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May, 2024

**MARK: MY WORDS**

“The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God…” (Mark 1:1). “And they went and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid” (Mark 16:8). These verses that bookend Mark’s Gospel narrative demonstrate that, as far as he is concerned, the story of Jesus is not yet done.

Mark deliberately leaves his account open-ended as a call for Jesus’ followers down through the centuries to continue Jesus’ healing and life-giving work in all the “Galilees” of our time and world: among the sick, the outcast, the poor and hungry, the lost, the lonely, and the dying.

Through the countless faithful and through *us,* the Story indeed goes on. As we bear His blessing, new life, new hope, new promise, and new possibilities are realized. We are constantly being called by Jesus to arise from disappointment, discouragement, failure, and defeat to proclaim and embody His presence that has overcome every form of death.

We may not think of our annual spring congregational meeting as an important component of continuing Jesus’ story. Pouring over proposed budget figures doesn’t seem very conducive to the kind of active ministry to which Jesus summons us. But how and where we spend our money and manage the stewardship of our finances, time, and volunteers is an important part of our congregational discipleship. It points us to our priorities and reminds us that our goal is not simply to continue to survive and keep the doors open, but to spend ourselves in every way for the good and life of this neighborhood and community in the name of the Crucified and Risen Jesus.

In addition, we hope to have an updated report on the sale of the school building and what that means for our mission in and for this neighborhood. We will also hear a report on a joint strategic planning initiative with First Presbyterian and First United Methodist congregations (see more below).

As always, we need your presence, your wisdom, and your input in that discussion so that we might move forward in faithful and fruitful ways. Join us on **Sunday, May 19, at 10:00 a.m.** in the St. Paul Room so that moved, inspired, guided, and strengthened by the Spirit of the Risen Lord, we might discover new and exciting ways to bring the Gospel to our “Galilee” and write a new chapter in the ongoing Story of “the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”



**POTLUCK DINNER**

Following the congregational meeting on the May 19, we will hold a traditional potluck meal. The Council will not be providing the main course this time, so whatever entrees, salads, sides, and desserts we have will come from those who attend. No need to sign up for anything; simply bring a favorite dish to share and enjoy good food and better fellowship following the meeting.



**FESTIVAL WORSHIP**

May is filled with liturgical festival days. In fact, three of the six major feast days of the year occur in this month: The Ascension of our Lord (which, as always, falls on a Thursday—this year on May 9, but which we will celebrate on the following Saturday/Sunday, May 11-12); the Vigil and Day of Pentecost (May 18 and 19); and The Holy Trinity (May 25-26).

These festivals bring the Fifty Days of Easter to their completion and help transition us into the longest season of the church year, Pentecost. They are some of the most joyous celebrations of the year but also among the most challenging, and we look forward to observing them with special music and uplifting worship.



**STRATEGIC PLAN**

You may recall that several years ago we entered into an extensive strategic planning process with the leaders of First Presbyterian and First United Methodist congregations. We met for a number of Saturdays here in the St. Paul Room and talked with local community leaders about what needs they perceived might be addressed by us in this neighborhood.

We drew up some specific goals and plans to reach those goals—and nothing happened. A large contributing factor to that failure was that, in all three of our situations, those who attended and planned were already heavily committed to service in their community and were unable to add even more responsibilities to their work. In our situation, we were not successful in drawing others besides our Council members into the plan; and everything fizzled because of a lack of volunteers.

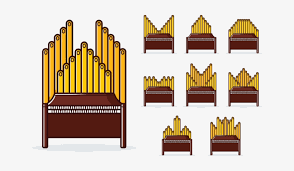
With the ending of our soup kitchen ministry and our housing for the men and women’s homeless shelters, all that we had left as far as service to the community was the school. When that closed, the uncomfortable reality was that we had virtually no outreach or mission to those around us.

I thought that perhaps it was time to revisit the idea of a combined ministry with the other two congregations. None of us are able any longer to stand on our own. We need the resources and people of all three of our congregations to create and sustain faithful and fruitful work for our neighborhood.

So, I approached Pastors Nichols and Parkinson-Kilbourne and asked if we might try again. It so happened that one of Pastor Ericka’s parishioners had just completed a workshop on assessing and implementing local ministries. They were both excited about the possibility of using the resources of the workshop to more effectively diagnose the needs around us and come up with a plan to address them.

Over the past months, a framework for this project has begun to take shape. Our Council voted at the March meeting to commit to what will be about a year-long study of our community and then develop some specific, concrete ways to offer help and hope to those in need. I will make a brief report at the congregational meeting about the process and begin to lay the groundwork for our part in the discernment and planning stages.

My hope is that this time we will be able to follow through on the goals we establish so that we may have a clearer sense and purpose of what God is calling us to do for our community.



**MUSICIAN UPDATE**

There has been some progress in our search for a permanent organist/choir director. Mizue Fukushima, who has played for several funeral services and two Saturday liturgies, has expressed great interest in the position. She was interviewed by the Search Committee on Monday, April 15. Their recommendation will go to the Church Council at their meeting on April 25.

There are two challenges that we would face in hiring her. The first would be to work with her to improve her English. Generally, communication with her is good; but there are times when there is somewhat of a language barrier. The other is that her visa runs out mid-May. In order to stay in the country, she would need to get a work permit. That is a long and complicated process, and it would fall to us to provide much of the information needed.

We will keep you posted on our progress with her. In the meantime, we continue to be greatly blessed to have Maggie Martin play, as well as Dr. George Karst when needed.



**UPCOMING TRIPS**

I will be gone for several trips during the middle and end of May and the beginning of June. My son Dan finishes spring finals sometime on May 6. We will be traveling to Cleveland on the 7th and 8th to pick him up and bring him home for the summer.

My son Jacob has been accepted into a summer internship program with the Army Corps of Engineers—in Yakima, Washington. They provide neither housing nor transportation, so we are currently attempting to find both for him. He is to start on Monday, June 3; so he and I will be flying out toward the end of May to get him settled. I will return probably by mid-week.

The Synod Assembly will be held in Louisville beginning on Friday, June 7, and running through Sunday the 9th. Jan Bakken, Donna Knoll, and I will represent St. Paul for the election of a new bishop. I have arranged for supply pastors for Saturday, June 1, and Saturday and Sunday, June 8 and 9. I am awaiting word from someone about Sunday, June 2. I will also try to arrange for someone to be available for any pastoral emergencies that might arise during those times.



**OFFICE CLOSED**

The church office will be closed on Monday, May 27, for the Memorial Day holiday. Regular hours will resume on Tuesday, the 28th, at 8:00 a.m.



* Due to the early publication of the *Good News* this month, the March Church Council minutes have not yet been approved at publication time. The March minutes will be available following the regular Council meeting on April 25.
* The Church Council set the date of the Spring Congregational Meeting for Sunday, May 19, following the Sunday worship service. The meeting will be held in the St. Paul Room. At this meeting, we will adopt the new budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1 and we will have a detailed update on the sale of the school. There will be a potluck dinner following the meeting.

Please note that copies of Council meetings are placed in the Narthex after approval at the monthly meetings.



The Gleason family wishes to thank all of you for your love and support during a difficult time.  You richly blessed us, and we deeply appreciate everything.  May God bless you.

Love,

Judy Gleason



**IN MEMORY OF CHAD MILLER**

**General Fund** from Virgil & Pat Miller

**IN MEMORY OF JIM GLEASON**

**General Fund** from Virginia Murray, Bob & Karen Kizer, Robert & Janine Peo, Judy Bartels, Janet Squires Bakken, David & Nancy Squires, Al & Sue Green, Al & JoAnn Sydow,

Donna Ottersen



Last month, we inadvertently missed including Dan McNabb in the list of musicians we thanked for helping with music during Holy Week. We apologize for this. Dan, we truly appreciate all you have done to keep the choir going through Easter. Thank you very much!



**May Birthdays May Anniversaries**

2 Isabella Robbins 1 Leigh & Beverly Coburn

4 Tim Mellen 2 Charles & Carol Thomas II

William Seedorf 5 Jim & Bernadette Krueger

Kimberly Payne 6 Christian & Cynthia Scheuchner

5 Rachel Sutor 19 Fred & Judy LaBorn

6 Charles Payne 29 Clay & Kimberly Payne

Brittany Strelesky

7 Marcy Petri

8 Mandy Robbins

Abby Haring

9 Lauretta Hapke

11 Audrey Henderson

15 Adaline Gebbink

16 Patricia Miller

17 Melinda Nagle

18 Judy Reshan

20 Donna Collins

21 Hallee Petri

24 Bonnie Ziesmer

25 Marvin Dirks

Pamela Kienitz

Chandler Fisher

26 Emma Robbins

27 Kerry Steinborn

Krysten Fratgillo

30 Charles Ponder, Sr.

Sally Timm

31 Audrey Claussen

Pamela Hackett

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**Long-Term Prayer List**

Laura Dovey Marla Furness Sue Granacki

Jayla Jacobi Jess Kalvaitis Christine Kiser

Bethany Manning Christian Martinez Virginia Murray

Shane Nevels Jan Paholski Kay Peglow

Joan Seifert Jary Tannehill Mark Tannehill

Kathy Thielman Jana Thomas Margie Torres

Venia Wendt Brian Wiseman



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 Staff**

Pastor Rev. Mark Reshan

Secretary Libby Pollock

Accompanists Jary Tannehill, Mark Tannehill, Jacob Tannehill

Custodian Mark Kloess

Thank$ for $haring

Thanks to all who participated in the last give back at Galveston. The church received $210 from that evening.

We invite you to join us for an lakeshore cruise on the Emita II on Tuesday, June 4, from 7:00-8L30 p.m.. The cost is $35 per person with $10 of that going to the church (no coupon required). Children up to age three are free. The link for making a reservation is:

<https://app.bookingcentral.com/book/product/harborcountryadventures?location=5cb18b14-6f6a-46ba-a655-0d19a685fc47&product=21a85c71-60f2-4e91-ae49-75182f98bd2c&referer=&clearcart>

For now, the day is blocked out on their main page, so the above link is the only way to book a reservation for this particular cruise. The cruise will be made public two to three weeks prior to the cruise date, so the earlier you make your reservation, the better.

This month, we will see you again at Galveston on Thursday, May 23! Here are two coupons: one for you and one for a friend.

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