**“The Messenger”**

**JULY 2025**

 **St. Paul’s UCC (513-422-4519); Rev. Rich Luh, Pastor (937-993-5464)**

**“WHAT IF?”**

As we head into the warmer month of July, I was thinking about the “what ifs” in life. For instance, what if this month brought us below normal temperatures? After all, in past years our spring weather often was warmer than some summer months. However, this past spring we have experienced cooler temperatures than normal. So, what if this July weather was cooler than in the past few years?

Have you ever wondered what your life would have been like had you and I had done or not done certain things in a certain way? Or pursued a different direction in our life than what we finally ended up doing? Our whole world could have been turned upside down if we had only done things differently!

What if people who stayed away from worshipping at St. Paul’s decided to make that extra effort to come to church on Sunday mornings? Or, how about volunteering to help out with some of the projects we are engaged in, such as hosting a Lenten Lunch, hosting the city tour (which happens every other year), Lay Reading, Ushering, Greeting, coming out to Lenten Lunches at our sister churches and Maundy Thursday Service with First Baptist and First Christian or attending worship at First Christian when we get together with them the first Sunday in August for a joint service and picnic?

What if people stopped living in the past about what our church used to do and instead looked forward to what it is capable of still doing?

These are just a few of the instances where I think about “what ifs” regarding our church. But the list could go on and on as far as talking about our city, state, nation, world. Yes, what if peace would reign in the leaderships’ hearts – and that attitude would trickle down to those people they were elected to lead?

What if people were to take more seriously their vows they took at their wedding or baptism or confirmation and demonstrated how much those promises mean by how they speak and act?

Indeed, there isn’t much we can do about the weather. But there is a whole lot we can do about the other things mentioned; and that is up to you and I whether we do anything about it or not. God gives us plenty of opportunities to take the “what ifs” in our lives and change them around to “what can be”. The only thing stopping us is us.

So, as we begin this month – let’s think about what we can do differently in our lives as compared to what we are already doing and I think we’ll find that making some simple changes in our attitudes can help us discover or rediscover all that we’ve been missing out of through our stubbornness, our apathy, our misguided priorities. Yes, “what if” we become determined to do just that? It could make all the difference to us and to those we know and love and to the church of Jesus Christ.

**Shalom,**

**Pastor Rich**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU:**

1 – LARRY ADAMS; 2 – KURT KISHLER; 6 – STEVE GREEN; 10 – TOM SHIBLEY; 15 – DAN FLORY; 19 – LAWRENCE DeBolt; 25 – CASSADY EDWARDS; 30 – DARLENE ADAMS

May you all have a wonderful celebration on your special day!

**FOURTH OF JULY ODE by James Russell Lowell**

Our fathers fought for liberty, they struggled long and well, history of their deeds can tell – but did they leave us free? Are we free to speak our thought, to be happy, and to be poor, free to enter Heaven’s door, to live and labor as we ought? Are we then made free at last from the fear of what men say, free to reverence To-day, free from the slavery of the Past?

 Our fathers fought for liberty, they struggled long and well, history of their deeds can tell – but, ourselves must set us free.

**E. PLURIBUS UNUM**

This Motto for the US Seal was adopted in 1782 by Congress after being selected by a committee consisting of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.

**LET’S REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED OF OUR PRAYERS**

CHARLENE HALE (MAJESTIC), ANNE TURNER, RUBY MCQUADE (SPRING HILLS), JACK KINIYALOCTS, BECKY HALL, ABBY ALEXANDER, KIP, SUSAN HANNAH, BRYAN CANTER, PAT BEATTY

**COME, JOIN US FOR WORSHIP**

6 – “Surprising Prophets” Altar Communion

13 – “Caring Neighbors”

20 – “Word and Work”

27 – “Shaped by Prayer”

**SPECIAL MUSIC NEEDED**

As we are in the summer months, we are in need of people to share their musical talents with us during our worship time. If you wish to volunteer to play an instrument, or sing – please let Barb or Pastor Rich know. We’d love to have you share your talents with us!

**The difference between intelligence and education is that intelligence will make you a good living. CHARLES F. KETTERING (1876-1958)**

**THE LUNCH BUNCH SUMMER BREAK**

We will take time off during July and August and resume our quest for delectable delights at a local restaurant on September 28th. Bon a Petite!

**REMEMBER OUR SPECIAL OFFERING FOR JULY**

This month’s special giving goes to **FAMILY SERVICES OF MIDDLETOWN**. Please try to be generous in contributing to this worthy group who help so many people in our area.

**SOMETHING TO PONDER**

1 John 1:3 – “….so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son.”

Several university professors were discussing how children develop. These were some of their remarks: “Most children fall short of what they could be because their environment does not enable them to reach their hereditary limits.” “I believe that the social and intellectual characteristics of a child, his/her personality and intelligence, depend very largely upon their experiences in the family, the neighborhood, the school, and the community.” “When we help children to steer their bad feelings out through acceptable action-pathways, they become more willing to give up the unacceptable action-pathways.”

These remarks are true. They check with our own experience. Since they are true, we can scarcely overemphasize the importance of the character of people we live with, the people with whom we work and play and go about. Human beings must have favorable factors for their distinctive kind of growth; the soil of wholesome fellowship, and unpoisoned “social atmosphere”, a bright “intellectual climate”.

Some of you may remember how you grew spiritually in summer camps whose “pervading tone” was the Christian spirit. A church, a Christian fellowship, is almost literally like a ship on the sea of life, and the prayers of the passengers are the rivets that hold it together.

Let us pray: O Master, let me walk with you. Keep me in the company of those who travel on lowly paths of service free. AMEN.

 **LITURGISTS USHERS GREETERS**

6 – HILLARY FRALEY LARRY/DARLENE ADAMS RICK LYONS

13-CHARLENE KINIYALOCTS CARL/JENNIFER BATLINER JOHN WILLIAMS

20-CARL BATLINER TOM/MARCIA SHIBLEY LARRY,DARLENE

 ADAMS

27-SABRINA BARRACLOUGH CORRINE LOWMAN/STEVE STEVE/JUDY

 SCHNABL GREEN

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

It was announced that Julie Ratliff has stepped down as a member of the Church Council, so here are the following members for the next year:

Moderator – Barb Flory

Secretary – Darlene Adams

Treasurer – Corrine Lowman

Property – Rick Lyons

Budget and Investments – Bryan Canter and Carl Batliner

Fellowship – Steve Schnabl

Service (Missions) – Jennifer Batliner

Worship – Barb Flory and Rick Glatfelter

We thank so much Julie for all her years of service to the church, and we know she and Mike will continue to help when ever needed. We thank all the members of the Church Council for their dedication and service to St. Paul’s.

We also wish to thank the rest of our members who attend regularly and who participate **IN SO MANY ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**. Without their assistance, without their commitment, without their willingness to do what needs to be done, nothing would happen! You all are greatly appreciated for your dedication and enthusiasm. **HATS OFF TO YOU ALL!**

We also discussed the Future’s Committee report which was first presented at our fall Meeting. Rick Glatfelter made the presentation, and the survey forms were passed out and returned. More information will come forth soon.

But there was mention about the fact that we are celebrating our 150th anniversary next year and are asking for input from the congregation as to what activities and souvenirs we came have for this special time in our church’s history. Darlene Adams is chairing this Committee, so if you have any suggestions, please let her know.

Also, mention was made about our rooms upstairs and how through the efforts of Carl and Jennifer Batliner and Steve Schnabl, three rooms have been cleaned up. There is a lot of stuff – books, etc., that if anyone is interested in taking any of them, please feel free to do so.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

Again, this year we are going to go over to First Christian Church on Rosedale for a **JOINT WORSHIP AND PICNIC (INDOORS) ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 3RD**. The worship begins at 10:30. We are to bring a dessert to share. We hope you can join us for some good worship, food and fellowship!

*LIFE IS MADE UP, NOT OF GREAT SACRIFICES OR DUTIES, BUT OF LITTLE THINGS, IN WHICH SMILES AND KINDNESS AND SMALL OLIGATIONS, GIVEN HABITUALLY, ARE WHAT WIN AND PRESERVE THE HEART AND SECURE COMFORT.* **SIR H. DAVY**