

Epistle

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

December 2021

REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR AMY JO

Blessed Advent! Christmas music is beginning to play on the radio, lights are going up on homes and stores, and the Advent Candles are burning brightly in our sanctuary. We are preparing for a joyous Christmas celebration at Saint Paul's UMC.

Advent Activity Bags: Families with children and youth have already received an Advent Activity bag with a full Advent devotional curriculum and supplies needed for the activities included. Sunday morning worship during Advent will relate to the themes in this devotional guide.

Children's Pageant: On Sunday, December 12, during our 10:30 am worship service, our children will lead a festive pageant celebrating the birth of Christ. This year, our puppets will be making special appearances, as Lorraine comes to learn that Jesus is the true "star" of Christmas. A puppet choir will join the angels in singing "Gloria!"

Video Worship: Special Christmas music is being prepared on piano by Don Irwin, on violin by Jennifer Thomas, and soon by our hand bell choir (whose bells have just returned from being tuned and refurbished!)

The video worship service will be a traditional, full length Christmas Eve service, during which we read the Biblical accounts of the birth of Jesus, and celebrate the coming of Christ in joyous song. You can find the link on our website (stpaulsmn.org) on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship: There will be three in-person worship services on **Christmas Eve, at 3:00, 4:00, and 5:00 pm**. These will be short (about 30 minutes), peaceful, and heartfelt services of worship, with Laurie McFaul joining us as a guest violinist. Special music will be different at each service, but all of the services will include the reading of the Biblical account of the birth of Jesus and conclude with the lighting of candles. The Gospel of John tells us that Christ is the light of the world, so as we light the candles, we see how Christ's light shines in the darkness, and how each of us helps to pass on that light to others. A sign-up sheet will be available in the narthex for people who know ahead of time which worship service they wish to attend. (Reservations are not required, but signing up in advance will help us to know at which services we may need to set out additional chairs.)

We hope that you will find many ways to join the people of Saint Paul's UMC as we prepare for the coming of Christ and celebrate this blessed Advent and Christmas season! May the peace of Christ be with you and your loved ones this Christmas.



FINANCE

Support of our church and its mission



FINANCE UPDATE AS OF 10/31/21

I have been reading a book where a part of the story included a discussion of the Beatitudes. The book takes place in the late 1800s. The young man was attending St. Olaf College and the professor assigned the students a summer project. They were each to select one of the Beatitudes and work to live up to its teaching during the summer.

This spurred me to think about one of my favorite Beatitudes, Matthew 5:4, *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."* One of the many ways we find comfort is to honor the memory of our loved ones with memorial gifts to the church. Our church is very blessed by the generosity of those who have contributed to our memorial fund.

During the current year, memorial funds were used for two important projects. I'm sure you have noticed the beautiful new trees surrounding our parking lot. In addition,

over the Christmas season, you will be blessed with the sound of our refurbished bells. Our bells were sent off to Pennsylvania this summer for a total refurbishment. Parts were replaced and they were tuned. Each of these projects was funded by memorial fund gifts. These two projects cost around \$6,000. The availability of memorial funds made these wonderful projects possible.

Gifts to the memorial fund are given as we mourn and in honor of those we love. I find great comfort in the beauty of our new trees and the hand bells that will welcome the birth of Jesus this Christmas season. We are all blessed and comforted by the gifts given to the memorial fund.

Merry Christmas,
Kae Jewell

	<u>October Financials</u>	<u>2021 Year-to-Date</u>
	<u>September 2021</u>	
General Fund Gifts	\$ 20,684	\$ 204,781*
Less General Fund Expenses	<u>\$ 19,215</u>	<u>\$ 199,430</u>
Balance	\$ 1,469	\$ 5,351
Less Unpaid Apportionments	<u>\$ (2,501)</u>	<u>\$ (25,013)</u>
Balance After Unpaid Apportionments	\$ (1,032)	\$ (19,662)

*Includes \$36,382 PPP loan

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Peaceful and
heartfelt services



HOLIDAY OUTREACH

Providing gifts
to those
in need



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

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NEIGHBORS' HOLIDAY GIFT PROGRAM

The Neighbors holiday gift program is a great way to spread joy to our community this holiday season. This program connects generous community members to families in need during the holiday season. If you would like to help make joyous holiday memories for a family this year, please consider shopping for a child or senior.

St. Paul's UMC has been asked to buy items for children, teens, and seniors.

Black Friday is a great time to be on the lookout for deals! Gifts will be delivered to Neighbors on December 13th, so please have everything turned in before then. You have a few weeks now to be a secret shopper to make Christmas a miracle for a needy family. You can also adopt a family, individual, or senior by calling 651-306-2140 or email holiday@neighborsmn.org.

SMALL GROUPS

United with purpose



RACHEL CIRCLE

For our November meeting, we explored the history behind December 25 as the birth date of Jesus. The New Testament provides no clues. According to the historians, one widespread explanation of the origin of the date is that the Romans celebrated winter solstice as the casting away of winter and the rebirth of the sun. Therefore, when Christianity became the official religion of ancient Rome, December 25 was fixed as the date. As the historians point out, one problem with this view is that the Christian church is seen as appropriating a pagan festival. In fact, during the mid-17th century, the Puritans banned Christmas for 20 years in America stating the

celebration was all a pagan idea. A second view suggests that December 25 became the birth of Jesus based on the reasoning that the spring equinox is the date of creation of the world and the 4th day of creation as the day light was created and therefore, the date of Jesus' conception (March 25). December 25 is 9 months later. It was interesting to review what history has to say about the date on which Christmas and the birth of Jesus are celebrated.

Rachel Circle will not meet in December and January.

UMW 2021 MISSION SUMMARY

As we come to the end of another difficult year we are thankful for the two fund raising events that raised money for missions. These events would not be possible without the help of many hands. A big thank you for all contributions big and small!

St. Paul's UMW not only makes donations to the UMW Twin Cities district for national and international projects but we also support missions right in our community. Following is a summary of where the funds raised this year were given.

To the district used for various national and international projects	\$2,320
Neighbors, Inc.	\$1,000
Emma Norton Services	\$ 500
360 Communities (includes Robert B. Lewis House)	\$ 500
Simpson Services	\$ 300
Every Meal	\$ 100

Again, thank you to the congregation for your support!

Barb Jorgenson

GARLOUGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Helping families,
students and
educators



P.I.E. NIGHT

GARLOUGH PIE NIGHT:

P.I.E. (Parents In Education)

Nights are a fun opportunity for Garlough families to come together to learn about reading and math while sharing a meal. Each child that comes to PIE Night leaves with a new book!

St. Paul's volunteers showed up with smiles on for PIE Night on Tuesday November 16th and

prepared take home meals in record time for everyone who came to the school that night.

St. Paul's Outreach team is always looking for volunteers to help at these events. Volunteer hours will be approximately 5:00-6:30 pm. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Lani

at lani.thompson@stpaulsmn.org

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Helping families
nurture lifelong
disciples of Christ



NOVEMBER YOUTH GATHERING

St. Paul's UMC youth in 6th-12th grade have started gathering every fourth Wednesday from 5:00-8:00 pm for some guided Faith, Fellowship, and Fun. Each youth gathering focuses on a combination of a Faith topic, Mission project, Worship participation, Fellowship building, and of course a fun activity. In October youth met at the church to help with the annual Turkey Dinner by "checking in" the vehicles when they arrived and carrying the meals out to the cars.

In **November** we made Christmas cards for homebound members and families that are still worshipping from home for health and safety reasons, and played around with Zoom backgrounds for this year's Christmas pageant.

Our next youth gathering is on **December 22nd** and we will be

having a Youth Christmas Party! It will be full of music and games to celebrate the season, and baking delicious Christmas cookies and desserts!

2021 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Our Church Christmas pageant will be during Kidz 2gether worship again this year on Sunday, December 12th. We will be choosing parts, rehearsing, and doing some filming for the pageant with children during part of the Sunday school hour throughout November. There will also be a sign up form going out to all parents for those who cannot make it to Sunday school or who would like to participate and film from home this year. Please be on the lookout for that and encourage your children and youth to participate. It is so much fun to see everyone have a role no matter if you are in person or video!



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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CONFIRMATION

Confirmation 2021-2022:

In November the confirmation class theme was *"The Importance of Church Participation and Finding your Place in the Church."* We watched videos, had discussions about how many people it takes to run a worship service here at St. Paul's UMC, as well as the many other things that St. Paul's does outside of the church walls. We talked about where and how the confirmands had interests in volunteering and even learned

how to run the sound system in the sanctuary. We then participated in video worship by recording a few prayers and scriptures to use. Our class ended with a photo scavenger hunt to help all the confirmands learn where a lot of things are inside our building and where they can find them the next time they are volunteering with something.

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



The Poinsettias were given to the Glory of God

... In loving Memory of....

Yeen Chong	by Curtis Almberg
Joyce Bur, our mother	by Scott and Amy Jo Bur
Ernest and Kathryn Mathes and Eleanor Guntzburger	by David and Mary Lou Dresbach
Margaret Hall and Bert Hall	by Jerry, Wendy and Mark Hall
Don Jorgenson and Bud and Arlyce Anderson	by Barbara Jorgenson
Tom Lewis	by Beda Lewis
Bill and Alice McCorkhill	by Jan Marshall
Eric Nyquist	by Jim and Rhea Nyquist
James Peterfeso	by Cynthia Peterfeso
Mary Ann Smith, my mother who loved everything Christmas	by Nancy Pierson
Our fathers, Donald Dietner and Marvin Rix	by David and Carol Rix

...In Honor of...

My loving family	by Kae Jewell
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...In Thanks for...

Family	by Barb Helmken
A good life	by Andrea Larson
Church family	by Diane Siebert

...In Celebration of...

Family	by Darrell Butterwick
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Baptism IN THE CHURCH FAMILY

William Daniel Wilson

November 28, 2021

Son of

Luke and Melissa Wilson

2130 47th Street East

Inver Grove Heights MN 55077





SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday School: 9:30 am

Worship: 9:30 and 10:30 am

Kidz 2gether worship: 2nd Sundays of the month

Communion on 1st and 2nd Sundays of the month

VIDEO WORSHIP

Available on Facebook, YouTube (St. Paul's UMC Mendota Heights) and the church's website:
www.stpaulsmn.org

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,
lanithompson@stpaulsmn.org

Director of Music Ministry:
 Lane Skoglund-Anderson,
laneskoglundanderson@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:
 Diane Pelinka,
info@stpaulsmn.org

HOLIDAY LETTERS

We invite you to send a letter to our homebound family:

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

Marilyn Anderson
 8345 Atlas Ave.
 Inver Grove Heights MN 55077

Darrell Butterwick
 8725 Promenade Lane #134
 Woodbury MN 55125

Emaline Devereaux
 3475 Crestmoor Drive
 Woodbury MN 55125

Gerry Nicklaus
 Homestead
 2102 S. Market St. #170
 Oskaloosa IA 52577

Marion O'Connor
 316 23rd Court South
 South St. Paul MN 55075

Ernest Peitso
 P.O. Box 32902
 Minneapolis MN 55432

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

Dick Robinson
 170 Emerson Ave. E. #103
 West St. Paul MN 55118

Myrle Voynovich
 6536 Chamberlain Rd.
 Woodbury MN 55125

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



To everyone who made the take out turkey dinner possible: We just wanted to express our appreciation for the lovely Turkey Dinner we picked up on October 27th. The entire process was flawless! The meal was so delicious and the portions generous. We appreciate the time and effort taken by each of you to make this such a wonderful success. Thank you and best wishes—

David & Mary Lou Dresbach

Thank you for the delicious turkey dinner!

*Phone call from neighbor,
 Michael Larson*

Thank you for your October donation of 17 pounds of groceries for those who visit our food shelf. We are so grateful for your ongoing partnership.

Neighbors, Inc.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

700 Wesley Lane
Mendota Heights MN 55118

Phone: 651-452-5683
Email: info@stpaulsmn.org

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



*Christmas Eve
Candlelight Worship*

Friday, December 24th

3:00 pm

4:00 pm

5:00 pm