

TIDINGS

St. Paul United Church of Christ

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www.stpaulucctaylor.org

Senior Pastor - Rev. Dr. Geoffrey G. Drutchas

Minister of Christian Education - Pastor Cheryl Schalm

May 2020

PASTOR'S PEACE

This past month has been immensely challenging for us all. The Covid-19 has dramatically changed the daily patterns of our lives. Things we used to do without a second thought we can't do at all or only with great caution. Even going out to the grocery store can be a source of anxiety. There's nothing hysterical about all the precautions we are now taking. The spread of the virus is very real—and very dangerous. Unfortunately, some who preferred to take the pandemic lightly or dismiss it completely are learning the hard way. The other day I read about an Ohio man who several weeks back was calling the pandemic a hoax and political ploy only to expire from complications associated with the virus. Lesson learned, his own bereaved family is now encouraging everyone to socially distance for their own safety and well-being.

Early on, the Covid-19 virus touched our congregation. Several weeks ago, I officiated at the funeral for the son of one of our members, baptized and confirmed at our church, who has been identified as the first Michigan fatality due to the coronavirus. The *Detroit Free Press* had a full page-and-a-half about his illness and death and the terrible grief of the family that survives him. More recently, another couple in our congregation discovered they both were experiencing coronavirus symptoms and, in fact, tested positive. Happily, they are now both recovered. Beyond our own congregation, the coronavirus has further touched me personally. My sister-in-law and niece in Chicago contracted the virus in mid-March and battled it for almost two full weeks before they recovered. Meantime, I am keeping in special prayer one of our members and the sister of another who are residents in next-door nursing homes where there have already been at least a dozen deaths from coronavirus.

As we have all been learning, the coronavirus is both very contagious and very baffling. Although some treatments are emerging, there is not a lot of certainty about them yet. Any effective vaccine, if possible, is at least a year away. Our best recourse in combating the coronavirus is prevention through hand washing, masking, and social distancing. That was true before; it remains true today. No doubt it will continue to be true throughout the year ahead.

To some, our own Michigan governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" mandate has seemed draconian and way out of bounds. They registered their criticism with a massive protest in front of the Michigan State Capitol. Although some stayed in their own cars along Michigan Avenue leading up to the Capitol, a large crowd gathered on the front Capitol lawn, in some cases with children in tow, not practicing social distancing at all. Whether they realized it or not, they were being socially and morally irresponsible. Whenever we flaunt precautions against viral spread, we potentially contribute to our state's death toll which now includes men and women of all ages. We are also jeopardizing the lives of all kinds of "frontliners," ranging from doctors, nurses, and EMS workers to farmers, grocery store clerks, and shipping and delivery personnel. Whom we call upon to care for us and provide ongoing support services in this very tough time. At least a dozen of those "frontliners" are our own members—or sons, daughters, and grandchildren of members.

I am glad that our own church, like many, but not all, others, has been very responsible in dealing with the reality of the Covid-19 pandemic by suspending most programs and activities and keeping to the "ministry essential" model. Sunday morning services are now live-streamed on Facebook at 10 a.m. each week and then posted on the St. Paul website, attracting "visitors" as far-flung as Florida, Alaska, Ontario, and Italy. Church council and cabinet meetings do continue but via telephone conferencing. Our church's Tuesday morning Bible study also "meets" the same way. Meanwhile, Pastor Cheryl Schalm and I have developed resources for home devotions and Christian education that are being shared online with families and youth. To members who are not Facebook active or online-savvy, sermons and other church literature are being mailed out at least monthly. Pastor Schalm, Parish Nurse Kathy Williams, and I are also pursuing a lot of telephone outreach to members. In the ten days leading up to Easter I personally made 349 calls! It was so good to talk. Every conversation was a blessing, particularly in this time when we can't greet each other face-to-face or share a handshake and a hug.

Although we are facing great hardship now—hardship that is likely to persist in the year ahead of us—we are not alone in this. Almost the entire globe is struggling through this pandemic too. Moreover, God, who raised Jesus from death itself and promises eternal life to the faithful, never abandons us. No matter how dark our situation seems, we need to look for those ways in which God reaches out to us with his blessing—inspiring, encouraging, and teaching us. These past weeks have been a time of learning and discovery for all of us, figuring out creative ways to get things done safely that we never imagined we could do. Our Sunday morning live-streamed services at church are just one example of that. Family car parades and zoom parties to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, as well as telemedicine calls with doctors, are examples as well.

The coronavirus pandemic has made every day more fluid. We don't always know what to expect next. We're not sure when the biggest part of this crisis will pass and some of the restrictions on staying at home and staying in place will ease. We have to stay tuned to the facts on the ground and what public health officials are reporting on the trajectory of viral spread, whether up, level, or, hopefully soon, coming down. Any church gatherings in May and June are going to hinge on this. Yet at very least I have in my own mind hopes of a "Road Rally" Pentecost Service at the end of May when we gather in our cars in our big church parking lot to share in a broadcast service with a distribution of communion elements car-to-car, with all sanitary precautions taken. Sounds a little crazy, doesn't it? But it could be both fun and faithful and wonderful. Yes, stay tuned!

~ ***Shalom, Pastor Geoffrey Drutchas***

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EDITORIAL

"The Lord is with you." ~ Judges 6:12

Max Lucado serves as one of my favorite inspirational authors. I have found great comfort in his book, *Praying the Promises*. My hope is that you too, will find comfort and peace in the following insert from that book.

"God uses common people for uncommon works. Gideon, for example, was a simple sodbuster. He displayed no political ambitions, demonstrated no military interests, and yet God turned this farmer into a leader and used him to protect Israel. With only three hundred men, Gideon defeated the mighty Midianite army (Judges 7:1-25).

In this victory, Gideon learned what God wants us to learn: all we need is the presence of God. He is enough. We don't need a large army. We don't need abundant resources. His presence tilts the scales in our favor.

The same God who was with Gideon is right beside you. As David said, "Where can I go from Your Spirit?... If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me." (Psalm 139:7-10)

The two-dollar theological term for this is omnipresence. Omni is the Latin prefix for all. God's presence is all-encompassing. Don't apply earthly physics to Him. He does not have size or spatial limitations. He is present in every point of space with his whole being.

Which means, He is with you as you face your armies. With you as you are wheeled into surgery. With you as you enter the cemetery. With you, always. Let this promise find a permanent place in your heart. God is with you."

Amen, Amen and Amen!!

~ In Christ, Pastor Cheryl Schalm, Minister of Christian Education

Christian Education News and Events

Food & Flick, May 15th

Join the youth group and young adult fellowship in a Food & Flick night. All interested are invited and encouraged to prepare your favorite snack and to tune into "God Bless the Broken Road," on Netflix at 7:00 p.m. The movie tells the story of a young mother who loses her husband in Afghanistan and struggles to raise their young daughter in his absence. The film combines elements of faith, country music, and stock car racing while paying tribute to those who serve in the United States Military.

For those who do not have Netflix, I have other Christian movie DVDs to loan to include, Veggie Tales. If you would like to borrow a movie please contact me and I will make the arrangements.

Sunday Morning Sunday School Blog to Continue Through May

The Christian Education Corner Sunday School Blog will be available every Sunday throughout May. Simply log onto the website, stpauluctaylor.org and click on the Christian Education Corner link. There will be a greeting, a story, a message, a love letter from God, an activity, a weekly challenge and a closing prayer. If you should have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Schalm.

Book Buddy and Adopt a Grandparent programs continues throughout May

If you are a middle school or high school student or post high school young adult and would like to serve as a weekly book buddy to one of our younger Sunday School children please contact Pastor Schalm. If you are a parent of a young Sunday School child and would like for them to have a book buddy please contact Pastor Schalm. The book buddy will facetime with the child once a week, read them a story, chat about the story and then say a prayer with the child before closing.

Sunday School children, youth and young adults are needed to adopt a grandparent during these days of shelter in place. All that is required is that you send a bi-weekly note, drawing or picture to your adopted grandparent. If you or your child/ren are interested please contact Pastor Schalm. These are both great ways to help out during these difficult days. Please prayerfully consider them.

Sunday All-Church Videos Facebook Posted

Each Sunday an all church video will be posted to the Rock Hard in Faith Facebook group after our live streamed service is over. Church members are encouraged to text Pastor Schalm their theme designated pictures by 7:00 p.m. on Thursday's to ensure their inclusion. Let's stay connected despite our inability to be physically present.

Video Themes:

April 26th: Furry Family Members / Pets

May 3rd: May Flowers & the earth's rebirth

May 10th: Mother's Day / Greetings & Pictures of Mom

May 17th: Spring Sports / Kids athletic pictures/ favorite games attended

May 24th: Tribute to our Vets, past and present

May 31st: The amazing color red / Remembering Pentecost

PLEASE DO NOT SEND PICTURES PRIOR TO THE WEEK INDICATED. DUE TO MY STORAGE LIMITATIONS, MY PHONE CAN ONLY TAKE SO MUCH.

Postponed: Youth Flower Sale, Spring Program, Youth Mission Trip, Vacation Bible School

Given the uncertainty of the days ahead and the time required to plan and prepare for these activities, these events have been put on hold (not cancelled, hopefully just postponed) until such time the shelter-in-place mandate is lifted. Many of these activities are dependent upon other businesses, organizations and events. As I receive more information relative to each, determinations will be made as to whether to cancel or postpone planned Christian Education events.

Young Adult Ministry

Young Adult 'Worship Wednesday' Bible Study Meets

The group continues to meet on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. via House Party. All post-High School young adults are welcome and encouraged to join. Plan to join the group for study, discussion, laughter, and fellowship. All information is posted to the Rock Hard in Faith Facebook group.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

A **SPECIAL THANK YOU** for being an active and faithful member of St. Paul and continuing your donations during these difficult times, you are showing us that we still have a meaningful place in your heart. We just wanted to let you know that you are also in our heart, as well.

We deeply appreciate your ongoing support and want to let you know we are here for you. If there is ever anything, we can do for you or your family, do not hesitate to reach out to the office at (313) 291-1221. You are a valued member of our church family.

Your financial support is making a difference. We can continue to pay our dedicated and loyal employees as well as our utilities and essential services due to your continued financial support. To reduce our monthly expenses all discretionary spending was suspended beginning March 16th and will continue until further notice. We will continue to monitor our financial health and keep you and our membership informed of any changes.

Although we have received many donations by mail, we have seen a significant increase in our electronic giving. We invite everyone to evaluate the potential of utilizing Vanco for electronic giving. It might make it easier for you as we continue during these difficult times. It is very easy to set-up a giving schedule, visit us online at www.stpaulucctaylor.org/giving, locate the Online Giving button and set up your giving schedule. If you have a technical issue with setting up your electronic giving please feel free to call Dan Case or Gary Peters for assistance. Of course, you can continue to contribute by sending your donations directly to the church via the US Mail.

Dan Case – St. Paul Treasurer

Coronavirus CARES ACT: A little known fact about the CARES ACT, the act allows an individual to make a cash contribution up to \$300 and deduct the contribution “above the line” when computing adjusted gross income. This means the taxpayer will receive this deduction in addition to their standard deduction if they do not itemize on their tax returns.

For those who do itemize, the new law temporarily lifts the limits on charitable giving for 2020. Cash contributions can be deducted up to 100% of adjusted gross income for 2020 (normally limited to 60%). Excess contributions can be carried over to the next five years. If you have additional questions, please contact Dan Case – St. Paul Treasurer

ST. Paul Church Members Stay Connected

198 households viewed the Easter Sunday morning service live streamed from our church sanctuary as led by Pastors Drutchas and Schalm and Music Director Tracy Hoffman. Those logging on included visitors from Alaska and Toronto, Ontario. During the ten days leading up to Easter, Pastor Drutchas logged 349 telephone calls to church members to share a prayer for Holy Week and Resurrection Sunday. Copies of recent sermons and orders of service were also mailed out to almost 150 households to those who are not active on Facebook and without online access. Unfortunately, the U.S. Postal Service has slowed down deliveries. In some cases, mail deliveries are every second day. Short-staffing at the local post offices has sometimes meant further delays in delivery of first class mail of up to ten days or more. Church members and friends who have not previously made use of their online or Facebook capability are encouraged to take advantage of that possibility now.

Pastors and Parish Nurse are Available through Phone Calls, Texting and Emailing

Though not able to visit hospitals, nursing homes, and private homes as we would like we hope to remain in touch with all of our congregation through Facebook, the church website, and one-on-one telephone calls. Please let them know by telephone, text, or email about any pastoral needs that have arisen for yourself or your family. You are also encouraged to reach out to fellow church members through personal phone calls and mailed cards. It is important that we remind each other that we are not alone but part of a true network of faith.

St. Paul Council and Cabinet Meet

Our St. Paul Church Council continues to meet at its regularly scheduled time on the second Tuesday evening of each month, 7 p.m. through telephone conferencing. If there are concerns that you wish to share with the Church Council, please notify Council president Michele McNeely before Tuesday, May 5th, when the Executive Committee, composed of Council officers, prepares the Council meeting agenda for the following week.

The St. Paul Cabinet will also be meeting on Tuesday evening, May 19th, via telephone conferencing to provide an update to all organizations on upcoming program and activity scheduling in light of the most recent guidelines from the State of Michigan on in-person gatherings. Organizational representatives will be receiving call-in information in advance of the May 19th meeting. For more information contact Council vice president Tim Ruffner.

A New Bible Study Start-Up

Church members and friends interested in participating in a new Bible Study via telephone conferencing are encouraged to contact Pastor Geoff Drutchas. Presently contemplated are a Men's Bible Study, as well as a couples study group with a cap on group size at 12 participants—the same number as Jesus' apostles. You can notify Pastor Drutchas of your interest by calling the church office (313-291-1221).

'Every Daughter' Banquet Garden Party Cancelled

Due to the ongoing order to "stay home and stay safe" and the uncertainty of when that order is to be lifted, the banquet that was scheduled for early May has been cancelled. We are hoping that another available date on the church calendar can be used to reschedule it. Watch your morning tide and future tidings for notifications.

'Lily List' Offers Opportunity to Remember, Commemorate Loved Ones

The Easter Season at St. Paul has Traditionally been a time in which we have Remembered Loved Ones with Lilies for the Chancel. This Easter season is certainly different. But there is still an opportunity during these seven weeks of the Easter season to remember those dear to us by making a special \$10 contribution to the "St. Paul Lily List." Those you wish to remember and commemorate will be included in a special Easter season roster shared through our church website and in our May *Tidings* newsletter. You can add your loved one's name to the "Lily List" by sending your dedication request and donation to the church. Please contact the church office and leave a message if you have any questions.

Health-Related Programs Planned

Although the coronavirus pandemic makes scheduling more difficult and uncertain, plans are being made to resume Enhanced Fitness, Matter of Balance, Chronic Pain Self-management, CPR, and First-Aid programs when gatherings are again possible and safe for participants. Looking ahead, a Matter of Balance class is tentatively scheduled for June 1st. If you are interested in possibly participating in a Matter of Balance or other classes when churches like our own receive an "all-clear," please contact Parish Nurse Kathy Williams

St. Paul Red Cross Blood Drive Scheduled for June 23

The need for blood remains critical at local hospitals. The next St. Paul Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for Tuesday, June 23, 1-6 45 p.m., contingent on the lifting of "Stay Home and Stay Safe." You can sign up today online at www.redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767. Sixty days are needed between blood donations. If you have questions regarding the St. Paul blood drive or wish to schedule your donation through Parish Nurse Kathy Williams instead of online, please contact her directly.

HEALTH MINISTRIES

Message From our Parish Nurse

During this challenging time of physical distancing, it is easy to feel isolated and down. It is important to communicate with others to show that we care. This is what Christ would want us to do. I encourage you to call one another. I also encourage you to call our members and friends who don't have the internet or know how to get to our www.stpaulucctaylor.org website. I have talked a few members through how to get to the website and listen to our services. I have had success with putting my phone on speaker and placing it by the speaker on my computer so that a person without the internet can listen to the service while I play it on my computer. If you are willing to do this for someone please contact me. It means so much for them to hear our church service.

I have been listening to some programs about Covid-19, some are very good. A good source is: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> and it is updated frequently.

~ Kathy Williams, Parish Nurse, R.N.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

ChristNet and Fish & Loaves Community Food Pantry Maintain Emergency Services

Due to church closures across the Downriver area, ChristNet has moved to a more ample school space rented from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit with the support and assistance of Wayne Metro Community Action Agency and a federal grant. ChristNet will continue to provide 24/7 service to the homeless right through the summer months. Help is needed in providing lunches and snacks for ChristNet guests. Individually wrapped snack items, small cans of soda, and bottled water are especially appreciated. Also welcomed are entertainment DVDS that can help provide entertainment for ChristNet guests who are sheltering in place like the rest of us. All donations can be dropped off at the church for delivery to the ChristNet center.

The Fish & Loaves Pantry is in need of younger volunteers who can help with client enrollment and food distribution on Monday-Wednesday and Friday. Due to the pandemic, all food is being individually packed for clients and distributed on a drive-thru basis only with all social distancing precautions taken. Also, new client enrollment and appointment scheduling is by telephone only. To volunteer, please contact the Fish & Loaves via web site or by calling 313-992-6284. Fish & Loaves volunteers can be provided with a "business critical" letter authorizing the bearer to travel during the current health crisis. For more information, you may also call Pastor Geoff Drutchas at the church office (313-291-1221).

JOYS AND CONCERNS

THANK YOU to our April Merry Mailer: Marjie Barnard.

Condolences to Church Families

Grace & Wanda Wangbickler on the loss of son & brother Kevin Wangbickler who passed away on Sunday, March 22nd. Funeral service was Monday, March 29, 2020.

To the Havenstein and Koszalka Families on the passing of Rebecca Havenstein Coughlin and Nancy Koszalka from illnesses not related to the coronavirus pandemic. Married to Michael Coughlin, Rebecca is the daughter of Shirley Havenstein and the late Bill Havenstein and the sister of Chris Fargo. Nancy, who was married to the late Bob Koszalka, is the mother of Stephanie Koszalka who lives in Tampa, Florida. Memorial Services will be held for Rebecca Coughlin and Nancy Koszalka at a later time.

Fred and Mary Miller on the passing of his nephew, Brian Miller, from the coronavirus. Joan and Craig Rensel on the passing of husband and father Clarence "Keith" Rensel.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Memorial Fund:

In Memory of: *Kevin Staffeld* From: Teri Staffeld

WE ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS FOR

Church Members and Friends: Veronica Flomo, August Block, Harold Fick, Doris Hilliker, Murl and Judy Nieman, John Smith, Larry and Loretta Kurtzel, Kirk Blanchard, Neil MacEachern, Alice Nagy, Bill McGahey, Sheryl Schwab, Kyle Hard, John Smith, Helen St. Louis, Doreen Thompson, Marion Bolen, Bettie Slusher, Dianne Sturgeon, Tracy Spears, and Ron and Henrietta Hinzman.

Extended Family: Talama Braba (Judy Albright's daughter), Lisa Collins (daughter, Arlene Felske), Mary Jane Fliss (sister-in-law, Arlene Wolfram), Gabriella Gomez (niece, Darlene Babin), Kevin & Steven Johnson (grandsons, Patricia Olson) Richard Jones, Joanne LeFleur (daughter, Helene & Neil McEachern), Jennifer & Tammy Lee (granddaughter & daughter, Barb Siemers), Michael Martall (Ann Blanchard's friend), Jonathan Milatz, Courtney McEachern Matthews, Kim McEachern (daughters-in-law, Helene & Neil McEachern), Family of Norma Reid (friend, Denise Foley), Judy Robin (aunt, Lucinda Chavez), Trudy Clark-Schiller (daughter, April & Steve Clark), Bob Smarr, Darlene Spence (sister, Grace Wangbickler), Larry Staten (brother-in-law, Peggy Staten), Nicholas Surre great-grandson, Helene McEachern), and Victoria Whitcher (daughter, Cheryl Stewart).

Congregations' Parents: Robert Brainard (father, Ed Brainard), Jan Filpus (mother, Julia-Joy Miller), Bonnie Isaacs (step-mother, Michael Isaacs), and John Sharp (father, Gina Hribik).

Church Members & Friends in Nursing or Rehab Care:

Donald Babin - *Carolyn's Corner*, 17890 Parkridge Dr., Riverview, 48193; Mary Dubke - hospice - *Amy's Place*, 41346 Llorac Lane, Northville 48167; Terry Dyer - *Heartland Healthcare Center*, 9150 Allen Rd., Allen Park, 48101; Esther Perry - *Bellbrook Assisted Living*, 873 West Avon Rd., Unit 209 H, Rochester Hills, 48307; Eleanor Rossi - *Maple Heights*, 4600 Allen Rd, Room 415, Allen Park, 48101; Melissa Rossi -17652 Colgate, Dearborn Heights, 48125; and Betty Steinhauer - *Rivergate Health Center*, 14141 Pennsylvania Rd., Riverview, 48193.

LET US ALSO KEEP IN PRAYER THOSE PROVIDING EMERGENCY 'FRONTLINE' SERVICES as police officers, nurses, and EMS workers during the ongoing pandemic. We want to especially remember church members and friends *Rick Barnosky, Jennifer Babin, Chelsea Eisenga, Debbie Lyles, Ciera Mack, Sam Martin, Michelle Mellin, Amber Ostrowski, Samantha Pedersen, and Eric Poet.*

Graduate Information Requested:

If you or someone in your family is receiving a degree this spring, or has received a degree since last June, please make sure the information is into the church office by May 28, 2020.

ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, TAYLOR
BACCALAUREATE SERVICE
GRADUATE BIOGRAPHY FORM

NAME OF GRADUATE _____

FAMILY INFORMATION

Parents _____

GrandParents _____

Great Grandparents _____

School/Program from where you are being Graduated

Diploma/Degree/Certificate Earned _____

Future Plans _____

Return By May 28, 2020