

EPIS⁺LE



*St. Paul's Lutheran
The Church On The Hill*

Volume 64 No. 4

April - 2020

Pastor's Message

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." <1 Peter 5:10>

One month ago in this column I wrote the winter was past and we could now look forward to warmth, sunshine and the greening earth. The past couple of days we have had nice temperatures in the 70's and even 80's. The sun has been shining and plants are sprouting from the warm earth. The leaves on the trees and bushes are exploding in a transformation from bare branches to lush green leaves, and the buds are bursting into blooms of white and red and yellow here on the Hill.

But in the midst of this we have also had some strong winds, rain, and hail the size of golf balls to baseballs. The destruction has been severe in places. Flowers have been broken over, homes have been damaged and our friends at Xtreme Body & Paint have automobiles lined up to be repaired.

Our expectations do not always appear at the expected time and place. Sometimes the world has a different outcome than we had imagined.

On March 1, New York reported its first case of Coronavirus, and Missouri had zero. As I write this 30 days later, New York has nearly 61,000 cases and reports nearly 1,100 deaths. Missouri has 1031 and 13 deaths. What started as a nice spring has been ravaged by a severe storm of sickness and death.

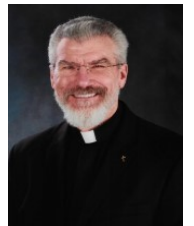
Our Church 'in person' worship has been suspended since March 15, as well as other church activities. The community Easter Sunrise Service has been canceled.

Fortunately, we have the technology for me to bring you an online virtual worship every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. just as usual. And fortunately, because of the precautions we have taken we have not had any reports so far in our congregation of exposure to the Coronavirus. I praise God for this good news as I continue to pray for all of you who are now isolated in your homes with only the occasional foray into town for groceries, medicines and essentials.

In our scripture above, Peter tells us "after we have suffered a little while, God himself will restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." This is the good news by God's grace through the promise of his Son, Jesus, our Savior. This is what gives us the strength to persevere through the struggles and suffering the world causes us. We have nothing to fear from what the world throws at us because we have God's grace to keep us firm and steadfast. We also have each other to lean on in hard times since we are one family, united in Christ and always together.

Stay safe, wash your hands and take care of your neighbor.

Blessings to you in Christ Jesus,
Pastor David



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to you!

- 1 Wilfred Plochberger
- 1 Donald Weber
- 2 Bill Stubinger
- 4 Patricia Russell
- 4 Deb Wriedt
- 4 Julie Walters
- 8 Kara Richart
- 11 Laura Koestner
- 11 Mattson Stoermer
- 13 Devin Koestner
- 13 Paul Schiller
- 15 Ellen Strobel
- 16 Todd Walters
- 17 Michelle Collins
- 17 Mitchell Plochberger
- 19 Noah Stubinger
- 20 Leon Pistel
- 22 Diane Kalaf
- 22 Christie Murphy
- 23 Chris Russell
- 26 Angie Bracher
- 27 Garrett Hager
- 29 Kay Pascoe
- 29 Kyle Freiner



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Shawn & Sherrie Williams 1999
- 18 Matt & Wendy Barker 2015 (5 Years)
- 18 Jerry & Laurie Koestner 1992
- 21 Luke & Miranda England 2018
- 23 Charles & Wanda Ferrell 1982
- 23 Michael & Dana Moeller 1994
- 25 Doug & Julie Carel 1987
- 28 Melvin & Joan Stubinger 1968

Happy Anniversary



Lenten Offerings: Due to the coronavirus, many of you were unable to give your special envelope offerings for Lent. If you would like to do so, please mail or drop them off at the church. **LENTEN Offerings** benefit the **ELCA Hunger Appeal**. **Mauudy Thursday** and **Good Friday** benefit the **Heisinger Bluffs Benevolence Fund**.

Jenetia Gibler – New phone # 573-616-4448

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Date	Attendance	Offering
March 01	111	\$6,607.69
March 08	101	\$2,482.86
March 15	117	\$2,749.25
March 22	Virtual 436 Views	\$0,000.00
March 29	Virtual 354 Views	\$0,000.00
Total		\$11,839.80

In addition to the financial totals:

Sunday school received \$3.77

Epistle \$10.00



Angela Russell and Curtis Bracher were married on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. Congratulations to this wonderful couple and their sweet children.

Continued prayers for healing.

Gus Fischer, Les Linsenhardt, Jade Cary, Gert Strobel, Julie Carel, Vanessa Pyatt, Amy Buechler, Donna Viles, & Chris Russell.

Sympathy and prayers for Curt Bracher's family as they grieve the loss of his mother Diana Johnson on March 20th.

Prayers for all who suffered damage from the hail storm that passed through our communities last week.

Ask the Pastor

Question: How do we stay connected in church during this coronavirus pandemic?

Answer:

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." <Romans 12:4-5>

I think Paul helps us with this connection when he speaks the verses above to the Romans. He tells them, and us, that we are connected by something far greater than anything we can imagine. We might think we come to church with our household family or by our self if we live alone but that is never the case. Paul says we have a body with many members, that is arms, legs, hands, feet, mouth, nose, eyes, ears and the rest. Although each of these members of our body do not function the same, they come together in unity to make us who we are and how we live.

In the same way, each of us at St. Paul's is a single member of the body of this church. We all have different roles to play within this body. But each one of you are a unique and special part of this church body, and even though each of you do not function the same, together you comprise the unity of this congregation and make it what it is and how it lives.

We may not be physically meeting together at this time but that does not mean we are not together. For every day I think of, and pray for each of you and I know from phone conversations, texts, emails, cards, Facebook and other social media that you are thinking of me and each other.

You show your care and compassion by letting me know how someone else is doing. Or you call to let me know how you are doing. You are connected with each other but in different ways as the members of our bodies and the members of our congregation work in different ways but are one.

Lately many of you have been joining together for worship on Sunday morning as I broadcast the service through FaceBook Live. After the service I post it to our St. Paul's website where others come to click on the link and watch the service at a time that is convenient for them.

I created the worship photo below to show that even though the pews are empty, we are still one in Christ and we remain connected together at all times in our Lord and Savior's name.



Blessings to you
Pastor David

Congregational Council Meeting, March 9, 2020
Respectfully submitted by Becky Weber, Church Council Secretary

A regular Congregational Council meeting was called to order at 6:30pm, on Monday, March 9, 2020 by Council President Zola Finch. Present were council members Zola Finch, Scott Soell, Delores Vlach, Mitch Plochberger, Kathy Meller, Paula Linsenbardt and Becky Weber. Absent were Dan Tschirgi and Laurie Koestner. Also present were Council Treasurer Kay Pascoe and Pastor David Viles.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Pastor Viles, followed by a devotion from Philippians 2:4, "Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." Pastor said this is a scripture that he lives by, and recognizes this scripture in each of his council members, adding; "you are the elders of the church, the ones that step up to get things done and set things in motion. I see your busy hands behind the scenes, and in the midst of them." Pastor went on to say, "You are the ones I can depend on to share the highs and lows of the days we live out in the church and the community. Pastor offered a warm and heart felt thanksgiving for council members. Pastor ended the devotion with a prayer.

President Finch called for a motion to approve the February 10, 2020 minutes. A motion to approve the February 10, 2020 minutes was offered by Mitch Plochberger, was seconded by Paula Linsenbardt, and passed via voice vote.

President Finch called upon Council Treasurer Kay Pascoe, to present a review of the past month's expenses and incomes. A two-page review was presented and accepted.

President Finch asked Pastor David Viles for the February 2020 mileage and activity report. Pastor's February mileage totaled 223 miles, to the amount of \$128.23. A motion to approve the mileage was made by Mitch Plochberger, seconded by Paula Linsenbardt and passed via voice vote.

Pastor reported attendance at several meetings, to include Food Bank at Trinity in Russellville, Church Council, Worship and Music, Mutual Ministry and Lohman City Council, Safety and Security, and Ministerial Alliance. He held Weekly Adult Forums, Weekly Confirmation Classes, and Weekly Bible Study Classes that ended February 23. Pastor created the Epistle for March, and emailed the Epistle. He had 2 home visits, several office visits and several phone conversations. Pastor reports services for February as follows: 5 services at St Paul's. Sunday: 2 communion services to include a special service to welcome our eight new members into the congregation, 2 non-communion services, and an Ash Wednesday communion service. One home communion service.

President Finch called for the Standing Committee Reports which are included below.

Old Business:

A free will offering basket for the Cole R1 High School Project Graduation was placed in the narthex following worship this past Sunday, with future collections occurring this month.

New Business:

No new business.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mitch Plochberger, seconded by Paula Linsenbardt, passed via voice vote. Council was adjourned at 8:18pm. The Lord's Prayer was recited by all.

Respectfully submitted by Becky Weber, Church Council Secretary

Evangelism: Delores Vlach

Delores and her committee wish to thank Jerry and Laurie Koestner and Harry and Jana Thompson for serving a delicious breakfast for Fellowship hour on March 1, 2020. Her committee will provide refreshments for the presidential preference voting day March 10 in our Friendship hall of St. Paul's, which is the voting precinct for the Moreau Township, and will do likewise for the other three elections this year. Plans are complete for the Pancake and Sausage breakfast set for March 15, 2020, serving from just after worship until 1:00pm.

Technology: Dan Tschirgi - absent. Pastor David reports that bids from Precision Security for purchase and installation of ten security cameras and six door alarms are being considered.

Worship & Music: Kathy Meller

The new member service and reception was well received. Pastor David was given high praise for the personal introduction of each new member. Her committee wishes to thank the Evangelism committee for help with the reception, and a special thanks was extended to Delores Vlach for her hard work. Kathy reports 52 attendees were present for Ash Wednesday service, which was traditional with the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. Upcoming services include:

- Palm Sunday on April 5, which begins with procession of palms
- Maundy Thursday on April 9, with Holy Communion, ending with the choir stripping the altar and everyone exiting the sanctuary in silence
- Good Friday on April 10, will focus on the "Seven Words of Jesus from the Cross", with hot cross buns and drinks to follow, hosted by their committee.
- Community Easter Sunrise service on April 12 at Trinity in Russellville. (Next year, the Sunrise service will be held at St. Paul's.) Easter lilies will be ordered by Kathryn Linsenbardt. The outdoor flower cross will be erected by Les and Kathryn Linsenbardt, with church members bringing flowers for its decoration.

Parish Education: Laurie Koestner - absent.

Scott Soell reports Sunday School has had a change in the curriculum, with Pastor David adding the new plan is to follow that particular Sunday's liturgy as well as other engaging projects.

Church Improvement: Mitchell Plochberger

Mitch reports the following: Spring work day is set for March 28, 2020 at 8:00am. Plans are in progress to remodel the kitchen, with possible window replacement in the Fellowship hall. Several bulbs have been replaced in our inside fluorescent fixtures. One window in the upstairs youth room will need to be replaced.

Stewardship: Paula Linsenbardt (No report)

Mutual Ministry: Scott Soell

Scott reports on discussion with starting worship on time, and the issue of noise level in the narthex prior to and during worship. There was discussion on ways to eliminate the noise during worship.

Freundschaft Gruppe: Jeannette Fischer, Chair

There were 24 in attendance at our March meeting and we enjoyed a fantastic dinner of corned beef and cabbage with all the trimmings served by Donita and Abby. Our main work detail for the evening was to sort quilts, pack them in boxes and apply addresses for shipment. If you are interested in our excursion to Arrow Rock on July 25, please make reservations with me by June 14. There will be additional information about this in the May Epistle. Our next meeting will be April 13 and that will be our last meeting until September.

Mobile Food Pantry: Audrey Bunch

The March 10th Mobile Food Pantry was held at Trinity Lutheran Church parking lot on a cold and cloudy afternoon. We served 110 families with 337 people in those families. Some of the items given out this month: milk, pancake mixes, popcorn, chez-it crackers, fresh produce: celery, kiwi, peppers, potatoes, sweet potatoes, frozen assorted pizzas, frozen whole chickens and eggs. Volunteers were Gary and Alberta Zumwalt from the Lohman Lions Club, Becky Weber, Rosemary Heidebreder and Audrey Bunch from St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Next Mobile Food Pantry will be April 14th at 1:15 P.M. at the Trinity Lutheran Church parking lot in Russellville.

NOTE: Due to the Covid-19 virus situation, the Mobile Food Pantry truck will not operate on April 14, 2020.

Jr. Lutherans: Donita Stubinger

Jr. Lutherans met at Gardner's Welding in Russellville on Sunday, March 8, 2020 following Sunday school. First we enjoyed pizza, cookies, yogurt, and drinks. Thanks Rania and Alan for bringing carrots and ranch dip. A very interesting tour was presented by Willard and Amber. Each child was presented a cross to take home. A large wall cross was cut on their Maverick CNC machine to show us how it was done. This cross was given to Donita who was very surprised to receive such a wonderful gift. We all thank the Gardner's for their generous gifts and taking the time to show us their business.



The 'Pancake Breakfast' at St. Paul's was a huge success! The Jr. Lutherans were great at helping clean trays, plates, and anything else off the tables. Thanks also for the clean-up and putting up chairs and decorations when everything was over. All your help was greatly appreciated.

A special thank you goes out to Dave and Trish Russell for the \$50.00 and to Leroy Plochberger for the \$150.00 to the Jr. Lutheran's account. Your thoughtfulness and generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you so much.

Our next meeting will be held at Church on Saturday morning, April 11, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. We will start with a continental brunch. We will color Easter eggs for the Jr. Lutherans to take home with them, each child will dye a dozen eggs.

NOTE: Due to the Covid-19 virus situation, this event has been canceled.

The train ride to Herman, MO will be explained to all with direction and instruction of how things will be handled on May 3, 2020. So be sure to pick up your letter for each family. You will be paired in groups of eight and tickets will be passed out at the train station. Remember it is May 3RD after church service and everyone needs to be there by 11:00 a.m. We have a huge group going, if anyone else is interested in joining us, please call Donita.

NOTE: Due to the Covid-19 virus situation, the train ride to Herman, MO has been canceled and will be rescheduled at a later date.

Safety and Security: Rich Prosch

Minutes for Safety and Security Meeting March 2, 2020

The St. Paul's Safety and Security Committee met on the evening of March 2, 2020 to discuss our spring and summer agenda. After Pastor David opened the meeting with a prayer, we discussed a plan to collect bids and technical information for our proposed camera and security system. Next, we agreed to make sure both of our weather alert radios were in operating condition. With tornado season

underway, we planned an announced drill for Sunday, March 29th. During the second half of our meeting, we agreed that two members of the security team will be on duty each Sunday—one in the narthex and one downstairs. The basement security team member will be on hand to monitor the back doors, but also to assist with emergencies. A calendar of team members will be drawn up, similar to the schedule of ushers. After a brief discussion, and based on our continuing education, we decided not to post any signage related to firearms in the church. We are delighted to thank Scott Soell for his donation of additional walkers and crutches for our congregation to use in an emergency.

Margaret Circle: Erika Gerth

The members of Margaret Circle were happy that neither rain, snow, or any other type of inclement weather interfered with this month's meeting! On March 4th, Donita Stubinger, our hostess for the evening, greeted us warmly and provided us with delicious cake and ice cream, coffee and hot chocolate. We were thrilled to have Laurie Koestner join us for the evening and hope that she will come often!

Amber Gardner introduced our special guest, Lorie Holt, Executive Director of Strong Tower Haiti, an organization whose mission is to care for orphans in Jesus' name. Lorie shared the story of how God led her to the town of Caracol, Haiti and the local church in that community. Here she, with support from her home church in Sedalia and other faith communities, established a ministry whose focus is on family care, religious instruction through vacation Bible school, micro-financing for women wishing to establish a small business, medical missions, and nutrition initiatives. Lorie personally travels to Caracol several times a year to oversee this program and to collaborate with the local school and other agencies. We were particularly interested to learn of a nutrition supplement which is distributed to approximately 400 school children each morning. It is peanut based and rich in nutrients and calories. Their bellies filled, the kids are ready to learn! Lorie told us that a donation of \$24.00 provides this nutritious snack for one child for an entire school year - quite a bargain! Amber Gardner and Julie Griffith became friends with Lorie last year, which gives Margaret Circle a personal connection with this amazing charity!

There are many worthwhile organizations - local, national, and international - which receive support from Margaret Circle. The evening's offering will benefit Strong Tower Haiti with \$100.00 and Healing House and New Beginnings, a Jefferson City agency, will also receive \$100.00. It is our joy to provide financial support for God's children who are in need! Margaret Circle's next meeting will take place at the home of Debbie Boyce on Tuesday, April 7th, at 6:30 PM. The Circle welcomes all women of this congregation, and their friends. Don't be a stranger - come!

WELCA: Audrey Bunch

WELCA will be collecting for the Samaritan Center March 1st to April 1st for our Lent Ingathering. Non perishable items, dish soap, laundry soap, any hygiene (toothpaste, tooth brushes, shower gel), canned goods, paper products may be put in the donation box in the Narthex. Thanks so much for helping others.

NOTE: With the suspension of 'in person' church services, this will continue. If you would like to come by and drop items off during the week, let Pastor know if you do not have a key.

The Samaritan Center box in the Fellowship hall will still be available for egg cartons, plastic grocery bags to be recycled, misc. items, note pads, calendars. Thanks for continuous donations, the egg cartons are always needed, plastic or large brown paper grocery bags. If you have any questions contact Audrey Bunch.

WELCA EVENT: Marie Scheperle

The 33rd Annual Synodical Convention of the Central States Women of the ELCA will be held at the Best Western Premier Hotel in Kansas City, MO. on August 7-9, 2020. The theme this year is "My Story,

Your Story, Our Story” based on Psalm 51:15, “Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.” Plans are for an informative and inspiring time with Bible Studies, focus groups, business meeting and participant activities including crocheting ‘prayer squares.’ Bishop Susan Candea will share her time and talents during the convention. Information and registration forms have been received with registration due June 1. Please see Marie if you are interested in attending. St. Paul’s WELCA is still in desperate need of a President and Vice President. Perhaps Co-Chairwomen would be possible. Let any Board Member know if you are interested. **Be sure to check to make sure these dates are still valid.**

Quilt News: Jeannette Fisher

A group of ladies spent 3 days in February making quilts for those in need and completed a total of 36. Thanks to all who contributed to this project. Four quilts were given to the Gipson family in Russellville who recently suffered a house fire. Thanks to Amber Gardner for taking these to the family. Fourteen quilts were boxed and shipped to an ELCA church in Nashville to be given to people whose homes were destroyed by the recent tornado. Thanks to Bill and Erika Gerth for securing the information for shipment and thanks to Paula Linsenhardt for taking the boxes to the Fed Ex office in Jefferson City.

S.T.A.R.S. [Seniors, tired and retired saints]

STARS will meet on **April 8, the second** Wednesday of April. Please note change of date. Our speaker will be Shirley Andrews who will share information about her mother who came to the mid-west on the Orphan Train from New York City. This will be a very interesting program, so please make plans to attend. Let Rose Strobel (782-4553) know that you will attend and what you plan to bring. Interested in this topic? You don’t have to be a senior to attend; all are welcome! **Canceled due to coronavirus.**

Friday Family Fun Movie Night:

Friday Family Fun Movie Nights are scheduled for the first Friday of every month. Set up starts at 6:30 with snacks and fellowship then the movie starts at 7. The movie for March was “God’s NOT Dead 2”, which showed a teacher’s determination to stand for the gospel of God under the threat of losing everything she had including her job. Our movie for Friday, April 3rd will be “God’s Not Dead 3” which is the last of the series and shows the determination of a destroyed church to rebuild. Come enjoy some time and fellowship with us. There is always snacks and if you wish to bring some you may or just come as you are and enjoy what is available. **Canceled due to coronavirus.**

Delores Vlach:

The Evangelism Committee would like to extend a thank you to all of the members of our church and community who came to the Pancake-sausage-scrambled egg Breakfast on March 15. We hope that you enjoyed the food and time spent with friends and family. According to our records our attendance was 182. This was an increase of 30 people more than last year, even with the threat of the Coronavirus upon us! Our net profit after all expenses amounted to \$1641.04. Our total food expenses were \$370.00 before a Thrivent Financial “community impact” card for \$250 and donations brought this amount to \$0. A huge THANK YOU to all of our workers who helped to make this event possible - to those who came early to cook the food, to the preparers of the new menu items who made this change possible with our existing facilities, to the servers who attended to our guests needs immediately, to the decorators for our St. Patrick’s Day theme, to those who loaned their appliances, to those who volunteered their services because they saw a need even though their name was not on the work list, to the cleaner-uppers who stayed long after their job was completed. All of you were wonderful! We had almost 40 volunteers of all ages. Thanks to your dedicated efforts to make this a successful breakfast. The Evangelism Committee: Laurie Koestner, Trish Russell, Marie Scheperle, Karla Strobel, and Delores Vlach (chairperson).

Happy Birthday to Gert Strobel:

Although on Saturday, we gathered to celebrate her 96th birthday, since Gert was born on Leap Year and this year she was able to have her birthday on the 29th of February, she technically celebrated her 24th actual birth date. The day started with a gathering at Red Lobster with family and St. Paul's friends. Gert loves Lobster and she ordered enough for lunch and to take home for the rest of the week. During the lunch the crew from Red Lobster came to the table and sang Happy Birthday to Gert and gave her a sweet ice-cream treat. Apparently Gert likes ice-cream more than Lobster because she immediately dove into that treat.

The next day after worship at St. Paul's everyone gathered downstairs in the Friendship Hall to continue the birthday celebration. There was cake, more ice cream and as it was the first Sunday of the month we also had plenty of breakfast treats provided by Jerry & Laurie Koestner and Harry & Jana Thompson. Here are a few photos for your viewing pleasure.



*HAPPY 24th/ 96th BIRTHDAY
GERTRUDE
STROBEL*





During worship service on March 1 we were blessed to hear Kathy Meller and Dan Tschirgi sing a duet of "O Lord, Have Mercy" accompanied by Zola Finch on the keyboard.

The congregation was overwhelmed with this amazing performance and were so in awe they probably were unable to concentrate on the sermon that followed.

We hope to hear more of this type of musical treat for our ears and hearts. Thank you Kathy, Dan and Zola.



If you have missed the benches that sit in front of the church next to the steps, they are back. The ends of the benches had begun to rust. The wood slats were extremely weathered and beginning to break apart. Thankfully, Alan Scheperle and his wonderful family came to the rescue and completely refurbished them and now they are brand new again.

Now they match the beautiful job they did on the bench next to the playground where parents and grandparents can sit while they enjoy watching the children swinging and playing on the slide.

We are very thankful for Alan, Kylee, Jackson Scheperle and Wilfred Plochberger for the hard work and time they devoted to restoring these beautiful benches for the enjoyment of our St. Paul's Church family.

Thank you Xtreme Body and Paint for the wonderful donation of their time and talents on the powder coating of the metal ends of these benches. They should never rust again.



Thanks also to Donnie Hampson for donating Nuts, Bolts & Screws for this project.





Our spring church work day had to be canceled due to the Corona virus and a rainy day that later turned into a storm. But that didn't stop some people on the Hill from getting out and doing some work at a safe distance from each other.

Marie Scheperle, Jackson and Pastor David worked in the yard between the church and the parsonage to get all of the sweetgum balls raked up, loaded in the wheelbarrow and dumped near the woods next to the cemetery. It was quite a job but luckily we had the energetic Jackson running around to help out and he did a fantastic job.



While that work was going on, Rosemary Heidbreder and Audrey Bunch were working just as hard to remove many of the faded and worn out artificial flowers in the cemetery and replace them with new or gently used artificial flowers that are beautiful. These ladies do a fantastic job of keeping the cemetery a beautiful place to rest. Thank you so much.



Pastor also ripped out all of the torn up black plastic from the flowerbeds at the parsonage and cleaned out the weeds, grass and what was left of the disappearing mulch. Now Pastor David and Donna are ready to plant flowers and bring on the color.