



St. Paul News

The Newsletter of
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Ida Grove, Iowa

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JANUARY

2021

2021: A Year of Opportunity

Four years ago about this time, I was in the midst of the toughest decision of my life. I had been serving three congregations in Osceola County for 3 ½ years. St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ida Grove had extended the call for me to become the new associate pastor. As I recall that time, I can't help but think about why I made the decision that I did.

It is no secret that 2020 was a very difficult year. Our services have been reduced to one per week. Our children's programs have been reduced significantly. The services that we have are limited for social distancing. The excellent fellowship hour came to an abrupt halt. The youth ministry that has glimpses of hope isn't finding the opportunity to begin growing. COVID-19 pandemic has made things challenging.

When I was in seminary, my professors emphasized the value of working outside of the church office, being present in our community. We were told to attend school activities as often as we can. We were told to consider working on our sermons or Bible studies at local restaurants and coffee shops. Why? Visibility to one's community. It allows the pastor to serve the community merely with his presence.

So, when I became a pastor, I made it a plan to spend at least one afternoon a week working on a sermon or Bible Study at a local restaurant or coffee shop. It indeed allowed for relationships to develop that might not have otherwise. I made it a plan to attend as many activities as possible at the schools. Many of the games were painful to watch (to be honest), but it has been a joy to watch these kids grow.

However, COVID-19 has made the ministry of presence very difficult to come by. Ministry feels crippled. My heart hurts for our shut-ins and members in nursing homes and assisted living. I miss them so dearly and the opportunity to bring them communion. 2020 without a doubt has been challenging.

This brings me back to 4 years ago. Four years ago, I absolutely loved the congregations in Ocheyedan, Horton twp, and May City. However, I looked at St. Paul Lutheran Church and saw opportunity.

I looked at the number of high school and middle schools in the congregation. The church had just confirmed 18 students. In a town of 2,000 people we had over 900 members. That really stood out.

However, the youth ministry was struggling. Our tri-parish who had a combine 11 youth sent more to the National Youth Gathering. In the LCMS, from my experience most congregations hovered around 40% for attendance unless there is a school attached. St. Paul hovered around 20-25% attendance.

It was there on paper plain as day, this congregation was stagnant. However, I saw opportunity. I saw a congregation that is right up the hill from the elementary and not too far from the high school. I saw a congregation with 900 members in a 2,000 person town. I saw opportunity.

However, in four years, I've seen it in myself. I have become stagnant myself. I have fallen into the mode of sticking to the status quo. Somehow I myself had forgotten the opportunity that lies before us, an opportunity that 2021 has laid at our feet. I ask for your forgiveness where I fall short, for I know that I have fallen short and will do so at other times. I am but a man, and I do err.

2021 is the year that I pray that St. Paul Lutheran Church, the sleeping giant in Ida Grove awakens. I pray that as (prayerfully) the cloud of COVID-19 lifts and fades away, we would begin anew. We would look for opportunities, that we as a congregation would find a new vision for our unique mission to our area. Our mission to be bold witnesses of this wondrous Gospel of Jesus Christ. In him, and him alone is salvation to be found.

Therefore, we MUST wake up and remember the task before us. If you think that the responsibility belongs to the pastors and the pastors alone you are mistaken. A day will come that I will get a call from another congregation, and I will say yes. A day will come that Pastor Salcido would take his step to a new

chapter of his life. What shall you do then. No, it isn't on us alone. We NEED your help. We NEED you to step up.

We NEED to talk about opportunities. We NEED to spend our time focusing upon the mission before us, the mission of bringing the Gospel to those around us. Myself and Pastor Salcido cannot do this alone. Consider how you can help when our children's ministries go back into full force.

As we move to continue to revitalize our youth ministries consider how you can help. 23.56% of our membership is 4-19 years old. Another 22.47% is 20-39 years old. Consider joining on the board of youth and family. Plan on Sunday, October 31st, 2021, to help with Trunk 'r Treat. I've dreamed of kids being greeted by a parking lot full of cars with St. Paul members happily handing out goodies. 20.6% of our area population are born between 1999 and 2016. It is the second largest age group.

2021 is opportunity for a new vision for this congregation that is placed throughout our community. When I substitute taught, I saw at least one member in all but one class. When I go to Subway, Casey's, Cenex, Food Pride, Jimmy's, the Bank, the schools, the hospital, and other places, I see members of this congregation. We are an army, and we are caretakers of the precious Gospel of Jesus Christ. As stewards of that precious gift, I pray that we would awake and see the opportunity placed before us. I pray we'd awake and find where God is leading us in 2021 and beyond.

Believe me there is hope. Before COVID-19 started, our attendance was increasing. We have an awesome, active group of kids in our current confirmation classes. The fellowship time was a strength. Our VBS programs were regularly strong. Cross Explorations was going strong. There is opportunity, there is hope. May God lead Pastors, Elders, council members, and all St. Paul Lutheran Church through the opportunity before us. The opportunity to awake and see mission field that lies before us. The opportunity to awake and see the gifts God has given all of us to bring his Gospel to our neighbors.

In Jesus' Name,
Pastor Neil Wehmas

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE for *ANY ITEMS* for in the **February Newsletter by January 13**

Remember it's up to you or your family members to let the church office know if you are hospitalized.

CHURCH NEWS

OFFICIAL ACTS Funeral: Virginia Jensen

THANK-YOU members for your thoughtfulness and your kind and generous gifts during the holiday season. It truly is a blessing to be a part of the St. Paul family here in Ida Grove.
Pastor & Sue Salcido

FROM THE ELDERS *Sean Benner, Brandon Johnson, Doyle Brown, Jeff Gilbert, Brent Harm, Aaron Hoffman*

St. Paul Lutheran Church Elders are here for you, and interested in your input or concerns.

Sean Benner 371-2034 seanibenner@hotmail.com

Jeff Gilbert 371-2608 jeff.b.gilbert@hotmail.com

Brandon Johnson 515-231-1744 brandonj2911@gmail.com

Aaron Hoffman 364-5166 aaronjen@netllc.net

Doyle Brown 369-0214 doylebrown@frontiernet.net

Brent Harm 712-210-4135 harm1477@gmail.com

FROM THE BOARD OF HUMAN CARE *Daisy Thayer & Glenda Hausman*



PARISH NURSE

With up increase in COVID-19 cases there is a need for people to donate plasma. January is national Blood Donation awareness month. Here is some information about donating plasma from the website <https://www.lifeservebloodcenter.org/donate/recovered-covid-19-patient-plasma-donation/>. Please consider donation of plasma, but even if you don't qualify for that please consider donating blood.

Questions about Convalescent Plasma

What is convalescent plasma? Convalescent plasma is the liquid part of blood that is collected from individuals who have recently recovered from COVID-19. COVID-19 patients develop antibodies in their

plasma that attack the virus. Convalescent plasma is being used as an experimental treatment for patients currently battling COVID-19.

I've never donated plasma. What's the process like? Plasma donation does take longer than a standard whole blood donation, but have no fear! Our team of professionals are here to make you feel comfortable and walk you through the process.

Who else is offering this program? LifeServe Blood Center is one of two community blood centers in Iowa that has implemented this program. Other blood centers and states have started this as well. Although this treatment hasn't been proven, there is evidence it may help. Since this is the only treatment option as of yet, the need for these donors is critical to obtaining the amount of plasma needed for treatment. Convalescent plasma donated to community blood centers like LifeServe Blood Center will save lives in our community immediately.

How many patients can one donation help? In a single donation, recovered COVID-19 patients can donate *four* lifesaving plasma products that will be immediately used as treatment for current COVID-19 patients.

Can for-profit plasma centers also collect convalescent plasma for COVID-19 patients? For-profit plasma centers are buying plasma that will be used to create plasma therapies which will take many months to create. **COVID-19 patients who sell their plasma are not saving current hospital patients.** Donating with LifeServe Blood Center is the only way in our community to help current COVID-19 hospital patients.

Think you qualify? Let us know! If you have questions you can give us a call at 800-287-4903. Suzanne Salcido RN, FCN

LIFE QUOTE "As the Church, we are created to stand against evil. We are created to speak truth ... and forgiveness. The truth is that abortion ends the life of a human being, and we should be unwavering in our opposition to it. But that is not the end of the story. We have been given the gift of Christ, and the power of Christ can wash our sins away." *Rev. Troy Tysdal, Church of the Lutheran Brethren – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • www.lutheransforlife.org*



COMMUNITY BASKET Donations for January: paper products: toilet paper, paper towels, garbage bags, napkins, etc. All items are appreciated as well, as they can always use donations. The Community Basket is open on Thursdays (except 3rd Thursday), from 2:30-5:30PM. The **Mobile Pantry** will be at the Holstein, United Methodist Church, **January 21st, from 2:30-5:30PM.**

FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP & MISSIONS *Brad Zobel & Deb Clausen*



GOD DIRECTS US to give regularly and generously (1 Corinthians 16:2). You may never be in a better position to give generously than you are today. The decision to give God your first and best is usually not made with calculators or with pencil and paper. The decision to give to God the first portion of your paycheck is made on your knees and with your heart. Giving generously and cheerfully has very little to do with mathematical formulas.

IN OUR WEAKNESS, GOD'S DIVINE POWER IS SEEN.

"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

FROM SHARA OSIRO IN KENYA

While we cannot visit face to face with our brothers and sisters in Christ across the region as we did before the pandemic, we can celebrate with them and support them in various capacities. This month we celebrated with the church in Madagascar as they elected a new president. We give thanks to the Lord for the students who graduated from the LTS seminary in South Africa.

We praise God that the school children, who have returned to the Project 24 sites, are doing well. Director Kissinger Nyang'au remains faithful in visiting the boarding facilities and children and supporting the staff.

I traveled with my colleague Krista Young to the Mt. Kenya region to visit the women's groups of the Evangelical Lutheran Conference & Ministerium of Kenya (ELCMK). After months of no travels, it was

a joy to be “upcountry,” as we say here in Kenya. Bishop Kugeria and Deaconess Rosemary of the ELCMK accompanied us.

Krista taught Community Health Evangelism/Education (CHE) lessons on the Proverbs 31 woman, and about COVID-19 and Jesus. The Proverbs 31 lesson helped the ladies talk about how their husbands and the community see them and how God values them. They did short dramas to demonstrate how they understood the lesson and did an excellent job. Many showed how they cared for other women, those in need, and their love for the Lord. Deaconess Rosemary helped to translate and explain the lessons. She coordinates programs for the women in three counties, teaching them how to make clothes, start small businesses to support their families, and care for the sick.

I give thanks to God for opportunities such as this to visit and be in a relationship with these sisters in Christ. This year has been one of many challenges but always the Lord is with us so we can joyfully give thanks.

Together In Christ...Shara & Michael



MISSION CENTRAL EVENTS Mission Central – LCMS World Mission

40718 Highway E 16, Mapleton, Iowa 51034 PH: 712-882-1029

Gary.Thies@lcms.org 712-882-1029 Brent.Smith@lcms.org 703-713-2851

Be sure to check the bulletin board in the hallway by pastors’ offices for information on Missionaries visiting Mission Central this month.

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES *Ross Ladwig, Jeremy Mason, Doug Hanson & John Brinkman*

Project Updates:

- Repairing Education building heating and air-conditioning.
- Installation of outdoor solar lighting outside north entrance doors.
- Investigating installation of cameras at all exterior doors.

FROM THE BOARD OF EVANGELISM / ASSIMILATION *Jen Hoffman & Kristy Gilbert*



MAIN STREET LIVING IS A LUTHERAN TELEVISION PROGRAM that is endorsed by the Iowa West District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The program receives no funding from the District, but is totally funded by viewers and congregations of the KCAU Viewing area. The program is broadcast on **KCAU, the ABC network affiliate in Sioux City on Sunday morning, starting at 10:00 AM.**

The first 30 minutes are remastered episodes of the popular “This is the Life” series that was very popular in the 70’s and 80’s. The second half of the program is a modified Lutheran worship service that features a different Pastor each week, from the station’s broadcast area.

FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION *Jon Devitt & Robyn Devitt*

4th - 6th grades and 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation- watch for more info in email or Facebook

Wednesday Morning Bible Class -watch for more info on Facebook

FROM THE BOARD OF YOUTH AND FAMILY LIFE *Amy Bennett*

Lutheran Youth Fellowship JANUARY 2021

Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

Watch email for details or updates on these events due to current COVID situations / restrictions

NOTE: All events are subject to change or be cancelled due to COVID-9.

“The Highway” High School Youth Night (9th-12th Grade)

Theme: Happy New Year Sunday, January 3rd @6pm St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ida Grove

“The Way” Middle School Youth Night (6th-8th Grade)

Theme: Morality

Sunday, January 17th @6pm St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ida Grove

Keep an eye on your e-mails, Facebook, and Instagram (@stpaulig_lyf) for information on future events.

Higher Things Conference—Forgiven 2021—Deposit \$150

Pick Up Registration form at the Church

June 29-July 2, 2021

North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND

July 6-9, 2021

Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

July 20-23, 2021

Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI

July 27-30, 2021

Concordia University-Texas, Austin, TX



The Magi’s story — and ours

The story of the Magi is our story. God has used his supernatural means to draw us unto himself. ... On one glorious day, when we were exhausted and wearied in our sin, God led us to gaze upon Jesus just as the Magi did. We see the glory of God manifested through Jesus Christ in the internal work of the Holy Spirit. We see our utter sinfulness and God’s abounding grace offered in the Messiah. We are filled with joy as this grace sinks into our hearts. We fall down on our knees and confess our need of this Messiah. We worship him and offer up our lives as our greatest offering to him. Then we continue on in our lives, carrying the truth about the Messiah. —Travis Cunningham, tvcreources.net

A word for the year

Every January, some people pray and ask God to provide a word for their year ahead. Friends have shared theirs with me, but I was hesitant to embrace the practice myself. I’d love to receive a word like *flourish*; then again, I might be like the friend who heard *health* and then faced many physical challenges that year. But I tried it for 2020 and heard *prepare*. My first reaction was that the word wasn’t very exciting, which possibly confirmed I hadn’t orchestrated it. Indeed, 2020 ended up full of significant, unexpected change for our family, with careers, school, church and friends. *Prepare* reminded me that amid chaos, God had prepared me for each moment and continues to prepare me for what’s next. Give it a try! Regardless of the word you receive or what lies ahead, you can trust that God loves you and is ultimately in control for 2021 and beyond. —Janna Firestone



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JANUARY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Year's Day Church office closed	2 Wedding Christine Bennett & Eric James
Second Sunday after Christmas 3 9:00AM Worship w/Communion social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 10:15-11:15AM 7 th -12 th Grade Bible Study 2:00PM online & local cable channel	4	5 Elders 7:00PM	6 Epiphany	7	8	9
The Baptism of the Lord 10 9:00AM Worship social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 10:15-11:15AM 7 th -12 th Grade Bible Study 2:00PM online & local cable channel	11	12 Church Council 7:00PM	13	14	15	16
Second Sunday after the Epiphany 17 9:00AM Worship w/Communion social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 10:15-11:15AM 7 th -12 th Grade Bible Study 2:00PM online & local cable channel 6:00PM "The Way" 6 th -8 th grade	18	19	20	21	22	23
Third Sunday after the Epiphany 24 9:00AM Worship w/Communion social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 10:15-11:15AM 7 th -12 th Grade Bible Study 2:00PM online & local cable channel	25	26	27	28	29	30
Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany 31 9:00AM Worship w/Communion social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 10:15-11:15AM 7 th -12 th Grade Bible Study 2:00PM online & local cable channel						