

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Newsletter

June 2020

Transition as Following!

Yep, that's what following means, transition in the best sense of the word. God's people are always on the move. Both transition and following are about spiritual movement from Abraham's GO to Jesus' SENT, to FOLLOW me, too. At St. Paul's JIM, TOM, JOE, DAVE and, now, TEKLU, it's all about transition, following, going, serving and growing.

Now you are on the go again at God's calling, Teklu to St. Paul's, it's all about changes and blessings, and me to what's next in the after 50 years of service to the Lord time. It's all in the movement of God's purpose and time by his grace, surrounded by his love, empowered by his Spirit into a future unknown, yet known in his promise, fueled by his word, the sacraments, prayer, conversation and community.

So, jump in, get involved, take up the cross, love one another in the Lord and transition forward, everyone. That buy-in will not be without questions, wonderments, challenges and some hiccups. Those are normal and to be expected, that is what faith is about as we place ourselves in God's hands and together trust his promises even if you do not altogether agree with what moving forward means and includes. Unity and working together are what it's about. Our oneness is larger than our differences and the power of God among us is promised and possible by God's grace and a faithful effort.

In the meantime I will help with the transition by praying, writing, speaking and acting like a pastor on the move. Pray for Pastor Teklu and his family, St. Paul's work and her people, and me. We will keep you posted about what and when and how as we commend this transition or following into God's hands and yours.

Peace, Dave

How are YOU doing? How are you doing?

Retired psychologist Rev. Dr. Bruce Hartung, a former seminary professor and a current resident of the Southeastern District, delivered a lecture to the SED professional church workers on the emotional, spiritual, psychological and physical impacts of the coronavirus, or COVID-19. I have shared comments about this with some of you but I'm keeping in mind the quote of Professor Doberstein at Concordia Prep who said often "repetition is the mother of learning."

How are YOU doing? How are you doing? These are the two most important questions of the day during the coronavirus pandemic. You should ask and answer that question for yourself BEFORE asking it of someone else, which everyone should be doing. Here's why.

In a bit over 3 months this event has turned our world and our way of living upside down. Interpersonal relationships, educational and work sites, economic and medical, social and political, and entertainment and spiritual venues have been changed. Fear of germ warfare was 27th on a list of anxiety producing events and fear of germs was 92nd on that same list. I presume that fear of germs is now in the proverbial top 10. These things have resulted in the following:

Many are MAD or SAD or both.

Many thousands have died and many more have been infected.

The old dependable support systems and activities have been shut down and are not available to us.

Everyone is affected with fear and anxiety about getting it from others or giving it to others. No one escapes from its possibility because we are ALL the enemy.

Some population and ethnic groups have been harder hit.

There are many unanswered questions about the "when" and "how" of the future.

We are trying to learn new ways to deliver the needed support, treatment, and control the spread of this disease with few good answers.

A vaccine is likely a long way away.

Psalm 102:4-5 catches some of how we might be feeling: "My heart is blighted and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food. Because of my loud groaning I am reduced to skin and bones."

So, how do we deal with/manage the loneliness, isolation, grief, anxiety, lack of intimacy and madness?

First, we ask ourselves that question, "how am I doing?" and then we ask others the same question, "How are YOU doing?" Then spend time sharing honestly how you are doing. That's great medicine. I believe bottling up those feelings will hurt you physical, emotionally, spiritually and psychologically.

Then try one or more of the following:

Take a walk, keeping a safe distance and protected, and look for conversations with others you encounter.

Stay in touch with family and friends virtually, by email or phone; even the old style letter or note will help.

Exercise, work in the garden, take an online class. Be creative; there's lots of safe help out there.

Finally, and most importantly stay connected with our Lord and the Body of Christ!

Remember God's name, Immanuel, "God with us."

Jesus said, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Use the coronavirus daily line of scripture and prayer.

View the Sunday Service on the St. Paul's website.

Turn off the TV hype by turning off when it begins to get to you. You control it, not it you.

Avoid alcohol or limit consumption.

Connect with a friend or neighbor.

Read Romans 8:37-39 "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Here are a few other questions you might ask yourself at this time:

How is God active in your life now?

In what way is the presence of Jesus clear or not clear in your life now?

What can you not do and miss during this time?

What can you not do and do not miss in this time?

Plan ahead!

Read Psalm 121. (The psalm asks and answers an important question right now.)

John 20: 19-23 is an excellent source of help. Jesus enters the little rooms of loneliness, fear, anxiety and grief that we hide in and says, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

I am available if you want or need to talk about all of this. I will listen and care and share and pray with you.

*Peace and love,
Pastor Dave*



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!

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.

June Recognition

The past three months have drastically changed the way we interact, connect and worship. That fact was clearly demonstrated when St. Paul's pastoral call process was suddenly placed on hold due to the impact the virus was having on all church congregations. Then, just as suddenly, St. Paul's Call Committee was given the opportunity to speak with and consider graduating seminary student, Teklu Ketema. Many weeks of preparation, conference calls, Zoom meetings and Q & A sessions were required. The Call Committee, listed below, never wavered in their dedication to this critical process.

Michelle Angeli
Dana Brown (Prayer Leader)
Devan Dugan
Jane Felsentreger
Ron Hausner
Madonna Howard
Jerry Kane
Rachel MacCumbee
Pastor David Betzner (support and guidance)

Please join me in thanking them for the incredibly difficult work they performed on behalf of St. Paul's!

Blessings,
Zac



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!



St. Paul's will hold 2, that's right, 2 food drives in June. The response for the May food drive benefitting our partners in worship was so successful due to your whole-hearted participation that we're building on that spirit of hope and help for our neighbors!

First will be on Saturday, June 13th, with food drop-off at church, Fellowship Hall door, from 10-12. This food collection will benefit local folks who are un-/under-employed.

Suggested foods/goods include:

dry beans, rice, mac & cheese, corn meal, oil, flour, granulated sugar, breakfast cereals, pasta, spaghetti sauce, cans of tuna/chicken, canned vegetables, peanut butter, jelly, sacks of potatoes, carrots, onions, oranges, apples, pears, cheese, eggs, milk, fresh or frozen meats, toothpaste, shampoo, bar/liquid soaps, clothes detergent pods, feminine hygiene products

Grocery gift cards or cash will be gratefully accepted!

These foods & goods collected will be distributed on Sunday, June 14th.

The second event will be a STOCK-THE-PANTRY! food collection. The CCCC Food Pantry is re-opening in June at Seton Parish and the shelves will be almost empty. We will collect food to restock this community food pantry on Saturday, June 27th, from 10-12 in the Fellowship Hall. Once again you are urged to generously support this effort.

Needed items include:

pasta, spaghetti sauce, mac & cheese, rice, rice side dishes (Knorr's and similar), breakfast cereals, peanut butter, jelly, cans of chicken/tuna, oil, flour, pancake mix, syrups, canned or dry soups, canned fruits, canned or dry beans.

Cash donations will also be accepted for the Food Pantry's use. These items will be delivered to the Food Pantry for distribution to county neighbors in need. **Contact Penny Courtney 410-969-9156 to volunteer to help with these events!**

Penny has also been very busy contacting the shut-ins on a regular basis. She has been making and delivering "Care Packages" that have been very appreciated.



The Missional Development Committee (formerly the Outreach and Mission Committee) has continued to meet with consultant Tina Jaison on a regular basis. In light of the pandemic, we decided to focus on the immediate need of helping our brothers and sisters in the Life Bridge Church. Many of these hard working people have lost their jobs during the current crisis. We conferred with Pastor Juan and he gave us a list of the food needed and the number of families in need. As reported previously, a food drive was held on May 9th. The generous giving of the congregation and the community yielded over 300 pounds of food and more than \$400 in gift cards and cash. The Boys Scouts, under the direction of Jon Retzer were a huge help. Thanks to Penny, Bonnie, Jon and Jan, Zac, Cyndie and Patrick, who manned the collection and distribution. The Life Bridge Church was overwhelmed with the generosity of both the St. Paul's congregation and the community. This was truly an example of the Church in action!



QUILTS AND MASKS!

Dorothy Clark, fearless leader of the Quilters, has turned her attention to making masks! Many have been delivered to the Crofton Convalescent Home and have been warmly welcomed! The Quilters are still deciding if their annual Quilt Sale will take place on the weekend of October 3. In the meantime, Dorothy has a lovely quilt that will be raffled to benefit both the CCC and Boy Scout Troop #731 (Parker Retzer's troop). This troop continually helps us with food drives and other service work. The quilt is very special as it is a vintage quilt made with all handmade embroidered cross stitch! It measures 80 x 96 inches. Even if the annual sale does not take place, the drawing will take place on Oct. 4 at 1:00 pm at the church. Please consider buying tickets or even selling tickets to your friends and neighbors to support this worthwhile cause! For more information, please contact Dorothy Clark.



Our dear sister in Christ, Mary Kress passed away on May 14th. She was surrounded by her family. This beautiful tribute is reprinted with permission from her daughter, Joy:

It is with profound sadness that we share that Mary Kress, our wonderful mother, who was also a caring grandmother, sister, aunt, godmother, friend, and child of God, died peacefully at her home this morning, Thursday, May 14, 2020. Due to social distancing restrictions, a memorial service will be planned later in the year for family and friends to gather together. A charity for donations will be designated at that time in lieu of flowers.

We know how fast mom's illness progressed and how none of us had time to get over the shock of her diagnosis to acknowledge the reality of how quickly today's events arrived. She only learned of her cancer diagnosis 64 days ago. I am sorry to all those we were not able to get in touch with. I hope it is a comfort to all of you to know that she was able to spend time with immediate family that last two weeks of her life. She received many wonderful cards, messages, flowers, phone calls, and prayers. She loves you all, and again, wants you all to know how much God loves you too. Yesterday we were able to read the entire Gospel of John (her favorite) aloud to her while she was sleeping.

There will be plenty of time to gather photos, write down memories, and share them when we are able to physically be together. Mom was evangelizing until she could no longer speak. In her adult life she served as a Stephen's Minister, a facilitator in Women's Prison Ministry and Via de Cristo retreats, as a children's Sunday School teacher, and Adult Bible study and small group leader. We look forward to the day we can all be together to celebrate her life and know that the Lord has already exclaimed "Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant!"

The immediate family needs time to rest and recuperate and may not be able to respond to calls, texts, or emails at this time. We will reach out in the coming weeks as we are able.

Our family wants to thank all of you for your wonderful thoughts, prayers, cards, messages, flowers, meals, logistics coordination, and love and care. It lifted mom up and all of us during the last two months.

Cards of support can be sent to Joy and Brian McCrady, 1460 Lowell Court, Crofton, MD 21114

Sermons



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. You can participate at your convenience. Music is provided as well as one of Pastor Betzner's inspiring sermons. Even though we are separated physically, worship still provides a spirit of unity and community.

Pastor and Penny continue to keep in touch with the shut-ins, monitor their well being and Pastor serves communion as needed.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Heidi Wood continues to provide children opportunities to grow their faith. The kids have been sent crafts and Bible verses via mail. Vacation Bible School may not be feasible this year but we may potentially offer a mini-version in late summer, as a wonderful church outreach to both children and families.

Pastor is also providing a Sunday School opportunity for adults. The study of the Book of James has just begun. This can be accessed through Conference Call at phone number 425-436-6373 and code number 221380#. All are welcome. The study is on Sundays at 12:15 p.m.



Earlier in the year, the Retzer family took photos of the congregation and began gathering contact data for an updated directory. Jen Houck then compiled, printed and published the brand new directory on the website. You can access it under the “Members” page. A big THANK YOU to the Retzers and Jen for completing this project!



Easter Lilies Delivered!

Jackie Abend delivered Easter lilies to the shut- in congregants. They delighted in her visits and appreciated this delivery. This made their Easter more joyful in this isolated time.



Although the physical church building is 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 held at the post office and delivered to St. Paul’s once per week, where it is immediately retrieved.



The BoD voted to provide assistance of \$100 to a local man who lost his entire home to a fire. We were informed of this critical situation by Jen Houck. As a result, Diane Segelhorst and Bernice Prescott have written a “Compassionate Aid Policy” statement for use in future instances, to ensure we operate in a fair and reasonable manner whenever a request is received, and recommending that a compassion line item be included in future budgets.

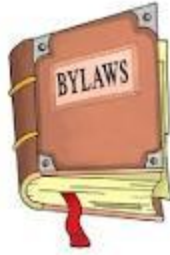


PANDEMIC UPDATE

During this period, Zac and Pastor Dave have participated in several SED conference calls concerning the pandemic and innovations churches are undertaking to continue to minister. This information is updated from day to day as we navigate through this new experience. As an opening date grows closer and restrictions are being slowly lifted, the BoD is staying informed regarding the SED and Maryland guidelines. Safety of the congregation is our first priority. To be proactive, an ad hoc committee will be established with members of the congregation to study these guidelines and make sure that we are in compliance with the requirements. Because no one is using our building at this time, the cleaning service was directed to perform a deep cleaning of each area on a rotating basis, and the contract has been suspended for the duration. Also because the building is unavailable to the Life Bridge congregation, the BoD has suspended their rent payments.

The congregation submitted an application for Payroll Protection Plan funding under the federal Cares Act. It was an arduous process, completed by Zac Huffman and Charlotte Angeli, and was ultimately successful, resulting in funding of \$13,936, which has been received at our bank. Under the terms of the Act, 100% of the loan will be forgiven as long as 80% is used for payroll and the remaining 20% is used for utilities and some other miscellaneous expenses.

The BoD discussed how we can best use the current “downtime.” Suggestions included spending more time with family and assisting neighbors and others with shopping and other needs. Pastor Dave offered that he has established a weekly neighborhood conference call, wherein participants share their experiences and needs and maintain contact.



After a review of St. Paul's constitution and bylaws, the BoD determined that the existing quorum and voting requirements were not appropriate when voting to call a pastor. Those requirements for all votes stipulated that 20 percent of voting members constitutes a quorum and measures are passed by a simple majority affirmative vote. The BoD decided to propose a constitutional amendment to require a quorum of 50 percent and an affirmative vote of 2/3 to approve a pastoral call. This amendment was presented to the congregation at a Zoom meeting on May 6, with voting completed on May 20. The amendment passed unanimously.

St. Paul's Property Update

The property committee has been busy wrapping up some big projects in the last 6 months. All drainage improvements have been completed, including trenching and sealing around much of the church and installation of two exterior sump pumps on the east and west sides of the building to take water away from the foundation. The parking lot on the east side was regraded and a concrete pad at the top of the steps was also installed to prevent water from running down the east stairwell. Also, rock riverbed landscaping lined with a rubber membrane was installed on the east side of the church to prevent water overflowing from the roof from soaking into that corner. To further control the humidity downstairs, two dehumidifiers were installed over the last several months, one in the hallway and one in Helen's closet.

The church basement, which has been showing its age with worn out floors and in need of painting, has been totally redone with new floors and painting! This has taken several months due to the challenges of choosing colors, selecting a floor, and selecting a flooring company. The COVID-19 situation also caused some delays. Thank you to Carrie Segelhorst and color consultant Tina Fontana Designs for helping to select the colors and floor. Craig Silbert's company did a spectacular job repainting the entire basement, including hallway, classrooms, fellowship hall, the kitchen, and bathrooms! And Bay Country Floors did an excellent job grinding and leveling the floors and installing the new materials throughout the basement hallway, classrooms, and fellowship hall. Thank you to Landy Angeli, Zac Huffman, and Diane and John Segelhorst for helping to move furniture and supplies to enable the floor install. Also, Diane and Carrie installed new curtains in the kitchen! And, John and Diane also cut the bottom of all the doors downstairs to enable installation of the new floors; a HUGE job!

Rick Wood has been leading the replacement of the main church sign with electronic panels. The new panels have been installed and are now operating! We are learning how to edit the messages and graphics on the sign to best advertise St. Paul's. Light boxes with the church name are currently being fabricated and should be installed in the coming weeks. Thanks to

Rick's expertise, the church has saved a ton of money on this sign project! We also want to say thank you to John Segelhorst for overseeing the electrician who rebuilt the flooded and broken conduit and wiring outside that runs to the sign.

John also oversaw the lighting company that replaced all lights inside and outside of the church with LED fixtures. This was accomplished through a state rebate program that greatly reduced the cost to the church.

Parker Retzer is making a bell tower for his Eagle Scout project to showcase the original church bell. He will be installing it behind the main church sign very soon! It will be meaningful and beautiful. Thank you Parker!

Also, a big thank you to Charlie Frater for processing our sign permit with the county and for making sure the county is okay with the bell tower.

The new sanctuary eternal flame lamp was installed at the altar to replace the candle lamp that fell from its cable a few months ago. The new one is electric and mounted to the side wall of the altar.

We are still working with the county to determine if we can gain access to county water and sewer services. More on that to come.

Website Committee Report

COVID-19 has spurred the website committee to add online worship services to the website. Thank you for all the hard work and dedication of Michelle Angeli. Michelle has been editing and producing the full worship service every week since this all began. We also thank Pastor Dave for stepping up to this new challenge of online services.

Rick Wood, St. Paul's IT specialist, is looking into expanding the services to live-stream in the future. There will be opportunities for the congregation to help with this worthwhile venture – especially worthwhile for those who unable to physically attend services.

Online Donation was also added to the website, and other ways to donate by app or texting were established. A huge thank you to Diane Segelhorst and Michelle Angeli for their leadership with this.

A Sunday School fun page was created for the youth to stay in touch with Christianity. Thank you to Heidi Wood!

The members page has expanded with a new congregational directory, and updated constitution, bylaws, and meeting minutes (and other special stuff!). Check it out! Text or call Patrice at 443-254-6765 for the password or contact Cindy.



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.