

TIDINGS

St. Paul United Church of Christ

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Senior Pastor - Rev. Dr. Geoffrey G. Drutchas

Minister of Christian Education - Pastor Cheryl Schalm

September 2020

PASTOR'S PEACE

Over this past summer a “new normal” has settled in. Except, at least for me, nothing really feels very normal or very settled. As much as I’ve always before found it good and wise to plan, it’s been hard to plan and harder still to keep to plans. Instead, more than ever, a lot of decisions need to be made day-to-day—even hour-to-hour. Whether we like it or not, more than ever, we are all being compelled to live in the present--in the “now.”

In his “Sermon on the Mount” that fills two whole chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus offered many great words of counsel. But I keep returning to that moment when he uttered advice about how to best deal with the present and future. “Do not be anxious about tomorrow,” he told his followers gathered on the hillside to hear him, “for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for today is its own trouble.” (Matthew 6:34) In our latest circumstances, we are, I think, being called to live the gospel in a way that we rarely have before. It consoles me to think that I can spiritually grow in this time, becoming more aligned in my living with Jesus’ wisdom and truth.

I hope that we can all keep Jesus’ admonition in mind as we each make our own necessary daily adjustments. It’s important for us to all remain positive, faithful, and hopeful—always looking for the blessing when things aren’t going the way we expected and planned.

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

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EDITORIAL

Over the course of the past several weeks, Exploration packets, a 4 week course on finding God and self, were delivered to our young people. While the program was designed with young people in mind, its contents are suitable and relevant for Christians of all ages.

Week one's focus is on the image of God, on how we see God and where we see God. Sometimes we become too complacent or just too busy to ponder and to reflect upon these questions. Worse, we stop exploring ways and places in which God is present and speaks. "God starts where we are."

The second week's focus is on prayer and how we communicate with God. It's one thing to believe in God and yet another to have a relationship with Him. How do you communicate with God? Exploring new ways may lead to a deeper and more meaningful relationship with Him. "Prayer is the world's greatest wireless connection."

Week three's focus is on the Sabbath and on how we honor it. Do we rest on the Sabbath and take a break from all the things that tend to keep us from God? Do we dedicate time to spend with Him? We would all benefit from exploring ways in which we could take a break from something in order to free up some time to deepen our relationship with God. "Rest provides fine-tuning for hearing God's messages amidst the static of life." ~ Shelly Miller

Lastly. The focus of week four is on community and on the people who reflect God's love to us and inspire us. Unintentionally, we can all take for granted those within our faith community who serve to make it stronger. Everyone benefits when we explore and acknowledge the importance of such a community. During our exploration we should question our own contribution and then challenge ourselves in representing Christ within that community. "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." ~African Proverb

We could never uncover all the magnificent and wonderful ways in which God speaks to us and shows His presence in our lives and within the world. However, the more we explore, the more we learn and the closer we get to our God. Enjoy the remainder of your summer and take some time to explore!

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

Christian Education News and Events

Rally Sunday & Scavenger Hunt

When: Sunday, September 13th Where: St. Paul UCC Time: Service @ 10:00 a.m. with a family scavenger hunt to follow.

It's time to rally the troops as we prepare to begin another year of Sunday school. Our "2020 - 2021" focus will be, "nurturing the fruits of the spirit." All families are encouraged to participate in this special service of "reengagement and activation." Whether you decide to join us under the tent (weather permitting), or from your vehicle in the church parking Lot (station 105.3), we hope that you will be present for this special family rally service.

Following the service all families who pre-register will have the opportunity to partake in a scavenger hunt in a roped off area designated just for their family. All registered families will begin at the same time and once all items have been found they will text

Pastor Schalm. The 1st family to complete the hunt will win a gift card to Dairy Queen. Others will receive consolation prizes.

Individually wrapped donuts and juice boxes will be handed out to all participants. A special Rally Sunday video will be shown featuring all our wonderful young people.

Watch your email and text messages for photo requests. I do hope that you will join us. Our young people need to stay connected to the one in control now more than ever!

Scavenger hunt clue: Fruits are good and make us strong, some even keep us from doing wrong. So, so many different kinds to eat and digest, knowing the ones of the spirit will serve you best. We stand upon solid rock, when we remain within Christ's Flock.

PLEASE REGISTER YOUR FAMILY FOR THE SCAVENGER HUNT BY SEPTEMBER 6TH BY CONTACTING PASTOR SCHALM VIA EMAIL CSCHALM@STPAULUCCTAYLOR.ORG OR PHONE (734) 255-0935.

Sunday Morning Sunday School Blog to Continue Through September

The Christian Education Corner Sunday School Blog will be available every Sunday throughout September. Simply log onto the website, stpaulucctaylor.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 to resume and/or continue throughout September

If you are a middle school or high school student or post high school young adult and would like to continue and or/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 pandemic restrictions. 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.

Young Adult Ministry

Young Adult 'Worship Wednesday' Bible Study Meets

The group continues to meet on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. at Pastor Schalm's. All young adults (post High School) are welcome and encouraged to join. Social distancing precautions will continue to take place.

Young Adult Fall Food & Fire

The group will meet on Wednesday, September 23rd at 7:00 p.m. for a bon-fire, hot dogs (each will cook his/her own), bagged chips and pre-packaged s'mores following Bible Study. This will be held outside and social distancing will be respected.

Rock Hard in Faith Youth Fellowship

Members of the youth group will have the opportunity to display their creativity while **painting rocks** on September 12th. The rocks will be used for the Rally Sunday scavenger hunt on September 13th. All interested in participating should contact Pastor Schalm by September 5th. The artist displaying the most creativity will be awarded a Dairy Queen gift card.

Nature Walk and Picnic Event Upcoming

The youth will be going on a nature walk at the Huroc Park and nature trail on September 26th. All interested youth should plan to pack and bring a sack lunch and mask. After our walk and picnic lunch we will walk to the local Dairy Queen for some ice cream. To confirm participation contact Pastor Schalm by September 19th. This is an outside and socially distanced event.

ALL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EVENTS WILL BE HELD ACCORDING TO CDC AND STATE OF MICHIGAN COVID RECOMMENDATIONS AND LAWS. EVENTS WILL BE MONITORED AND CANCELLED IF DEEMED NECESSARY BASED ON SUCH.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Live-streamed and Outdoor Services Continue

Outdoor services, also live-streamed on Facebook, will continue as our St. Paul congregation enters the fall season. Weather permitting, St. Paul members and friends will be gathering under the tent on the church green through all the Sundays of September. In case of rain or cold, services will simply be transferred to our indoor sanctuary. Our tech team will be live-streaming and recording the services for home viewing whether we are inside or out.

For outdoor services, church members and friends are asked to bring their own folding chair. Six foot social distancing for non-family members and masking for all is being maintained for everyone's benefit and safety. The service is a little shorter—forty to forty-five minutes.

For indoor services church windows remain open with the air conditioning operating to assure good ventilation. Masking is also required and the aisles and pews have directional markers to help ensure that we come, go, and sit safely. Our ushers have been oriented and trained to provide guidance for safe Sundays. Under the direction of Music Director Tracy Hoffman, Sunday music continues. But, in lieu of congregational singing, he and individual soloists or small ensembles provide the morning anthems.

Over the last several months our live-streaming of services have not been without their glitches. However, our tech team of Michael Isaacs, Dan Case, and Gary Peters remain committed to bringing to St. Paul homes the best-quality relay possible. Church members are asked to be patient with delays or interrupted services. In most cases, the whole service is posted on the St. Paul Church website by Sunday afternoon and can be viewed at your convenience. An audio version of the service is also available online and copies of the Sunday morning sermon are posted and can be read online or printed. Church members who do not have online access are receiving mailed sermons monthly. Please contact the church office (313-291-1221) if you also want to receive sermon mailings.

Our Church Council and its Executive Committee continue to stay alert to Covid-19 developments and public health notices from the Centers for Disease control (CDC) and

the State of Michigan. Our church leadership is committed to keeping our church members and friends healthy and safe even as we do everything we can to maintain our life together of Christian worship and fellowship. Our St. Paul Church website offers a "Covid-19 Update" to keep the congregation informed about ways that we are responding to the latest health and safety concerns. If you have questions or suggestions for our church council, please call Council president Michele McNeely.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study Begins 'Romans'

This September the St. Paul Tuesday Morning Bible Study will be beginning a study of the Apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans. It is one of Paul's longest and most important letters written to the fledgling Christian community in Rome, struggling to be faithful in the face of persecution and internal disagreements. The study is open to all St. Paul members and friends.

The study group uses the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible which, while faithful to the original Hebrew and Greek texts in its English translation, is easily comprehensible, thanks to the utilization of contemporary language. Copies of the text are provided to all participants.

Led by Pastor Geoff Drutchas, the Tuesday Morning Bible Study meets on Tuesday, 10:30-12 noon. Currently, all classes are outside under the tent on the church green, weather permitting. On rainy or poor weather days we meet in the West Room with ample space for social distancing.

The Bible Study group finished reading the Book of Acts of the Apostles this past summer. About twelve people participate from week-to-week. If we are outside, participants are asked to bring their own folding chairs. For more information, please contact Pastor Geoff Drutchas (313-291-1221).

Confirmation Classes Scheduled

Our St. Paul Confirmation program for 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students will be getting underway as usual this September but in very unusual times that require some changes in approach. This fall classes will only be held on Wednesday evenings, 7-8 p.m. without the Sunday morning program that usually goes hand-in-hand with them. Our class will also be meeting in a larger upstairs classroom where Pastor Geoff Drutchas will lead confirmation students in lessons on the history of our Christian faith from ancient to present times. The classes for the two year program will continue through Easter 2021. A couple of our confirmands are second year students. We will be welcoming several first year students. In a time when so many activities for our young people are limited, Confirmation Class will provide an opportunity to socialize safely and meaningfully—and faithfully!

There will be a zoom orientation for all Confirmation students parents on Wednesday, September 16, 7 p.m. Information on signing in for the zoom call will be sent to all families with confirmation age students. Please let Pastor Geoff Drutchas (313-291-1221) know if you have any questions or concerns about Confirmation Class start-up.

St. Paul Women's Retreat

This year's retreat will be held at St. Paul on October 3rd, 9am-1pm. There is no cost for this event and lunch will be provided. The theme this year is Women of the Bible. What challenges were they given? How did they manage various situations? How can we relate to our bible women if given today's circumstances? These questions and more will be discussed. This is a great time to share in some much needed fellowship during these

uncertain days. A safe and healthy environment to include social distancing will be available in the Fellowship Hall. There is limited seating so if you are interested in attending, please R.S.V.P. by September 15th. Call the office (313) 291-1221 or contact one of the committee members: Marjorie Barnard, April Clark, Michele McNeely, Eileen Vernor Drutchas to reserve your spot.

Some Activities Canceled, Others Creatively Continue

Both the St. Paul Fall Rummage Sale and the Craft Fair have been canceled due to the challenge of hosting both in a way safe for church volunteers and patrons. In-house church school on Sunday mornings is also not going to be happening this fall either. Weekly choir rehearsals and performances have been suspended until further notice. However, Wednesday night confirmation classes for 8th,9th, and 10th grade students and the annual St. Paul Women's Retreat are still a "go." So are other small group activities like our Tuesday morning Bible study and upcoming health ministry programs. All of them will be taking special precautions to make sure everyone stays safe.

Part of the challenge of hosting large public events like the Rummage Sale and Craft Fair is the difficulty of maintaining safety precautions such as masking for those who enter the building. Many members of the general public remain resistant to any masking requirement, making it more difficult and awkward for stores, let alone churches, to enforce. Even with effective masking, large group gatherings of any kind increase possible exposures for church members volunteering for our church events.

In hosting small group programs, our outdoor tent on the west side of the church will be utilized as much and as long as possible, weather permitting. Indoors, room seating for the West Room and Fellowship Hall is being configured for scheduled events to respect important and necessary social distancing. The St. Paul Women's Retreat, for instance, will be making use of the much larger space of Fellowship Hall and capping the number of participants. Our St. Paul Confirmation class will be moving to the largest upstairs classroom where there's room to spread out and many windows for great ventilation. For the coming months, the classroom will also be completely dedicated to weekly Confirmation Class use. For all church activities undertaken, it's essential to be thoughtful, sensible, and creative about how our building space and grounds can be best used.

HEALTH MINISTRIES

Improving Your Health during Covid-19 Social Distancing

Until we can meet in person, there are computer Long Distance Health Programs Provided through the National Kidney Foundations of Michigan include:

- Walk with Ease
- Diabetic Prevention Program
- Personal Actions Towards Health (PATH)
- Chronic Pain Management with (PATH)
- Better Choices, Better Health
- Powerful Tools for Caregivers
- Cooking Matters at the Store

Click on: <https://www.nkfm.org/communities-families/distance-learning> for more information. Don't have Wi-Fi or computer use? Please contact Kathy Williams

Depression and Anxiety are Common Concerns during a Pandemic

It's important to seek guidance if you have a family member, neighbor or friend that you are concerned about. Resources include suicide prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 (24/7), crisis Text line - Text HOME to 741741 (24/7), Downriver Guidance Center 734-785-7700, Community Care 313-389-7500. You can also call Reverend Geoff, Pastor Schalm, or Kathy Williams to speak with regarding your concerns.

Our Daily Bread Devotional Availability

If you are interested in reading, Our Daily Bread, please contact the office. The editions are available in large print and regular print. Please specify the print type that you want. They come every three months.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Memorial Garden

As you pull up to the Church you will immediately notice a newly landscaped Memorial Garden. The intent of the new landscaping is to emphasize the Memorial Garden as the focal point. There will be beautiful purple rhododendrons in the spring and summer, beautiful white hydrangeas in the summer and fall and numerous dwarf shrubs located in the area to provide different colors year-round. Please take a moment to enjoy our beautiful new Memorial Garden. We have contracted Maasab Acres to do the work. They are the same business that landscaped the Parsonage and Family Room. Funding is coming from the St. Paul Memorial Fund which is controlled by the Memorial Ministry.

West Parking Lot and Horseshoe Apron Resurfaced

The west parking lot and apron around the back of the church have been resurfaced to protect and extend their life. The current parking lot is 18 years old; we hope to get another 10 years out of the existing lot, the cost to replace it is approximately \$115,000 in today's dollars. The work included filling in all the large cracks with coal tar, filling in the larger cracks with cold patch, clearing out all the weeds, applying a thick coat of PMM sealcoat and restriping. The project would not be possible without the financial support of Women's Fellowship (\$7,500), Christian Education (\$1,000) and Men's Fellowship (\$1,500). The remaining money will come from the Facility Improvement Fund. The Building and Grounds Ministry would like to thank these organizations for their generous support which allows us to maintain our building and grounds.

St. Paul Pictorial Directory

Information regarding the new St. Paul Pictorial Directory will be mailed out to all members in early September. The new dates for photo sessions are Thursday, November 5th (10:00 am to 4:00 pm), Friday, November 6th (1:00 - 7:00 pm) and Saturday, November 7th (10:00 am to 4:00 pm). Scheduling your appointment ahead of time will be required. The information letter will provide all of the details required to schedule your appointment. This should allow families to have their pictures taken together for their 2020 Christmas cards or for that very special Christmas gift. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you and your family.

Due to the COVID19 pandemic we will be practicing social distancing (6ft apart), masks will be required while in the building (we will provide if you don't have one) and hand sanitizer will be provided. Please call Dan Case, if you have additional questions.

Financial Update

As summer comes to an end, we continue to maintain financial stability despite the COVID19 Pandemic. Our income has continued to be over our projected budget and our expenses are well below our expected budget. Thank You for your continued generosity. Dan Case – St. Paul Treasurer

ChristNet Ministry to the Homeless Seeks Alternative Site

In the midst of the Covid-19 health crisis and the temporary or partial shut-down of churches across the Metro Detroit area is posing huge challenges for rotational homeless shelter programs like ChristNet. Many churches, including our St. Paul congregation, do not believe that we can host safely as we have done in past years because of social distancing requirements and health concerns of many older volunteers. Consequently, ChristNet, launched by our congregation almost three decades ago, is looking for a stationary site where guests can be safely hosted with volunteers traveling to that site to serve as night-time hosts.

A huge and positive asset in this necessary transition for the coming year will be the fall opening of the ChristNet Services Building on Eureka Road in Taylor. The building, which will host the ChristNet day program, is to be fully equipped with shower, laundry, and kitchen facilities. Many of the activities handled at individual churches in past years will be available to guests during the day in the building. The ChristNet Services Building is slated to be move-in ready in mid-to-late October.

During the summer months, ChristNet did continue its nighttime shelter program at a church school building. But the rental agreement for that space is ending as schools reopen. Thanks to precautions taken by both coordinators and guests, there was no outbreak of Covid-19 at the shelter. Those same safety protocols will be maintained in the coming months as ChristNet opens its door for the fall and winter seasons at a new locale. Please keep ChristNet and the homeless men and women throughout our community in your prayers.

RED Hot Purple Angels

Due to social distancing we will not meet in September. We are hoping to have our October, Halloween bunco night on Thursday, October 22, at 7 PM. Bunco is easy, you don't have to know how to play it ahead of time. Wear a costume or Halloween shirt. We will follow social distancing.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

A Faithful Traffic Jam?

Over the past weeks as construction on Goddard Road has been underway, there has been a traffic jam on many mornings and most afternoons. Making lemonade out of lemons, St. Paul "sign master" Charlie Barnard has been posting wisdom from the Old Testament Book of Proverbs for everyone's spiritual benefit. Hopefully, it is helping everyone keep a cooler head in the crunch. Each biblical proverb offers brief, pithy wisdom for daily living today. As you travel down Goddard Road, keep an eye and heart open for the great wisdom that our roadside pulpit daily imparts.

WE ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS FOR

Church Members and Friends: Darlene Babin, Marian Bolen, Elaine Cowper, Harold Fick, Shirley Gratrix, Kyle Hard, Doris Hilliker, Diane Hines, Lin Hogan, Ken Kaszubowski, Shirley Koths, Sue Kren, Loretta Kurtzel, Ciera Mack, Neil MacEachern, Andrea Matney, Steve Matney, Neil McEachern, Judy Nieman, Cleora & Bill Pattenaude, Frank Patterson, Shirlen Powell, Nancy Rabb, Lil Roscoe, Morgan Schalm, Ann Schmoekel, Sheryl Schwab, Glen Sigman, Bev Sitz, Sue Spears, Tracy Spears, Helen St. Louis, Doreen Thompson, Bob Weigel, Diana Wickline, Al Wierzvicki, and Tom Williams.

Extended Family: Kim & Julian Arndt (daughter, grandson Pauline Arndt), Marcie Bolen (daughter, Ron & Marion Bolen), Talama Braba (Judy Albright's daughter), Joe Coffee, Cassidey Wangbickler-Congelierre, Mary Jane Fliss (sister-in-law, Arlene Wolfram), Brian & Michele Gillespy, 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), Jonathan Milatz, Courtney McEachern Matthews, Kim McEachern (daughters-in-law, Helene & Neil McEachern), Toni Oliver, John Poet (nephew of Thelma Poet), Judy Robin (aunt, Lucinda Chavez), Trudy Clark-Schiller (daughter, April & Steve Clark), Bob Smarr, Darlene Spence (sister, Grace Wangbickler), Nicholas Surre (great-grandson, Helene McEachern), Darlene Wangbickler, and Victoria Witcher (daughter, Cheryl Stewart).

Congregations' Parents: Robert & Diane Brainard (parents, Ed Brainard), Jan Filpus (mother, Julia-Joy Miller), Carol Hoffman (mother, Tracy Hoffman), Bonnie Isaacs (step-mother, Michael Isaacs), Charlie Markey (father, Rebecca Markey), 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.

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 *Kim Arndt, Wendi Wioncek Ashby, Rick Barnosky, Jennifer Babin, Rhonda Wioncek Berndt, Dana Wioncek Barlage, Chelsey Eisenga, Joshua Eisenga, James Hubert, Debbie Lyles, Amy McGahey, Ciera Mack, Marci Magnuson, Sam Martin, Michelle Mellin, Brenda Murphy, Inez Kurtzel Ogonowski, Amber Ostrowski, Samantha Pedersen, Eric Poet, Trudy Clark Schiller, Rachel Tank, Emily Wangbickler Baggett, Jillian Wangbickler, and Sarah Wangbickler.*