

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Newsletter

July 2020

Wow! I just finished an interview with mostly alphabetically arranged groups of 8-12 people getting feedback on our ministry together and looking forward to or anticipating ministry with a new pastor. The anticipation of a new pastor would be almost any NEW pastor and not specifically the one named Teklu.

I come away feeling affirmed by you and I learned some new things about how people perceive me. Most of the comments were directed at our ministry together, for which I am thankful to God, and you for your support, without which a good bit of what happened would not have happened.

Here's some of what folks will miss or valued.

Visiting the seniors and shut-ins was at the top of the list. Apparently that had not been very consistent. What a "golden group" and a joy they are to be with.

The Quilters too, a delightful, dedicated group of servants they are and "they let me in." I will miss those Tuesday mornings "slumming" it with them.

Leading by offering ideas and letting them be without forcing decisions to go my way. Sermons and their conversational style, usually understood with life applications.

Steady hand on the tiller.

Characteristics: passionate, honest, approachable and understanding. We did some new things and people seemed to like them.

In the middle both good and a pain. One person said I was like the tug boat that pulled up alongside the oil tanker on the way into port and kept bumping it till it got into place. I like it.

Someone said I was too persistent about pushing you to invite your friends which apparently you had been doing for years to no effect since they were all church people. That makes sense. Honesty was liked, but equally disliked as I heard it. Apparently my handwriting is hard to read for those who faced that task.

I got carried away with the sermon at times, yes, often.

One person said they were thankful for the coronavirus since they did not have to carry all the items out of the church for the "stripping of the altar" on Maundy Thursday.

When it comes to a new pastor here's what folks are looking forward to:

After 2 1/2 years of change/transition people are looking forward to having the stability of a full time pastor, a team member, living in community for an extended period of time. They would like to work together to minister to young families with elementary and high school children and work on reaching out to young adults. They would like to see ministry to the Quilters and shut-ins and seniors continue. They are looking for a pastor with a new spirit, passion, outreach interest and energy for Christ, church and community.

They are concerned about the getting to know process in this environment (pandemic). They want to see collaboration in ministry from all members and are hopeful that people will work with the changes that will inevitably come. They are hopeful that the good work of the “call committee” and the promise of a new beginning with a new pastor will give birth to growth in faith, community and service.

I’m reminded of Paul’s words in Romans 8:28 “And in all things we know that God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” Notice it says, “God works for the good of those who love Him.” That is His promise and purpose, He will be working for the good that He wants to come out of this ministry moving forward and I firmly believe He wants all of you to join Him in fulfilling that promise to overflowing.

Peace and love and prayers,
Pastor Dave

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the precious name of our redeemer Jesus Christ! My name is Pastor Teklu Ketema. Thank you for calling me to be your Pastor! I am excited to join you in building God's kingdom in Crofton, Gambrills, and beyond! Since I was born in Ethiopia's central highlands, I have moved five times to a new place with new opportunities and challenges. The last one is different from the other four. Of course, moving during the COVID 19 pandemic was a unique experience for my family.

Moreover, I moved from St. Louis to Crofton to shepherd God's flock and also to join my spiritual family at St. Paul's in building God's kingdom. It is a great opportunity for you and me to be and serve the church of Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century! Although this is a difficult time to live in this world and witness our faith, our heavenly father will give us His grace and strength to stand firm in our faith and witness our faith to our neighbors. Think of Nehemiah, who prayed, planned, and mobilized many to rebuild the fence of the Holy city. Like Nehemiah, we will prayerfully plan and build God's church on the foundation that Jesus built and our "faith fathers" had been building for the past two thousand years.

"The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding..." (Nehemiah 2:20, NIV).

Teklu Ketema

Incoming Pastor

pastor@stpaulscrofton.com

410-721-2232

New cell phone number forthcoming, but please e-mail for Pastoral emergencies



Prayer Requests

Short-term prayers will run for 4 weeks. If at all possible, please list the need for the prayer. If the request requires long-term prayers, please indicate so and let the office know when it should be removed. Please contact Cindy in the office at info@stpaulscrofton.com if you have any questions!

Short-Term Prayers-Phil Myer (surgery)

Long-Term Prayers:

Adelaide Abend (health issues); Brian Arnold (health issues); Preston Arnold; Barry (family and health issues); John and Monica Bagley (health issues); Barbara Brown (health issues); Terrence Brown (health issues); Peta Capello (health issues); Lorraine Clow; Nathan DunLeavy (health issues); Marianne Foreman (health issues); Jeffrey Kurtz (health issues); Janet Mox (health issues); Brian Spencer (health issues); Dick Sulken (health issues); Heidi Swanson (health issues); Louis Zimmer III (health issues); and Michael Zimmer (health issues).

Please pray for our members and friends serving in the military: Jake Godboldte, Rachel MacCumbee, Scott MacCumbee, Brian Wolford, and their families.

JULY RECOGNITION

It's been 16 weeks, almost four months since the congregation of St. Paul's has been able to worship together in person. That is about to end on Sunday, July 5th when we say good bye to Pastor Dave Betzner. The current 50% of capacity restriction for attending church services limits what we can do, but we are heading in the right direction.

Preparing St. Paul's for reopening has not been easy. Many meetings, conference calls and Q & A sessions were required. The Reopening Committee, representing our standing committees, have done a fantastic job in leaving nothing to chance to ensure, as much as possible, the health and safety of all who plan to return to worship at St. Paul's.

Please join me in thanking the following people for performing this difficult task on behalf of St. Paul's. Well done!

Diane Segelhorst - Committee Lead/BoD

Patrice Jenstrom - Property

Jane Felsentreger - Worship

Penny Courtney - Fellowship

Judy Tribby - Education

Bonnie Weinhold - Sunday School

Jackie Abend - Altar Guild

Pastor Dave - (support and guidance)

Blessings to all,

Zac

Church Reopening

Together again! That is what the sign says, and what we hope for. By the time you receive this newsletter, our first in-person service since March should have taken place on July 5th as we say farewell to Pastor Dave Betzner. Our second in-person service is planned for July 12th for Pastor Teklu Ketema's installation and ordination. Our intent is to continue to hold weekly worship services in person, unless state or local guidance changes.

Hopefully most of you have participated in our Zoom meeting on reopening, or have read the minutes of that meeting. I want to highlight the key points here, so you know what to expect.

The reopen Church committee used the guidelines published by the State of Maryland and the CDC to guide our decisions on what safety measures to take and how to hold in-person church services with the least amount of risk possible. However, we cannot guarantee a totally risk-free environment. It is up to each individual and family to decide whether or not to attend church. If you aren't ready to return to the building, THAT'S OKAY! We are trying hard to improve the quality of our on-line services to enhance your at-home worship experience. We realize that many of our members are at higher risk, and aren't going to feel comfortable returning to the church building for some time yet. We will continue to keep you in our prayers, welcome you to join us virtually, and hope that you may feel comfortable joining us for one of our outdoor, socially distanced social events.

First and foremost, if you are experiencing any symptoms of illness, or know or believe you have been exposed to the Coronavirus (or any other illness), PLEASE STAY HOME. We will keep you in our prayers.

If you choose to attend, below are some of the highlights of things you will experience:

- Face masks which cover the nose and mouth are mandatory! We will have a supply if you don't have one or forget yours.
- The church will have been sanitized between the last non-St. Paul's activity of the week and the beginning of our Sunday service.
- Doors will be open when you arrive.
- Please arrive early! Several new procedures will make entering the church and being seated take a little longer.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be located throughout the church and in the pews.
- Please use the restroom before you leave home, and consider the restrooms at church to be "emergency use only."
- All frequently touched items such as hymnals, Bibles and even pew cushions have been removed to make cleaning easier.
- You will be asked to wear a name tag.
- All attendees will sign an attendance sheet with contact information to be provided to public health officials in the event contact tracing becomes necessary.

- Half the pews will be blocked to provide the necessary social distancing. You will sit in a pew with just your family members, or on opposite ends of a pew six feet away from one or two other people.
- The service will be projected on the screens.
- We will not be singing! Hymns will either be presented by video or played instrumentally with the words projected for meditation.
- Communion will take place in the pew with individual communion packets
- We will exit the church immediately after the service, and any socializing will take place outside in the parking lot.

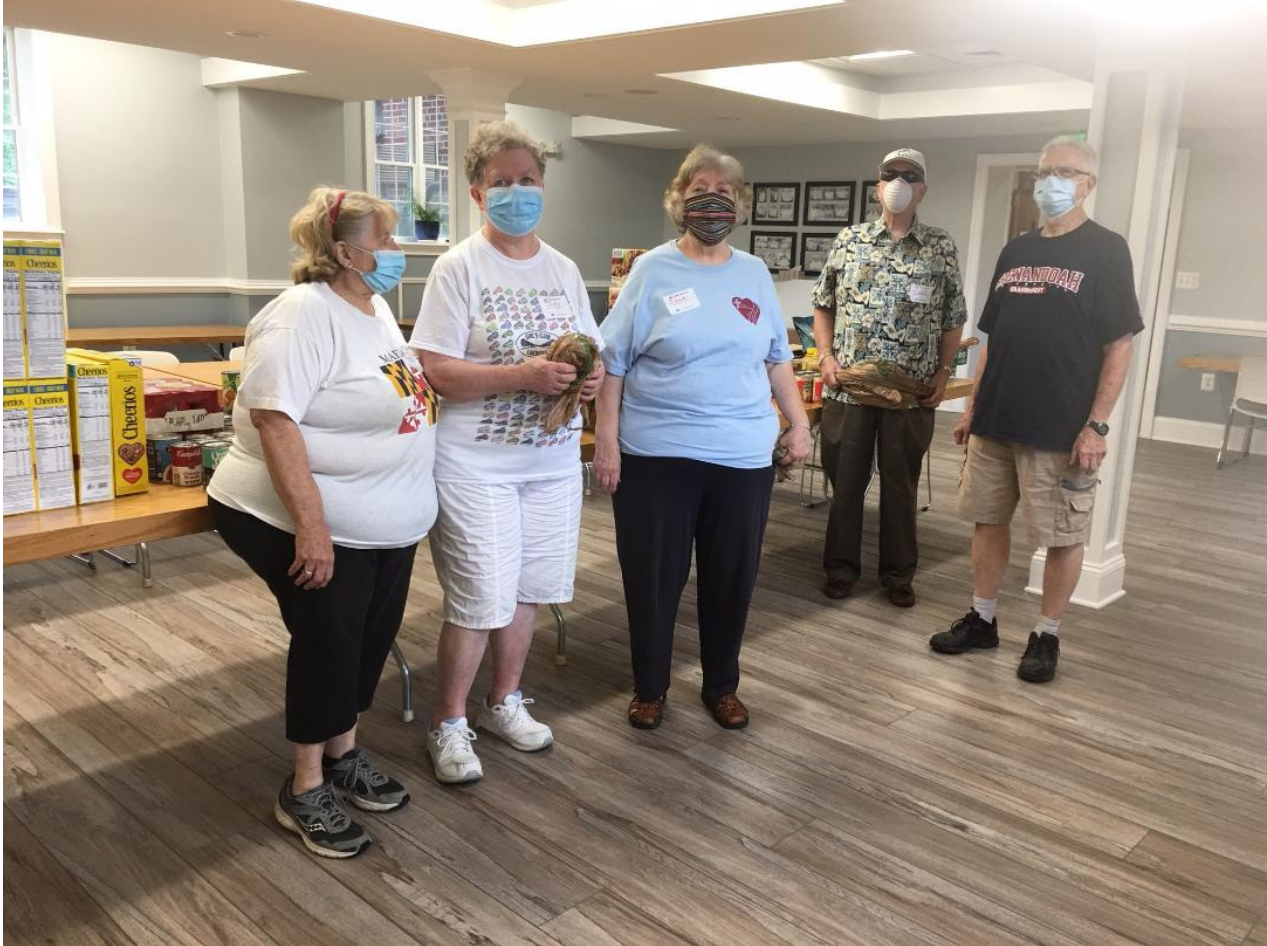
Be prepared for changes as the summer progresses, as we learn more about how to worship together safely. We hope to see you at worship sometime this summer, or virtually any day. If you have questions, please ask one of the members of the Reopen Committee. Committee members are mostly the chairs of the standing committees: Diane Segelhorst (Chair), Jane Felsentreger, Judy Tribby, Patrice Jenstrom, Jackie Abend, Bonnie Weinhold, Penny Courtney, Zac Huffman, and Pastor Dave Betzner.

OUTREACH Team News

A **BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who contributed to two food drives during the month of June! The first one was held on June 13th and we were overwhelmed with pantry and perishable staples along with clothes detergent and personal hygiene supplies. The foods were distributed the next day to anyone who asked; family size determined how many bags were placed into their cars. That food drive was also the project for a Thrivent Action Team grant that helped us support not only local neighbors in need that came to St. Paul's but also the CCCC Food Pantry

The second food drive was on June 27th and all of the foods collected for that were delivered to the CCCC Food Pantry to help them re-stock their shelves after the COVID lockdown. Over 300 pounds of pantry staples will make a significant difference in the Food Pantry's ability to serve the community.

Besides your tremendously generous gifts of food, grocery cards, & cash, neither of these food drives would have been successful without *many* volunteers working together. Jon Retzer's Scout Troop 731 and their leaders, Zac & Linda Huffman, Orlando & Charlotte Angeli, Dorothy Clark, Marilyn Harris, Jen, Caitlyn, & Max Houck, Judy Tribby and MacKenzie Boughey, Bob & Bernice Prescott, Pastor Juan and his LifeBridge crew, Diane Segelhorst, Bill & Sandi Corwin, Jack Courtney, everyone who pitched in to sort and bag -- many hands working together, being church out in the community. Thanks to everyone for your generosity and your team work!





FELLOWSHIP Team News

The FELLOWSHIP Team welcomed the Ketema Family on their arrival in the Crofton community with a big delivery of fresh and staple foods and household items to help stock their new home. Cereal & milk, fresh bread, eggs, deli items, a basket of kids' snacks, pasta & sauce plus tp, paper towels, hand soap, and more helped get Pastor Teklu, Tsion, Jonah & Selah settled into their Crofton home. We're glad they're here!

The FELLOWSHIP Team



DON'T MISS A SERVICE!

We are blessed to have an updated and fully functioning website that provides us with the information we need to communicate. Every Sunday, we have the privilege to virtually attend a church service through the website. If you are not comfortable attending worship, please visit us online at www.stpaulscrofton.com.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

To our Sunday School families and all the teachers I've had the pleasure of working with over the years, I just wanted a moment to express my deepest and heartfelt thanks. I have loved working with your kiddos! Getting to know them and watch them grow over these past 11-12 years has given me incredible joy and gifted me with the best way to be involved within St. Paul's ministry. I especially have to extend my thanks to some special mentors without whom I wouldn't have even started this journey (let alone done it for so long) ~ Jane Felsentreger, thank you for your faith, your support, and your music! Diane Segelhorst, thank you for your constant help, for always fighting for our program, and your loving support. You two ladies put together such an amazing program, it was a pleasure to teach! To my outstanding and amazing teachers, these young ladies gave up countless Sunday mornings, without fail, to lend a hand. The children just loved their time with our 'cool' teens/young adults and I just don't know how the program would have succeeded without your commitment: Kaitlyn & Kasey Crislip and Christine Wood. I thank each and everyone one of our members who taught, who acted as education elder, who supplied us with cookies and who simply offered support when needed. I look forward to still seeing you Sunday mornings – I still want updates on how things are going!

Heidi Wood

Ladies Breakfast Group

The first outdoor, socially-distanced, mask-wearing ladies' breakfast was a great success! The June meeting was enjoyed by all who attended, and we're going to do it again! All women of the church are invited to the next breakfast gathering. It will be on July 23rd at 8:30 a.m. We will meet at the picnic tables in the back of the church. Bring a lawn chair and your breakfast including a drink. The restrooms in the Fellowship Hall will be opened for use, but only one at a time. If it rains, breakfast is cancelled. At this time we are not meeting in the church. If you have any questions, please call Jane (410 721-7519) or email mjfelsentreger@outlook.com.

*Please wear a mask!



Although the physical church building has been closed at this time the expenses continue. Recently, on-line giving capabilities were established and information provided to the congregation. If you would like to establish virtual giving, please download the Church Center app. Over the past few weeks, the use of on-line giving has increased, greatly assisting the church during this period. Additionally, mailed offerings are secure, as U.S. mail is being delivered to St. Paul's daily.



Church Library: We are planning to revive the church library. Many of the old books were lost to the mold issue which has been abated. If you have books that are appropriate for a church library and you would like to donate them, please contact Judy Tribby (410-721-2453). You can drop them at my house or I can pick them up. We are seeking children's Bible books, adult Bible study books, Christian life books, biographies, etc.



QUILTER'S NEWS

The St. Paul's Quilters are still working hard! Dorothy Clark said, "You can't keep us down!" They have moved their work to Dorothy's house and are continuing their mission work from there. If you have fabric to donate or wish to participate, please call Dorothy and find out how you can help! Thank you to this group for providing the masks for our church!



The St. Paul's Book Club, under the direction of Sandi Corwin, has still been active during the pandemic. Dana Brown has been making the arrangements for the members to meet virtually. Watch your e-mail for the details of the next meeting!