

The Epistle of St. Paul's

May 2020

In This Issue

Page 1

From the Pastor's Desk

Pages 2-3

Updates

Community Items

Page 4

Birthdays

Preaching Schedule

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From The Pastor's Desk...

Another month, another newsletter, and still we are faced with an uncertain future as we continue to live in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic. So many unknowns remain: When will we be able to gather again in the sanctuary for worship? Will there be a second wave of the virus? How many of our countrymen will die before this is all said and done? Who among us feels safe and secure in their home, their finances, or in their health? What I do know at this point is that we are still the church – the church that is active in the world, albeit at the moment a virtual world.

As I sat down to write this Epistle article, I was listening to a recording of music composed by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. This particular piece, *Motettorum Liber Quartus Quinque Vocibus Ex Cantus*, was written in Venice in 1584. It is moving collection of motets based on the Song of Songs which offers witness to the love of God. Think about this. There I was, listening to music that had been written 436 years ago, which had been coupled with words that had been written at least 1,000 years before Palestrina. That's at the very least close to 3,000 years ago! And I was listening to this beautiful music while typing on a computer, in an office, thousands of miles from the source of either the music or the words I was hearing.

Why is this worth mentioning? What we say or do, write or sing, paint or build, lasts in ways we cannot possibly imagine. In the pages of the Bible, a collection of writings compiled over centuries, we see people, just like you or me, who wrote down words that we are still reading several thousand years later. We're reading books that were printed using technology that is based on ideas that are nearly 600 years old. We are listening to music that is being transmitted in a way that emerged from the telegraph invented in the 1830s.

And, this is where I make the connection to St. Paul's UMC: we are United Methodists, part of the branch of Christian practice that goes back to the Wesleys in England in the 1700s. They were part of the Anglican tradition that had roots in the Protestant Reformation (well, or so Henry VIII claimed) that was begun by Martin Luther 503 years ago (this October 31). Luther had emerged from the Catholic Church which took as its charter the instructions given to Peter by the Lord Jesus Himself more than 1,900 years ago. And Jesus was part of a faith tradition that traced its roots back to Abram and Sarai who first set out from Ur, obeying God and seeking the God in a land and in a manner they'd never known before.

The bottom line is that each of the people who wrote what we read in the Bible, each inventor of devices that make our world possible and each stream of human interaction has made possible who we are today. This begs the question that each of us should be answering daily: What am I doing that will impact future generations as I

Continued on page 2

have been impacted by generations before me?

Each person reading this newsletter has something to offer, some word to utter, or some deed to be done, that will build upon the legacy passed down to us through the ages. Each of us has the ability and the means to transmit the image of God to this and future generations. Who you are matters because you matter to God, who God is matters because God matters to you. The question then becomes this: When you come before God and give an account of the stewardship of your life, will you be able to proclaim – You are worthy, O Lord, to

On May 3 (10:00 AM), we will celebrate as God's people in a unique offering of Holy Communion.

Please have on hand some form of bread/cracker (can be any type or style) for each person present and something to drink (doesn't have to be grape juice). Following the morning message I will lead us through an abbreviated Great Thanksgiving.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is a means of grace in our Wesleyan tradition. Through it we experience the mystery of God's prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. In this meal we experience Christ fully present to us as we come to the Table with penitent and grateful hearts to remember what God has done through Jesus Christ for our sake and the sake of the whole world. Through Holy Communion, we are brought into saving relationship with Christ and with one another as members of Christ's body across time and space. In these times when we cannot meet in person, I believe it is important to offer one another this vital means of grace.

Especially in this time of physical separation from one another, Holy Communion can be a conduit of God's healing power. We remain open to what God is teaching us in this moment. We believe in the importance of being community, present together at the Table of our Lord, repentant of our sin and seeking to live in peace with one another.

I believe that this opportunity to share in this sacrament will aid in our efforts to find new ways to bring the means of grace to God's people knowing that the Holy Spirit who alone can make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, is unfailingly with us.

Prayer for Pentecost

We are in a challenging time under the cloud of this pandemic. And yet, we are an Easter people who live in the knowledge that our God is with us in the midst of all that life sends our way. As we move through the season of Easter and make our way toward the Day of Pentecost (this year on May 31), you are invited to pray this hymn, written by Charles Wesley for Whitsunday (another English name for Pentecost).

Away with our fears, Our troubles and tears
by Charles Wesley

Away with our fears,
our troubles and tears:
the Spirit is come,
the witness of Jesus returned to His home.

Our advocate there
by His death and his prayer
the gift has obtained,
for us He has prayed, and the Comforter gained.

Our glorified Lord
has given His word
that His Spirit will stay,
and never again will be taken away.

Our heavenly guide
with us shall abide,
His comforts impart,
and set up His kingdom of love in our heart.

The heart that believes
His kingdom receives,
His power and his peace,
His life, and His joy's everlasting increase.

When Will We Gather Again?

Unfortunately, St. Paul's leadership cannot give a definite date when in-person worship services will resume. Certainly we cannot meet in large numbers until Governor Polis lifts restrictions on gatherings of 50 people or more. We will also consider the recommendation of the Bishop and other district leaders. Currently the Bishop is advising suspending in-person worship until the end of May: **"As we continue to monitor rates of COVID-19 infection throughout the Mountain Sky Conference, as well as look at models for removing Shelter in Place Restrictions, I am updating my request to keep our churches closed at least through May 2020."** We will also consider the unique needs of the St. Paul's community before making any final decision.

Be assured that when the building *does* reopen, our cleaning service will do a thorough cleaning and disinfecting. We will also adhere to any sensible guidelines for safety suggested by the Bishop, the Governor, and others who are following the advice of experts.

Meanwhile, we will continue to worship and fellowship online. Our church is still a vital—if virtual—community! Check the blog, Facebook, YouTube, and our website for opportunities to connect.

Current Status of St. Paul's

- Office is closed. Building use is extremely limited. The preschool offers limited childcare two mornings per week for children of essential workers.
- Administrative work is being done remotely. Email the church office with questions, concerns, and prayer requests (office@saintpaulsboulder.org).
- The food pantry is stocked with resources for those who require assistance. King Soopers cards are also available. Food pantry is by appointment only (with Pastor Charles).
- Our blog (www.bolderstpauls.blogspot.com) and Facebook page (@bolderstpauls) are updated daily with online resources. The calendar, found on our website (www.stpaulsboulder.com) is a where to see what you can expect to happen in the weeks and months to come.
- The Wired Word study is emailed each Thursday. Contact Pastor Charles if you're interested in receiving this study that looks at current events through the lens of scripture.
- On Sundays, we meet for worship via Zoom (online meeting). The link and password are emailed every week.
- Pastor Charles records the sermon each week and posts it on our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJAOAiYsJw1TVrzYvRjROA/playlists>).
- St. Paul's yoga class has moved online. Find a video on our YouTube channel.

Monthly Events

Ladies Lunch Bunch will NOT meet in May.

Men's Breakfast will NOT meet in May

Sew What will NOT meet in May.

The theater performance scheduled for May 7 has been cancelled. Judy has opted for "patron credit," which would apply for any performance we choose to attend in the future. At any time she can change that and get refunds. Thank you for your flexibility.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

5-1 Jessica Betts
5-11 Anna Dahlstrom
5-12 Joey Revier
5-14 Louise Cook
5-20 Sandi Cook
5-21 Pat Cleaveland
5-22 Suzanne Polacek
5-27 Doris Steiner
5-27 Donna Wasson



MAY PREACHING SCHEDULE

Virtual worship happens every Sunday via Zoom

May 3: *"Where have we seen this before?"*
 Psalm 23, Acts 2:42-47

VIRTUAL COMMUNION

May 10 (Mother's Day): *"What to do, what to do?"*
 John 14:1-14, 1 Peter 2:2-10

May 17: *"Is this promise for real?"*
 Acts 17:22-31, John 14:15-21

May 24: *"Oh, for a heart like that!"*
 Acts 1:6-14

May 31 (Pentecost): *"Be careful what you pray for"*
 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13, Acts 2:1-4, 14-21

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