

Epistle

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

May/June 2021

REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR AMY JO

Moving Forward

As I write to you today with the May/June Epistle, we are moving forward in many areas of the church. It is the spring season and many new things are sprouting and blooming!

Guest Readiness Renovations.

As part of our Healthy Church Initiative Recommendations, we are doing renovations to our sanctuary and entrance areas to improve guest readiness. A technical consultant is helping us with questions related to our sound system, hearing amplification system, projection system, and our website. Along with the technical work, we are also looking at flooring and paint samples to do a complete refresh of the sanctuary and entrance areas. The primary focus of these renovations is to make our guests feel more welcome. However, long-time members will also enjoy the benefits of this refresh. We are just beginning the planning phase now, so look toward the late summer and fall for more information about details.

In-person, Indoor, Weekly Worship. Thanks to declining COVID rates, we are returning to in-person, indoor weekly worship services at Saint Paul's UMC, beginning on Sunday, May 16. It

will be good to worship together in-person and indoors again! Our schedule will be:

9:45-10:30 worship

10:30-11:00 sanitation/air exchange

11:00-11:45 worship

At this time, we are required to be socially distanced and masked for our worship services, so we are having two worship services, to allow plenty of room for socially distanced seating. The seating in the church has been clearly marked, and extra masks are available if you need one. Extra attention is being given to engaging our children and youth during worship, since nursery care and traditional Sunday School are not yet being offered. For right now, we are integrating parts of children/youth Sunday School into our worship services. The Chancel Choir and Bell Choir are both rehearsing special music which will be a blessing! Please help out by doing the following:

- ♦ Wear a mask
- ♦ Socially distance and greet friends from six feet of distance
- ♦ Follow social distancing signs for seating and room use
- ♦ Enter through the covered, sanctuary entrance
- ♦ Exit through the fellowship hall exit
- ♦ Pick a Sunday to volunteer as the air exchange attendant

(turning the fans on and off between services). Contact Diane at info@stpaulsmn.org or (651) 452-5683 or use the online sign-up link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080B48A5A928A1FA7-sunday>

- ♦ Stay home if you are sick
- ♦ Allow staff the space/time to sanitize the bathrooms between services

The Foundations Team will meet on June 10 to evaluate and make changes as necessary, as we continue to move forward.



**Return to
in-person
indoor worship!**

Children and Youth. A monthly youth fellowship and weekly children's story time will be starting soon! Planning is also under way for summer service opportunities for our youth. Watch for more information to come.

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Rain Gardens. Our rain gardens are greening up for the spring, and two master gardeners from our neighborhood, Rosemary and Leslie, are diving in to help us with tending the young plants. The 4H Club who affiliates with our church has also scheduled an outdoor weeding day to help with spring clean up. The walking path, rain gardens, and playground are providing a beautiful setting for outdoor hospitality.



It feels good to be moving forward again in new ways! I also want to highlight the way that many things have kept right on going during the past months. Video worship has been posted every week, without fail, when we haven't been able to safely meet together in person. Thank you to all who have helped with this large endeavor! The Finance Team has quietly and efficiently worked behind the scenes to secure two PPP loans through the Cares Act, and to make sure that all of the church financial obligations have been met. Thank you, Finance Team! The bell choir has been rehearsing and providing us with special music on video and outdoors (even with the wind blowing music pages.) Thank you—beautifully done! The Central Leadership Team has been coordinating all of the policy efforts of our congregation and staying on top of the many safety policy guidelines that emerge each day from the Minnesota Department of Health, CDC, and bishop's office. Thank you, Central Leadership Team! And finally, the Outreach Team has been coordinating mission and Outreach, resulting in a successful March food drive and Easter offering, as well as planning for more Outreach during the summer and fall months. Our mission is ever before us. Thank you to the Outreach Team and all who are engaging in Christlike service, loving our neighbors! May the light of Christ continue to shine brightly through Saint Paul's United Methodist Church! ☒

SMALL GROUPS

United with purpose



UMW CIRCLES

Rachel Circle

Rachel members spent an enjoyable March evening in person discussing what we are doing to cultivate a 'poetic mindset'. We shared the things we are in awe of: miracle of life, music, babies and how they change, birds, nature and the 'dimension of time'. We talked about what we do when brokenhearted or angry: meditation, reading the Bible, praying, journaling, having a good cry and talking with friends, putting on some music and 'getting to work'. We discussed

Bible verses that inspired us when looking for goodness: Romans 8:28; Proverbs 3: 5-6; Jeremiah 29: 11-13; Micah 3: 6 and the 23rd Psalm. And finally, each of us shared what we do to give ourselves a new perspective: focus outward instead of inward, walk on the 'other side', listen to lively music or music that brings back good memories / good times, and reflect on all the positives in our lives instead of focusing on the negatives. Next meeting: Monday, May 24th, 7:00 pm at church.

Nancy Pierson, chair

REACHING OUT

Living our faith
and connecting
with our
neighbors



MISSION AND OUTREACH REPORT

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, the Mission and Outreach team will be delivering \$2,005 (half of the Easter offering) to Lewis House in Eagan. Lewis House provides emergency housing and assistance to individuals and families escaping from domestic and sexual violence, services which have become more in-demand over the course of the pandemic.

In late March the Mission and Outreach Team held a small, virtual, “COVID-19 era” annual planning session and finalized the list of organizations that will be supported as part of our foundational mission work.

We decided to continue our close partnerships with Garlough, Every Meal (a separate organization that works in tandem with Garlough), Neighbors and Keystone food pantries, and UMCOR. We will supplement those foundational efforts with one-time “pop-up” initiatives based on unique congregational interests and emerging areas of need. These decisions were informed by conversations with many of you; we are grateful for your insights and ask that you continue sharing your ideas on where we can best serve.

We’re working on a few fun and engaging pop-up opportunities for the summer, so stay tuned!

YOUTH SUMMER MISSION PROJECT

This summer St. Paul’s youth will be partnering with four other local churches to put together a Mission Work week called “Summer Servants”. Each day we will be going to a new location to volunteer together and serve our local community in many different ways. Dates and more info coming soon!



*Delivery of March
FoodShare
donations!*

CENTRAL LEADERSHIP

Support of our
church and
its mission



Greetings St Paul's Congregation! The Leadership Team has continued to meet this past year. I am proud to be a member and share in the progress and accomplishments of the team. It is not news to you this has been a tough time for all of us! We have been learning the ins and outs of virtual meetings since March 2020. While Finance, Operations, Foundations, Outreach and Member Enrichment teams all continued to run their programs and serve the congregation, they also spent a great deal of time crafting the safety policy in accordance with the Bishop's phased re-opening plan. This has been uncharted territory and we've talked about many scenarios that 18 months ago none of us knew existed.

The Central Leadership team honors the Bishop's decisions knowing that it is designed to protect us, and we are acting responsibly to comply. Our decisions were not made lightly, and we appreciate your adherence to the policy. The team members are continuing their work and have done a wonderful job during the COVID-19 restrictions.

With spring on the way, the Bishop's move to phase yellow, and the governor's recent announcements, we are delighted that the congregation has not only been able to enjoy worship outside, but now can move to inside worship. While many restrictions will be eased, our responsibilities to make safe decisions and protect the unvaccinated remain. One way is to continue to monitor our own health and stay home if we are ill.

I have been participating in the Minnesota Department of Health Faith Based Outreach virtual meetings, and our most recent gathering emphasized we still need to evaluate our church values and risk tolerance as we navigate the ease of restrictions while COVID-19 continues to spread. Businesses and individuals can continue the safer practices protocol indefinitely to protect the vulnerable, including our children. If you have any questions or ideas, please feel free to contact me or a member of the Central Leadership Team.

Leslie Watkins



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Helping families
nurture lifelong
disciples of Christ



CHILDREN'S SUMMER STORY TIME AND PLAY HOUR

Starting on June 2nd, every Wednesday at 2:00 pm, St. Paul's UMC will be hosting a story time and play hour on our front lawn. Bring the family and a blanket or a chair to sit on to enjoy the outdoors and listen to a couple of stories together followed by an hour of outdoor fun and fellowship on our playground. All ages are welcome!

MONTHLY YOUTH GATHERINGS

As warmer days arrive, we are making plans for outdoor opportunities to connect. We are currently talking to parents and families about finding what day/time of the month would work best for our youth to gather together again once a month for some faith, fun, and fellowship (and most likely s'mores).

FINANCE

Support of our
church and
its mission



I again write to you from sunny Arizona. In March I was missing Minnesota because you had such great weather. Now I'm not sure I'm ready to return as April hasn't been all that great. While I have been traveling, our finance team has done a fantastic job of keeping the business of the church running. My thanks to all of our team as they

have dealt with the day-to-day and have successfully addressed new items that have surfaced.

Thank you for your gifts and financial support of the mission of our congregation. Below is the finance report as of the end of March.

Kae Jewell, Finance Chair

Finance Update as of 3/31/2021

	<u>March 2021</u>	<u>2021 Year-to-Date</u>
General Fund Gifts	\$ 15,040	\$ 59,122
Less General Fund Expenses	\$ 20,798	\$ 58,729
Balance	\$ (5,758)	\$ 393
Less Unpaid Apportionments	\$ (2,501)	\$ (7,504)
Balance After Unpaid Apportionments	\$ (8,259)	\$ (7,111)



Please pray for the following:

Joys:

Melissa and Luke Wilson expecting a baby

Chuck and Dawn Everling's great grandson, Charles Robert Everling, born May 10

Wendy Hall, for a successful medical procedure and positive outcomes

John and Nancy Grinager's niece, Natalie, of Rapid City SD, celebrating the 10th month of sobriety and improving health and praying that she continues on this journey each day

Dawn Everling's niece, Patty, healing from double mastectomy and enjoying life

Dawn Everling's mother, Lucille Curtis, honored by the Daughters of the American Revolution amongst its Women of American History for her service in a defense job during World War II

Health Concerns:

Tom Lewis, strong recovery from subdural hematoma surgery

Kent Sherburne, nephew of Rhea Nyquist, healing from Parkinson's

Unspoken prayer requests

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 effecting his work

For those testing positive for COVID-19

Dick Robinson, in home hospice care

Tim and Andrea Larson's friend, Laura, recovering from surgery for a brain tumor

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 peace between Israelis and Palestinians

For those injured and the family and friends of those who died in the Mexico City bridge collapse and those crushed during religious festivals in Israel

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 peace and safety in our communities

Please e-mail the office with joys and concerns at 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

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

Thank you for your financial contribution of \$500 on March 31, 2021 to Every Meal. Your partnership will enable Every Meal to continue to make a positive impact in the fight against child hunger.....

Sincerely, Rob Williams
Executive Director

Thank you so very much for your generous donation of 3,358.50 pounds/dollars during MN FoodShare! Your gifts will help feed and support many families in northern Dakota County.....Thank you for your partnership!

With Gratitude, Beth Skwira
Dir. Of Mission Advancement



Tom and Beda Lewis
6305 Burnham Circle #301
Inver Grove Heights MN 55076

651-552-2803

Thank you for giving the gift of healthy food and stability today! Thank you for your generous gift of \$792.50 to Keystone Community Services for our food shelf programs. I am honored you chose Keystone as a way to support people in need in our community at this important time.....Thank you! This is a tremendous gift and your support will help Keystone support more neighbors.....

Mary McKeown, Pres.
Keystone Community Svcs



Altar Flowers

If you would like to provide altar flowers for a two-week block of time (flowers usually last that long, so you only need to purchase once) please sign up on the clipboard underneath the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall or at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080B48A5A928A1FA7-altar>. An acknowledgement of your donation along with your personal designation (in memory of/thanks for/celebration of) will appear on the PowerPoint presentation projected on our wall.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

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

**CHILDREN'S SUMMER STORY TIME AND PLAY HOUR
EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 2:00 PM
STARTING JUNE 2nd
FRONT LAWN**

