Leslie Watkins
Finance:	Kae Jewell
Foundations (worship and personnel):	Shirley Holmay
Lay Member of Annual Conference:	Carol Egan
Membership Enrichment:	Jo Baker & Charles Duddingston
Operations:	Brent Cuttell
Outreach:	Bev Momsen
Young Adult Representative:	Katie Hamilton

**DON IRWIN IN WORSHIP
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22nd****10:30 am**

Join us in worship on Sunday, December 22nd as we welcome back Don Irwin, a Steinway concert artist who performed during St. Paul's UMC Year of Music and a previous worship service.

As a classically trained musician, Don Irwin surprises many with his very versatile non-classical repertoire. He studied Piano Performance and received a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Illinois. His expansive musical styling allowed him to work as a recording studio musician for artists such as Prince, Donna Summer, and many others.

His beautiful melodies, sweeping ranges, unique sounds, and exotic rhythms are intertwined to form what has become the Don Irwin signature. The musical expressions of this exciting, innovative, and inimitable artist will forever change your view of piano music.



www.donirwin.com

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Helping families
nurture lifelong
disciples of Christ



CONFIRMATION 2019-2020

In November the confirmation class theme was Salvation and Grace. We watched videos, had discussions, and played games that helped us learn how salvation is a lifelong process during which we must continue to respond to God's grace. How our baptism was the promise that the Holy Spirit will always be working in our lives, but salvation requires our acceptance of that grace, trust in Christ, and on-going growth in holiness as long as we live.

Our next class is on Wednesday, December 11th from 6:00-8:00 pm and the theme will be the *"Holy Spirit & Gifts and Presence"*.

YOUTH COMBINED CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY

On December 13th from 6:00-9:00 pm, St. Paul's UMC youth are joining with six other local church youth groups to have a combined Christmas party and mini-service project at Cottage Grove UCC. We are looking forward to the youth getting to know each other better and celebrate the season. Our youth group has recently started partnering with these churches once a month to be able to have bigger events like this with a larger group of youth as well as leaders. There will be dinner as well as cookie baking and a cookie decorating contest. The youth will be also be making cards for sick and homebound church members.

2019 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

We are very excited for a all new pageant this year. Our church Christmas pageant will be during Kidz 2gether worship again this year on Sunday, December 8th. We will be rehearsing music for the pageant with children during the beginning of the Sunday school hour throughout November, so please try to get your children there to practice. We have a whole new script this year with complete news coverage of the entire story of Jesus birth. It will be heartfelt and traditional, but will also be funny and entertaining. You won't want to miss it! Afterwards will be our all Church Christmas Party! (see page 7 for details)



**CHRISTMAS
PROGRAM**

REACHING

OUT

Living our faith
and connecting
with our
neighbors



NEIGHBORS NEWS

CHRISTMAS SHARING TREE

Neighbors has indicated to us that they have all the gifts they need for this year. They are asking up to provide food (especially pancakes mixes, syrup and Hamburger Helper) and cash. The food collection bin is located in the narthex. Cash donations may be placed in the offering plate with a notation either on the envelope or memo line of your check that it is for "Neighbors".

We pack gifts in large boxes; we need 4 big boxes. No plastic bags this year. Contact Jude Rikala if you have questions at 651-454-6885.

FOOD SHELF

Neighbors continues to need food for families and seniors. Donate what you would like to eat on holidays. Monetary gifts are most welcome.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE LIVE RADIO BENEFIT SHOW THE SAINT PAUL HOTEL THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5th

7:00 pm

Proceeds from this special performance will benefit Neighbors, Inc.

Tickets : \$35 general admission and \$25 for Neighbors volunteers.

Purchase tickets here: <https://events.idonate.com/wonderfullifebenefit>.

UMW YEAR END REPORT

As another year draws near to a close, St. Paul's UMW wants to thank the members and friends of St. Paul's church for their support with our fundraising events. These events would not be possible without the help of many hands. In summary I would like to share with you where the funds raised in 2019 were given.

To the Conference used for various national and international projects:	\$2,310
Neighbors, Inc.	\$1,000
Emma Norton Services	\$ 900
UMCOR	\$ 500
Robert Lewis House	\$ 300
Simpson Services	\$ 200
Helping Hand Fund	\$ 200
Feed My Starving Children	\$ 100

A big thank you for all of your contributions!

HOLIDAY EVENTS



HOLIDAY LETTERS

We invite you to send one to our homebound family:

Marsha Knuth: Coventry of Mahtomedi, 720 Mahtomedi #301, Mahtomedi MN 55115

Del and Gerry Nicklaus: 2065 Park Center Dr. #206, Eagan MN 55122

Phyllis Abrahamsen: 6305 Burnham Circle #122, Inver Grove Heights MN 55076

Ernest and Alice Peitso: Hill-top Manor, 595 Hwy 110, Mendota Heights MN 55118

Della Relation: 720 Linden St. #315, Mendota Heights MN 55118

Jackie Swanson: The Willows of Ramsey Hill, 80 N. Mackubin St. #100, St. Paul MN 55102

Myrle Voynovich: The Waters, 7088 11th St. N. #308, Oakdale MN 55128

Bob Wilson: Southview Senior Living, 1984 Oakdale Ave. #414, West St. Paul MN 55118

Duane and Emaline

Devereaux: 3475 Crestmoor Dr. Woodbury MN 55125

Bill Gydesen: 6305 Burnham Circle #300, Inver Grove Heights MN 55076

If you are not personally acquainted with all of our homebound family, just sign "St. Paul's UMC family" under your name!

CAROLING THURSDAY DECEMBER 5th

You are personally invited to be a "Christmas Caroler" on Thursday, December 5th, as we share the spirit of Christmas.

We will meet at St. Paul's at 6:00 pm and then return to St. Paul's around 8:00 pm for hot cocoa and cookies. All ages and singing levels are welcome!

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 8th

CHOIR PROGRAM

SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 15th
Inspiring music!



CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE

SERVICES
TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 24th
3:30 pm
and
5:00 pm
Candlelight,
readings,
& carols!

TURKEY DINNER 2019



EVENTS

What's
happening and
when



ALL CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 8th, 11:30 am

Please join us after the Christmas pageant on December 8th for a Christmas party to celebrate all the hard work put into the pageant! There will be good food, music and fellowship, and lots of activities for children and youth, including everything you will need to build an amazing *gingerbread house* for you to take home.

Last year



CHILDREN AND FAMILY GAME NIGHT DECEMBER 21st

Want to come and join in on some fun family Christmas games? Or do you need a little time to get ready for Christmas without the kids in the house? Possibly just need a quiet moment to catch your breath during this busy Christmas season, all the while knowing your children are having fun and running off some of that built up winter energy?! You are in LUCK! We are hosting another game night, on December 21st this time for all ages of children and families! All are welcome to join us at the church from 4:00-7:00 pm for a fantastic evening of fun games and fellowship! We will play all kinds of exciting games in the church and end the evening with a pizza dinner. Parents are welcome to drop children off for the evening or join us for the fun! Friends are welcome to join too!

SMALL GROUPS

United with purpose



Esera Tuaolo

UMW CIRCLES

Ruth Circle

Ruth Circle will meet Monday, December 16th at 10:00 am at Janet Schrankler's home, 2350 Apache Street, Mendota Hts.. Questions? Contact Rhea Nyquist, 651-457-5623

Rebekah Circle

Rebekah Circle will meet on December 18th at 11:00 am at church. We will be discussing the future of our circle for 2020. Questions? please call Beda @ 651-554 3600.

Rachel Circle

Rachel Circle will not meet in December. Questions? Contact Barb Jorgenson, 651-414-0054.

MEN'S GROUP

The Men's Group will meet Sunday, December 8th, 6:30 pm at church. We are pleased to have Esera Tuaolo as our program! Esera, nicknamed "Mr. Aloha" (he is Hawaiian), is a former defensive tackle in the NFL, having played for the Minnesota Vikings, 1992-1996. The author of a book, *"Lonely in the Trenches"*, Esera starred at Oregon State, then went on to play for the Packers and Vikings. Esera also has a music career, as a finalist on the TV show *The Voice*. We are expecting to have a free-ranging discussion with Esera about his life and careers, including his involvement in the LGBTQ community. Dinner will be served. All are welcome! Please come and be with us. Questions? Contact Charles Duddingston, 651-454-1733.

SUNDAY ADULT ED

Bertelsen Library

Sundays, 9:30 am

The world is complicated. Let's work through it together. Using *Faithlink*, a weekly curriculum, each Sunday this fall we will address a current event and discuss it, along with a Christian point of view, with as many viewpoints as possible. Topics will be fresh every Sunday! Join us as we connect faith and life. Charles Duddingston will convene.

WEDNESDAY ADULT ED BOOK GROUP

Bertelsen Library

Beginning November

27th noon

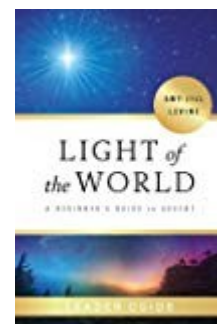
Light of the World: a beginners guide to Advent by Amy-Jill Levine. This book highlights the role of women and men in first century culture.

Dates:

November 27

December 4, 11 and 18

Books are available to purchase on the narthex table for a \$10 donation to Garlough School but they are not required for participation. Bring a sandwich and a friend!





Please pray for the following:

Joys:

The little boy tossed off the balcony at MOA is back at school, walking straight and praising God
 Jerry Moffitt, thankful for a successful hip replacement

Deaths:

Gretchen Nelson's grandmother, Emily Grimaluskus, November 23rd
 Franklin Rutherford, Loye Eckman's brother, November 13th

Health Concerns:

John Schmidt, for healing of his leg
 Natalie Drew in her quest to recover from addiction, Mike Shaw, father of Nancy Shaw, as he enters hospice care; Mikey Shaw, brother of Nancy Shaw, as he undergoes surgery for cancer
 Barb Jorgenson's mother-in-law, Verna, fell and fractured her pelvis
 Jerry Holmay, encouragement while recovering from a recent surgical procedure
 Loye Eckman's cousin Anne with depression and Anne's husband, Joern, with lung cancer
 Brad Paulson recovering from a broken vertebrae in his neck from a fall
 Barb Helmken, health issues
 Jerry Moffitt recovering from a successful hip replacement
 Chrisana Tripodi's husband, Greg, for ongoing health concerns
 Mike LaGuire's daughter, Cheryl, healing from breast cancer
 Daniel Berntsen, Shirley Holmay's friend and former co-worker, very seriously injured when hit by a vehicle while riding his bicycle to work
 Kathy Detert's neighbor, Mary, with bone cancer
 Barb Goin's friend, Laurie, finished 3rd round of chemo with more to come
 Nancy Grinager's sister-in-law, Dedra, fighting lung cancer
 All homebound with health problems

Additional:

For farmers who are struggling to harvest their crops
 Guiding parents during the teen and tween years
 Peace, healing and joy to all

Please call the office with joys and concerns

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Monday - Friday: 8:00 am - noon

LANI'S OFFICE HOURS:

Please contact Lani at
lani.thompson@stpaulsmn.org or
 612-412-6663 to make an
 appointment.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Education Hour for all: 9:30 am
 Worship: 10:30 am

2nd SUNDAYS SCHEDULE

Education Hour for all: 9:30 am
 Kidz 2gether Worship: 10:30 am
 Brunch: 11:30 am
 Communion will be offered the 1st
 and 2nd Sundays of every month.

CENTRAL LEADERSHIP

CHAIR: Leslie Watkins

ST. PAUL'S STAFF:

Pastor: Rev. Amy Jo Bur,
pastor@stpaulsmn.org

Director of Children, Youth and Mission:

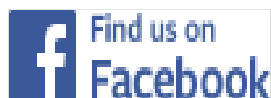
Lani Thompson,
lani.thompson@stpaulsmn.org

Director of Music Ministry:

Lane Skoglund-Anderson,
laneskoglundanderson@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:

Diane Pelinka,
info@stpaulsmn.org



grat·i·tude
 [grat i tood]

noun

the quality of being
 thankful; readiness
 to show appreciation
 for and to return
 kindness

THANK YOU TO THE OCTOBER COUNTERS

Brent Cuttell
 Barbara Goin
 Shirley Holmay
 Barbara Jorgenson
 Jude Rikala
 Bob Walker
 Leslie Watkins

Thank you for your October
 donation of 60 pounds of
 groceries! Our inventory is low
 now, so we are very grateful for
 your generosity!

The team at Neighbors, Inc.

Relationships Matter

COMING IN 2020: YEAR OF RELATIONSHIPS

Saint Paul's will have a special focus during 2020 on our relationships with God, our relationships with each other, and our relationships with our neighbors. Watch for more information in the new year!

December



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 am Education Hour 10:30 am Worship w/ Communion 11:45 am Charge Conference for Pastoral Compensation 4:30 pm & 5:30 pm Music 2gether	2 10:30 am Music 2gether 6:00 pm Finance Mtg.	3 6:30 pm Yoga	4 12:00 pm Book Club 6:00 pm Handbell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	5 6:00 pm Caroling	6	7
8 9:30 am Education Hour 10:30 am Kidz 2gether Christmas Pageant Worship w/Communion 11:30 am Party 4:30 pm & 5:30 pm Music 2gether 6:30 pm Men's Group w/Esera Tuaolo	9 10:30 am Music 2gether 6:00 pm Central Leadership Mtg.	10 6:30 pm Yoga	11 12:00 pm Book Club 6:00 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm Handbell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	12 10:00 am Quilters	13 6:00 pm Youth to Cottage Grove UMC	14
15 9:30 am Education Hour 10:30 am Worship w/ Choir Program	16 10:00 am Ruth Circle, Janet Schrankler's	17 6:30 pm Yoga	18 11:00 am Rebekah Circle, church 12:00 pm Book Club 6:00 pm Handbell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	19	20 Newsletter Deadline	21 4:00 - 7:00 pm Children and Family Game Night
22 9:30 am Education Hour 10:30 am Worship	23	24 3:30 and 5:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship	25 Office Closed	26	27	28
29 9:30 am Education Hour 10:30 am Worship	30	31 No Yoga				

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

700 Wesley Lane
Mendota Heights MN 55118

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Email: info@stpaulsmn.org

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Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors
The People of the United Methodist Church®

**CHILDREN'S
CHRISTMAS
PAGEANT**
SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 8th

**CHOIR
PROGRAM**
SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 15th
Inspiring music!



And the Word
became flesh and
dwelt among us ...
John 1:14, ESV

**CANDLELIGHT
CHRISTMAS
EVE
SERVICES**
TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 24th
3:30 pm
and
5:00 pm
Candlelight,
readings,
& carols!