

# Epistle

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

April 2021

## REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR AMY JO



### Happy Easter!

Happy Easter! Christ is risen from the dead, and the door to new life, eternal life is opened for all of us through faith in Jesus Christ! Hallelujah! When Mary finds the stone rolled away at the empty tomb, she is amazed, and she runs to tell the others: "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20:18). The Spirit of God is with us throughout our lives, and we see God's hand at work in many ways. As I read the account of Mary saying "I have seen the Lord!" I think about the ways that I have seen/experienced God's presence recently. I experience God in the breath that I draw and the life that sustains me, in the consistency of the seasons of life and budding plants, in the guidance that leads me forward on a pathway of discipleship, in the strength that holds me up during difficult days when human strength isn't enough on its own. How have you been experiencing God? May your heart be open to receive God's blessings and to celebrate God's presence with us each day. May you experience the wonder of new life on this Easter!

Video Worship services for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter will be available.

Easter Day, April 4:

- 9:30 a.m. Outdoor Worship in the Saint Paul's UMC parking lot, weather permitting
- 10:15 a.m. Children's Egg Hunt, weather permitting
- 10:30 a.m. Outdoor Worship in the Saint Paul's UMC parking lot, weather permitting



### Phased Re-Gathering Plan

Bishop Bard has shared the exciting news that he anticipates relaxing some of the COVID gathering restrictions after Easter. We are all growing weary of the safety precautions and we miss one another! Signs of hope are all around us! We do not know the bishop's plan, so we are preparing for many possibilities. Thank you to those researching the childcare guidelines for the nursery, air change-over procedures for the sanctuary, cleaning protocols, and the many technical details related to regathering.

As we anticipate the return to in-person worship, we'd like you to keep these thoughts in mind.

**Phased Re-Gathering Plan.** We are working with a *phased* plan-- one step at a time. When we begin to gather, we may need to start up our ministries one at a time (or a few at a time), until eventually we are fully operating as before.

### How can I help our re-gathering to be successful?

Many of you are asking us this question, and we appreciate your enthusiasm! To make our in-person regathering successful, you can help by volunteering in any number of ways. Once we know the details of the bishop's announcement, we can provide specifics but most likely we will need people to help with the following tasks, just to name a few:

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(continued from page 1)

- Sanitizing (wipe down light switches/door knobs, etc.)
- Directing people to marked, socially distanced seating
- Turning fans on and off to help with air flow turn-over
- Turning the iPad on/off to record video
- Preparing the church building with a bit of spring cleaning

Staff will be pitching in, but with the focus on in-person worship while still providing video worship, it will take many hands for a successful and safe re-opening. We want to continue video worship services after we re-gather, to connect with those who are not able to safely join us in the building, as well as reach people who are traveling and unable to attend on Sunday mornings. And of course, by remembering to socially distance and wear a mask, everyone contributes to a safe regathering.

We are all looking forward to being together again. Until then, a big THANK YOU to the many people of all ages who are participating in music, worship leadership, editing, and visuals for our video worship services. The music for Holy Week is fabulous! Remember our video worship services are serving as a spiritual connection that keeps us close to God and close to each other during this time of social distancing. May the peace of God surround you during this Holy Week.

Pastor Amy Jo and Leslie Watkins, Central Leadership Team Chairperson

## REACHING OUT

Living our faith  
and connecting  
with our  
neighbors



## MARCH FOOD SHARE MONTH

As we write this newsletter, donations are still being received for March Food Share month, so we don't have a total of donations yet. What we do know is that the non-perishable food items have



been delivered to Neighbors, Inc. and we were able to share more than a truckload of food assistance with those in need. Thank you for your generosity! Your compassion and generosity have made a large difference in the lives of neighbors in need.



# REACHING OUT

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## ISAIAH - BUILDING A JUST AND ABUNDANT MINNESOTA THROUGH FAITH IN ACTION

I recently began working with *Isaiah*. Working toward social justice is one of the ways that we can help to build up the Kingdom of God. It is an organization of people of faith - all faiths - who work together to build social justice for everyone in Minnesota. *Isaiah* works to encourage equitable policies in government and our communities so that all people can thrive.

Right now, during the legislative session, *Isaiah* is very busy meeting and planning. We encourage our lawmakers to consider social justice and racial equity in all their decisions. We have been lobbying hard for the Paid Family and Medical Leave bill as well as for fully paid child care. We believe strong, healthy families are the foundation of a healthy state. Members of *Isaiah* are encouraged/pushed to grow in their own awareness of social issues as we work to improve community in Minnesota.

*Isaiah* is very well organized! The meetings are packed with information and are very inspirational. Also they provide so many steps for us that the work we do is clear. They take away new members' fear by providing scripts and written questions.

I would love to see others from St. Paul's join me in the work we do at *Isaiah*. Some churches have *Isaiah* cohorts who work together

on community issues such as working closely with the city leadership on assuring our city strives for and implements racial equity policies. If you would like to join some of the *Isaiah* meetings, let me know. I can make sure you get the correct information. (All meetings this year are virtual.) Also, read about *Isaiah* at [www.isaiahmn.org](http://www.isaiahmn.org)

Carol Egan,  
[merryhands@gmail.com](mailto:merryhands@gmail.com)



## EVERY MEAL

One year ago Every Meal, formerly Sheridan Story, asked for help. With schools closing, the need for feeding children was greater than ever. We responded with financial support. With our response and that of many others, Every Meal was supplied with enough money and provisions to distribute 3,618,833 meals this year. Their production went up 400%.

Thanks to everyone who helps the Outreach team provide these necessary funds. We continue to support Every Meal for the summer distribution of meals. Together we are keeping God's children fed.

**Distributed  
3,618,833  
meals**



# SMALL GROUPS

United with purpose



## UMW CIRCLES

### Rachel Circle

Rachel Circle met in person! It was an enjoyable evening sharing life events and highlights of 2020 from visits from grandchildren and nieces to new grandbabies to grandbabies on the way to new kittens. We talked about getting outdoors and walking and meeting the neighbors. We chatted about creative ways to social distance in the backyard from meeting around a fire pit to gathering in plastic bubbles. We talked about connecting with God through daily devotionals to morning prayers to meditative walks. We were all in agreement that one of the first things we will all do when it is safe to do so is go out to eat! We also discussed the "Everyday Poet" by Jacqueline Suskin from the February issue of *Guideposts*. The author talked about a

poet's mindset and she had suggestions for cultivating a 'poetic mindset'.

At our next meeting, we will explore a few things we are in awe of, what we do to find peace when brokenhearted or angry, what Bible verse inspires us when looking for goodness and what we can do to give ourselves a new perspective, what moves us most. Cultivating a 'poetic mindset' is a healthy goal.

**Next Rachel Circle meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 26 @ 7:00 pm at church in the Fellowship Hall.**

## EVENTS

What's happening and when



## GROWING THROUGH LOSS

Speakers and support groups will be offered virtually via Zoom for this series. You must register for each session that you plan to attend. Following registration the Zoom link will be sent to you.

Zoom open: 6:45—7:00 pm  
Speaker: 7:00—8:00 pm  
Support Groups: 8:00—9:00 pm

### Registration:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090B4BAAAA2EA31-spring>

### Suggested Donation:

\$4 per session. All proceeds support the Growing Through Loss Ministry.

### Guest speakers:

#### April 8:

"The Wisdom of a Broken Heart"  
Bussho Lahn

#### April 15:

"Depression vs. Grief"  
Kay King

#### April 22:

"Love Deeply, Grieve Deeply"  
Kelly Grosklags

#### April 29:

"Resiliency Through Life's Challenges"  
Donna Mathiowetz

#### May 6:

"Service of Remembrance"  
Rev. Karen Treat

# FINANCE

## Support of our church and its mission



Greetings and Welcome to Spring! I am hopeful that this will be an early spring but . . .

I'm also hopeful that the improved pandemic numbers continue and we will begin to have more opportunities to be in ministry and mission in an in-person manner. In the meantime, the work of our congregation to glorify God and love our neighbor continues in earnest.

And that work continues to require our support by actions, prayer and financial gifts. There are three ways for you to give:

\*Send a check to the church office. Mail is being picked up daily and deposits made twice a week. Mail your gift to: St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 700 Wesley Lane, Mendota Heights, MN 55118

\*Set up regular electronic giving. Currently 25% of the gifts we receive come in electronically. It is easy to set up and means that you don't have to think about whether you have sent a gift to the church. If you are interested in this tool, contact Rhea Nyquist at [rheajn34@gmail.com](mailto:rheajn34@gmail.com).

\*You can also use the mobile giving app. Go the app store on your cell and locate and download

the Give Plus app. This too is easy and can be used for setting up a regular giving schedule or a one-time gift. Many thanks to all who have continued to support the mission of the church with your gifts.

Below is a quick summary of the February and year-to-date finances. A couple of items aren't apparent from the numbers. In 2020 we received a federal government loan through the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) of \$37,600. That loan was forgiven in February 2021. Those funds are in the General Fund numbers for 2020. In February, we qualified for a second PPP loan of \$37,382. To qualify for this loan we needed to have a quarter in 2020 that saw a 25% or greater reduction in gross receipts over the same period in the previous year. We qualified because our gifts were down 31% in the fourth quarter. We expect this second PPP to also be forgiven but until then it is currently in grants and does not show in the General Fund gifts. When it is forgiven, the funds will move to the General Fund. If you have any questions on this or any other aspects of our finances, feel free to contact me or anyone on the Finance Team.

Kae Jewell, Finance Chair

### Finance Update as of 2/28/2021

	<u>February 2021</u>	<u>2021 Year-to-Date</u>
General Fund Gifts	\$ 14,851	\$ 44,357
Less General Fund Expenses	\$ 18,178	\$ 37,931
Balance	\$ (3,327)	\$ 6,426
Less Unpaid Apportionments	\$ (2,501)	\$ (5,003)
Balance After Unpaid Apportionments	\$ (5,828)	\$ 1,423



## PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING

### Joys:

A'leigh, new great, great granddaughter of Della Relation, home from the hospital  
 Chuck and Dawn Everling's great niece, Emilee Arriaga, back home and doing well after heart surgery  
 Birth of James Brian Schrandt, March 10

### Deaths:

Ken, Dana Nyhus' uncle, March 2

### Health Concerns:

Bob Wilson, with a new cancer diagnosis  
 Dawn Everling's niece, Patty, diagnosed with breast cancer and recovering from double mastectomy  
 Chrisana Tripodi's husband, Greg, whose ongoing medical issues are affecting his work  
 For those testing positive for COVID-19  
 Dick Robinson, in home hospice care  
 Sam Young, undergoing treatment for a detached retina  
 Tim and Andrea Larson's friend, Laura, recovering from surgery for a brain tumor  
 Jim and Rhea Nyquist's neighbor, Robert, with lung cancer  
 Curt Almberg's cousin, Loren, undergoing long-term cancer treatments  
 Jo Reck's friend, Angie, continued healing  
 Bob Mahoney, Corrine's brother, healing  
 All homebound with health problems

### Additional:

For those affected by the tornadoes in Alabama and Georgia  
 For those affected by the violence in Boulder and Atlanta  
 For peace in our community, our country, and throughout the world  
 For an end to violence and racism in our communities  
 Those in recovery from addiction without in-person meetings  
 For healthcare professionals, including those affiliated with our congregation: Arin, Carrie, Deanna, Greg, Heidi, Jade, Kevin, Mary, Nikki, and Reed  
 For those who are unemployed  
 For those affected by COVID-19 and wisdom for our public health officials  
 For peace and safety in our communities  
 Please e-mail with joys and concerns at [info@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:info@stpaulsmn.org) or call Pastor Amy Jo at (507) 341-1760.



## CENTRAL LEADERSHIP

**CHAIR:** Leslie Watkins

## ST. PAUL'S STAFF:

**Pastor:** Rev. Amy Jo Bur,  
*[pastor@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:pastor@stpaulsmn.org)*

**Director of Children, Youth and Mission:**

Lani Thompson,  
*[lani.thompson@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:lani.thompson@stpaulsmn.org)*

**Director of Music Ministry:**

Lane Skoglund-Anderson,  
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Diane Pelinka,  
*[info@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:info@stpaulsmn.org)*

**Debbie Robinson**  
1405 Upper 55th St. E. #111  
Inver Grove MN 55077



## James Brian Schrandt

March 10, 2021

9.2 pounds, 21"

Parents: Steven Schrandt and

Lani Thompson

22287 Cameo Ct.

Forest Lake MN 55025



Thank you for contributing 100% of your 2020 apportionment allocation! You generously support your local church budget, community outreach, and global missions.

Dear St. Paul's UMC,

We want to say a huge thank you to all who have reached out to us, said prayers with us and for us, as well as sent gifts, food, cards and well wishes. Your love and support has been amazing and so much appreciated throughout. We are all doing very well at home and we can not wait until we can see you all in person again (and as for James - for the first time).

With love and Blessings,  
Lani, Steve, Maddie & James

**St. Paul's United Methodist Church**

700 Wesley Lane  
Mendota Heights MN 55118

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Email: [info@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:info@stpaulsmn.org)

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



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**EASTER DAY, APRIL 4**

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