

COVID COMMITTEE NEWS

We will return for worship in the sanctuary on Sunday, January 31st. We will begin using the precautions you have seen elsewhere in an effort to minimize any risk to our church family. If you have symptoms or have been recently exposed to a Covid positive person, please delay your attending for the protection of everyone.

Important to remember will be:

1. ONLY the sanctuary will be open and it will ONLY be accessed through the west doors. All other parts of the church are closed on Sunday morning. Please don't try access through any other door to the church.
2. For the safety of all, ALL who enter will need to wear a mask and keep it on until they leave. Masks will be available for those who need one. Even if you feel fine with no mask, there will be others nearby who do not.
3. Seating to preserve social distancing will be as directed by our ushers. This is how we avoid covering the sanctuary with tape that blocks seating in most places. Balconies are closed for now.
4. No vocal choirs or congregational singing for a bit.
5. Pastor Cris is higher risk and so some special precautions will be in place for him that are consistent with what our District Superintendent has reported is being done elsewhere.
6. No fellowship time or gathering before or after—for now.

This is only the beginning and we look forward to easing our restrictions as conditions and distribution of vaccine improve. The work of St. Paul's involves so much more than Sunday morning, and all are encouraged to explore how we can continue that work with the precautions of the times in place.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD NEWS

Our Administrative Board is grateful for the time and support of those who consented to be part of the Covid Committee. This 11 member Committee has met for five evenings with perfect or near perfect attendance each time. They include Meribeth Adams, Don Blackstone, John Cook, Leah and Bruce Dagel, Dr. Pat Harrison, Dick Point, Craig Schmidt, Ervina Scott, Bob Simonsen, and Don Witcombe, with input from Pastor Cris. Their work continues.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 2021 LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

Chair: John Cook
Judy Grienke-Miller, Peggy Rasch, Cheryl Gordon,
Marci Brown, Bruce Dagel, and Charlie Leissler

Ex-officio members and General Officers
Church Accountant: Burkhardt & Dawson
Church Treasurer: Linda Christensen

Financial Secretary: Sarah Cook
Lay Leader: Mary Jo Carnine
Lay Members, Annual Conference: Mary Jo Carnine,
Linda Burkhart, and Jennifer Decious

Subcommittee: 2020 Vision Team

John Cook, Sue Parker, Linda Appleby, Bruce Dagel,
and Linda Christensen

STAFF/PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Linda Burkhart
Leah Dagel, Jean Anderson, Mike Taylor, Linda
Burkhart, Linda Appleby, Norma Fox, and Bill Jentz

Ex-officio members:

Lay Members, Annual Conference

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair: Don Blackstone
Dick Point, Roni Timmerman, Linda Christensen,
Chuck Tolzin, Dave Appleby, Louie Hausmann, and
Don Blackstone

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair: Stan DeRoo
Stan DeRoo, Peggy Rasch, Kristal Phillips, Tom Rutter,
Sheree Hausmann, and Deb Taylor

Subcommittee: Audit Committee

Chair: Rich Cook
Marci Brown, Rich Cook, and Karen Aduddell

Subcommittee: Memorial Committee

Chair: Ervina Scott
Jerri Hunt, Monica Schmidt, Linda Rutter, Ervina
Scott, Norma Fox, and Shelley Lenz

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Pastor Cris Decious
Cheryl Gordon, Joyce Goodrich, Carolyn VanAmberg,
Micki Conley, Judy Jentz, and Marci Brown

CHURCH HISTORY COMMITTEE

Chair: Connie Hankens
Mary Chisman, Jerry Larson, Connie Hankens, Micki
Conley, Neil Phipps, and Jodi Phipps

The rest of the 2021 Leadership Team for St. Paul's UMC will be listed in next month's newsletter.

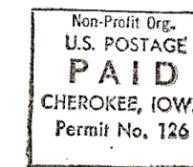
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



February 2021 UMW Buzz



The UMW Executive Board will meet on Monday, February 8th, at 9:30 a.m. in the Schuldt Dining Hall.

Charity Circle will meet on Wednesday, February 17th, at 1:30 p.m. in the Schuldt Dining Hall. Deb Siepka will serve as hostess, and the program will be given by Patti Blum.

PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY

We extend our deepest sympathy to Kirk and Lori Ebel and all of their family. Kirk's mother, Bonnie Jean Ebel, 79, of Cherokee, formerly of Aurelia, died Monday, January 11th, at the Cherokee Regional Medical Center. Private family services for Bonnie Ebel will take place at a later date at the Good Hope Cemetery. The Redig Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY

We extend our deepest sympathy to Brian and Trish (Taylor) Gobrecht and all of their family. Brian's sister, Heather Rae Gobrecht, 43, of Dodgeville, Wisconsin, died on Wednesday, January 13th, at Upland Hills Health in Dodgeville. A public visitation was held on Monday, January 18th at the Melby Funeral Home and Crematory in Platteville, Wisconsin. Private family services followed with burial at Hillside Cemetery.

PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY

We extend our deepest sympathy to Cody and Rachel Lucas and all of their family. Rachel's grandmother, Betty Jo Halder, passed away on Friday, January 15th, at the age of 88. A Mass of Christian Burial for Betty Halder took place on Monday, January 25th, at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Cherokee, with Monsignor Kenneth Seifried officiating.

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone who helped with our 2020 Salvation Army Bell Ringing in November and December. That includes all the people who rang the bells, donated money, and set up and took down equipment at Hy-Vee and Bomgaars. We received a little over \$5,000. All the money collected goes to aid those in need of emergency help with food, clothing, partial utility payment, partial rent, natural disasters, and fires. 90% of all the money we received stays right here in Cherokee County to help local people in need. Sometimes this is the only assistance available to a person or family, so showing them that someone cares can really help them make a fresh start. Every penny counts along the way with caring people helping other people. Thanks again!

-Mary Jo Carnine,

Salvation Army Cherokee Co. Volunteer Representative

THANKS FROM THE BLACKSTONES

Thank you to our church family who sent cards for our 50th anniversary. You brightened our day!

-Don and Jeanne Blackstone

LIFTING UP IN PRAYER

Please keep the following members of our church family in your prayers: Jeff Blum, Dave Appleby, and Bob Parker. Jeff had surgery at CRMC on January 6th for a strangulated hernia, Dave had a pacemaker implanted at St. Luke's Regional Medical Center on January 18th, and Bob had his left knee replaced at Mayo on January 22nd. If you'd like to reach out to them, here are their addresses: Jeff Blum 510 North Craig Drive, Cherokee, IA 51012; Dave Appleby 5231 Crest Drive, Cherokee, IA 51012; and Bob Parker 1887-580th Street, Cherokee, IA 51012.



THE DOME

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
February 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Religion! I've got that. I've had religion since I was a little child being brought up in our church. I was baptized, born, raised, married, and ministered for 31 years in the United Methodist Church. Being 'religious' has not really been the problem facing many of us these days. Being filled with God's love and living right is the problem we continue to struggle with. It's the love and the life behind the religious façade that gets us in trouble. It's difficult to comprehend the idea that we are God's representatives here on this earth! It's even more difficult to live this out in a concrete way. Yet, here we are!

Methodists got their name from being methodical or religious in their practice. Truthfully, doing something in a pattern isn't very hard, because most of us are patterned people. We religiously set our schedules, sit in the same seats in church and at home, have certain times we like to eat, watch certain shows we like, and can even decide to exercise religiously in our lives. In most of our personal lives, patterns can be seen and identified. So, when deciding to follow Jesus, it is not uncommon to become religious about living a life dedicated to God. It is common to develop patterns for whatever we are passionate about. As Christians, we get into the habit of praying, reading scriptures, reading inspirational books, attending support groups, and being mindful about growing in Christ.

Jesus invited his followers to develop some new patterns when He said, "Come, follow me, and I'll show you how to fish for people." (Matthew 4:19) When speaking about fishing, my father-in-law comes to my mind. He was an avid fisher. My father-in-law, throughout his years, had a fishing buddy. The two of them had a weekly routine of going fishing. Usually, it was in the same place. I never saw them in action, but I would guess they sat in the same places and fished from the same "good spots" and avoided bad ones. Throughout the years, I am sure that they developed conversational patterns and grew in their friendship. Jesus was inviting fishermen to become his disciples and develop some new fishing patterns!

When Jesus spoke about 'fishing for people,' he was talking about a new and different ministry. Jesus was in the business of setting people free, not tying them down to a lifestyle and list of things to "do" and a new list of things "not to do." In fact, the love and good news that Jesus introduced people to changed the hearts and lives of people and cities forever. Jesus tended to love the people and forgive and help those the religious had deemed unforgivable and condemned. Yet, Jesus was present with them in their usual routines doing the most unusual things to stir them up and show them a new way!

How does our 'fishing for people' routine look today? It is not uncommon to get a wrong idea of what a Christian should look and act like. In the end, we can look and

act like the very religious people that turn so many off to a relationship with God! We can religiously watch livestream Sunday mornings, or attend an in-person worship service in our community, and still not be doing God's business. Neither worshipping on livestream nor in-person can heal or fix what needs fixed when we stop listening and acting in love. It's a heart issue. We have a choice and need to allow God's spirit to help heal hearts. Love is our lure when we go fishing to help spread the good news. We need to ask ourselves what kind of lures we are using when we fish. I know it makes a difference!

Jesus always used terms that were commonly understood to those whom he was reaching out to. These fishermen understood fishing terms, so naturally Jesus used fishing language with them. That is why Christ invited the fishermen to follow him by telling them that they would now fish for people. What a strange picture! But, it was a picture that they were able to understand. These men were fishermen and they understood exactly what Jesus was saying to them in their language. Jesus' lure was love, peace, and good news.

Jesus wants us to follow him. Jesus will use language that we understand in our lives. Each one of our calls will be distinct to us in that we will understand. Jesus wants us to be excited about what excites us! God understands what will motivate us because God distinctly wired each one of us. Our uniqueness is what God is building his kingdom upon.

As we move into February, make sure that you are all about God's love and putting God's love into action with your attitudes, actions, skills, generous giving, and most of all your words. You represent God's love in our church and in our community. You may be the only representative of God's love that anyone ever experiences. Keep Fishing!

-Pastor Cris

OUR UPCOMING CONFIRMATION SERVICE

We are really looking forward to celebrating another group of confirmands during our worship service on Sunday, February 14th. These are the students who will be professing their faith in Jesus Christ and will become full members of St. Paul's United Methodist Church: Macaib Appleby, Amelia Brown, Aurora Christensen, Kylie Christensen, Emma Frahm, Hailey Harman, Taya Phillips, and Maverick Stief. We hope you'll be present for this very special service when these students receive their membership certificates and are presented with Bibles that have been imprinted with their names.

SPRC REPORT

As most of you know, Pastor Cris is leaving St. Paul's UMC to become the Senior Pastor at Walnut Hills United Methodist Church in Urbandale, Iowa. We wish Pastor Cris well and know that God has a great plan for both him and St. Paul's! Our Staff/Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) will now go through the process of finding a new pastor for St. Paul's. I thought our church family might be interested in that process since many of you have never served on the SPRC and may not know how we get our pastors. (I highly recommend serving on the SPRC; it's truly a great committee!) Once a pastor gets reassigned to a new church, the District Superintendent (in our case, Rev. Ron Carlson) meets with the SPRC of the church that is losing their pastor. The committee talks about the important missions of the church, challenges of the church, and qualities the committee members would like to see in our new pastor. The District Superintendent (DS) takes notes, asks questions, and clarifies what the committee is saying. The DS will then meet with other District Superintendents in the Conference, and they will talk about what pastors are available and what churches need pastors. Each church and each pastor is discussed, and then they try to match up churches to available pastors. After many prayers and much discussion, the District Superintendents tentatively assign pastors to churches. Our DS will bring a candidate to St. Paul's and he/she will meet with our SPRC. After a conversation, our DS will ask the pastor to step out of the room, the committee will make a decision, and the DS will talk with the pastor to see how he/she feels about our church. If everyone is agreeable, we will then have a new pastor! Rev. Ron thinks this process will take anywhere from four to six weeks. We will have Pastor Cris here until around the end of June, and our new pastor will come sometime in July. Our SPRC did meet with the District Superintendent on January 19th, so the process has begun. The committee will meet again on January 28th to learn about a survey that St. Paul's will be taking to find out more about our church. This will help our new pastor get to know us better, and we will learn more about our strengths and our challenges, as well. You will be asked to complete the survey in the near future, so please be prepared to do that! During this time of transition for St. Paul's, please know that your prayers and your faith are needed to help us through this process. Our St. Paul's SPRC members are Jean Anderson, Linda Appleby, Mary Jo Carnine, Leah Dagel, Norma Fox, Bill Jentz, and Mike Taylor (and, for other matters, Pastor Cris).

-Linda Burkhart, SPRC Chair

FINANCE COMMITTEE NEWS

For the 2021 budget, we anticipated \$201,440 of pledges for the General Fund which is a slight increase from 2020. The budget also has a \$6,000 decrease in expenses. To date, 54 pledges have been made totaling \$62,234 for the General Fund. If you have not made a 2021 commitment to St. Paul's, please consider doing so.

The Finance Committee would like to thank all of you, the church staff, and our many committees for carrying on with St. Paul's ministry in a manner that can make our church proud. Thanks for your concern and support as we put God's love into action!