

September, 2023

**MARK: MY WORDS**

Normally I use this column to inform about upcoming events, worship schedules, special commemorations, themes of the liturgical season, and so on. This month, I would like to use it to ask for your help.

As with all disciplines, preaching in the Church has evolved in its practice and approach. When I was growing up, the sermon was the focal point of the service. Since we only celebrated the Lord’s Supper once or twice a month, preaching was the constant in our worship. Sermons often lasted 25-30 minutes or more. In my experience, they were often heavy on the cataloging of sins and warning of the consequences of failing to repent. There was little, if any, interest on the part of the pastor whether the proclamation was connecting with people’s hearts, hurts, concerns, and lives.

One of the important developments in the advancement of preaching practices was the contention that it was “dialogical,” that is, the sermon was meant to be something that was shaped not only by the pastor’s viewpoint but also the life situation of the hearers of the Word. In its ideal practice, there would be actual meetings between the pastor and a group of congregation members to discuss the week’s texts and explore together how the Word addresses those hearts, hurts, concerns, and lives.

In my experience I know of few pastors and people who regularly engage in such discussion. One indirect way of engaging in such discernment is through Bible study, especially when, as we do in our Wednesday group, the texts for the coming week are studied in detail. Background information on the readings’ contexts, historical setting, place within the entire Scriptures, and interpretation help those in the class to better and more fully hear the texts as they are applied in the sermon.

There is a benefit to me as well. Normally by Wednesday mornings I have a good idea of what I am going to say on Saturdays and Sundays. Yet, that has only been shaped by my research, study, prayer, and interpretation. During our study and discussion together, I can see whether the direction I am planning is actually addressing those hearts, hurts, concerns, and lives I am trying to reach.

There have been many times when, after getting input from the members of the study, I have re-thought and re-worked what I was going to say to better and more faithfully proclaim the Word people need to hear. That experience has been invaluable to me over the years. Here is where I am asking for your help.

The group that has been meeting for the past dozen years or so is comprised of the same eight to ten people, depending on their schedules, health, weather conditions, and other factors. I am deeply grateful for their continued and faithful participation; but the experience for everyone would be so much better and fulfilling if more people were part of the group.

So, consider this a personal invitation to join us. We have been meeting on Wednesday mornings in the Luther House at 9:45, but that time was determined by the need to schedule Confirmation instruction for school students to fit their daily classes. Since that is no longer an issue, we will now meet on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. in the Luther House. If—as we hope—we increase the size of the class and the conference room there is too small, we will move into the St. Paul Room. Classes will begin on Wednesday, September 6.

No prior study of the Scriptures is needed or required. We are all beginners when it comes to exploring the infinite riches of the Word. Please come. You will be enriched, you will help me in my understanding, and you will benefit the congregation as a whole to make our worship more meaningful, faithful, and fruitful.

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**COOPERATIVE MINISTRY**

At the July Council meeting, I received permission to meet with Pastors Ericka Kilbourne of First Presbyterian and Nancy Nichols of First United Methodist to explore possible areas in which we might cooperate in ministry. This arose out of an Indiana-Kentucky Synod program in which ELCA congregations find ways to share ministries without necessarily merging their congregations.

One does not have to be an expert in church management to know that the days of congregations going it alone in their work are long gone. We need to work together because few congregations have the volunteers, funding, or other resources to carry out their work by themselves.

You may remember that we tried this approach several years ago. We even got to the point of having several meetings here at St. Paul with some of our Council members and representatives of the councils/leadership of the other two congregations. We drew up plans for how we were going to proceed with such joint ventures; but in the end, as is so often the case, nothing concrete developed from all that planning work.

I think it is worth another try. I will be in touch with the two Pastors about a meeting between the three of us to determine if there is still interest in finding common ministry together and report back to the Council in September and to you in next month’s newsletter.



**INSTALLATION OF MUSICIANS**

As you have noticed, the choir under the direction of Pastor Fischer is already helping lead us in worship. As is our tradition, we will formally install them along with members of the New Song Praise Band on Sunday, **September 17.** This is always a wonderful opportunity to recognize the rich ways our musicians lead our worship and praise and to thank them for their many hours of practice and sacrifice in order to do so.



**OFFICE CLOSURE**

The church office will be closed on Monday, September 4, in honor of Labor Day. It will re-open on Tuesday, September 5, at 9:00 a.m.



**MUSIC NOTES AT ST. PAUL**

It’s an honor to begin serving as Music Director at St. Paul. In the few weeks since beginning in July, I have been overwhelmed by your warm hospitality and even warmer welcome!

ADULT CHOIR has started and meets every Wednesday from 4-5 p.m. We will be singing three Sundays per month, adding another dimension to our worship experience. All singers are welcome to join us; we especially need TENORS. Come and join us.

VOCALISTS AND INSTRUMENTALISTS are wanted and welcome to enrich both the 4 p.m. Saturday and the 9 a.m. Sunday services.

Whether you’ve been part of the music program before or are considering it for the first time, singers and musicians are welcome to join us as we give praise to God through our music ministry.

**MEET OUR NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Pastor Tom Fischer retired from full-time ministry after 38 years in ordained ministry in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Long before his ordination, Tom was involved in church music. As a fifth grader, he began playing piano for Sunday School chapel. After switching to organ in seventh grade, he began playing for Sunday worship services in eighth grade.

Tom accepted his first Music Director position at Our Master Lutheran in Inkster, Michigan, at age 16. During his college years, he served as Music Director at St. John Lutheran, Detroit, Michigan. As a seminarian, he served as Music Director at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church; Trinity Lutheran, Algona, Iowa; and Des Peres Baptist, St. Louis, Missouri. Throughout his ordained ministry, Tom directed numerous youth and adult choirs, handbell choirs, ensembles, and soloists. In retirement, Tom served as interim organist and choir director at Trinity Lutheran, St. Joseph, Michigan, and has started and directed the *GoodLife Beyond The Walls* Christmas and Easter choirs, which visits area senior communities with special musical programs to hundreds of seniors and their families.

Pastor Tom is a student of the late Dr. Donald Williams of University of Michigan.

Pastor Tom and his wife, Cheryl, have been married 43 years. Living in Three Oaks, Michigan, they are very near to their daughter, Michelle, and her husband, Bob Hannon, and their only grandson, Emmett, who live in Grand Beach, Michigan. In his spare time, Tom loves to golf and engage in other musical and family activities.



**SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MISSION**

September's monthly mission will be ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response for the Maui wildfire. The Maui wildfire caused billions of dollars in damage and burned nearly 3,000 structures. It created an immediate housing shortage around Lahaina and raised concerns about long-term displacement. Donations received will go directly to Maui to support Maui victims.  Please place your donations in the offering plates marked for September's mission/US Wildfires. Checks can be made out to St. Paul. Thank you for your support!



**JULY, 2023, SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

* Pastor Reshan is planning to meet with Pastor Ericka and Pastor Nancy to see if there are ways our congregations can coordinate ministries.
* Judy Hunt reported that there will be a give-away on July 29, 2023 in the school gym.  Remaining items will be there for anyone interested.
* Janet Bakken reported that the Property Evaluation Team will discuss plans for the playground equipment.
* Donna Knoll reported that the membership committee will be sending out letters to those who have not attended church or contributed financially in five years.
* It was reported that the monthly mission for the month of August will be the Michiana Humane Society.  Popcorn, water, soda, and cookies will be given out during the boat race parade on Saturday, August 5.  Donations will be accepted during that time and given to the Humane Society.
* Judy Hunt and Karen Fleming were thanked for their hard work in cleaning out the school.

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



**September Birthdays September Anniversaries**

1 Benjamin Crozier 4 Michael & Becky Greenlaw

2 Judy Litchford 6 Paul & Lora Brooks

Jan Paholski 15 Pamela & Richard Henderson

5 Sarah Payne Al & Susan Green

7 Verne Lee 19 Donald & Elizabeth Thompson

8 Joan Seifert

9 Mary Knaup

10 Nan Larson

11 Trish Sprague

13 Kalen Sprague

14 Robert Pheanis

15 Richard Collins

James Krueger

16 Clay Payne

17 Hanna Tannehll

19 Kay Peglow

20 Daniel Ottersen

Laurie O’Hara

22 Sue Pfeiffer

23 Martin Tannehill

26 Frederick Weiss

27 Katherine Crozier

28 Donna Knoll



**IN MEMORY OF ED GUSTUM**

**General Fund** from Tim & Stacie Crozier; Jim & Bernadette Krueger; Donna Ottersen;

Chip & Audrey Claussen; Susan Bagby; David & Nancy Squires; Muriel Jacobi; Ron Ronglie;

Rosemary & Frank Wheeler; Dan & Sarah McNabb; Dick & Val Parrette; Ron Nelson;

Larry & Judy Litchford; Harlan & Brenda Gustum; Ivye Benson & Verne Lee; Vicki Meinen;

David & Carol Bardon

**For Music** from James & Sandra Galinowski

**IN MEMORY OF DONNA BOSTATER**

**General Fund** from Tim & Stacie Crozier; James & Bernadette Krueger; Susan Bagby

**Soup Kitchen** from Richard & Karen Fleming

**IN MEMORY OF MAXINE POWELL**

**Altar Guild** fromVirginia Murray; David & Nancy Squires; Donna Ottersen; Betty Yourist;

Pastor Rodney & Diane Juell; Frances & Jennifer Dickel; Dan & Sarah McNabb; Susan Coziel;

The Haughtington Family—Merhth Linda & Dean, Valerie & Bill, Lori & Bill, Steve & Katie;

Chip & Audrey Claussen; James Zemrowski; Jim & Bernadette Krueger; Melinda Nagle;

Janet Bakken; Warren & Karen Schacht; Ralph Kuespert; James & Sandra Galinowski;

Al & Sue Green; Virgil & Pat Miller; Mike & Marjory Bockover; Wayne & Suzann Dolson;

Diane Egilske; Tim & Stacie Crozier; Connie, Nicole, & Bianca Maibauer

**General Fund** from Bob & Karen Kiser; Susan Bagby

**Lutheran World Relief** from Susan Levenhagen

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**Long-Term Prayer List**

Audrey Beyer Laura Dovey Marla Furness

Dolores Hackett Jess Kalvaitis Christine Kiser

Pastor Al Lorentzen Bethany Manning Christian Martinez

Shane Nevels Jan Paholski Kay Peglow

Mark Tannehill Kathy Thielman Margie Torres

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 Rev. Mark Reshan

Secretary Libby Pollock

Music Director Rev. Tom Fischer

Accompanists Jary Tannehill, Mark Tannehill, Jacob Tannehill

Custodian Mark Kloess

Thank$ for $haring

A group of bags of food and items on a table

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Thanks to your generosity, we were able to donate these items to the Michiana Humane Society.

A group of cat food and snacks

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We were also able to donate these items to the Jane Bernard Animal Adoption Center, who are overrun with cats.

This month,we will see you at Galveton on Thursday, September 14! Here are two coupons: one for you and one for a friend.

A white and black card with text

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A Prayer for Labor Day

Dear God,

Be with those who go to work today

and whose jobs help our world go around.

We pray for helpers and harvesters,

truck drivers and teachers, plumbers and mail carriers.

Keep all workers safe today.

Amen.