

St. Paul's Lutheran
Church ELCA

401 Mill Street
Wilton, Wisconsin 54670



November December 2020
Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Christ's Calling Card

Pastor Cathleen Morris



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
As I begin my letter to you today, I can't help but to think about how much has changed in our lives this year. None of us would have imagined a pandemic that would last for months (and that will probably continue for several more months). All of us can think of many things that have changed in our lives that we hope will soon return. One such example, is family gatherings.

Fortunately, I have been able to spend time with my aunt and cousin's family in Onalaska, during the pandemic. They are my "bubble," and we have all been careful as we are looking out for each other's well-being. But I have not seen my older brother and sister-in-law since last Christmas. We had planned to meet during my vacation in early October, outside, socially distanced, at one of the Wisconsin State Parks. But my brother got the Coronavirus mid-week, and my sister-in-law developed what was considered a "probable case," a few days later. Fortunately, both of them had mild symptoms. But, needless to say, our family gathering was canceled! The reality and seriousness of the Coronavirus stays in the forefront of many of our minds on a daily basis. It reminds us of how quickly things can change in our lives. Yet, it also reminds us that we are not alone: God is with us in the midst of this pandemic. God is with us at all times!

Like many of you, I have heard news reports and read newspaper articles recommending that we not have family gatherings this year. I, like most of you, am taking this pandemic very seriously, so I will not be celebrating Thanksgiving with my brother, sister-in-law, and other family members from the Waukesha area with whom I normally celebrate. It is a hard reality to face for those of us missing being with many of our family members during the holidays. Yes, most of us wish that we could see them, as we wish that we could be together in the sanctuary of St. Paul's Lutheran

Continued



Church Council

Justin Arndt, President
John Ornes,
President Elect
Larry Ballwahn,
Secretary
Lori Brueggen,
Treasurer
Steve Brandau
Joel Arndt
Tim Deichler
Angie Gruen
Bud Osteboe

Looking Ahead

Christmas Eve Carol
Service 2:30 & 5:30

Pastor Cathy, Continued

Church for worship services. But, it is not wise and prudent for us to do these things right now. We need to love our neighbors as ourselves. This includes protecting ourselves from the Coronavirus, for our own well-being, and the well-being of others. But my message to you today is not about gloom. It is about **Thanksgiving!** How can we celebrate in these times when we cannot see, visit, or hug our family members and friends? We can call or Skype/ZOOM with them. We can email, text, or send a letter. We can praise God and pray to God to uplift our spirits and other's spirits during these challenging times! To encourage us to adopt a **spirit of Thanksgiving**, here are some Bible passages (NRSV) that we can memorize and recite, often.

"Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!" (Psalm 97:12)

"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever." (Psalm 107:1)

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations." (Psalm 100:4-5)

"I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High." (Psalm 9:2)

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

During Confirmation classes, when the students sometimes ask me why they need to memorize Bible verses, here is what I say: "We all have challenging times in our lives. Sometimes, we cannot put into words what we are feeling. We become overwhelmed with sadness or grief. During these times, we can recite Bible passages that we have memorized; passages that give us hope and encouragement in our times of need. Even if we don't have a Bible with us, we can use God's word to strengthen us and help us."

This is my message to all of you in this time of the pandemic and throughout your lives: Give thanks to God, for God provides hope and encouragement to you and to all who call upon God's holy name. God is with us now and always! God will not forsake us in our time of need! Let us praise God each and every day! Thanks be to God!

Peace,
Pastor Cathy

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Congregation pictures:

Contributed - Facebook

**The Website & Facebook page were developed & are administered by April Arndt

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Wilton continues to broadcast its 9am Sunday Church Service to parishioners and anyone with an FM radio (auto or home). Broadcast on 91.5 FM, the complete service, including music, may be heard at least as far as Main Street .

Drive in services will be held through November 15. Two Drive in Christmas Carol services will be held on Christmas Eve Day, December 24 2:30 & 5:30 pm.



FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT, JUSTIN ARNDT



COVID 19 AND CHURCH SERVICES

Once again, I hope that this newsletter finds everyone doing well. COVID-19 continues to turn our world upside down and shows no signs of slowing down. COVID cases in Wisconsin have jumped from an average of 727 cases per day at the beginning of September to an average of over 4000 cases per day this past weekend. In Monroe County, we have averaged over 100 cases a week in September and October.

We are currently holding drive-in services each Sunday at 9 am. We will continue holding these services until November 15th. At that point we will suspend weekly drive-in Sunday services until next year, probably restarting in March. We will, however, be holding drive-in Christmas Eve services at 2:30 pm & 5:30 pm. [These will be Christmas Carol based services and participation may be inside or outside the car, your choice. LB]

Why did we make this decision? As the weather continues to get colder, having an outdoor drive-in service becomes harder and harder. Why are we not moving services indoors? The La Crosse Area Synod has provided recommendation against gathering indoors in-person. As noted above, cases are at an all-time high with predictions of continuing to stay high throughout the winter. In addition, our congregation has a higher percentage of at-risk members than most congregations. With this information, the church council feels it would be irresponsible to move services inside. To help fill the void, Pastor Cathy will continue to prepare biweekly letters to the congregation and weekly sermons.

We know that people are looking forward to getting back together, and we hope to soon. Until that time, we appreciate your continued support.



WORSHIP NOTES FOR

November/December

The following are the Scripture readings that we will be sharing during the months of November and December, 2020.

Nov. 1 – All Saints Sunday

Micah 3:5-12; Psalm 43;
1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:1-12

Nov. 8 – 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Amos 5:18-24; Psalm 70;
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13

Nov. 15 – 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18; Psalm 90:1-8, 12;
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30

Nov. 22 – Christ the King Sunday

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a;
Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46

Nov. 29 -1st Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;
1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

Dec. 6 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Dec. 13 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Dec. 20 – 4th Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 27 – 1st Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 61:10--62:3; Psalm 148;
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

November

Sun., 1st Drive-in Worship 9:00 am
Sun., 8th Drive-in Worship 9:00 am
Wed., 11th Veteran's Day – Thank a Veteran
Sun., 15th Drive-in Worship 9:00 am
Mon., 23rd Shoebox Collection
Thurs., 26th Happy Thanksgiving!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

December

Sat., 5th Blood Drive, 7:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Thurs., 24th 2:30 pm Christmas Eve Service
5:30 pm Christmas Eve Service
Fri., 25th Merry Christmas

BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARIES

November

1st Florence Dougherty
3rd Carlee Niedfeldt
4th Gail Riedesel
5th Diane Gloede
8th Lori and Rick Brueggen
11th Camden Niedfeldt
Julie and John Acker
15th Pam and Steve Brandau, Sr.
18th Justin Arndt
20th Gideon Young
26th Jacob Picha
27th Lori and Joel Arndt
28th Karen and John Arzt
29th Gannon Tormoen



December

2nd Tammy Roscovious
4th Dixie Arndt
5th Tanya Niedfeldt
7th Branden Fleming
9th Jenna Picha
11th Angel Brueggen
12th Emily Bever, Steve Brandau, Sr.
13th Dan Buchholz
17th Julitta Arndt
19th Barb and Ron Savall
20th John Ornes
21th Richard Krause
22nd Kari Lydon; Bev and Dale Graunke
23rd Rob Ross
27th Makayla Zimmerman
29th Renee Mayne
30th Seth Tormoen
31st Cooper Powell



Covid-Careful Confirmation picture from Bishop Arends' Facebook page

Left Row: Mark, Sarah & Marah Gruen, Pastor Cathy Morris, David, Jennifer & Brooklyn Gruen

Right Row: Rachel, Ryan & Ayawyn Conner, Bishop Jim Arends, Travis, Ann & Vanessa Anderson

What is confirmation? [...Affirmation of baptism....]

From Living Lutheran Magazine - August 11, 2014]

At their affirmation of baptism, confirmands are asked to make this promise for themselves: "...to live among God's faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth." The process of preparing people to affirm these promises can take many forms, including classes and increased involvement in congregational life. The process of confirmation takes many forms and varies from congregation to congregation, but the end goal is the same: to prepare people to boldly and confidently make those promises, affirm their baptisms and continue to live out their faith in the church.

Drive-Up Chicken Dinner Fundraiser a HUGE SUCCESS!!

Council member, Lori Brueggen, approached the full council at the July meeting with regard to the possibility of holding a fundraiser, in view of the financial impact anticipated with regard to COVID-19 and the lack of services. No objections were raised and Nalani agreed to provide assistance. Lori figured we should be able to sell 300 tickets.

The key to the success was Lori's determination that we would need advance ticket sales. That way, we would know exactly the number of chicken halves to order, and not find ourselves with an extraordinary amount of leftover food. The tickets were prepared, distributed for sale and October 1 set as the final count date as we needed a two-week timeframe to order the chicken. To make a long story short, we sold 540 tickets and ordered 17 cases of chicken (544)!!

We worked with St. Paul's Wilton American Legion members who were able to barbecue at their Wilton location, as well as the Legion site in Ontario. In view of the noon start time of the Packer-Viking game, we felt it best to have all the chicken ready to go by our 11:00 AM serving time.



Now, for a little background on how we pulled this off!!! Several ladies from the church boiled and cooled 10-15 pounds of potatoes for a total of 120 pounds. We hard boiled some 44 dozen eggs, all of which were donated by Terina Laufenburg, and on Friday we chopped/sliced/diced eggs, potatoes, and celery. On Saturday, Lori made up 12 batches of sauce and all ingredients were combined and cooled. The cranberry sauce was placed in individual containers, refrigerated, and the rolls and butter were packed in sandwich bags.

Sunday morning arrived and by 6:00 AM the baked beans were heating in the roasters. Later in the morning the beans were dished up into separate containers.

By the time worship was over, we were ready to send our folks home with their meals. By 11:00 AM ticketholders were encouraged to drive down Center Street, where they would turn their tickets over to Nalani and a post-it note with the meals purchased was placed on their windshield, then to proceed to the corner of Mill & Center where our students would hand them water, and finally to continue alongside to the curb alongside the Center Street basement entrance and be handed their meal(s). Worked pretty slick and folks had as short a waiting time as we and they could have hoped for.

We ended up with an approximate income of \$2,500.00 from ticket sales. Our overall income from the fundraiser is \$4,080.42, as a result of donations from Thrivent Financial, Troy Reineke, Sonnenburg Funeral Home, Tom & Nancy Larson, and folks who either gave an extra amount when buying their ticket or refused to take change from a twenty or fifty dollar bill.

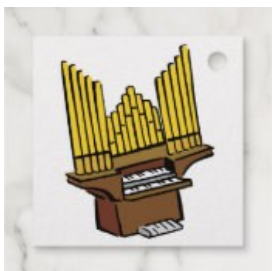
If we attempt to list all the names of the folks who helped in any way we will inadvertently leave someone out, so rather than offend anyone, we just want to say THANKS.

We had so much fun, Lori has now proposed we make this an annual endeavor and is looking to April 2021 as our next fundraiser date. Nalani

Organ Repair Update

We generally have room in the balcony for a good number of folks to sit in the pews. Well, not right now! The pews and the floor beneath them currently hold all but the 12 large wooded pipes from the organ chamber. The bellows have been repaired and returned to the balcony. The new soundboard is here, but the balcony looks like WW III just hit!! What will happen next??

Relax, we have plan. Fred Hermes, our contractor, is currently painting the floor of the chamber. Next, Fred with help from Steve Brandau will paint the walls up to the ceiling and perhaps the ceiling itself. Steve has taken care of patching and plastering the areas in the ceiling that have leaked over the years. In fact, he did such a good job we can report there was no leakage during the recent heavy downpours!!

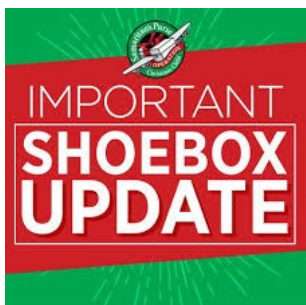


The next phase will be for Fred to return the pipes, repaired bellows and new soundboard to the chamber and painstakingly reconnect the electric one note, one rank, at a time. While we will not be holding services in the sanctuary before next March, we anticipate this project to be complete by Christmas.

So, where do we stand financially on this project? Glad you asked. We have raised \$9,242.00 from gifts and offerings to-date. You will recall we figured around \$10,000.00 would cover the repair of the bellows and unforeseen costs related to the bellows restoration.. While we did not anticipate replacement of the soundboard located in the organ chamber, it became overwhelming apparent the existing soundboard would not survive the necessary dismantling. The decision was made to use the Martalock Sustaining Fund to replace the soundboard and continue seeking gifts and donations to cover the entire project.

We don't have a final figure just as yet, but we are probably looking at an additional \$7,500.00 to cover everything. Remember a time when you were in the sanctuary and were listening to the organ. Perhaps it is Christmas and you hear "Joy to the World", or Easter and hear "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today!", or a funeral and hear "Abide With Me". St. Paul's has been blessed by earlier generations who understood the beauty of the sound of a pipe organ. If you are able to help in completing the fundraising for this project, we would be grateful. Nalani

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX PROJECT



Do you need a shoebox? Let Nalani or Greg know, and we will get one to you. Do you need supplies for your shoebox? We have crayons, pencils, pencil sharpeners, erasers, and scissors in the church basement. We also have shirts and some basketball swishy shorts in various sizes. Let us know your needs and we will get supplies to you.

We will be collecting and packing shoeboxes through noon on Monday, November 23. Don't worry if you aren't ready to return your shoebox on our last drive-in service of November 15.

We will make arrangements to have you either drop your shoebox at the church or we'll stop by your house, whatever is most convenient for you.

We know some folks object to the \$9.00 donation request. Please don't let that stop you from providing what may very well be the only gift a child ever receives as a Christmas gift. And don't forget, "The Greatest Gift" which is about Jesus and how much he loves them will also accompany every shoebox. Nalani

Projected General Fund Finances Through Ten Months

Our projected income in excess of expense through the month of October is \$3,128.50. Of course, we must also remember we are living off the benefit of the chicken dinner fundraiser. The true testimony of our support is that our expense exceeds our income by \$951.52. To be sure, we would be further behind if it had not been for confirmation. The many guests were generous in their donations.



We will continue services for 3 more weeks and collect offerings at those services. And, while we will have 2 services on Christmas Eve Day, it is doubtful we will have some 175-225 folks in attendance and surely won't have the offerings we have been accustomed to. Offerings, frankly, which generally bailed us out of the red for the year. Of course, in 2019, even a strong Christmas Eve offering could not pull us out of our dismal position. We ended the year having to use \$9,761.00 in our reserve funds to be whole.

If you would like a statement for your giving through October 31, please send an email to the church office (wiltonchurch@gmail.com), call the office and leave a message (608-435-6647), or call me at 608-387-2311 and leave a message if I don't answer. I will mail a statement to you.

Nalani

W-ELCA NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

The W-ELCA ladies met on September 15, the first meeting since January. 185 Personal Kits, thirty-five quilts, and approximately 200 school kits have been assembled for Lutheran World Relief and were delivered to the boxcar at La Crosse. Thank you to all who contributed. The quilting ladies have also met to start on quilts for next year. Covid-19 permitting, further quilting dates will be announced in the bulletin.



The next General Meeting will be Thursday, November 19 at 10 am in the Church Basement. All women of St. Paul's are members of W-ELCA and more participation would be welcome at all events. Arlis Ballwahn, Secretary

ST. Paul's Church Family

Without in person services, a number of people do not have regular contact with their church family. Members of W-ELCA have been trying to fill that void with our shut-ins, but the drive in services also do not meet the needs of some others in our congregation. Please contact Nalani or a council member if you would like someone from your church to contact you regularly during these trying times.

We apologize for not realizing this sooner.

Larry Ballwahn Secretary, Church Council



18/2020 **Pastor's Letter**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, during our worship service, the Confirmands will be sharing their faith papers with us. Perhaps, you too recall preparing your "Faith Statement" or "Favorite Bible Passage" paper when you were their age. It was an opportunity for you to reflect, write, talk with the pastor, re-write, think deeply about many questions, and eventually publicly state before the assembly what you believe.

Here are some of the questions that you may have considered at that time:

- * What do I believe about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit?
- * Why is the Christian faith important to me?
- * What makes my faith different from other beliefs that I hold?
- * Who and/or what has helped me to grow in my faith?
- * How will my faith make a difference in my life both now and in the future?

Of course, there are many other questions that one might consider, but asking the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions provide a good starting point. They are questions

that the Confirmands have considered, and they are questions that all of us may benefit from considering again and again throughout our lives.

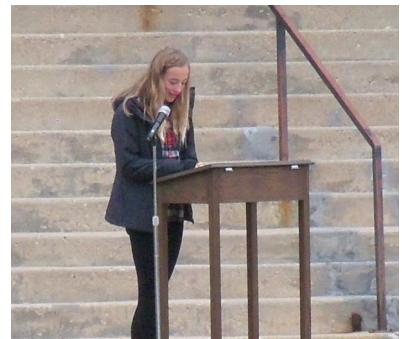
When we recall our own Confirmation and consider what we wrote when we were 13 or 14 years old, we may reflect on how our faith has changed. We may ask--Have I grown in my understanding of the one, Triune God? Has my faith been an important part of my life? Have I looked to others in this faith community as role models? Have I helped others--children, youth, adults--to grow in their faith? Have I in the past placed God first and foremost in my life?

Do I intend in the future to place God first and foremost in my life?

God welcomes us with open arms to experience the richness of life as children of God. As we listen to the Confirmands' words today, may we too be reminded of the importance of our faith in the one, Triune God.

Thanks be to God. Pastor Cathy

Complete Faith Statements are in the October 25 Bulletin (on the website)



Inviting people to journey with Christ's
family in spreading God's love and
mercy.

Christ's Calling Card
St. Paul's Lutheran
Church



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
"A Welcoming Place for over 125 years"
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