

July, 2022

**MARK: MY WORDS**

In my experience in every congregation that I have served, the July newsletter is one of the most difficult to write. Primarily, it is because there is not much “news” to include in the monthly “letter.” The situation is usually the same: school has been out for a month or so; committees normally do not meet during the month to give everyone a break from the routine of the rest of the year.

 Many people are on formal vacations or simply take a few weekends off from attending worship to enjoy time with family and wonderful weather. After the busyness of Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and then the festivals of Ascension, Pentecost, and the Holy Trinity, pastors are ready for a breather as well. Even the church calendar seems less crowded. A check of minor church festivals or commemorations shows few occurrences during the month. There just isn’t much going on.

 For those of us who have been taught that productivity is essential to our identity and worth, both individually and as a congregation, that can be a difficult situation in which to find ourselves. In our culture, where businesses, stores, and news cycles now are open and available twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week, it is easy for our work to bleed over into all hours of the day and night and leave little room for rest, renewal, and refreshment.

 It is easy to fall into that trap. In preparing to write this month’s articles I found myself stressing over coming up with a topic for this lead article. When none of the usual areas bore fruit (e.g., an upcoming festival of the church year; mission and ministry opportunities for our congregation; special events over the summer) I realized it was okay to admit and to simply acknowledge that things are quiet at both the church and school.

 So, perhaps the best thing we all can do is take a deep breath, step back from worries and anxieties about our membership and finances and direction, and use these days to find that rest and renewal and refreshment. Then, energized later in the summer when school kicks in again and we begin to think about who we are and what we want to accomplish in the year ahead, we will be ready for that difficult and important work.

 May these days of summer bring those blessings to you in abundance. With bodies, minds, and spirits restored, we will be better able to listen to and be guided by the Spirit in the months ahead as we move forward with our care for this neighborhood and community God has given us to serve.



**SOUP KITCHEN UPDATE**

Within the last month or so, the Community Soup Kitchen, serving out of First United Methodist, ran out of money. The bookkeeping tasks had been handled by the Treasurer at First Presbyterian Church. For reasons that were not explained to me, the leadership at First Presbyterian voted to officially cut ties with the soup kitchen.

 In response, First United Methodist agreed to take over the finances for the ministry. As always, they are working on securing funds through various grants. In the meantime, they were in desperate need of money. I contacted our Council President, Judy Mutchler and explained the situation. This occurred shortly after our regular May meeting.

 We still had a little over $500 in our Soup Kitchen fund. It seems clear to me and the Council that, at least for the foreseeable future, we are not going to resume serving meals at St. Paul. In order to help with the dire financial situation, the Council did not want to wait until our June meeting to act upon my request to send most of the Soup Kitchen fund to the Methodist Church. They may have had to stop serving for lack of funds in that intervening month.

 Because of the urgency of the situation, the Council agreed to take a vote by email; and approval was given to send the $500 to the Methodist Church. We kept a small amount in the fund for bookkeeping purposes. In addition, Bob Kiser, Larry Litchford, Richard Fleming, Mark Kloess, Brad Kiser, and John Kiser brought over all our canned and dry goods and two freezers’ full of meat that we were storing.

I do not know what the future will hold for the Soup Kitchen. It has struggled financially for some time now, and the good people of First United Methodist have so faithfully and doggedly continued to serve all through the pandemic and other challenges. If there is some way that we can help down the road, the Council will take up those possibilities. We will keep you informed about this vital ministry to our community.



As reported last month, Janet Bakken and I attended the first in-person assembly of the I-K Synod since the beginning of the pandemic. It was held June 9-11 in Muncie. The main agenda item was to elect a bishop to a 6-year term. Not surprisingly, current Bishop Bill Gafkjen was re-elected to a third term overwhelmingly on the first ecclesiastical ballot. Out of 191 required votes from the 257 voting delegates needed for election, he received 204.

 The other two important decisions were to approve a revised set of compensation standards for rostered pastors of Word and Sacrament and rostered deacons and deaconesses of Word and Service; and a memorial called, “A Reviewed Memorial to Update the Dignity of the Office of the Ministry,” to be presented to the Church Wide Assembly that would look at the status of ministers “On Leave from Call.”

 Next year’s assembly will be via Zoom, and there will be an evaluation about how often in the future to return to in-person assemblies.

**INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

I want to thank the Church Council for again allowing me to be the female voting member representing St. Paul, Michigan City at the Synod Assembly. It is no secret that I find great joy in assembling with fellow Lutheran Christians. Three hundred sixteen people registered at the Assembly in Muncie. One hundred eleven were rostered leaders, one hundred sixty-five were lay leaders, and 40 were visitors. I find it so spiritually moving when that many of us join in singing, especially singing a hymn.

Pastor Reshan has already addressed the business that was conducted in his article (above), so I am not going to repeat that. The Assembly theme was The Grace in Which We Live. Keynote speakers and breakout sessions centered on that theme. The following is my takeaway from the Assembly.

* Fact: no Christian religion is growing any place in the world.
* Fact: membership in churches is aging and dwindling.
* Question: is the church dying? Answer: a resounding “only if we let it.”

Many churches in the Indiana/Kentucky Synod are stepping out in faith with grace and forming new partnerships with other neighboring churches, both Lutheran and other Christians and non-Christian. Most of these are small partnerships focused on helping others. They are small actions, but they are actions.

We have to stay focused on what it means to be Christian. Jesus gave us new commandments. He told us to “love God above all else” and “love our neighbors as we love ourselves.” We have to stop worrying about the numbers in the pew and rejoice in the numbers we (St. Paul) reach through our radio, TV and YouTube/Facebook broadcasts. It may be the only time someone hears The Message.

In the past, St. Paul has partnered with other uptown churches to feed and house those in need. By Grace, we can explore those and other partnerships. St. Paul may never be young again; but we, with God’s Grace, can use our aging wisdom to create relationships and opportunities to be alive if we stay centered in Christ.

Janet (Jan) Squires Bakken

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 The Fourth falls on a Monday this year, meaning that the church office will be closed that day. Normally Libby is not in the office on Tuesday, but she will be in on the 5th from 8:00-5:00 to prepare worship bulletins for the coming weekend and attend to other normal duties.

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**JULY BLOOD DRIVE**

Our next Red Cross blood drive has been scheduled for **Tuesday, July 26,** from 1:30 - 6:30 p.m.in the St. Paul Room. There is a critical shortage of blood right now, and one pint of blood can help up to three people. Please consider donating if you are able to do so. To schedule an appointment, please call 1-800-REDCROSS to schedule an appointment.



It has occasionally happened that exit doors have been left unlocked. We urge everyone exiting the church doors during non-service hours to make sure and lock the doors behind them. Please try opening the door upon exiting to double check that it is indeed locked.



**TIME AWAY**

 As of this writing, I do not have any plans for major blocks of vacation time this summer. There will be some days in mid-July and then later in August when our sons will be moving into their dorms at college, and I will be gone then. I will notify the office and Council when those times arise.

 A number of people have asked about their post-high school plans; and if you will allow a bit (well, a *lot*) of fatherly pride, I am happy to share what they will be doing. They graduated from New Prairie High School on Sunday, June 5. Both finished *summa cum laude* and were members of the National Honor Society. Jacob was ranked 5th in their class of 251 students and Dan 17th.

 Jacob will be attending Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, rated the #1 engineering school in the country for the last 22 years (sorry, Purdue grads ☺). Dan will be at Case-Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH, always in *U.S. News and World Reports* list of Top 20 research universities to study Clinical Psychology.

 We are extraordinarily delighted at their accomplishments and the wonderful young men into which they have grown. It seems hard to believe that they were in kindergarten when we first arrived back in 2009. The years have gone by quickly, and we are humbled and excited by the opportunities for them that lie ahead.



Animal lover Melinda Nagle will care for your pets in your home when you can't be there.  Call her at 219-872-1217.  References available.



**A REQUEST**

 I may have asked this favor before, but recent experience leads me to ask again. When I call members to arrange a home visit, often I get their answering machine. I always leave a message asking for a return call so that we can set up an appointment. In many cases, the message goes unanswered, necessitating a second or even third attempt to reach the person or family.

 I don’t know if it is because when they see my cell phone number they think it is a telemarketer or a spam call and ignore the message, or because they don’t regularly check their machine. Whatever the reason it can be frustrating to have to make several calls until it happens that the person is available to answer.

 Especially now, with the price of gas so high, I try to arrange multiple visits in the same geographical area. If I have to wait a long time to hear from one of the prospective visits, that puts the other appointments on hold as well; and the whole schedule is then left hanging.

 So, my request is this: please remember that my cell phone number has an Illinois area code from when I lived in the Chicagoland area for 20 years: **630-450-1894.** If you see that come up on your Caller ID, please answer. Please also check your machine for messages; and if you see that number, trust that it is me and return my call.

 I always enjoy my time with you all, and hopefully we can smooth out the process for setting up those visits. Thank you.

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Although student numbers are indefinite during the summer, between families who have said they will be returning in the fall and contact from families who are moving to the area, we currently have 73-75 students enrolled/enrolling for the coming school year. Our Principal, Tracey McCay, and our Office Coordinator, Lisa Heddens, are actively recruiting new students over social media and targeted mailings.

 Most of our staff will be returning, and some are moving to new classroom assignments. We will be looking for a new custodian and a new middle school math/science teacher. We hope to begin interviewing for both positions in July. If you know of anyone who might like to apply for either position, please invite them to send their resumé to the school office.

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Council Highlights

Coffee hour is now being held after the 9:00 a.m. Sunday service.  There will be a sign-up sheet for those who may want to participate in making and serving the coffee.  Thanks to Sarah McNabb and Sue Bagby, who helped to get the coffee hour reinstated.  Please feel free to join in the fellowship.

Sue Koziel has volunteered to begin planning an ecumenical outdoor service.  If you have ideas for this type of service or would like to join Sue, please contact her.

Karen Fleming will soon be giving out raffle tickets to sell for gift certificates to Meijers in the amounts of $300, $200 and $100.  The drawing for these prizes will be held during the boat parade in August.

St. Paul made a donation of $515.00 to help out the Soup Kitchen.  Also, thanks to Bob Kiser, Larry Litchford, Rich Fleming, Mark Kloess, Brad Kiser, and John Kiser, who helped deliver all of the canned goods in our pantry along with some food that was in our freezers to the First United Methodist Church, where the soup kitchen is now being held.



Lord, we are a strange people.

We believe aloud the latest pop songs,

 but we won’t open our mouths to sing hymns of praise.

We eagerly sign a note for 36 big car payments,

 but we fear to commit ourselves to a pledge to the church.

We can sit comfortably for two hours in a theater seat,

 but an hour in a pew is confining.

We become ecstatic about the Dallas Cowboys *(or the Chicago Bears),*

 but we muster scant enthusiasm for the work of Christ.

We shed tears over the make-believe plight of soap opera characters,

 but we are untouched by the anguish of real people.

Quick to condemn and slow to command, strong in willfulness and weak in thy will,

 generous with ourselves and stingy with you, we are a strange people.

We are not who we ought to be. We are not who we want to be.

 Help us, O God, to be changed today, through the power of Christ. Amen.

*Michael Patison, Fort Worth, Texas*

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**ARCHIVE ROOM NEWS**

The Archive Room has been cleaned, sorted, and somewhat changed around. Come and visit! Please sign the Guest Book on the table so we know how many folks have visited. Feel free to bring a friend or two.

The Archive Room is located under the entrance stairs, and the door is always unlocked. (Since the church is generally locked, you may want to come and visit the Archive Room and sit awhile before church service. Before, after, or during committee meetings should work as well.) A table, chairs, pencils, and paper have been added to the room for your comfort, so you can come, sit down, and browse through all the items. Take your time!

Previous work done by past Archive Committee members has been respected, and many "new" items have been added. There are updated displays in the Archive Room itself, and many boxes of books have been organized for display in the basement as well. Many artifacts never seen before are now out for your enjoyment. Although not "out," feel free to look through all the drawers labeled in green. There are photos in drawers and in a box on a table, identified by year. On a small table are many photos still looking for your help in identifying.  Did you know a picture of St. Paul was found that predates the one from 1881? It is framed and on display.

 There is now a section of German and English children's books, choral books, and many bulletins that have been bound. Some of the most fragile items are 146 years old!

In next month's newsletter, look for interesting tidbits about St. Paul Church and School.

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**IN MEMORY OF ROGER MILZAREK**

**Altar Guild** from Al & Sue Green

**General Fund** from the Jobgens: Mark & Arlene, Eric & Karen, Brian & Kristi, and Sue & Ron; Nancy & Ron Sanders; Betty Yourist; Virginia Martin; the Morning Coffee Group;

Mike & Marjory Bockover; Roger milzaren’s family: Norma, Sheri, Terry & Kristi, and grandchildren Austin & Maddison

**IN MEMORY OF JANE McEATHERON SELLENBERG (Donna Mitchell’s mother)**

**Capital Improvement Fund** from Maxine Powell

**IN MEMORY OF SUZANNE CAINS**

**General Fund** from David & Amy Haring & family



 **July Birthdays July Anniversaries**

 2 Edward Werner 1 Chip & Audrey Claussen

 3 Christian Scheuchner Wayne & Milenda Simerlein

 4 Amy Petri 3 David & Nancy Squires

 6 David Squires 9 Dan & Sarah McNabb

 Donna Sutor 17 Allen & JoAnn Sydow

 8 Al Green 18 Mike & Amy Maesch

 Diane Waltz 28 Charles & Jana Thomas, Sr.

 10 Elizabeth Thompson

 11 Warren Schacht

 12 Norma Milzarek

 13 Warren Glanz

 14 Craig Hunt

 15 Kyle Neulieb

 18 Al Lorentzen

 20 Beverly Johnson

 Nicholas Neulieb

 Kathleen Pliske

 21 Allen Sydow

 23 Irene Bohnstadt

 24 Zachary Petri

 25 Bernadette Krueger

 28 Grace Romine

 29 Charles Thomas II



**Long-Term Prayer List**

Robert Atwood Audrey Beyer Irene Bohnstadt

Donna Bostater Sherry Brotsky Laura Dovey

Laura Eilers-Straight Marta Furness Diane Gielow

Jim Gleason Ed Gustum Dolores Hackett

Heidi Happel Terry Hygema Jess Kalvaitis

Christine Kiser Ryan Krueger Tom & Larry Leuth

Pastor Al Lorentzen Bethany Manning Christian Martinez

Laura Moore Shane Nevels Duane Ormsby

George Ottersen Jan Paholski Kay Peglow

Cameron Rackard Wally & Betty Ratliff Annette Scroggin

Knox Shepherd Ryan Sirk Erik Tannehill

Jary Tannehill Kathy Thielman Jean Thomas

Lee Timm Venia Wendt



 Monday 8:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.

 Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

 Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.

 Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon

 Friday 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

**St. Paul Lutheran Church & School Staff**

 Pastor Mark Reshan

 Organist John Remmel

 Accompanists Jary Tannehill, Mark Tannehill, Jacob Tannehill

 Choir Director Lori Zylstra

 Office Secretary Libby Pollock

 Custodian Mark Kloess

 School Principal Tracey McCay

 School Office Coordinator Lisa Heddens

 School Custodian



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Thank$ for $haring

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