

Chapel Bells

St. Paul's U.C.C.-Erin

262-628-2319

www.StPaulsErin.org



April, 2026

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Aperire is the Latin word which translates as April and is the fourth month of the Gregorian and Julian calendars. In Latin it means "to open". We know that the first day of spring was on March 20th, but April has always meant Spring to me. It's a month of flowers blooming, not just budding out. Imagine someone from another planet...a planet without flowers...they would think we would be mad with joy every time a bud bursts open.

I pulled the book, *Earth Gospel, A Guide to Prayer For God's Creation* written by Sam Hamilton-Poore off my shelf and just opened it. This is the prayer I found there: "Drive me mad with joy, O God, to have your grace surround me everywhere, everyday in such ordinary, superbly natural things." Wow in one sentence this prayer said it all.

What superbly natural things bring you joy? For me it's dirt. I always wanted a T-shirt that said, Plays Well in Dirt...much like a teacher's comment that a child plays well with others. With my hands in the dirt I can feel sunshine and rain; the golden harvest; and even the snow and wind. I can feel new life as I drop a seed and cover it ever so gently but firmly with rich soil and a touch of fertilizer (horse manure maybe). Or filling a large pot with brilliant colors. Combining the blues and violets of pansies or the tall foxglove pinks with trailing green of sweet potato plants. You have your own favorites, I am sure.



April brings us Earth Day on the 22nd. Our worship service on the 19th will feature creation. We will sing our thanks to God for all creation and each "little bud that opens". We will offer joyful prayer to the "God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens." Then, on the 22nd and if the weather cooperates, you are invited to join me at the prayer garden to just sit and listen, pray, sing a little, and perhaps Curt H. will help us identify various bird calls.

April means to open, let's open our eyes, our ears and our hearts. Blessing: May Christ open your eyes that you may see the light of creation. May Christ open your ears that you may hear the song of the earth. May Christ open your heart that you may give and receive love.



ZEN BUDDHISM

Is Zen Buddhism a religion? Have you ever wondered about Buddhism and Zen? What might a Zen meditation experience entail? How could this practice be beneficial to the quality of life in the world? Is ordinary mind the way: why and how so? Might a taste of Zen meditation increase religious understanding that informs the practice of one's present religion and how so?

Bring your questions for a brief introduction and sampling of Zen awakening practice at Lakeland University near Plymouth, Wisconsin, April 7th from 11:45 am to 12:45 pm led by Taiso Byran Barlow.

WOMEN'S GUILD



Our meeting was very brief, but our lunch was delicious – hot ham sandwiches and three pies (cherry, apple and pumpkin) left over from the Chili Lunch and Pie Sale. Thank you Chili Committee and thank you pie bakers!

We were blessed to have Lucy join us at church again and to receive a call from Bernice who sounds good and is hoping to be home soon!

We spent the afternoon stuffing candy into the plastic eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt on March 28. We finished 888 eggs, with 4 or 5

hundred left to complete. A job for another day!



Our next Guild meeting will be on **Wednesday**, April 15, at noon. All St. Paul's women are invited to bring a bag lunch and join us. (We will not make you stuff Easter eggs!) Dessert will be furnished.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR MANAGING WEBSITE AND YOUTUBE CHANNEL

We are looking for a volunteer to manage the church website including posting weekly updates along with someone to manage the church YouTube channel which involves editing weekly service. This would be a great way to give of your time without being overly time consuming. If you would like more information on what is involved, please contact Connie Johnson at ecfamily5@gmail.com or (262) 313 7672.



YouTube
St Paul's UCC Erin church service ...



NARD

We recently encountered the use of Nard (not lard, lol) in our stories of the death of Lazarus and again when Mary spilled this precious oil on Jesus' feet and wiped it with her hair. Here's a bit more information about this substance and its smell.

According to Google, Spikenard or Nard is a rare, costly essential oil derived from the *Nardostachys jatamansi* plant, a Himalayan herb in the honeysuckle family. It is known to have a heavy, sweet-woods, and musty-animal scent. It has been used for thousands of years in perfumes, incense, and medicine. Nard is used in aromatherapy to promote relaxation, emotional grounding, and to ease sleep problems, often diffused to create a serene atmosphere.

If anyone would like to smell it for yourself, ask Pastor Bonnie who has some in her purse. Lynn D. described it as woody and spicy. I'm thinking of using it to mix the ashes for Ash Wednesday next year.

CREATION CARE

Depending on the weather, we will be gathering at the prayer garden on April 22nd, **EARTH DAY**, at 1:30 pm to focus on the birds of our area. This is God's creation, not ours at all. Come and listen. Come and see. Come and pray. Come and rejoice.



Plan ahead!!! Daniel Cooperrider, the author of *Speak With the Earth and It Will Teach You*, has a new book, *Live Each Season As It Passes*. The Wisconsin Conference Creation Care Team invites you to a Saturday gathering with an optional Friday overnight, at Daycholah Center. This event will focus on practical steps toward sustainability. You will leave with practical, money-saving ideas to implement right away and a glimpse of sustainability initiatives underway at Daycholah Center. Plus, meet Danie Cooperrider. This event will be held on May 2, 2026 at the Daycholah Center. Registration:



<https://ucco.org/events/sustainability-saves-retreat/>

BIBLE STUDY



We have been reading aloud from Matt Miofsky's book *Fail*, what to do when things go wrong based on the book of Jeremiah. We have covered Jeremish's Story and The Do-Over, which we will summarize before beginning the third chapter, In The Pit. We will meet **April 16 at 1:30 PM**. There is no homework and you do not need to purchase the book, just show up!

PRAYER REQUESTS

We were so pleased to see Steve and Alice, Bernice, Lucy and Tom and Mary G. in church again, yet our continued prayers are so appreciated. Please pray for John E. as he has entered into hospice care and Dave Z. as he enters cardiac rehab.

This is our present prayer list: Diane S., Joyce O'K, Mark G., John and Polly E., Mary and Tom G., Lucy K., Steve M., Cheri J., Dave Z. and Bernice D.



APRIL	GREETERS	LITURGIST
5 th	Jacque B. & Jill P.	
12 th		Kay O'K.
19 th	Mark & Debbie G.	Jill P.
26 th	Judy N. &	Misti S.



Golden Girls Murder Mystery outing

CONGRATULATIONS! And THANK YOU!



Kay ongoing Council President and Debbie S. new President

We are 5 for 5 again! We have received a special acknowledgement for our support of Our Church's Wider Mission, Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, the Christmas Fund and Strengthen the Church Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ. Check out our Thank You signed by Karen Georgia A. Thompson, General Minister and President of the UCC and Franz Rigert, Wisconsin Conference Minister.

Thank you to Kay O.K. for her wisdom and guidance as Council President. Her calm presence over the years has been a gift to us all.

Thank you to Debbie S. for her willingness to step into the role of Council President.

The Women's Guild Thanked the Congregation with pies! How yummy indeed.

March has far too many volunteers to thank for me to remember them all, but special thanks this month goes to those who do their very best to bring us the highest quality Sunday morning worship video. It's not an easy job and sometimes they encounter challenges beyond their control.



Mark K. and Jill S. new Council Members



Thank you to everyone who donated food goods, baked pies and helped make the Chili Lunch & Homemade Pie Sale a success. Our bakers made 70 pies to sell... WOW!! We raised over \$2,100 the annual church fundraiser which helps support the annual church budget.

SOMETHING TO SHARE

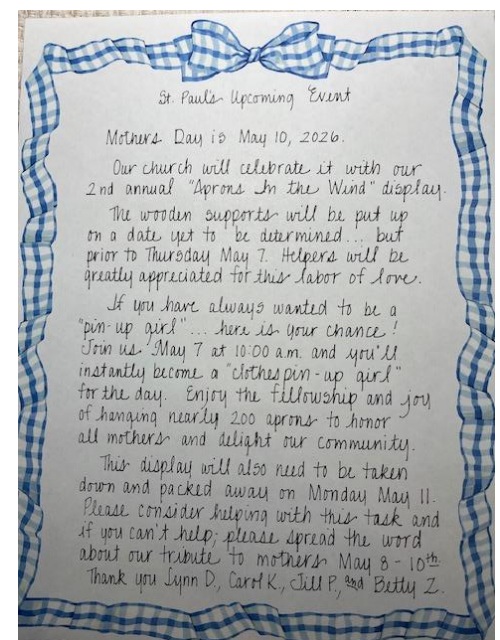


This was written by U.S. Astronaut James Irwin (1930-1991) who prior to his space mission was a doubter.

"From the moon, the earth looked like a marble, the most beautiful marble you can

imagine. The earth is uncommonly lovely. It is the only warm living object that we saw in space on our flight to the moon...

That beautiful, warm living object looked so fragile, so delicate, that if you touched it with a finger it would crumble and fall apart. Seeing this has to change a man, has to make a man appreciate the creation of God and the love of God."



St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Church Council Meeting Minutes February 16, 2026

The Church Council meeting came to order at 6 p.m. Those in attendance were Kay O., Pastor Bonnie, Connie J., Debbie S., Curt H., and Vicki D. Pastor Bonnie led the group in reciting the Church Covenant.

The January Council Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved. The January Financial Reports were reviewed and approved.

Pastor's report- Pastor Bonnie would like to try and give the benediction from the back of the church. A clarification of the Memorial Fund. Misti S. has agreed to send the Thank You note to those who donate \$100 or more. Unless the family has designated how the money should be spent, the council will discuss and approve spending. Connie J. will write up a procedure for the Memorial Fund process which will include the tracking of the funds.

Lenten Service is 2/28 at 7p.m. Maundy Thursday Service is 4/2 at 7 p.m. Easter Sunday is 4/5 with a potluck planned for afterwards. Two members attended last week's Bible Study. The next Bible Study is 3/12 at 1:30. Easter Egg Hunt is 3/28.

We will need to do a walk through with our new members regarding the elevator, fire extinguishers, and AED. Council needs to appoint one member to PPRC and two members to the Endowment Committee. Will defer this until next meeting when our new members are in attendance.

Vicki D. volunteered to call those members who do not have email when the church is closed for weather, etc.

Liaison Report- Buildings and Grounds- no new report. Chrisitan Ed.-Debbie S.- planning a fund raiser in May. Possibly develop a Welcome/Visitor pack. Chrisitan Ed. Would like to donate to the church. Possibly a sign with solar lights that would face east-west. Guild- Vicki- May move meeting date to Wednesday. Mission-Kay- Planning to purchase two doses of Narcan. Altar- Kay- Will check with the committee regarding Easter flowers. Technology-Kay- no report. Music-Vicki- no report. Creation Care- Curt- Will start to get bids for planned improvements. Investment- Debbie- Will meet this week.

Other items-Council received another very generous donation for the restricted funds. A Huge Thank you to the anonymous donor.

Chili lunch- Connie- Still need some help. Connie will send out a reminder for help and supplies. For next year, we may purchase a banner for the fence.

Discussed expense of advertising what our church offers. Pastor Bonnie will contact WTKM to announce our Easter Services.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m. The next Council Meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2026, at 6 p.m.



April 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 	4
5 9:30 Worship 	6	7 Seniors	8 Debbie G.	9	10	11
12 9:30 Worship Kyle G.	13 Council Mtg. 6 PM	14	15 Women's Guild	16 Bible Study 1:30	17 Chelsea & Adam B.'s Anniversary	18
19 9:30 Worship Emma A.Z, Mark & Debbie G.'s Anniversary	20	21 Chapel Bell Items due to Donna	22 Fred D. 	23 Jill L. Betty P.	24	25
26 9:30 Worship Steve & Alice M.'s Anniversary	27	28 Steve M.	29	30		