

The Epistle of St. Paul's

June 2020

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St. Paul's United Methodist Church

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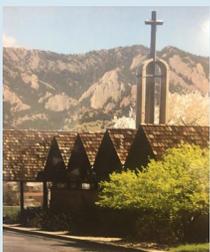
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From The Pastor's Desk...

Five years ago, June 2015, I was on a journey that I've dreamed of for many years. I went on a pilgrimage to Ávila, Spain, the birthplace Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada, known as Teresa of Jesus to her contemporaries, and more commonly as Teresa of Ávila to us today. 2015 was the 500th anniversary of the birth of "The Saint" as she is known in Spain. While there, I saw historical sites, visited numerous museums (go on the trip with me by visiting the entries for June 2015 on the Alkula blog, <https://alkula.blogspot.com/2015/06/>).

I developed a fondness for this sixteenth-century Carmelite nun, church reformer and mystic when I was in seminary and I discovered one of her writings, *The Interior Castle*. This book opened my eyes to the understanding that faith, church, religion, spirituality, and so on, are all mere terms used to explain that there is more, much more to our God than we have allowed ourselves to know or experience.

You have heard me say many times in the past year that prayer, faith formation, and worship are essential activities for anyone calling themselves a Christian. I would put it to you that a pilgrimage is another essential aspect of spiritual growth. Some pilgrimages, like mine, involve travel to distant places, others involve walking a labyrinth, or the reading of a spiritual classic. Faith, you see, is a way of life, and is never meant to be static or stagnant. My pilgrimage was but one way to grow in the faith. I hope and pray that you will discover the way that leads you closer in your walk with God.

Here is one of my favorite quotes from St. Teresa, a reminder to us all that we are in a state of constant spiritual formation and that we are being formed in the likeness of God for the service of our God and King:

"May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us."

Every Blessing,

Pastor Charles

Continued on page 2

June Covid-19 Update

It seems like a lifetime ago since we last gathered in person for worship, study, fellowship, or even had the office up and running. **We are continuing with the suspension of in-person worship for the month of June** until our plan for reopening is approved by the Mountain Sky Conference (MSC).

Using John Wesley's "Three Simple Rules: Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God," the MSC has provided a road map of sorts to guide our development of a plan that will safely see us gathered as a community of faith. The three stages of our response are:

RED STATUS

Stop all in-person worship and gatherings. Essential workers only are allowed in the church building. This is the **"Stay in Love with God"** time and stay-home phase of our ministry. Right now, it is best to err on the side of caution, even as directives are eased from the various Mountain Sky area governors.

YELLOW STATUS

Cautionary Return. It is anticipated this will cover a number of months. As the MSC, we want to **"Do Good"** as restrictions are lifted. This may mean a gradual return to gatherings, depending on the circumstances. Yellow Status begins when state and local officials have reported a 14-day downward trend of cases, hospitals are treating patients without crisis care, and there is a robust testing program in place, including antibody testing.

GREEN STATUS

In-person gatherings are the **"Do No Harm"** phase that can be initiated when the virus is contained. Permission will be granted to communities of faith to return to full activity and in-person gatherings. This will be in place only as church leadership is confident in the care of their community of faith. Green status for all activities will likely be dependent on a testing protocol for asymptomatic COVID-19 carriers, antibody testing, therapeutic drug therapies, aggressively caring for those who have contracted COVID-19, and approval and availability of a COVID-19 vaccine. State and local officials must have successfully met the criteria of Yellow Status, and there must be evidence through case reporting, testing, and community monitoring that there is no evidence of a rebound.

The Mountain Sky Conference of The United Methodist Church recognizes returning to full participation will be based on the oversight of the Bishop, Crisis Response Team, state, and national guidelines, as well as the seasonal movement of the virus.

In the meantime, please continue to stay in contact with one another and your friends, family, and neighbors so that all might know the loving care of our God. Our Zoom worship will continue in June at 10:00 AM on Sundays. We will also continue the Wednesday morning check-in via Zoom, also at 10:00 AM.

I know that this is not an easy time for any of us and that the novelty of isolation has long since worn out its welcome. In the rush to get back "to normal," let us err on the side of grace and see the care for one another and the care for our communities, as a ministry to the world and a witness to our faith.

Read the entire Mountain Sky Conference Covid-19 guidance at www.mtnskyumc.org/relaunch-church.

Mountain Sky Annual Conference Update

Bishop Karen Oliveto announced in a letter to the Mountain Sky Conference on April 16 that the 2020 Annual Conference Session will be held online June 19 and 20. The theme for this year's session is **Repairers of the Breach** based on Isaiah 58:9-12: "...you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in." The limited digital format will be held over Zoom Webinar with GNTV Media Ministry overseeing the technical support.

Find more details about the 2020 Session at www.mtnskyumc.org/2020MountainSkyAC

Theater Notes

All performances of *Ragtime* at BDT Stage have been cancelled. Currently they plan to open *The Sound of Music* in July.

June Finance Fun Facts!

Did you know.....?

There is a difference between the PATH Fund and the Pay it Forward Fund? The PATH Fund is one that we use to help our neighbors and friends that fall on hard times. The PATH Fund is funded through generous contributions of our congregation. The Pay it Forward Fund is one that helps people within our congregation whenever anyone needs a little help during hard times. Right now, the PATH Fund requires donations on a monthly basis to sustain itself. The Pay it Forward Fund is currently in "good shape" and not in need of donations.

Did you know.....?

You can have your monthly pledge paid through your bank's bill pay feature? Many people in our congregation use this option and it makes giving much easier for them. This is something you have to set up with your bank—either online or in person. You can set the amount, the withdrawal/delivery date, and your donation comes right to the church office via U.S. Mail.

Did you know.....?

The Finance Committee has a new set of policies and procedures to keep our money safe and our procedures in line with the wishes of the conference and the United Methodist Book of Discipline. Those will be available for you to look at once we are through editing them.

Did you know.....?

Our current financial status is that we have received 48% of pledged income. St. Paul's has collected \$3334 for the PATH Fund, \$962.60 to StemRev, and have contributed \$500 to Paraguay Hope, along with others.. If you would like to make a special donation, we are happy to direct it to the appropriate fund. We are thankful for your faithful stewardship to St. Paul's UMC.

For the time being, please continue to send your monthly or weekly pledge to Martha Batch at 7025 Pike Ct. Arvada, 80007. All checks should be made payable to St. Paul's UMC and designate on the memo line which fund your pledge should be credited to, if not the "General Fund".

Stewardship: The job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property.

*Loving God * Creating Hope * Changing Lives*

News from Community Table

We have long-anticipated the closing of the 30th Street site on May 31st. That plan is still in place. Most services will move to the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless on North Broadway after May 31st.

Bridge House will continue our successful Ready to Work program in Boulder and Aurora (and possible expansions elsewhere!), our active Kitchen catering (with great family-portioned Take and Bake's and delicious Danconias truffle brownies—see our revamped website menu and delivery system here: www.communitytablekitchen.org) and the Community Table dinners at new locations.

In the meantime, we are still committed to offering a food service throughout the summer! We will have to pivot during the summer months (June/July/August) and do an OUTDOOR Grab And Go dinner option where clients will receive individually-packaged meals to take with them. This will be safer than eating indoors in terms of air circulation and many other factors. Here are the details:

Food will be distributed in the parking lot at 2691 30th Street. Yes, this is the same location where Path to Home and Community Table dinners currently are served. This will make it familiar and easy on our clients. We will be primarily be OUTDOORS the entire time. No services will be offered indoors. Dinner will be available starting at 5:00 p.m. each night, Monday through Friday (no weekend meal service). One bathroom will be available for use inside, but for the most part the inside of the building will be empty and not accessible. Dinners will be handed out in individual packaging, most likely brown paper bags. Although it will be a cold meal, we will strive to make it more interesting than a PB&J sandwich! Our Chef is exploring options right now. Eating on-site or loitering will NOT be encouraged. This really is a Grab And Go. No smoking on site. We want people to safely receive their food and head out to eat elsewhere. This will make it a safer process for everyone. Three staff will be on-site to administer the dinner. They will be wearing PPE (and often have extra donated PPE's to give to clients), there will be some sort of hand washing or sanitizing station, and we will strategically map out the entrance and waiting areas to maintain social distancing while people wait to get their food. Each guest will be briefly checked in so that we can keep track of stats. We also will be offering some outreach services to guide people where they can get further support, including possibly joining our Ready to Work intern program. We hope to continue wellness check-ins as well, like we have currently been doing for all who enter our 30th Street site.

WE NEED VOLUNTEER SUPPORT! Ideally we will have 2 - 3 volunteers each night. They will help with distributing the food, guiding guests on where/how to wait until they are called, and possibly helping with check-in. Help is needed from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. All volunteers will, of course, be required to wear PPE and to not attend if they are show any signs of illness.

If you would like to help with donations of masks, hand sanitizer or brown paper bags (6 lb. size), we would welcome those donations!

Additional call for a volunteer: we are looking for a hair stylist/barber who would like to donate their time cutting hair at our Ready to Work House for Trainees (mostly men).

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, contact the church office for more information.

You can **#HelpTheHelpers** by donating at <https://boulderbridgehouse.org/donate/>

In Our Community

News from Ghana by Mozart Adevu

Abraham Breseh is one of the leading beekeepers in the community of Osramanae in the Krachi West district of Ghana. Abraham harvested honey from his hives early April and got 90 gallons of honey from 40 hives. Abraham had the following to say; “Although I was happy about he yields, most of my hives colonized late so I decided not to harvest from most of them but rather leave for next year for good yields as experience has taught me.” Abraham plans to build a new home from his honey business. Abraham has a good market for his honey and will absolutely have no problems in selling his honey. He hopes to realize close to Ghc 16, 200 (USD 2,945) from his honey sales this season and this is a good income for his family. He will also have wax and other products from the enterprise. Other notable good productions in Osramanae are from Atorbolor and Tobias who realized 30 and 20 gallons respectively from the yields from their hives. Several other farmers including more than 20 women have saved their bee colonies for a good harvest next year since their hives colonized rather late last year. Over 60 farmers of the community of Osramnaae are currently involved in beekeeping and this includes about 25 women. Most beekeepers are also commenced organic vegetable production this season.

Owusu Okyere is a 21 year old student and the third son of Peter Okyere, the outgoing Steward of the Methodist Church in Jeduako. Daniel has the following to say about the disruption in his studies [due to COVID-19]: “Since the outbreak of COVID-19, studying has become difficult for me. We have started E-learning but I have found it difficult to join my classmates because my Dad has to spend so much money in purchasing internet bundle for me to use on my phone to access the Virtual classes. There is no free Wifi here in Jeduako. I have realized how much undue pressure I have put on the budget of my family yet I should not miss any lectures as there are ongoing quizzes and the final examinations will be held soon. This pandemic has created so much disruption in my studies but I am grateful to God that no case has been registered so far in our community of Jeduako”. Daniel has spent time also to support his parents in establishing an organic vegetable garden since his Dad, Peter Okyere, was a participant of the Farmer Field School in Organic agriculture held last year in Jesduako. Peter Okyere, aged 50, has eight children (4 boys and 5 girls). Peter and his wife Hannah are full time farmers in Jeduako. Peter says COVID-19 has impacted on his family so badly even though there has been no reported case in Jeduako. Peter had the following to say: “Providing food everyday to feed a family of 10 is not easy these days. Even though we are food sufficient, our food stock is depleting very fast. After paying fees for the children in school, most of them would have been in school at this time and that will cut down on our costs at home. It seems we have a double loss of the fees paid and then the extra mouths to feed in a pandemic”. Peter also is praying very hard that no cases get to Jeduako as social distancing is near impossible to practice because of communal living. Peter lives in a compound house together with other tenants and they share common facilities. Pater says it is difficult even to keep all the children at home all the time as they often want to spend time with their friends outside the home. “Only God can save us from such a pandemic,” says Peter. Peter and others are requesting for prayers as they also pray for their supporters in the US.

God at Work

The Narration of the Travel Experiences of Joshua Suttah to the Community of the Asian Rural Institute (ARI), Japan Submitted by Mozart Adevu

My name is Joshua Ofori Suttah I am from Ghana in the Greater Accra Region and the Ga-East Municipal Assembly and from a small community called Adenkrebibi, with population of about 600 people. I am 28 years old. I have a two year old daughter. I am a Christian and worship with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana-Adenkrebibi Gligal congregation. My father was an evangelist and he was the caretaker of the Adenkrebibi /Ayim Methodist Church until his death. I was born in Adenkrebibi and raised there.

After my basic education, I attended a Technical school called Danfa Voc/Tech Training Institute to study Electricals in the year 2007-2013. My father passed away when I was about to write my first examination which is NVTI Certificate 2. I had no money to do my registration so I had to stay at home and raise money for the next year. Unfortunately for me when back to school the curriculum had changed so I have to wait and write another examination before the NVTI Certificate 2 which was NVTI Foundation Skills in 2010. After writing that examination, I had to stay home for another year before writing the NVTI Certificate 1.

A year later without job I decided to go into small scale farming so I started cultivating crops like cassava, maize, and vegetables like pepper, tomatoes and green beans. In December 2014 an NGO called Heifer International came to train young people on how to rear animals so after the training program I started rearing grasscutters which they taught us. I started with 40 grasscutters; later they started dying because of the weather so I quit. In the following year another group came to train the people of the Methodist Church in Adenkrebibi so they invited other churches in the community and from outside. At this time, I was keeping sheep, goats and chickens. The group name was The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) which was led by Mr Mozart Adevu. They taught us moringa and soy cultivation and processing and emphasized on the nutrition benefits of these plants. They also taught beekeeping. After the training program and on next day I was at home and I had a text message from Mr Adevu congratulating me for my active participation and that even though I am not from the Methodist church but I did well during the program. After a few weeks he called me and asked about my intentions of staying permanently in the community. My response was that am searching for work so if any comes on my way I have to leave the community, he told me he would call me later the following day. He later called me and said, "Josh, I want to recommend you to an organization in Japan, the Asian Rural Institute, because I know you have the quality to teach your community on your return". My reply was yes and I was full of joy the whole day. He briefed me on how I will acquire skills and improve my small scale farming and learn organic farming. I got about 20 messages before eventually got accepted to ARI. What makes me more frustrated is sometimes I had to go to the Sending Body's Head office in Abokobi three or four times before approval or to get a letter or document signed. Because my community is far from the head office of the Sending Body, I often had to walk to the road side for about one and half hour before boarding a vehicle

THE JOURNEY TO ARI

After completion of all documents to travel to ARI, I started counting my days: then pandemic of COVID-19 broke out. On 20th March when the coronavirus case was getting worse the President of the Republic of Ghana gave a press statement for all borders to be shut down from midnight of 21st March 2020. So after the press statement I knew my trip to Japan was impossible but after few minutes I saw I had missed a call. Later I decided to call back and was surprised that was the Travel Agent. I knew she was going to tell me that I won't be able to travel to ARI but she rather told me that she had not heard of the announcement. On next morning she called and asked if I was ready to travel same day so she could book a new ticket for me. So I called Mozart and told him the situation at hand and his reply was "you have to leave today because you

God at Work

don't know what will happen in the next two weeks". I had to hurry to my Sending Body for my signed agreement letter but when I got there it was not signed and the document couldn't be found. I had to get a new copy but all internet cafe shops were closed because it was Sunday. One of our administrators called Felix told me to return to the office on my way to the airport and that he will meet with me the document. I got home around 2:00pm and I had to get to the airport at 6:00 pm because the flight will take off 9:30pm. I had to leave the community at 4:00pm to get to the airport on time. I took off from the community with a friend Daniel who owns a taxi but after 10 minutes' drive the car broke down. I had to call a cousin with motorbike to pick me to the road side to get a car. When I got to Oyarifa, which was on the major highway to the airport, I had to alight and wait for Felix to take my letter. I spent one hour waiting for him until he finally came. I took off around 5:20pm. On this note coronavirus played a role to get me to the airport early because there was absolutely no traffic, I got to the airport a few minutes to 6pm.

At the Accra International Airport at the check-in point I had to wait. The lady who attended to me asked me the purpose why I am travelling to Japan. I gave her a couple of documents sent to me from ARI and a letter I wrote to the Japanese embassy in Ghana. Later she started using frustrating words on me like "you young guy, have you not heard of what is going on when Ghanaians are coming back to the country and citizens of other countries are going to their land you are travelling this hour, don't you know what is happening?" I had to call Mozart and the Travel Agent to tell them what was happening. At about 7:15pm the airline official gave me the green light and so I knew I was through to the second check point to be issued boarding pass. Once again they told me to wait and that she was going to call Nairobi to check if they would allow other citizens into their country. She also further said very frustrating words to me. At that moment all I knew was I was travelling to ARI and their word of discouragement will not stop me until all avenues have been explored. As was all evening, I had to call Mr. Adevu and the Travel Agent. The Agent told me to relax and that she had to call the manager on duty that night and call me back. When she called, I realized the lady who told me to wait was the manager on duty. At 8:45pm a confirmation came that they should allow only people in transit so she called me and asked me again and said "young man do you really want to travel at this hour?" At that moment I had no reply. After issuing the boarding pass to me she told me to run otherwise in the next fifteen minutes I will not be able to travel. When I got to the immigration I had to complete a form. I asked one of the staff to assist me but he requested for money and I just had to oblige so I gave him 10 cedis (1.8 dollars). At the last point which they had to check my hand baggage, the young man told me that he had closed and was just packing out when and I got there so I had to put something on the table so I gave out 10 cedis as well. In the meantime, there was announcement that the flight was waiting for passenger Joshua Ofori. I began to run and a lady met me and asked "are you Joshua and why are you late?" I tried to explain to her but she told me not to worry the flight is taking off in the next 15 minutes, relax, don't run.

I got to Nairobi the next morning. Once again my name was mentioned to step aside. They said the Government of Thailand was requesting a health certificate. I called Mozart immediately and the Agent as well. The latter told me if that is the instruction from the Government of Thailand then the only thing she could do was to change the flight for us. Some minutes later Mozart gave me an address and that if all hope was lost I should tell my new friends also travelling to ARI to take me there. On our way out one security advised us not go out from the airport otherwise we will be quarantined for two weeks; the only option he gave us was that we had to pass the night at the airport. We went back and slept on the floor and anyone who passed asked us questions. On the following day the Travel Agent booked us a new ticket with the Ethiopian Airline #319 but around 12:00pm when I went to check the flight display board there was no 319 on the screen. At this time my hope was lost because I didn't know what else to do. But finally we took off with a different flight #372 much to my relief. I am someone who always likes to question God "why me". At the end I always found out why it happened that way—faith is important. We eventually left Nairobi, transited through Addis Ababa and arrived safely in Japan landing at Narita International airport. I was expecting three days journey but it turned out to be five days. Oftentimes God's delay is not His denial. A delay does not mean God is denying you; it just means God is preparing you for the future.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

6-4 Jessica Bishop
6-5 Wally Cleaveland
6-9 Harry Owen
6-19 Janette Hosford
6-17 Maurine McKibben
6-21 Caitlin Small
6-22 Zack Nunnery
6-26 Betty Herrell



JUNE PREACHING SCHEDULE

Virtual worship happens every Sunday via Zoom

June 7/Trinity Sunday

"We live in community"

2 Corinthians 13:11-13, Matthew 28:16-20

VIRTUAL COMMUNION

June 14

"This isn't a suggestion"

Matthew 9:35 –10:4, Matthew 10:5-15

June 21/Father's Day

"Found and lost"

Romans 6:1b-11, Genesis 12:8-21

June 28

"Credo"

Romans 6:12-23, Matthew 10:40-42

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