

From the Pastor's Desk

At the start of 2019, I set a goal to read 40 books by the end of the year. I read 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 a book club to force me to read authors and topics I wouldn't choose on my own. I think that is the purpose and value of participating in a book club. And then to have the opportunity to discuss the book with others is invaluable – to hear what others liked, disliked, were frustrated by and were inspired by is amazing. I promised to share (Star word for 2019) my list of books I read. Perfect Match by Jodi Picoult, Wake-Up An Invitation to Center by Peggy Hahn, Accidental Saints by Nadia Bolz-Weber, Shameless by Nadia Bolz-Weber, The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict, Mercy by Jodi Picoult, Educated by Tara Westover, The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See, The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch, Six Hours One Friday by Max Lucado, The Life-changing Magic of Tidying Up by Marie Kondo, From Tragedy to Triumph by Ryan Kraft, The Bookshop of Yesterdays by Amy Meyerson, All the Missing Girls by Megan Miranda, Inspired by Rachel Held Evans, Hope for the Flowers by Trina Paulus, Sold on a Monday by Kristina McMorris, Girl, Wash Your Face by Rachel Hollis, The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho, The Moment of Lift-How Empowering Women Changes the World by Melinda Gates, Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens, The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss by James Kemp, It's Not Supposed to be This Way by Lysa Terkeurst, Dear Church by Lenny Duncan, Inland by Tea' Obrecht, Happy Birthday to You, Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?, The Lorax, Oh, the Places You'll Go!, And to Think That I Saw it on Mullberry Street, The Sneetches and Other Stories, Marvin K. Mooney, Will You Please Go Now!, Hunches in Bunches, Oh, the Thinks You Can Think!, ABC, The Foot Book, Green Eggs and Ham, There's a Wocket in my Pocket, One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish all by Dr. Seuss, The Eye Book by Theo

LeSieg, The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood, White Fragility- Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism by Robin Diangelo, Build a Bigger Table-creating space to discuss life and faith by Jeremy Martin, Love Big-the power of revolutionary relationships to heal the world by Rozella White and Not a Silent Night by Adam Hamilton. I reached my goal and a few more! I plan to keep this same goal next year since I probably won't read so many Dr. Seuss books again. While they are much shorter, I read them over and over and over again! A slight adaptation for next year is that I can't buy any new books- I bought far more than 40 books this year at the library sales, second hand stores and with gift cards from friends. I plan to read what I have and use my library card much more. As always, I'm open to suggestions of your favorites.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bonnie



The end of the year is fast approaching. This is the time to make sure you are up to date on your financial support of our ministry at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Your gifts **DO** make a difference! You can make gifts at worship or you can mail them to the office. In order to be included on your 2019 contribution statement, gifts must be received in the church office by **December 29, 2019**. Thank you for your continued support of our ministry.

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 on Christmas Eve. Dale and I are blessed to be part of such a wonderful congregation. We look forward to many more years of doing ministry together.
Pastor Bonnie

EPIPHANY

Festival of Epiphany -

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 words are printed on a card and placed face down in the offering plates. You aren't supposed to "peek" but rather let the spirit guide your choosing. 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 2019, was *Sharing*. I have been led by the Holy Spirit in ways I never imagined to *share* this year. I can't wait to see what my "Star" word for 2020 will be and how Christ will be revealed through it. Join us on **January 5th at 8:00 or 10:30** to hear the story of the Christ child being revealed to the magi and receive your Star word.

Pastor Bonnie



St. Paul is thankful for memorial gifts received the fourth quarter of 2019.

In memory of Robert Schumann by Cheryl L.S. Plouff.

MEN'S MINISTRY

Paul's Guys

We are continuing our study of the book, *A Life Beyond Amazing*, by Dr. David Jeremiah. We will be looking at chapter five (5) which talks about a life of compassion.

This book is written with each chapter talking about a characteristic (gift of the Holy Spirit) so you don't have to have been present from the beginning of the study; you can jump in at any point.

I have been informed that Countryside Free Methodist Church will again be hosting the men's conference, *Get in the Game*. It will be Superbowl Saturday which is February 1st. So mark your calendars.

I am also checking on the Imlay City Christian Reform Church Men's Breakfast which will be held in March or April. More information to follow.

Robert Schumann remembered.....

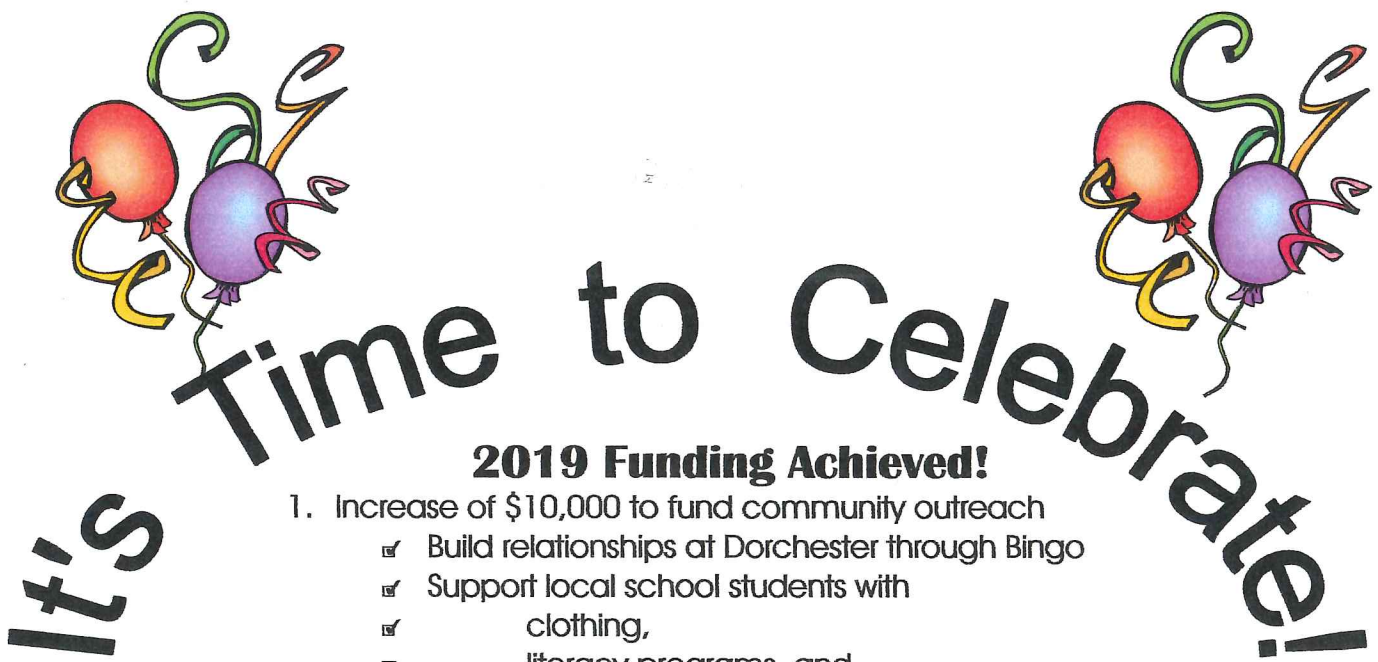


Bob was a lifelong Lutheran and a member of St. Paul

He was an outdoor enthusiast – enjoyed fishing, hunting, and riding snowmobiles and motorcycles

Bob liked bowling and was a Boy Scout leader
He worked for Community Enterprises for about 35 years; especially enjoyed performing maintenance at Bel-Rose Apartments

Bob was Linda Barker's cousin
He will be remembered as very kind and always smiling.



It's Time to Celebrate!

2019 Funding Achieved!

1. Increase of \$10,000 to fund community outreach
 - ✓ Build relationships at Dorchester through Bingo
 - ✓ Support local school students with
 - ✓ clothing,
 - literacy programs, and
 - Develop parenting support programs
2. Increase of \$5,000 to improve/update technology for ministry
 - ✓ Add microphones to improve sound quality and hearing,
 - ✓ Replace worn equipment, and
 - Update computer, screen, & software
3. Increase of \$5,000 to initiate planning for a building expansion
 - Establish a building feasibility committee
 - Determine needs and wishes
4. Increase of \$10,000 to sustain ministry excellence
 - ✓ All increased expenses for 2019 were met

In gratitude, we thank you for generously responding to the 2019 challenge of increased giving and for sharing your time and talent in so many positive ways. The money has been donated, some of the programs have already been implemented (✓), and progress is being made on those that are still in the planning stage (□). The money has been set aside to ensure their development.

It's time to celebrate the way in which God has motivated us to stretch and grow in response to His love and mercy for us and for those around us. As your stewardship committee, we are in awe as we observe God at work among us.

Day of Celebration: January 19, 2020

Luncheon & Program at 12:00

On Sunday, January 19th, following worship services, a luncheon will be served followed by a short program celebrating the People of God whom we have become. As an important part of this incredible journey, you are invited to attend and get a glimpse of where we, as a congregation, are heading.

While all of you are invited, it is necessary to know who will be able to attend on January 19th, noon to 1:30 pm. Please help us with the planning by indicating whether your family will be able to attend this catered event. The sign up sheet is in the narthex.

COMMUNITY GARDEN
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
2019 Report

This was the eleventh year for our Community Garden at St. Paul and it turned out to be a below average year. This year we donated **5310 pounds** of produce to Mid City Nutrition, the Blue Water Food Depot, and people at our September Food Truck.

Our production history is:

2009	860 pounds	2014	7500 pounds
2010	2800 pounds	2015	5500 pounds
2011	4300 pounds	2016	10,800 pounds
2012	8400 pounds	2017	8700 pounds
2013	5850 pounds	2018	6750 pounds
		2019	5310 pounds

The Grand Total is **66,770 pounds** since the garden was started.

We rented out 10'X10' plots for a deposit of \$10.00 per plot. If the gardener wanted more than 1 plot they could have more. We rented out a total of 56 plots to a total of 27 gardeners. The \$10.00 deposit was nonrefundable which will help pay the garden operating expenses. The gardeners were still responsible for taking care of their plot(s) and cleaning them up at the end of the season.

The Church's part of the garden was about ½ acre and we had a total of 44 helpers this year. There were 21 members from St. Paul and 23 non-members who helped in the garden. Six were Master Gardeners. All help is greatly appreciated and I would like to give everyone who helped a **big thank you**. We can always use additional help next year. Please let me know if you would like to help. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

We had a large assortment of garden produce consisting of green beans, cabbage, cucumbers, eggplant, green peppers, potatoes, several types of squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, broccoli and kale.

The operating cost for 2019 was \$1,036.95 of which \$539.97 was paid for from garden deposits, \$246.98 from WELCA at the church and \$250.00 from a Thrivent Action Team grant. Our cost of production was just under 19.5 cents per pound with all of our volunteer labor and no cost for equipment.

Every year we try some new things in the garden. This year we purchased a 4 wheel wagon for hauling produce, water, tools, etc. The spike tooth drag we got last year worked well. We tried a few other new things and I have some new ideas for next year. The weather in 2019 was probably the worst that we have had in the last 11 years as you are probably aware of. We weren't able to plant anything in the church part of the garden until June 23rd. But, next year will be better. We have about 30 yards of composted horse manure to spread on the garden next spring before it is plowed.

The garden was worked up and the rye cover crop was planted on October 18th. If anyone has questions about the Community Garden or how we do certain things, please feel free to call me at 810-434-2380.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Strauss

2020 Church Council

Linda Barker, Council President

Rich Cochrill, President Elect

Cathy Stuewer, Council Secretary

Julie Lusk, Treasurer

Donna Sanderson, Financial Secretary

Susan Koglin, Asst. Financial Secretary

Ruth Reim, Financial Representative

Laurie Morris, Evangelism Rep

Danielle Golubinski, Parish Ed Rep

Chris Matts, Properties Rep

Ann Preimesberger, Stewardship Rep

Sue Wilson, Worship Rep

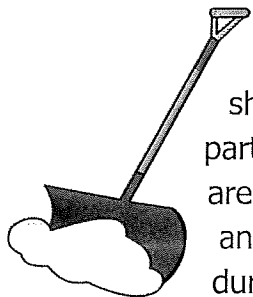
Olivia Rousey, Youth Rep

Heather Rousey, Youth Team Rep

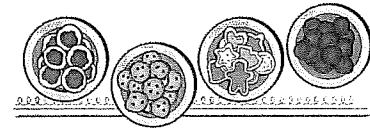
COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

December 9, 2019

We had our last Council meeting for 2019. Sue Wilson gave us our devotion. There wasn't a lot on the agenda with the year coming to the end. The building policy book needs to be read and will be voted on in January. Staff evaluations will be completed by committees before Budget committee meeting in September. Mary Smith who takes care of the Archive is willing to stay involved if we can get some help.



Please share your gift of shoveling by signing up with a partner for a week this winter. There are lots of activities here at church and groups using our building during the week so our sidewalks need to be shoveled and salted each time it snows! There is a snow blower available for a heavier snowfall. Please sign up in the narthex.



Holiday Cookie Walk

To our fellow members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, once again the ladies of WELCA would like to extend our thanks for your generous contribution of cookies to our Annual Cookie Walk. Each year we plan our event with the faith that the hands and big hearts of many will provide us with an array of cookies (mostly heavy 😊). Again this year we were not disappointed, you provided us with 216.5 pounds of cookies, which means we raised \$1515.50 from sales and had additional donations of \$46 so our total is \$1561.50. Our cookie walk has been going on in one shape or form for decades thanks to you. When we unlock the doors and our guests step inside we greet friends and family. We also greet guests who are not members but return year after year knowing that you are some of the best cookie bakers in town. We place stickers on all of the boxes with our Sunday service and Christmas service information and try as often as possible to verbally invite all to come and join us. Again thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Carol Middleton
Committee Chair on behalf
of the Women of WELCA

Direct your
Thrivent Choice
Dollars
Today!



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.



A Note from the Treasurer

Bills and payroll are scheduled to be paid January 1st, 15th, 29th. Please submit paperwork at least one day prior to these dates in order for checks to be issued.



1) 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 2019 to May 2020. Our NPO number is RK460. **Registration is online only.** Last quarter 32 households earned \$102.15 in rewards for St. Paul.

2) Newsletter: The newsletter deadline for the February Ray is Sunday, January 19, 2020. Articles may be submitted via e-mail (stpaulww@comcast.net), on a disk (IBM Format) or in writing.

3) Please make sure that if you need to borrow something from the church that you check the rental book and make sure no one else has reserved that item. If it is available, it needs to be signed out with the church office. The rental book is on top of the filing cabinet in the church office.

WHEN DROPPING ITEMS OFF IN THE CHURCH OFFICE: PLEASE

leave a note indicating for whom the items are intended. Thank you!



Diane,
Church
Secretary

Church Secretary Hours:

Monday – Friday 9am to 1 pm

Office will be closed:

January 1st

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH!

We are still **collecting** and returning **pop cans and bottles** to raise money to support our high school youth. Please place any cans or bottles in the designated box in the entryway of the church, and the youth will return them regularly.

**Thank you for supporting
youth ministry!**