

From the Pastor's Desk

At the start of 2020, I set a goal to read 40 books by the end of the year. Honestly, I wasn't sure I would hit my goal this year. April and May were really rough months for reading for me. I struggled to concentrate while reading – one of the side-effects of a pandemic, I'm told. I finally was able to read again and I enjoyed a wide variety of fiction, theology, non-fiction, biography, and self-help. Each style has a purpose for me – relaxation, spiritual growth, leadership development and sermon preparation. I am feeling stretched by some of the selections I made this year. I joined an on-line book club to force me to read authors and topics I wouldn't choose on my own. This was a wonderful opportunity because the author was part of the discussion. My plan this year was to use my library card more, read books I already bought and purchase fewer books. I was pretty successful with this goal (buying books is a weakness for me). I promised to share my list of books I read.

10 Days Without by Daniel Ryan Day, *Ragman and Other Stories of Faith* by Walter Wangerin Jr., *Dear Edward* by Ann Napolitano, *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* by Charlie Mackeny, *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by CS Lewis, *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins, *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* by Therese Anne Fowler, *The Walk* by Adam Hamilton, *Rediscover Jesus – an Invitation* by Matthew Kelly, *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult, *What We Talk About When We Talk About God* by Rob Bell, *A Family Like Mine: Biblical Stories of Love, Loss and Longing* by Rosalind C. Hughes, *Becoming* by Michele Obama, *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, *Planning Sabbaticals – A Guide for Congregations & Their Pastors* by Robert C. Saler, *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans, *The Applause of Heaven* by Max Lucado, *Florence Adler Swims Forever* by

Rachel Beanland, *Calling Me Home* by Julie Kibler, *Good Book* by David Plotz, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* by Rachel Held Evans, *Remnants – A Memoir of Spirit, Activism and Mothering* by Rosemarie Freeney Harding, *Sad Superhero* by Emily Marck, *The Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donoghue, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* by Victor H. Green, *Love Wins* by Rob Bell, *The Grand Weaver- How God Shapes Us Through the Events of our Lives* by Ravi Zacharias, *Transcendent Kingdom* by Yaa Gyasi, *Clear, Calm & Connected-Reflections on Church Leadership* by Paul Walters & Robert Holley, *Changed* by Tom Cantor, *The Color of Law* by Mark Gimenez, *Shade – A Tale of Two Presidents* by Pete Souza, *Dear Emmie Blue* by Lia Louis, *The Church of Us vs. Them* by David E. Fitch, *Girl, Wash Your Face* by Rachel Hollis, *Another 20 Feet* by Aaron Hulett, *A Weary World – Reflections for a Blue Christmas* by Kathy Escobar and *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor.

I reached my goal! I plan to keep this same goal next year. A slight adaptation for next year is that I plan to read a minimum of ten of the "classics". As always, I'm open to suggestions of your favorites.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bonnie

Send us your email address-

We are working to stay connected with more folks in a variety of ways. We plan to send out weekly emails with what is happening the coming week, devotions, birthdays and prayer concerns. Your email address will NOT be sold to a third party. Currently, we have 113 email addresses. It is our goal to reach everyone who uses email (even if you only check it once a week). Please send the church office (stpaulww@comcast.net) your email address so you can receive the latest news and updates!

Thank you, thank you...

To the people of God at St. Paul, I was overwhelmed by your generosity with the "Love" gift that I received from you. This has been an incredibly difficult year for all of us. I am grateful for the support that you have shown me. Dale and I are blessed to be part of such a wonderful congregation.

Pastor Bonnie

"God is Holding Your Life – A Journey of Assurance for the New Year" **Worship series**

Life is a series of exclamations from "O No!" to "Help!" to "Oh Yeah!" We can swing between disappointment, helplessness, and gratitude on a daily basis. There are also seasons of our lives when we feel inundated with more of one than the others. As we enter the new year, we had hoped we would be past the "O No!" of the last several months. Instead, we find ourselves with ongoing prayers for "Help!" The Book of Psalms knows all about this. Written over a span of time from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of the community, the poetry of the Psalms will accompany us in this series, reminding us that through it all, we can trust and even give our thankful "Oh Yeah!" because God is, indeed, holding our lives.

Join us online for worship on Facebook @ 9:30am each Sunday or you can view our worship services on our website – stpaulslutheranph.com under the "Worship Services" tab.

"The works of God's hands are faithful and just." - Psalm 111



Epiphany "Star" Words

Epiphany is one of my favorite festivals in the church year. The festival is when we celebrate the magi coming to see the Christ child. The word *Epiphany* means the manifestation or revealing of the Christ Child. I began a "tradition" here at St. Paul my first Epiphany here in 2016. I invited everyone to choose a "Star" word as part of worship. The idea is to allow God to speak to you – to reveal Christ to you – through the "Star" word you receive throughout the coming year. Even the Congregational Council will choose a "Star" word at their January council meeting. It is inspiring and fascinating to hear the stories people share about their "Star" word and how it reveals Christ to them each year. My "Star" word for 2020, was *Thoughtfulness*. I have been led by the Holy Spirit in ways I never imagined to be *thoughtful* this year. I can't wait to see what my "Star" word for 2021 will be and how Christ will be revealed through it. This year our "Star" words will be distributed a little differently. There will be 4 options:

- 1) Chose your word at the Drive-thru "Journey to the Manger" on Christmas Eve
- 2) Chose your word Drive-thru style on Jan. 3 following Virtual Social Hour – 11:30am-1pm
- 3) Chose your word online at wordoftheyear.me
- 4) Call the church to set up a time to chose your word

Please chose the option that works best for you. Blessings to you this Epiphany!

Nothing New Under the Sun (Hardly)

by Robert McCloskey is one of the books about Homer Price. The title reminds me of Ecclesiastes 1:9-10. The Living Bible says it this way: "History merely repeats itself. Nothing is truly new; it has all been done or said before." What can you point to that is new?

There are many areas in our lives that appear to have new advances, in travel it's rockets and driverless vehicles, in communications we have cell phones, computers, the rapid exchange of information, and Zoom. For most of her life my grandmother cooked on a wood range-- a microwave to cook food would have nearly been unbelievable. There are many times when we think we are encountering new ideas, new times.

2020, a new year and what a year it has been for all of us. A new pandemic, but we have heard of the pandemic of 1918, the influenza pandemic or the bubonic plague. In Biblical times the Egyptians experienced plagues. We have experienced great civil unrest during the year 2020. Many will remember the civil unrest in 1968, the civil unrest in 1861, Civil War. Why, even civil unrest in 1776. A year of political contention. What we have experienced are new forms of problems that have occurred in the past.

With the new year we can be sure that we will encounter things that are new. New inventions, new technologies, new events occurring in a different setting or way, new leaders, new ways to think, new ideas for us, and new ways to lead. Things may seem new to us, but our Lord has known all things from the beginning for His purpose.

So then....Happy New Year!
Perhaps a better word would be Joyous

New Year. As pastor pointed in the sermon for the third Sunday in Advent, there is a difference between happy and joyous. We often use happy to mean gratified as "I'm happy to be here," or "I'm happy to hear that," or "I'm happy to receive something" Joyous might be used to mean a state of well being or bliss. If I say I am full of joy, it is probably more a feeling of well being or contentment.

During the fourth Advent service Pastor shared some statements of belief by members, and one resonated with me, "I believe in joy even when I am sad." Even when we're disappointed, upset, hurting, or disillusioned the joy of the Lord is with us. I believe this joy in the Lord is the feeling of well being, contentment and bliss knowing that Christ with and in us makes us new and joyful each day.

Happy Joyous New Year!

Rich Cochrill



With the recent US Postal Service delays we have experienced in mailing our monthly newsletter, we are asking members to submit their email address so that the newsletter can also be sent by email. Please submit your email address to the church office, stpaulww@comcast.net.

With sincere appreciation I thank you for your very generous Christmas gift. I missed seeing and talking to those of you who used to be around during my office hours.

Happy, Healthy New Year to you all!

Diane Biskner

Help Wanted

Do you have a passion for video editing and/or technology? Pastor Bonnie is looking for someone to assist her in creating/editing recordings for worship. If you are interested and would like to learn more, please contact Pastor Bonnie at pastorbonniek@gmail.com for more information.

Re-Opening the Building Committee

We are closely monitoring the St. Clair Health Department's Covid-19 weekly report. Each month the council has conversation on the current status. We are continuing to follow the guidelines provided to us by the Synod, CDC and our insurance company for the safest way for our most vulnerable members to gather.

Our Daily Bread Devotionals

The December-February edition of "Our Daily Bread Devotions" has arrived. We have placed a stack of them in the Neighborhood Box outside the office door. It is located next to our Prayer Box. Please feel free to stop by and pick up a copy.

Zoom Meetings without a computer-

Did you know that you can join our Virtual Social Hour on Sunday mornings without a computer? All of our Bible Studies, meetings and Virtual Social Hour can be joined by telephone – this includes landlines and cellphones! You won't have video capabilities, but you will be able to hear everyone and speak to everyone. All of our meetings have the same phone number to access the meeting. Simply dial 929-205-6099 and when prompted enter 810 982 9853#. After the next prompt enter # again and you will be able to join our conversation. We hope this enables more folks to feel connected!

For those with Volga German ancestry, whether at St. Paul's Lutheran, or any other church in the area:

Early birth records from 1780 and 1792 - 1815 have been obtained by Bill Pickelhaupt, and he is in the process of translating those records. When the process is completed, he will do lookups for a \$10 donation for each named searched, all funds to go to St. Paul's Lutheran here in Port Huron.

The surnames and villages are:

Kind (Russian name Baskakovka): Albert, Becker, Belger, Corte, Derr (Doerr), Dortmann, Emich, Emmerich, Falk, Giess, Herber, Karle, Keksel, Koepfel, Langolf, Loos, Machleid, Pabst, Pickelhaupt, Roth, Russ, Schneider, Schumann, Spaar, Stürtz, Volhardt, Zang.

Susannenthal (German name Winklemann): Billeau, Flatung, Gense, Heidt, Kober, Lehmann, Löber, Michel, Miller, Naumann, Ritscher, Roth, Schaefer, Schmidt, Wasmuth, Wegner, Werner.

Others: Eifert, Meinhardt, Wehrwein, Winterholler.

Birth records for 1853 – 1921 have also been obtained and will be translated.

You may contact Bill at billpick11@gmail.com.

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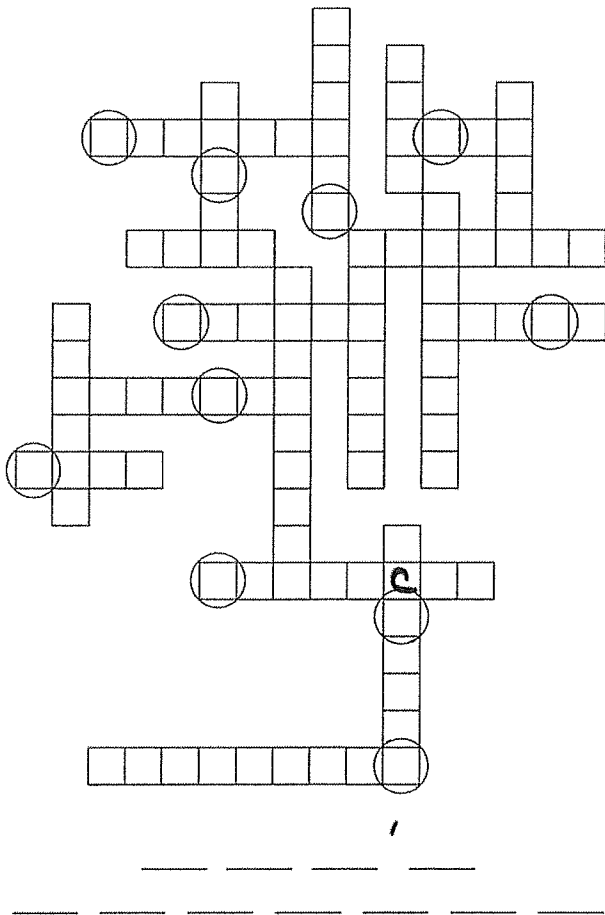
**Don't forget to direct
Choice Dollars®**

Remember that if you are a Thrivent member you may have "Thrivent Choice Dollars" to direct. St. Paul is on of the many potential recipients of your choice dollars, but your direction needs to be made each time. See Thrivent's website for more information.

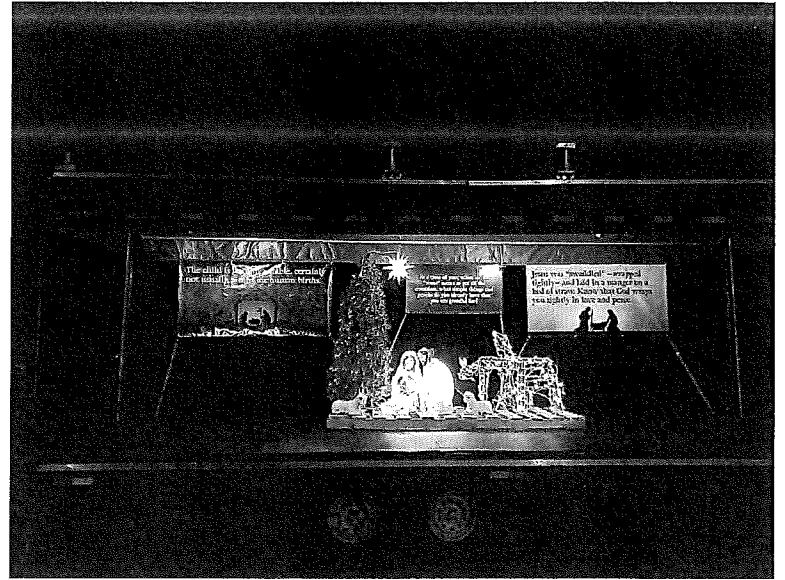
Puzzle!

Fit the names of these Bible-times places in the puzzle. Then write the circled letters on the lines below, in the order found, to find out where your citizenship is.

Tyre	Sidon	Kedesh	Ephesus	Philippi
Cana	Berea	Sychar	Corinth	Bethlehem
Rome	Lycia	Galilee	Iconium	Jerusalem
Gaza	Athens	Ephraim	Damascus	



God's kingdom



Journey to the Manger 2020

What a wonderful way to celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ! The journey began with an idea and an amazing team of volunteers ran with it. A huge thank you to Marcus Middleton, Tom Wilson, Rick Hanselman, Linda Barker, Rich Harwood, Amy Fabick, Rich Morris, Laurie Morris, Dale Klos and others who were "behind the scene". During a year of pandemic, we all needed a new way to gather at the church, experience the birth of Jesus and receive communion. Our "Journey to the Manger" touched the lives and gave hope to the members of St. Paul. More than that – we also reached out to our neighbors and the community with the hope, love, joy and peace on this Holy Night. This was the first year of a new tradition at St. Paul – I can't wait to see how the Holy Spirit will use it next year.

Happy New Year ~ Happy New Year ~ Happy New Year

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

December 14, 2020

New Council members were introduced at the December meeting

Sue Wilson led the Devotion and Prayer

Rich Cochrill introduced the new book "Canoeing the Mountains" for Council to read in 2021

Installation of new officers will be included in an upcoming online worship service.



We're excited to share that we've launched online giving at **St. Paul Lutheran Church** through Tithe.ly, a safe and secure giving platform that allows you to give one-time or recurring gifts!

To make an online contribution go to our website, stpaul Lutheranph.com, and click on the green "Give" button in the middle of the page, select where your contribution will go (current expenses, GWIP, memorial, etc.) and whether you want it to be recurring or one time. You can use a credit card or bank account. Please consider "Cover Fees" when making your contribution. This covers the nominal fee for processing your contribution.

Thank you for supporting our ministry!

2021 Church Council

Rich Cochrill, Council President

Marilyn Knak, President Elect

Marcia Conard, Council Secretary

Julie Lusk, Treasurer

Susan Koglin, Financial Secretary

Jane Dennis, Asst. Financial Secretary

Karen Lee, Financial Representative

Leanne Fortushniak, Evangelism Rep

Danielle Golubinski, Parish Ed Rep

Chris Matts, Properties Rep

Ann Preimesberger, Stewardship Rep

Sue Wilson, Worship Rep

Lucy Fabick, Youth Rep

Cathy Stuewer, Youth Team Rep

Kroger Community Rewards Program. St. Paul will receive rewards from your purchases at Kroger. To use the rewards program you can register online at krogercommunityrewards.com. All **current participants** in the Kroger Community Rewards Program **do not** need to re-enroll this year in order to earn funds for St. Paul. The rewards program runs from May 2020 to May 2021. Our NPO number is RK460. **Registration is online only.** Last quarter 36 households earned \$95.00 rewards for St. Paul.

Newsletter: The newsletter deadline for the February Ray is Sunday, January 17, 2021. Articles may be submitted via e-mail (stpaulww@comcast.net), on a flash drive or in writing.



Remember Our Members In The Military

COL. THAD MIDDLETON
2205 TANKER WAY
WICHITA, KS 67210



Melba Bartley
Connie Ganger
Lavina Kodet
MaryAnn Meyer
Beth Radtke



If you would like to add someone to our church prayer list, please email Pastor Bonnie at pastorbonniek@gmail.com. Request received by 9 a.m. on Fridays will be included in worship that Sunday. Those received after that time will be added to Pastor Bonnie's personal list and offered the following Sunday.

May the New Year ring in lots of love, happing tidings,
good health and loads of blessings for you and your family!



On-line worship opportunities

While we are not able to be face to face in worship in our sanctuary there are still opportunities to gather to hear God's word, to pray, to sing and to be encouraged. Each Sunday at 9:30am on our Facebook page worship is posted for us to gather in our homes at the same time to view worship.

The service is also posted on our website stpaulwlutheranph.com under the "Worship services" tab. We also gather on Zoom each Sunday at 10:30 for a virtual social hour. Here is the link to join us on Zoom –

<https://zoom.us/j/8109829853>