

The Epistle of St. Paul's

July 2023

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St. Paul's United Methodist Church

4215 Grinnell Avenue

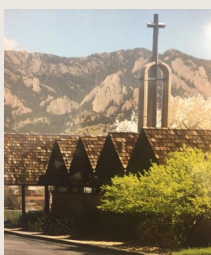
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From The Pastor's Desk...

As I looked out the office window on a delightful late spring morning, I saw the trees in full leaf, people walking dogs past the church, and a rabbit taking a break by the corner sign. I sat down to write this entry for the July Epistle, and I remembered that on July 1, we will begin our fifth year together. This is significant for me for a couple of reasons. First, this is already the third longest I've lived anywhere and the second longest in my ministerial career. Second, as I begin my twenty-ninth year of ministry, I am still hungry for God's Word, and the awe that I felt when I shared my first sermon at University UMC in College Park, Maryland, is just as present now as it was then.

Why am I sharing this with you? I recently received an article from Convergence, an organization of progressive Christians committed to a just and generous Christian faith that is moving from "organized religion" to "organizing religion."

The author of the email recounted that many congregations, aware of the changing world around them, are asking some common questions that all flow from a place of uncertainty: 1. How can we get more people to come to church? 2. How can we survive financially? 3. How can we make hard decisions without making people mad? 4. How can we get back to the way things were when the pews and the coffers were full?

Instead of working from a place of uncertainty or even fear, the email's author suggested reframing the questions this way: 1. How is God calling a particular group of people to fellowship, break bread, learn, and serve together this month/quarter/year? 2. Together as a congregation, are we enough to truly build community and honestly know and be known? 3. Is our church a learning lab for navigating life's changes and conflicts in a healthy and transformative way? 4. What kind of church does God need to heal the world in 2023, in 2073, and in 2123?

And this is where these questions, having been asked and reframed, can apply to our common life here at St. Paul's. The author offers suggestions: 1. Groups of people are called together by God to do Christian life together. 2. The forms this will take are unique and local and will vary as much as the flora and fauna that surrounds us. 3. Truly "doing life together" requires more than one hour per week in order to share practice, build community, and truly know and be known. 4. Christian life together should teach and model healthy communication and transformational change skills and must focus on the well-being of others more than ourselves.

And so, dear people of St. Paul's UMC, as we begin our fifth year together, I invite you to join the conversation as together we seek God's direction as a community of faith as we honor our past, live authentically in the present, and lean into the God-shaped future that awaits.

Every blessing, Pastor Charles

Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet Thursday, July 6, at 11:45 a.m. at Parma Trattoria & Mozzarella Bar (Village Shops at Colony Square, 1132 W. Dillon Road, Louisville). Please R.S.V.P. to Judy Waller before July 4 (judy38waller@gmail.com / 303-818-1759).

Breakfast Fellowship will meet on **Saturday, July 8**, at 8:00 a.m. at Le Peep (2525 Arapahoe Ave, Boulder, next to McGuckin's hardware). No reservations necessary. All are welcome!

Women's Summer Book Group meets on Thursdays from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. The book is *Find the Good: Unexpected Life Lessons from a Small-Town Obituary Writer* by Heather Lende. The group will discuss two chapters each week. It's not too late to join the fun! Contact Belinda Alkula (belinda.alkula@gmail.com).

Free Virtual Mission u Adult Study
July 11, 18, 25, and August 1, 7:00-9:30 pm via Zoom
Four consecutive Thursday evenings

This study is for men and women. It is based on *Exploring the Lord's Prayer as a Spiritual Practice for Social Transformation* by Riva Tableisma, available in print and Kindle versions. Find registration links in the E-pistle and News You Can Use.

Questions? Contact Belinda Alkula (Belinda.Alkula@gmail.com / 303-916-2349)

Interested in the article Pastor Charles mentioned in "From the Pastor's Desk" (page 1)? Hall, A. (2023, June 8). "Is It Time To Change the Questions You Are Asking About Your Church?" Retrieved June 8, 2023. Here's the link:

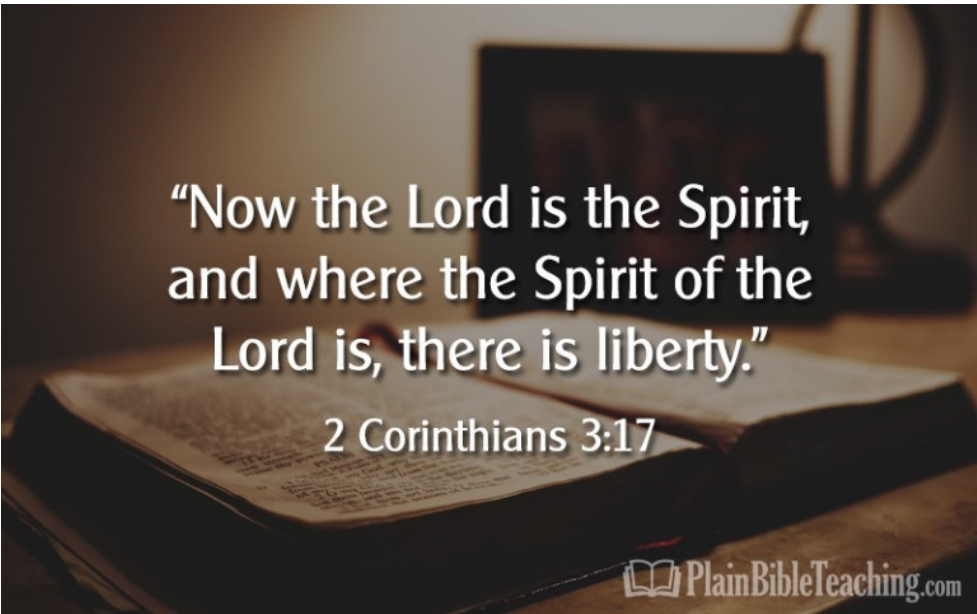
<https://convergenceus.org/2023/06/08/is-it-time-to-change-the-questions-you-are-asking-about-your-church>

St. Paul's UMC welcomes and affirms people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

Hank Troy and Wende Harston will visit St. Paul's on Sunday, July 9. Hank Troy will take part in the service. Save the date—we always enjoy his musical offerings. Plan to stay for a special Fellowship Time—an ice cream social is being planned.

Hearing Loop Technology for Sanctuary

The Trustees are investigating the installation of a hearing loop in our sanctuary to help people who have trouble hearing the service. This technology is most convenient for people who have hearing aids with telecoil, or T-Coil, function. (About 80% of today's hearing aids have this function--you might have a T setting on your hearing aids, or the function may be built in.) For those who don't have hearing aids or do not have T-coil function, we could also provide headphones each week that connect to the hearing loop. If you have trouble hearing the service in the sanctuary--anything that comes through the sound system, including Pastor Charles, the liturgist, and prayer requests--and are interested in finding out more about hearing loops, please contact Suzanne Polacek (303-709-6676 or suzanne.polacek@gmail.com). She plans to set up a Zoom meeting to provide more details to interested parties and get input. She is also planning a visit to a site with a hearing loop already installed to experience the difference herself, so let her know if you are interested in that experience.



**“Now the Lord is the Spirit,
and where the Spirit of the
Lord is, there is liberty.”**

2 Corinthians 3:17

July Birthdays

7-1 Michele Matthews

7-3 Marcia Roberts

7-14 Heidi Soha

7-15 Bobby Dahlstrom

7-18 Austin Cooper

7-19 Alex Wright

7-22 Steve Batch

7-23 Scott Glancy

7-24 Marcia Hult

7-26 Joyce Brandon

7-29 Jerry Beaver



JULY PREACHING SCHEDULE

July 2 / Communion

"The Christian Airplane"

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 & 17-22, Matthew 7:21-29

July 9

"The man who built his house upon a rock"

Matthew 7:24-27

July 16

"A pocketful of change"

Luke 15:4-10, Romans 8:1-11

July 23

"The whole armor"

Genesis 28:10-19a, Ephesians 6:10-18

July 30

Return of the Living Dead

John 11:1-14 & 38-44

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