

EPIS⁺LE



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

Volume 64 No. 9

September - 2020

Pastor's Message

"The man who was blind from birth answered, speaking of Jesus, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." <John 9:25>

I virtually attended The Global Leadership Summit 2020. I'm especially thankful to Zola Finch for paying my registration and joining me online for this meaningful two-day event on August 6th & 7th.

The event included a segment featuring Bishop T.D. Jakes of The Potter's House, a non-denominational American megachurch. Bishop T.D. Jakes told about reading a comment on social media posted by a fellow African-American man saying that Pastor Jakes was out of touch and didn't know what was going on in the projects where he lived. He said Pastor Jakes was a rich man that lived an affluent life and could not relate to what was happening in the poorest of the poor inter city neighborhoods.

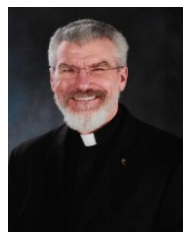
Pastor Jakes was outraged at the comments and wanted to defend himself as someone who grew up in a "raggedy house in the hills of West Virginia on the corner of a cliff hanging off a rock with a dog named Pup, no grass in my front yard and believed only rich people had doorbells. I wanted to tell him I knew what it was to struggle." He stopped to think about what was being said and realized that sometimes the talk will stop us from seeing the truth. Pastor Jakes realized that what the man was saying was right. He knew what it was to be poor and eat government cheese and cut coupons out of the paper. But, he did not know what it was like to step over needles and have gunfire outside his apartment and see people killed in the street and have to step over bodies to get where he was going. Pastor Jakes realized even though they shared the same skin and ancestry and heritage, they did not share the same experience.

He said, <quote> "How we see the world is a reflection of our world-view and our past experiences. Those of us in positions of leadership have the luxury of willful blindness, we are seldom required to think outside of our own orbit." <End quote> This message I heard from Bishop T.D. Jakes is one that should open all of our eyes that are obscured by our own circumstances and blinds us to the reality of others. During this pandemic, everyone is struggling in some way, even the little children who can't understand why the grownups are arguing. Perhaps the children are even afraid of going back to school because of what they are hearing.

Our church members are struggling to worship in an unfamiliar way without singing and now receiving communion in two part kits or at home. Some of these members are even afraid of coming back to church because of the news they hear of many lost lives to the virus. Even I struggle to hold it all together as I only hear the voices of fearful or hurting members on the phone, text and email.

So as we come together as members of this congregation, and as we live life outside of the church, pray that we do not fall into willful blindness that excludes others who are outside of our own orbit. Pray we do not only focus on this building, but also remember each other who are the church and open our eyes to see how each is affected in different ways.

Blessings to you in Christ Jesus,
Pastor David



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to you!

- 2 Rory Tierney
- 3 Jamie Bunch
- 3 Connie Miller
- 3 Karla Strobel
- 4 Marie Scheperle
- 6 Karahlyne Olsen
- 7 Garrett Collins
- 7 Scotty Soell
- 11 Jackson Scheperle
- 12 Desmond Pascoe
- 13 Cynthia Loesch
- 13 Anna Stubinger
- 14 Laura FrasherTuttle
- 14 Gina Prosch
- 16 Scott Brandt
- 16 Cory Strobel
- 16 Jacklyn Wood
- 17 Wesley Hanks
- 17 Jacob Meller
- 20 Lydia Trampe
- 24 Joan Stubinger
- 29 Clayton Meyer
- 30 Ashley Heidbreder
- 30 Irlee Linhardt
- 30 Paige Olsen



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Ron & Shirley Loesch 1973
- 5 Cameron & Karey Freinder 1998
- 6 Willard & Amber Gardner 2003
- 8 Ryan & AJ Ferrell 2018
- 10 Gary & Carol Elliott 1967
- 13 Irlee & Virginia Linhardt 1955 **65 YEARS**
- 14 Mark & Misty Schroeder 2002
- 18 David & Patricia Russell 1976
- 19 Herbert & Rose Strobel 1987
- 28 Cyrus & Kelsey Meller 2019
- 29 David & Zola Finch 1996

Continued prayers for healing and comfort.

Larry Koestner, Marie Scheperle, Julie Carel, baby Jane Grimm, Vanessa Pyatt, Donna Viles, Chris Russell, Gert Strobel, Glenda Hake, Kinsey McDonald, Bill Sankeill, and Pat Collins.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Month/Day	Attendance Phys./Virtual	Offering
AUGUST 2	36 / 117	\$2,353.00
AUGUST 9	41 / 102	\$2,715.01
AUGUST 16	39 / 176	\$2,155.00
AUGUST 23	45 / 224	\$1,194.37
AUGUST 30	35 / 192 +	\$1,878.00
Total	196 / 811 +	\$10,295.38

In Addition: \$500.00 from Jim & Debbie Linsenbardt who are thankful for the online streaming of the worship services. Thank you for your generous donation.

Blessed birth of Kaysen Lee Garner

Kaysen was born to Dalton Tyler Lee Garner and Hanna Brielle Evans on August 19, 2020 at 7:46 p.m. He weighed 6 lbs. 10 ozs. and was 19-1/4 inches long. Kaysen was born at St. Mary's Hospital. His grandmother, Angie Russell Bracher was in a Mutual Ministry meeting just prior, and chewing on her fingernails while watching her phone in anticipation of his birth. Fortunately, Kaysen held off until after the meeting so Angie could face time with Dalton when it all began. She was so excited. Great grandparents David and Trish Russell are overjoyed and looking forward to lots of snuggle time. Blessings to Kaysen and his family.



Ask the Pastor

Question: Did it rain before the great flood of Noah's time? Maybe...

Answer: *"Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground."* <Genesis 2:5-6> NIV

"Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made." <Genesis 7:4> NIV

This is an interesting question since there is no clear consensus among Biblical scholars to answer this query. Some Christians are adamant there was no rain prior to the great flood and justify their determination on a strict reading of the scripture and how they interpret their meaning.

But do the scriptures really tell us there was no rain? It's a tough call, so let's take a look at what is going on here.

In the second chapter of Genesis we find the creation story of Adam and Eve beginning with the fourth verse, *"This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens."*

Now the next two verses tell us that no shrub or plant had yet come up *"for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground."* But it does continue by saying, *"streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground."*

This is the first time we find the word rain in Genesis. The Hebrew word is מַטָּר *matar* {maw-tar'} with a pronunciation that is interestingly similar to water {wa-tar'}. We won't find this word again until five chapters later when God tells Noah he is going to send rain.

Therefore, looking at the sixth verse of chapter two it seems evident that rain is not needed since it says the whole surface of the ground was watered by the streams which came up from the earth. Case closed right? Oh wait, the previous verse said *"no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth."* So this verse seems to indicate that no shrub or plant can grow without the rain God will send to nurture them. Hmmm

In chapter seven God tells Noah, "Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights." Noah doesn't ask what rain is so it seems he knows but perhaps we could assume Noah just had faith and trust and entered the Ark believing that the great flood was coming.

Now we jump ahead one year and the flood waters recede and God tells Noah and his family to leave the Ark and bring the animals out of it with them. God blesses them and tells them to *"Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth."*

And then God makes a covenant (promise) with Noah and his sons saying he will never again destroy all life by waters of a flood. God says he had set a rainbow in the clouds and whenever he sees it he will remember his promise to never again flood the earth and destroy all life.

Now some say this was the first rainbow so must have come after the first rain. But God never says it is the first rainbow, only that the appearance of the rainbow after a rain will always be a reminder to him of the promise he just made.

Personally, I believe God sent rains to water the shrubs and plants, but I'll leave it to you to decide for yourself the answer to this question...

Blessings to you,
Pastor David

Cemetery News **Submitted by Roger Pennell**

On July 26, 2020 the St. Paul's Perpetual Cemetery Fund Inc. Board of Directors held a special meeting to discuss the status of the annual corporation meeting scheduled for September 20, 2020.

Article V of the By-Laws of St. Paul's Perpetual Cemetery Fund Inc. states "The membership shall hold the annual meeting at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lohman, Missouri, on the 3rd Sunday in September at 1:00 P.M. or a date as soon as possible thereafter at which matters of interest to the membership shall be presented."

Due to the high uncertainties of the current pandemic crisis with predicting "a date as soon as possible thereafter" and with no major "matters of interest" to present to the membership, the Board, in consideration of the health, safety, and welfare of our members, decided to cancel this year's annual meeting. Two annual requirements will still occur.

(1) A review committee, to be appointed by the Board, will conduct the annual September audit of the corporation's financial records. The results will be available upon request by any member and will be presented at the tentative September 19, 2021 annual corporation meeting.

(2) Every year requires the election of a Board member for a five (5) year term. It was decided to extend this year's out-going Board member term (with their agreement to serve) for one (1) additional year until the 2021 annual corporation meeting. Then at the 2021 meeting, two vacancies will need to be filled, a four (4) year vacancy (2020) and the annual five (5) year vacancy (2021).

A fall cleanup day will not be held this year. The Board will monitor the cemetery and complete any tasks that may need to be done. The Board also received and approved a Non-Vested Membership Application from former Lohman resident Glenn Linsenbardt. Should anyone have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Board of Directors.

Thank you Scott, Vanessa, Mackenzie, Madison and Philip for your hard work clearing the damage to the Cemetery from the windstorm.



Scott chain sawed the downed tree and split the bigger logs. Vanessa, Mackenzie and Madison stacked the brush and most of the wood while baby Philip supervised. Scott's dad and Pastor David helped a little.



Thanks also to Roger Pennell who hauled all of the brush and wood away from the site so the mowers can get in to mow and maintain the area. Roger said he would be working in the near future to level the four bases and remounting the headstones that were knocked over when the tree fell on them during the storm. If you would like to lend a hand, please contact Roger and let him know.

The large planter and area around the light pole have been dressed up in fall colors and the weeds cleared out. Trish Russell deserves a huge thank you for the work she does in those areas and always keeping it looking pretty. Normally the flower colors change and the areas are weeded and kept up with each season. Thank you Trish.



Pastor David and Donna have been working to keep the flowerbeds around the parsonage cleaned and planted also and we thank them for their efforts to make the Hill as pretty as possible.



Another unsung hero at St. Paul's is Mitchell Plochberger – it is rare for anyone to see him because he comes late in the afternoon after leaving work or on weekends. But his work is always evident when we notice patches on the road, weeds killed by his spraying, holes filled, building repairs made and hours spent gathering quotes and taking care of things we didn't even know was a problem. We give thanks for Mitchell's humble service that makes a huge impact at St. Paul's church and grounds.

Julie & Doug Carel – Thank You

Your prayers, thoughtful cards, calls and heartfelt wishes are appreciated more than you can know. The last year has been difficult and then compounded by the Coronavirus has made it even more challenging. Your caring response has made a huge difference during this time and we are so grateful for our St. Paul's Church family.

Epistle Editor – Thank You

Pastor David gives thanks for Marie Schepeler's wonderful skill of proof reading the Epistle before it is emailed and printed. Marie is able to pick up on little things and sometimes major mistakes that I simply overlook thinking it says what I meant for it to say.

Without Marie's attention to the fine details, this Epistle and sometimes other things would not be as well presented as they are each month. I appreciate Marie's help behind the scenes which make me look better than I am.

Congregational Council Meeting, August 10, 2020

Respectfully submitted by Becky Weber, Church Council Secretary

A Congregational Council meeting called to order by President Zola Finch at 6:40pm on Monday August 10, 2020 in the church basement with social distancing in compliance with Covid-19 guidelines. Present were council members Zola Finch, Laurie Koestner, Kathy Meller, Paula Linsenbardt, Dan Tschirgi, Delores Vlach, Mitch Plochberger, Scott Soell and Becky Weber. Also present was Pastor David Viles. Absent was Council Treasurer Kay Pascoe.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Pastor Viles, followed by a devotion from John 9:25, see Pastor's message on page one for this devotion.

President Finch called for approval of the previous council meeting minutes. A motion to approve was made by Laurie Koestner, seconded by Scott Soell, and passed via voice vote.

President Finch provided council members with the treasurer's report in Kay Pascoe's absence. After discussion, motion was made by Paula Linsenbardt to approve treasurer's report, seconded by Kathy Meller, and passed via voice vote.

Pastor David reported a total of 48 miles for the month of July for the amount of \$27.60. Pastor David reports he wishes to donate the mileage 269 miles driven to perform a wedding in Cook Station. Pastor was thanked by council for his generous donation. A motion was made to approve the mileage for July of \$27.60 by Mitch Plochberger, seconded by Scott Soell, and passed via voice vote.

Pastor David reported the following activities for July, 2020: Attended and said prayers for Russellville School board and Russellville City Council, Laptop pick-up at Best Buy and performed a wedding in Cook Station, Worship and Music via email exchange. He attended Church Council and Mutual Ministry Meetings, Lohman City Council and Ministerial Alliance, made one home visit and various phone conversations. Pastor also picked up mail at post office, purchased and set up laptop and tested on church network, and created, emailed and post mailed the July Epistle. Pastor performed four in person worship services, with online services at St. Paul's using Facebook Live.

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

Old Business: President Finch reports we will continue with our current Covid-19 procedures. President Finch then called upon the Safety Committee chairman, David Finch to give his report. David reported on the securing/locking all church doors, except the front door during worship service. He also reported on a camera security system specific to the needs of our church.

New Business: President Finch reported that our Communion Kits were successful this past Sunday. President Finch also presented an idea for consideration of a social media person as an enhancement to our church outreach.

President Finch

Called for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Scott Soell, seconded by Mitch Plochberger, and passed via voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Pastor closed the meeting in leading the council members with The Our Father prayer.

Evangelism: Delores Vlach reports her committee decided to cancel Church Family Day due to the numerous changes that would need to be put in place to remain Covid-19 safe. Delores also reports she will reach out to those church members who do not have access to email or access to getting an Epistle and add them to our mailing list to ensure they receive the monthly Epistle.

Technology: Dan Tschirgi reported on the camera for live broadcasting church services, the laptop purchase from Best Buy, failure of current camera for the downstairs television used for viewing worship services, and future purchase of a new microphone for the sanctuary.

Worship & Music: Kathy Meller reports the September hymns were chosen for worship services. Kathy expressed her appreciation to Dan and Pastor David for knowledge in matters of technology. She also reports we are still not singing in church in compliance with Covid-19 prevention guidelines, but adds that some people are humming or silently singing words to the hymns, which is perfectly fine. Pastor David reports Gertrude Strobel submitted her resignation as church organist after 73 years of playing. She expressed interest is possibly substituting in the event she is needed to play, and she was whole heartedly granted this request. Gertrude was recognized by President Finch and council members for all her years of dedicated service.

Parish Education: Laurie Koestner reports she contacted fifteen families to determine the number of children returning to Sunday School, and determine volunteers to teach. To date there are no Sunday School Teachers but Laurie is hopeful someone will volunteer and step up for this very important role in our church. Sunday School is planned to resume on September 20, 2020 with a possible change in format. She will incorporate Covid-19 prevention guidelines with the return of Sunday School.

Church Improvement: Mitch Plochberger reported on bids for possible church door replacement, bids for church and parsonage roof repair following a hail storm, acquisition and installation of new dehumidifier outside the downstairs kitchen, and replacing the light pole by the cemetery. After discussion, a motion to purchase and install a new light pole was made by Dan Tschirgi, seconded by Scott Soell, and passed via voice vote.

Stewardship: Paula Linsenbardt - No report

Mutual Ministry: Scott Soell reports Staff Evaluation reports are currently being compiled, with plans to complete the evaluations in September of 2020.

Mobile Food Pantry: Audrey Bunch

The August 11th Mobile was held at Trinity Lutheran Church parking lot. We served an outstanding amount of families 126 and 405 people in those families. The drive through went much better this month. Some of the items given out this month were: oranges, cauliflower, blue berries, cantaloupe, grape tomatoes, apples, red grapes, peppers, zucchini, onions, head lettuce, cucumbers, celery, carrots, Romaine lettuce, frozen meat hamburger, sausage, pork shoulder and beef stew meat. Thanks to all the volunteers who came out to help our communities. From the Lohman Lions Club were Gary and Alberta Zumwalt, from St. Paul's were Becky Weber, Dan Tschirgi, Rosemary Heidbreder and Audrey Bunch. Next Mobile Food Truck will be September 8th at 1:30 to 3:30 P.M.

Hymn Thoughts – by Dan Tshirgi

I sometimes consider the lyrics in Martin Luther's hymn 'A Mighty Fortress is Our God.' The particular words that stand out for me are: "...were they to take our house, goods, honor, child, or spouse..."

To know that these words were the reality of Christians during the early reformation years is a reminder of the blessing, of freedom of religion, founded by our forefathers in this nation. They also give great meaning to the words of this hymn and likewise a multitude of other hymns.

During this time of "no singing" during our worship services, we still have the organ or piano play through all verses of the hymns. It is a little more work to read the lyrics and not be able to hear our voices at the same time, but it is often worth the effort.

The hymns for each worship service are chosen to supplement the scripture and the sermon so when considered all together we can take away a complete message. Hopefully, we will be singing with joy soon.

WELCA – Marie Scheperle

The Mid-Missouri Fall Cluster Meeting which was scheduled for Saturday, September 26, 2020 will be postponed because of the current trend of Covid-19. The planning board has hopes that the meeting can be rescheduled for the spring of 2021.

St. Paul's WELCA Board has decided to send our contribution of \$100.00 as the regular Fall Cluster offering to the treasurer.

Fruendschaft Gruppe – Jeannette Fischer

Our gruppe normally resumes meetings in September. That will not be the case this year as nothing is normal at this time. So we will not meet again until the coronavirus is under control and we can safely enjoy our time together.

Cancellations due to the Coronavirus:

The coronavirus has caused a lot of problems and created many changes for our church and community.

Easter worship service was cancelled for in house gathering at St. Paul's and for the community event. The Lion's Club BBQ and Fireworks celebration on St. Paul's Hill was cancelled. Our annual Family Day event has been cancelled as well as one of our biggest events for WELCA, the Chili Supper.

This has been a sad time for our community as we have struggled at times to maintain a joyful attitude and remembering the many blessings we may overlook when thinking about the missed opportunities.

One opportunity we might consider is continuing the good work the good Lord has instructed us to do as we perform his will in the help of our less fortunate brothers and sisters. The Chili Supper is the main annual fundraiser for WELCA and this wonderful group of Women of the ELCA are passionate in supporting many projects for our congregation, local organizations that provide help for area families, our area school, and WELCA Mission work. With the loss of the Chili Supper this year the impact of this group could be diminished, but it doesn't have to be.

WELCA is asking for your financial contribution to support the continuing mission work here at St. Paul's. Since we won't be holding the Chili Supper and there isn't a need to contribute food, work the event, or come to enjoy the food and socialization, their hope is that you would continue to support WELCA by contributing funds instead of the food and work this year. For the many who normally come to eat and enjoy fellowship, this year you can be fed by the Spirit of our Lord and find fellowship and joy in helping to do God's work with your hearts.

Please send your donation to the church's address at P.O. Box 15, Lohman, MO 65053. You may also give your check to any of the WELCA Board Members or to Kathy Meller or Marlene Carlson to be passed along to Audrey Bunch, the WELCA treasurer. You could also place your gift in the offering plate in church. Please consider the value of the mission work WELCA does and return your donation today. Make sure to make your checks payable to St. Paul's WELCA.

Your continued support of this fundraiser is appreciated, and if you have any questions, please contact Marlene or Kathy.

St. Paul's Lutheran Travel – Marie Scheperle

Sadly, the annual Christmas trip to Branson this November has been cancelled. All 2019 tour bus passengers have been notified of the cancellation.

Looking ahead, new reservations have been confirmed to view the new production of 'Jesus' at the Sight & Sound Theater at Branson in November of 2021.

We look forward to the trip scheduled for November 17 & 18, 2021.

Free Money for St. Paul's Church

How many of you use AMAZON.COM to purchase items on the Internet? Probably a lot, I do and Donna does. It is one of the ways during this time of the Coronavirus pandemic to keep a social distance.

Did you know Amazon.com has a non-profit program in place that gives money to your favorite charity if you sign up for it and remember to use it.



For example: as of August 28, 2020 Donna and Pastor David have had around \$40.00 donated from Amazon.com to St. Paul's church with no extra cost to them. It isn't a lot, but if everyone getting this newsletter did this, it could add up and make a difference.

It's simple, just download the app to your phone or tablet or bookmark it on your computer, but you must use the SMILE page and not the regular Amazon page to place orders.

Go to: smile.amazon.com and Sign in with your Amazon.com credentials. Search charitable organization for St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Lohman. Make sure it is the correct church in Lohman, and click SELECT. **It's That Easy.**

Then be sure you are on the Amazon Smile page and not the regular page. Thank you.