

Epistle

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

July 2021

REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR AMY JO

Christmas in July

EVERY DAY is a day to celebrate the joy of Christ coming in to the world and into our hearts! Christmas is the holiday on which we formally celebrate the birth of Jesus, but during all seasons of the year, we are thankful for the coming of Christ.



Our children and congregation missed being together in-person for many special celebrations this past year during the pandemic. Wouldn't it be fun to have a celebration now that we are back worshipping together? What would Christmas in July look like? Are you able to picture it? No snow, no below zero temperature, no boots, mittens or coats! Would there be a Christmas tree, Christmas carols or Christmas cookies? (We think there will be!) Would there be Christmas lights, candles or a children's program? Yes, let us celebrate the joyous birth of Jesus on

Kidz 2gether Sunday, on July 11th! What will that celebration look like, be like? Come join us and invite a friend for Christmas in July worship as we celebrate Jesus being born into the world and into our hearts.

**Christmas in July Worship
Sunday, July 11, 2021; 10:00 am**



**Weekly Worship
Sundays at 10:00 am**

In-person, and Indoors.
Video of worship is also posted by noon on
Tuesday at: stpaulsmn.org.

Masking and social distancing mandates have been lifted. However, there are still recommendations that vocal performers and child/youth workers wear masks, and we are following those recommendations, so you will see staff masked when working with the children/youth. A number of families at Saint Paul's UMC are continuing to mask and social distance, so we are providing one section of socially distanced seating for those who wish to use it. Please sit where you are comfortable and come and join in.

*Pastor Amy Jo and Barb Jorgenson, Foundations
Team Chair*

SMALL GROUPS

United with purpose



RACHEL CIRCLE

Rachel Circle met in May and took on the challenge of discussing Jesus' parables found in Matthew 13. We found it interesting that we often did not find the same message in each parable. Certain parables we found to be more complex than others. Shirley Holmay provided additional context from *"The Parables"* by Madeleine Boucher and we found the following paragraph enlightening, *"Again, this is not to say that Jesus employed parables with the aim of making his subject obscure. A parable is a implied comparison. The comparison is not always obvious; but once it is perceived it sheds new light on the subject under discussion. The purpose of the parable is to move to decision or action; paradoxically, that purpose is perhaps more effectively achieved precisely because the speaker proceeds indirectly rather than directly."* It was a fun discussion.

Rachel Circle is now on summer break until September.

UMW SPECIAL RECOGNITION PIN AWARD

At the UMW annual picnic June 21st, the Special Recognition Pin was awarded to Bev Momsen. Congratulations Bev! Bev has been a key member of many committees at St. Paul's and has been instrumental in leading efforts for multiple outreach and mission projects. Bev was a key player in coordinating the care packages offered by St. Paul's members to the critical care staff at Bethesda during COVID. She helped orchestrate the recognition of Garlough teachers at the end of the school year. Bev has also been found multiple times 'behind the kitchen counter' when fund raising for St. Paul's mission trips. Again, thanks to Bev for her leadership ...an award well-deserved.



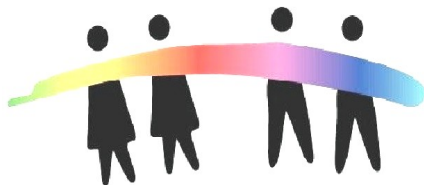
THANK YOU

Thank you to John Grinager, Mike Curran, Tim Larson, Curt Almberg, Bob Brocklehurst, volunteer expert consultants, Rosemary Husbands and Leslie Pilgrim, and the 4H group that meets at the church, for all the hard work on clearing out invasive plants and dead trees, pruning, planting new plants, and mulching mainly along the south border of the church that we share with The Village apartments. They have also been working to restore

our sprinkler system to full capacity. Thanks also to Andrew Gotham, who watered our rain gardens as part of the community service required to become an Eagle Scout. All this in the midst of the longest heat wave we have seen in decades. Their efforts are much appreciated by St. Paul's and Mother Earth! If you would like to volunteer some time for this on-going project, contact John Grinager, 651-644-4928. They would welcome the help!

REACHING OUT

Living our faith
and connecting
with our
neighbors



GARLOUGH SCHOOL NEWS

We applied for a grant for money to help Garlough replace the 1,000 books they lost during the pandemic chaos. We hope to hear from the grantors soon.

We will collect **school supplies** in August to give to Garlough Elementary. Please watch for sales this summer, and begin shopping for the usual items from now through August (backpacks, single subject notebooks, glue sticks, Kleenex, 24-count Crayola color crayons). We will have a collection bin in the narthex.



THE THRIFT STORE

The Thrift Store at Neighbors is open again! They have new rules for what you can donate and how much. The only things they accept now are what you think of as essentials for building a household: clothing and accessories, shoes and footwear, bedding and towels, and dishes, pots & pans, and utensils. They no longer take any holiday items -- any holiday you can think of. Limit of 5 bags/boxes/items. Items cannot exceed 40 pounds. Unload items independently.

GRADUATION NEWS

High School Graduates

Abby Brandecker, daughter of Bob and Jamie Brandecker, graduated from South St. Paul High School.

Allie Eggen, daughter of Scott and Pam Eggen, graduated from Richfield High School and will be attending Augsburg University.

Nick Eggen, son of Scott and Pam Eggen, graduated from Richfield High School and will be attending Minnesota State University Mankato where he will be marching in the University Drumline.

Hailey Whitley, daughter of Jeff Whitley and Monica Thompson, graduated from Rush City High School and will be attending University of Minnesota Duluth to study Environmental Sciences.

College and Advanced Degree Graduates

Rev. Amy Jo Bur will graduate in July from the Non-Profit and Church Leadership Program through Dakota Wesleyan, with half of the credits necessary for an MBA. She will use her new skills on the Conference Board of Trustees and at St. Paul's UMC.

Jake Edelman, son of Kevin and Jill Edelman, graduated from St. Cloud State with a Masters of Science in Regulatory Affairs. He is a Quality Management Systems Administrator at Surmodics, a medical device company in Eden Prairie.

Jenna Lewis, granddaughter of Tom and Beda Lewis, graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology.

EVENTS

What's
happening and
when



NIGHT TO UNITE

We missed you last year! Join us for a grand community get together. Bring the whole family and invite your friends!

Where: St Paul's United Methodist Church

When: August 3rd, 4:00—7:00 pm

What: Meet your neighbors and friends in the congregation, enjoy some food and yard games and lots of fun water activities for kids, so be sure to bring swimsuits and towels. The Fire and Police Departments will also be making a visit to the church and letting the kids climb in and check out their vehicles. A great time will be had by all!

NATIVE PLANT HOME GARDEN TOUR + ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP EXPO

Learn how to transform your yard into a landscape that nurtures wildlife. Exhibitors include native bee and native plant experts along with representatives from Audubon and more.

Saturday, July 10, 10:00 am—1:00 pm, 1704 Vicki Lane, Mendota Heights. Questions? Contact Neighborhood Greening at green@neighborhoodgreening.org

WEATHERING LIFE'S LOSSES ADULT GRIEF GROUP

Wednesdays, June 23– Aug. 11

Time: 12:00—1:00 pm (online)

6:30—7:30 pm (online)

Goal: To encourage the sharing of feelings, questions, and struggles as you journey through grief.

Meetings are free and require no registration. For more information, including how to receive the weekly Zoom meeting link, contact Monique Dosdall, Grief Group Coordinator at 651-239-8441.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Helping families
nurture lifelong
disciples of Christ



FINANCE

Support of our
church and
its mission



3rd and 4th GRADE BIBLES

On June 13th we presented Bibles and devotional books to 7 children in 3rd and 4th grade:

Keeli Ball, Maddie Bur, Gavin McCallum, Sophia Medjanyk, Ella Nyhus, Brynn Taurinskas, and Levi Turner.

CHILDREN'S SUMMER STORY TIME AND PLAY HOUR

Every Wednesday at 2:00 pm, St. Paul's UMC hosts 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!

YOUTH GATHERING

On Wednesday, July 28th, from 5:00—8:00 pm, St. Paul's UMC is hosting a youth gathering for kids who are going into 6th-12th grade. We will have a small mission project to do, play a couple of games, and do a little catching up while eating s'mores or snow-cones (depending on the weather).



THE DOORS ARE OPEN!

We are starting to get back to something near to normal. We are worshipping together indoors, circles are meeting, children are participating in SPLAT activities and we are having a weekly story time on the front lawn.

As "normal" returns we are relearning some of our old habits, that we considered customary 15 months ago. Now they seem a little strange. One of those habits is remembering our gifts to the church. As you can see, gifts have dropped off dramatically in the last two months. The last time I wrote an

article for the Epistle we were at break-even for the year prior to apportionments.

We are very blessed that in 2021 we were able to obtain a PPP loan from the government. Those funds are allowing us to meet our obligations. But they will not carry us through the year. As we learn to be social again, let's also renew our habit of gifts to the church. In July you will receive your giving statement for the first six months of the year. Please review and determine your ability to financially support the mission of the church.

Kae Jewell, Finance Team Chair

Finance Update as of 5/30/2021

	<u>May 2021</u>	<u>2021 Year-to-Date</u>
General Fund Gifts	\$ 11,418	\$ 85,229
Less General Fund Expenses	<u>\$ 18,554</u>	<u>\$ 94,713</u>
Balance	\$ (7,136)	\$ (9,484)
Less Unpaid Apportionments	<u>\$ (2,501)</u>	<u>\$ (12,506)</u>
Balance After Unpaid Apportionments	\$ (9,637)	\$ (21,990)



Greetings St. Paul's members,

As we come out from under the pandemic and into a time of celebration, Staff Appreciation Sunday will be celebrated on July 18.

All of us have had to adapt during the last months, and St. Paul's staff is no exception. While we have viewed the online services, the behind-the-scenes work has been challenging. Our staff performed digital acrobatics to provide music, education, clerical and technical support, team meetings, and spiritual guidance from their homes while quarantined. They continued their assignments while learning how to reach us in new ways. I have 2 asks of you.

- ♦ Please take a moment to write a 2 or 3 sentence personal statement on what a staff member meant to you during the pandemic or how a specific staff member helped or connected with you during this time. It could be what a particular online service meant to you, music during a service, a phone call or text you received, or just knowing their thoughts and prayers were with you while they continued in their work for St. Paul's congregation.
- ♦ Consider sending a monetary gift marked "Staff Appreciation" to the church which will be used to purchase thank you gift cards for our 4 staff members.

Your personal statements can be emailed to Leslie Watkins at dlek.mn@comcast.net using the subject line STAFF. You can also call, text or mail it to my home: 612-280-9756 (cell); 461 Deer Run Trail, West St. Paul MN 55118.

Thank you for your consideration as we all reap the benefits of a slowing pandemic and a renewed appreciation of our lives and the people around us.

Leslie Watkins
Central Leadership Team



WHAT'S
BEEN
HAPPENING?



Maddie Bur



Keeli Ball

Bible Sunday

Bibles and devotional books were given to 3rd and 4th graders.



Camp Sunday



Flat Jesus

Pick up a "Flat Jesus" from the bulletin board outside the Bertelsen Library, color him and take him along on your summer adventures!

And then send us a picture so we can see what he has been up to!

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?



I have been exchanging letters with a 4th grader from Garlough. She has one older sister. Her first letter talked about how much she enjoys baking in the kitchen and making baklava with her family. Her mother is first generation Slovakian but my pen pal has a very common Scandinavian last name as her dad is from Minnesota. She told me she only wanted LEGOs for Christmas and her wish was granted as in one of her letters, she talked about the gifts of LEGOs she received. Her family did go on vacation to Hawaii but found out once they arrived that they could not travel between the islands as their COVID tests were older than 72 hours and results of new tests would take too long. She was disappointed she did not get to see the volcano on the big island but very much enjoyed the beach. She likes to hear all about our grandchildren and what they are doing, especially my second grader and kindergartener, so my letters often include a picture or two of our oldest two granddaughters and their activities. In my next letter, I will tell her about the chickens my grandchildren in Hudson are helping feed and take care of until later in the summer when the chickens are big enough to become lunch. My pen pal's first name is Natalia and she really likes the Nutella spread so wants to be called 'Nutella' - what can I say, she is a 4th grader. *Nancy Pierson*

We had some joys in 2020: my sister got married. Two babies were born into Peter's side of the family. Our own kids are healthy, employed, and vaccinated. I have

joined a couple of organizations that are doing great work. I would love to have some St. Paul's members join me in these groups. **Isaiah** is a faith-based group that works on social justice issues. They are go-getters and very well organized! The other group is **Moms Demand Action**. They work on promoting common sense gun laws and preventing gun violence. See me if you have questions about either of these organizations. *Carol Egan*

I have loved getting to know my pen pal from Garlough Elementary! Her name is Autumn and she is an entertaining young lady. We've been trading letters since last November and have become good friends. It has been so nice to get actual letters in the mail box! I hope this tradition of outreach continues with Garlough - it is such a great opportunity for the members of St. Paul's to connect with our community. *Jill Edelman*

Janet Schrankler had a very musical year during the pandemic. She took violin lessons using Zoom, and re-learned the cornet. She has been practicing on a trumpet part for one of our hymns. Janet also inherited a musical saw from her father-in-law and learned to play it. It produces a very soft sound and can be played using a stick of wood or a bow. Janet and Cedric are sad to share that Honey, Cedric's

service dog, died on January 25. They have welcomed a new service dog named Sophie to their home. Cedric has built a new tiller, which will allow them to expand their cabin garden.

As told to Pastor Amy Jo

During this past year, I have been learning through Dakota Wesleyan's program for Non-Profit and Church Leadership Program, and will be graduating July 13 in Mitchell, South Dakota. The classes are half of the credits necessary for an MBA and are specially designed for church leaders in the church and non-profit charitable settings. I have enjoyed being a pen pal with a Garlough student who is in third grade. My spouse has continued with his teaching and research at Gustavus Adolphus College, and both children have been navigating a changing school landscape with some weeks in-person, some hybrid, and some distance learning. Alex has learned a new instrument—the French Horn.

Pastor Amy Jo

During my COVID year I sewed a lot of masks, turned my kitchen table in to a work desk and filing cabinet, enjoyed not driving to work in the snow, and worried about my youngest daughter who was pregnant with my second grandson. Jack was born safely in June but I missed a lot of his and his brother's growth as the pandemic continued. I looked forward to viewing them through their front door window and FaceTime calls. What a year!

Diane Pelinka

HONORING DR. LOWELL GESS ON HIS 100th BIRTHDAY

Happy 100th birthday to Dr. Lowell Gess, one of the great missionaries of Minnesota! Dr. Gess was the guest preacher at Saint Paul's UMC a few years ago during a sermon series on missions. I was inspired by his story and want to share part of that story again.

Dr. Gess was born in Paynesville, Minnesota and served as a medical missionary in Africa for 52 years (18 of those years fulltime), along with his late wife, Ruth, who was a nurse anesthetist. Beginning his mission work as a general surgeon, his heart was touched with compassion by the many cases of blindness that he saw, and he returned to Minnesota in order to complete a medical residency in the area of ophthalmology. His first three surgeries as an ophthalmologist were performed on three blind persons, all of whom regained their sight. Dr. Gess was the founder of the Kissy Eye Clinic in Sierra Leone, which has now been renamed the Lowell and Ruth Gess UMC Eye Hospital. Several of Dr. Gess' children and grandchildren also became ophthalmologists and traveled with him to Sierra Leone on some of his medical mission trips. The ministry of the eye hospital continues to be needed even today, when three ophthalmologists practice in Sierra Leone, a country of approximately six million people.

At 93 years old, Dr. Gess returned to Sierra Leone to help during an Ebola outbreak. (He writes about this trip in his book, *Ebola's Den*.) Traveling with a plane full of medical supplies, Dr. Gess brought

needed medical supplies, deep faith, and great medical skill. The discoveries of his medical research team on that trip provided more formation on how Ebola was spread through tears. This information helped to slow and prevent the spread of Ebola.

Whenever I have spoken with Dr. Gess, I have been touched by his sincere faith and his humble desire to serve others in the name of Jesus Christ. On July 18 (the week of Dr. Gess' birthday), our worship service will focus on the theme of missions, and I can think of no better way to celebrate his birthday than to make a generous donation to the Lowell and Ruth Gess UMC Eye Hospital! (Checks can be made out to Saint Paul's UMC with "Gess Eye Hospital" in the memo line, and we will forward them through the UMCOR Advance #09229A, with 100% of donations going directly to the Eye Hospital.) I invite you to join me in celebrating the first 100 years of the life of Dr. Gess, and making a generous donation to carry the work of the Eye Hospital forward into the future.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT FROM LAY MEMBER

Annual Conference 2021 was held June 22-24 and was mostly virtual. One day attendees had an option of an in-person site to attend, but I chose to do all three of the days via Zoom.

The conference theme was *Jesus, the Way Maker*. Both the laity training and the conference training centered around conflict resolution and engaging in tough conversations. We learned about techniques to use and approaches to consider when

having difficult conversations. They reminded us to make our way through hard conversations, remembering the model of Jesus as the way maker. Goals should be reconciliation (not "winning") and understanding who God wants us to be. We want our vision to be a lived reality.

Not talking about tough issues is no longer an option. Two book recommendations are: *Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell and *The Door Set Open* by Peter Steinke. Learning these techniques for conflict resolution is challenging and will take lots of practice. God will help us along the way!

Did you know about all the options for increased lay person leadership? You can attend training to become a Certified Lay Speaker, a Certified Lay Minister, and other options. Lay people have developed ideas and carried them out with help from their local churches: clean water for villages in three countries of Africa, bread and pizza dough ministry for a local community, clothing ministry, and many others. We can dream big!

The Minnesota Conference adopted a Racial Justice Resolution: "*All congregations in the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church join in the work of dismantling racism, opposing white supremacy, and advocating for racial justice.*" Let's think about ways we can join in this effort.

Amy Jo Bur was elected to the Conference Board of Trustees! Also, to our delight, she is appointed to St. Paul's for another year as our pastor.

(continued on page 10)



Please pray for the following:

Joys:

Marriage of Shirley Holmay's friend, Bill, and Mimi
 Jessica Kamish and Matt Gaviorno, Seattle, expecting a baby girl in July, making Sheila Kitzman a grandma
 Chuck and Dawn Everling's great grandson, Charles Robert Everling, born May 10
 Melissa and Luke Wilson expecting a baby

Deaths:

Barb Helmken's brother-in-law, Erv, June 10
 Tom Lewis, May 26

Health Concerns:

Marilyn Anderson, healing for health concerns
 Loye Eckman's daughter in Oregon, Patricia, recovering from two strokes
 Barb Helmken's friend's great grandson, Joseph, born early at 3 pounds 15 ounces
 Shirley Holmay's friend's daughter, Rachel, recovering from a stroke
 Unspoken prayer requests
 Bob Wilson, with a cancer diagnosis
 Chrisana Tripodi's husband, Greg, whose ongoing medical issues are affecting his work
 Dick Robinson, in home hospice care
 Tim and Andrea Larson's friend, Laura, recovering from surgery for a brain tumor
 Jo Reck's friend, Angie, continued healing
 Bob Mahoney, Corrine's brother, healing
 All homebound with health problems

Additional:

For all those affected by the building collapse in Florida
 For an end to violence and racism in our communities

(continued from page 9)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT FROM LAY MEMBER

Regarding General Conference, which was cancelled twice, it is now scheduled to take place in Minneapolis in August 2022. Watch for details on where/how we can volunteer. The Minnesota Conference has been working on possible scenarios that may occur following General Conference. They assured us that the Minnesota vision of being all-inclusive fits the mainstream of American United Methodism.

After several years of attending Annual Conference as your Lay Member, I have decided to resign from this position. It has been an honor to represent you at Conference. I encourage you all to consider becoming the next Lay Member and see how the state-level connectionism handles its business and its opportunities. It is fun, educational, and an inspiration. ☿

Carol Egan, Lay Member



CENTRAL LEADERSHIP

CHAIR: Leslie Watkins

ST. PAUL'S STAFF:

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

Director of Children, Youth and Mission:

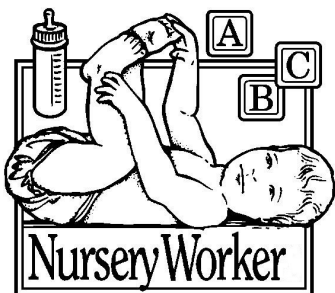
Lani Thompson,
lani.thompson@stpaulsmn.org

Director of Music Ministry:

Lane Skoglund-Anderson,
laneskoglundanderson@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:

Diane Pelinka,
info@stpaulsmn.org



HELP WANTED - NURSERY WORKER

Saint Paul's UMC is looking for a loving and caring person 18 years or older to hire as a nursery worker for every other Sunday. If you are interested or know anybody who would be interested in applying please contact the church office at info@stpaulsmn.org.



Deaths in Our
Church Family

Corinne Strand

December 12, 1935- May 17, 2021



Send sympathy cards to:

Kent Strand
 12783 Florida Lane
 Apple Valley MN 55124

Eric Strand
 54 Thornhill Drive
 Wildwood MO 63025



Thomas Lewis

February 2, 1930—May 26, 2021

Send sympathy cards to:
 Beda Lewis

6305 Burnham Circle #301
 Inver Grove Heights MN 55076



Thanks for the sympathy cards, prayers, memorial gifts for my husband, Tom. It is nice to have such supportive church family.

Sincerely, Beda Lewis

Thank you to Nancy Grinager for providing the flowers for the six flower pots that flank our front and parking lot doors. They make a very welcoming entrance for all who visit St. Paul's UMC!

Thank you for supporting the 360 Communities Lewis House with your gift of \$2,005....Because of you, we are able to deliver safety and stability that improves lives.

Laurie Bolin, Dir. Of Dev.

Thank you for your most recent donations of 23 pounds of groceries for our food shelf! Donations are usually lower in the summer, so we are grateful for your ongoing partnership!

The team at Neighbors Inc.



Loye Eckman

no longer has a landline.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

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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®

CHRISTMAS IN JULY WORSHIP
SUNDAY, JULY 11, 2021
10:00 am

