

United Methodist Church Newsletter

JANUARY

2021

stpaulneunitedmethodistchurch.com



Office Hours
Tuesday-Friday
9:00 a.m.—3:00 pm
754-4247

Staff

Rev. Dr. Susan Murithi

Church Secretary
Carrie Hancock

Custodian
Integrated Life Choices
Call Office

Committee Chairpersons:

Admin Council
Mikaleh Esquitin

Board of Trustees
Janet Thomsen

Finance
Dave Snow

Staff/Parish Relations
Bob Rasmussen

Worship
Darla Voigt

Mission-Outreach
Mary Ann Rickertsen

UMM
Dave Snow
Tom Knutson

UMW
Charlene Craig
Carol Phillips

Education
Nancy Harrington

VBS
Vacant

Auditor
Larry Hurlburt

January 2021 Newsletter- Searching for Purpose

Happy New Year! I hope we are enjoying this season that God has gifted to us to celebrate, even though we have had a tough year. Thinking about this newsletter, I got inspired by Luke's gospel, chapter 2: 41-52. It is the story of Jesus at 12 years of age, accompanying his parents to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover according to the custom. Scripture reports that after the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. After three days, they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. They questioned his choice to stay behind in the temple while they searched for him, to which he responded, "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

While Jesus' parents search for him, he too is searching; Jesus is on a search for a different thing. He is discovering his mission as the Son of God. He is sitting at the feet of the rabbis asking all the questions that have been lingering in his mind, then going silent and pondering what he heard, and then asking more questions. At 12 years, Jesus is conscious of his divine mission. His place as God's son and his calling to participate in God's work. He wants to know his whole purpose on earth. He wants to know why he is here and what the Father wants of him because he is eager to please his Father.

We are headed to a new year. Hopefully, it is going to be a more favorable year. We also hope to be better in the coming year. We want to make 2021 a successful year, so we have new year resolutions. We want to be better in treating our bodies, exercising, eating healthy, being better parents, better sons or daughters, being better employees or employers, better at our finances, and just being better human beings. But maybe our new year resolutions need to extend further to our spiritual welfare. Perhaps we can resolve to find out the purpose for which we were made, the purpose for which God wants us here in 2021. We could discover the reason why God has given us the privilege to see a new year.

Remember, whatever your resolve for the coming year, put into account the words in **Proverbs 3:5-6** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Thus, we cannot trust our abilities. We need God's strength to succeed. It does not matter whether it is a significant resolution or just a simple change. We will not lean on our knowledge, experience, past successes, or social status. We seek to recognize God's sovereignty in your lives. 2020 taught us that better than any other year has ever taught us. My prayer for all of us is that the Lord will guide all our resolutions and plans in the year 2021. Also, may we find our purpose for this new year; let's not go into the new year blindly. Sit down with the lords' word, sit down with Jesus, seek his counsel, have a time of prayer, quiet, and reflection. Search for your purpose. **Happy 2021 Y'all!** Amen.

Pastor Susan

We are starting a new prayer request list. If you would like your name added to this list, please let the church office know.

Thank you



Note: We can only publish prayer concerns with the permission of the people involved. Also, the Pastor often does not find out about hospitalizations. HIPPA regulations do not allow the hospital to call unless they are requested to do so. Please give us a call (Church 754-4247) if you or someone you know is in the hospital or desires a call. Thank you for your help.

United Methodist Church of St. Paul

MISSION STATEMENT

‘Making and Nurturing Disciples’

On January 17th, 2021 there will be a children’s baptism during worship. Please join us in person or online for this joyous occasion!

Prayer Group

A prayer group has started on Wednesdays, from 11am-12pm in the sanctuary of the church. Pastor Susan strongly encourages us to find time to join with other believers for prayer within the week. We will pray for each other, our families, our community and God’s world. This group will start up again on January 20th in 2021.



Sunday

Worship time 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.*

Adult Bible Study

Sunday morning 9:00 am *

Children’s Education

Sunday School 11:00 am.

*New time –after Worship

Youth Group

Wednesday evenings 6:15 pm
during school year

Thursday

Come ‘n Go Coffee 10:00-11:00*

***Fellowship and Come and Go Coffee time have been suspended until further notice.**

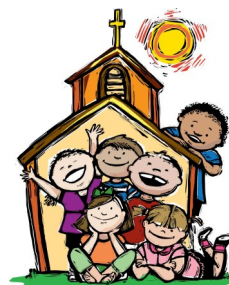
***Adult Sunday Bible Study has started! 9:00am Sunday mornings**

Youth Group will start up again on Wednesday, January 6th at 6:15pm

Adult and Children’s Sunday School starts up on January 3rd

Adult-9am

Children’s- after Worship



**St Paul UMC
Administrative Council Minutes
Zoom Meeting
December 15th, 2020**

In attendance: Pastor Susan Murithi, Mikaleh Esquitin, Carrie Hancock, Mary Ann Rickertsen, Deb Wells, Dave and Nancy Harrington, Darla Voigt, Dave Snow, and Tom Powell.

Pastor began the meeting at 7:00 pm with a prayer.

Mikaleh entertained a motion to accept the October minutes. Mary Ann made a motion, and Tom seconded. Motion passed.

Pastor's report: Pastor reported on how the year has been going. She wanted to thank the Safety Team for all the work they have been doing. She has been trying to do as many visits as she can at this time. She stressed to continue to keep in touch with people in the church (from our Care Members list) especially those that are having health/other challenges. The Youth group has been doing great, even though it is suspended at least until the new year. The Youth in the community have really enjoyed it. The Charge conference this year was very different this year, only lasting approximately 20 minutes. Carrie is working on getting the Charge Conference booklets put together. The Wednesday Prayer group has been learning lots of ways to pray differently. It will conclude on Dec. 16th for the fall session. The Howard County Emergency manager dropped off about 4 dozen smaller bottles of sanitizer for church use. We shouldn't need sanitizer for a while, thanks to them. Pastor is planning on having Consecration Sunday in January some time. Also, some baptisms will be done in January, so if anyone knows of a family that would like a child baptized to please let Nancy or Pastor know.

Pastor Susan said she would like each committee to create a vision or goal for the new year, what they hope to achieve. As this is nothing the committees have done in the past, please feel free to ask Pastor Susan for guidance.

Finance: Treasurer's report was given by Tom Powell: Operating Checking account \$20,599, Trustees Maintenance Acct. \$5,548, Resources Available \$63,712, Giving \$16,206, Total Income \$37,154 Total Expenditures \$14,607, Current Month Gain/(Loss) \$22,547 and the Year to Date Gain/(Loss) is \$18,161. Tom mentioned that the PPP Cares Act Loan that we had received from the government this year has been forgiven. Mikaleh entertained a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Deb made a motion, Darla seconded. Motion passed.

Carrie reported what Francine had reported on pledge cards from her report in Finance.

Francine had reported that she had received about 20 pledges so far. Some people had increased their amounts in giving, but she also said that a few of the members who gave on a regular basis had passed away. Carrie also reported that the milk fund currently has about \$185 in it, and the Children's fund (for Heifer International) has \$369.30. This leaves approximately \$130 to reach their goal of \$500 to purchase a heifer for a needy family. Pastor really wished that we could reach this goal and get that money sent out soon. We may use some of the Christmas Eve offering to go to this goal.

SPPRC: Pastor reported on how the custodians are doing. They seem to be doing a fairly good job, with a few issues that they correct as they are notified. Susan also mentioned that the SPPRC met in October and had decided to give her a raise. After consideration on Pastor Susan's part, she then decided to hold off on it and to re-evaluate later on in 2021 as the finances were unsure at this time.

Trustees: Carrie reported that she had received the taxes for the parsonage for 2020. The total for this is \$2,635.96. In last week's Finance meeting it was decided to pay these out of the Trustees Maintenance account, as this is where the rent from the renter's was being put into. Carrie also reported that the fridge in the church kitchen is not cooling again. Janet Thomsen had called Restaurant Supply (where it was purchased) and a repairman had come out, refilled it with freon, but said it most likely has a leak somewhere. Janet was going to call back and see where to go from there.

Memorial: Deb reported that the Advent Candles and wreath had been received, and they are beautiful. She also said that they will be giving out scholarships from the Memorial account soon.

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Education: Nancy reported that instead of a Christmas program this year, they would do a Christmas Scavenger hunt. They are hoping to involve more of the community.

The teachers are still rotating Sundays for Sunday School, with two teachers each Sunday, one for each age group. The Youth Group is not meeting right now, and with the Covid situation will be re-evaluated in January to see if they will be able to meet safely.

Mission/Outreach: Mary Ann reported that the Boo Bash was a better turn out than they expected, passing out about 400 bags to kids. Dave Snow reported on the Christmas Cheer program. They had 15 families and 31 children, and it is going very well. The families will need to pick up their goods on December 18th from 10-2.

Office: Carrie reported that she received the agreement from Paul Mueller's office for 2021. This cost will go up from \$250/month to \$265/month. During the Finance meeting, it was voted on to go ahead with this agreement for 2021. Carrie also wanted to let everyone know she received the forms necessary for the parsonage to be exempt next year, since Pastor Susan is now living there. After discussion, and speaking with the County Assessor's office, everyone was okay with Carrie filling out and signing these forms. They are due Dec. 31st.

Worship: Darla reported that the pumpkins for Fall décor were from Plackes this year. The Christmas décor was put up by the Worship committee, and seemed to work smoothly. Nancy asked about if the Safety committee needed to do anything extra for Christmas eve. There was a discussion on how many people we might expect, and what our capacity is during this time.

Old Business: None that hasn't been discussed

New Business: There was discussion on the Christmas Eve offering that will be collected. Epworth Village came up, as well as the Food Pantry. Pastor Susan stressed the children's fund only needing \$130 more dollars, and that this may be an option also. Pastor knows of several ministries in Kenya that are needing help, including orphaned children.

Pastor also had a detailed report on her research for the parsonage. These were her findings:

The discussion was first brought up at the August 11th 2020 Finance meeting by Brenda Starkey.

Brenda brought up that the church will need to decide something on the parsonage soon, whether a short term or a long-term basis. She was asked to make a proposal (as a Co-chair on the Trustees committee) to bring to Admin Council on the different ways the church could go on this topic. (See this Proposal attached to the September Ad Council meeting minutes in the church office). At the September Finance/Admin Council, Brenda's proposal had 4 main ideas:

Sell and replace with a more modern/updated home when/if available

Remodel (\$25,000-\$30,000) and sell down the road (5+years)

Sell and build new next to church

Sell and just pay monthly stipend of \$1,000 (All proceeds from the sale of a parsonage-can ONLY be used for a new parsonage or for rental stipend)

The house was assessed at \$135,500, and could realistically get \$150,000-\$160,000. The question came up as how much the church could handle 'loan wise'. At September's Ad council meeting, Brenda proposed to the Ad Council that they work toward the immediate repairs (Master Bathroom remodel, adding an Egress Window, fixing electrical outlets). The Finance had recommended that the current parsonage be sold and a new parsonage be bought, but everyone was in agreement that this is something that needs to be thought about and discussed. At the time of the September Ad Council, it was decided to bring up again at future meeting(s).

Pastor Susan, at that time, touched base with the DS Lance.

He recommended to the church that we check the Great Plains website for Guidelines in this matter. He made some crucial points, including calling attention to the Book of Discipline of the UMC. In the case of the purchase of a parsonage, the Board of Trustees shall either:

Purchase a parsonage that is on ground floor level: a) One room that can be used as a bedroom by a person with a disability; b) One fully accessible bathroom; and c) Full accessible laundry facilities.

OR

Purchase a parsonage without the accessible features for people with disabilities specified above and remodel within one year's time. The requirements provide a basic standard of living which parsonage families reasonably expect in every appointment.

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There were several routes to go from here including: Talk to people who builds houses and get their insights, if church members could help with the building? As in Labor? What are the city codes in extending the house, even an older home? Another option would be there are some premade homes that may save some money.

Things to consider in this situation: The homes need to be ADA Compliant- check parsonage standards on the Great Plains website. If it comes to selling the current parsonage, Tom Lucas will come and approve it. If we agree to build a house and needs more than 20% on top of the money we have, we will need a church or charge conference to discuss it because it requires a financial commitment from the members. The church would need to gather documents needed from the last 3 years, make sure there is a healthy pattern of giving. From the information from builders and Real estate professionals, Pastor Susan found out these insights: Building a new house is not a good choice at this time. Prices have sky-rocketed.

The cost of 1700-2000 sq. feet would cost between \$200,000-\$250,000.

Building that same house would take \$300,000.

Lots right now are going for around \$15,000-30,000. We could sell a portion of the church lot to help pay for some (maybe \$20,000).

Church labor would help, but may hinder the process as well. It may be wise to wait for some time before we build, give us an opportunity to figure our funding.

Buying would be a good option. In St. Paul, it is easy to sell a house, but not so easy to find one, so this will need to be taken into consideration. Maybe building a house at a later time would be a good option. This is the conclusion on Pastor's report on the parsonage at the meeting.

After Pastor's Susan report, the idea on trying to find a place to rent for the pastor to live in would be difficult, so a lot of people did not like that idea. Pastor's one major concern for the near future with the parsonage was the condition of the lawn/grass. It is very dry and in bad condition. She would like see something done in the next year. Discussion followed on this.

The topic of the parsonage will be something that will be brought up at future meetings to discuss further. As the new year approaches and our committees are changing, Carrie brought up that a letter to Citizens bank to change authorization for signatures needs to be done. Mikaleh made a motion to add Dave Snow and remove Evan Carlson from all of the church's Citizen's Bank accounts. This would allow Dave Snow to sign checks and have access to the bank accounts for the church. Dave Harrington made a motion and Mary Ann seconded. Motion passed. It was agreed that Tom Powell would stay on the accounts and therefore he can continue to sign checks as needed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Next meeting January 19th, 7:00 pm

November Attendance

Nov. 1st:	46 In-person 92 views/FB
Nov. 8th:	45 In-person 72 views/FB
Nov. 15th:	No In-person 168 views/FB
Nov. 22nd:	No In-person 123 views/FB
Nov. 29th:	42 In-person 93 views/FB

November Offering Totals

Nov. 1st:	\$4,101
Nov. 8th:	\$5,323
Nov. 15th:	\$4,647
Nov. 22nd:	\$1,540
Nov. 29th:	\$610

*Please watch services on-line on Facebook under *United Methodist Church in St. Paul, Nebraska*. These services are now a live-streamed service! If you can't watch on Sunday Morning, you can always watch anytime under the "videos" section. We encourage you all to do so! Also kindly 'like' our church Facebook page and share our services with friends.

The **Food Pantry** here in St. Paul is always looking for food donations. Please help us stock the shelves. Any food or paper item is accepted but these items are in high demand every month.

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|-----------------------|--------------|
| Jelly | |
| Syrup | |
| Pancake Mix | Dish Soap |
| Cake or Brownie Mixes | Laundry Soap |
| Puddings | Pie Fillings |
| Jello | Ketchup |
| Toilet Tissue | Cereal |
| Mustard | Fruit |



Food Pantry hours

Saturday 9:00-11:00 am	Tuesday 4:00-6:00 pm
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Beginning in 2018, February will be the month for United Methodist Church to donate to the Food Pantry.



Food Pantry

The United Methodist Church is responsible for operating the Food Pantry every third Saturday from 9-11 am. If you could volunteer to help any one of these Saturdays, it would be greatly appreciated.

January 16th is our next work date. Precautions are taken to insure the health and protection of both the worker and the consumer.

Thank you, Theda Van Horn

Jan 1	Claude Sorlie	Jan 13	Emily Christensen
Jan 2	Russ Swigart	Jan 14	Ashley Meyer
Jan 5	Diane Johnson		Jeff Vogel
Jan 7	Maxine Hoselton	Jan 18	Martha Voigt
Jan 8	Darby Greenway	Jan 19	Cash Wemhoff
	Marvin Scwenk		Anthony Esquitin
Jan 10	Austin Starkey	Jan 23	Lisa Porter
Jan 11	Tim Ross	Jan 24	Erica Krauss
Jan 12	Becky Schwenk		

Adult Sunday School

will be starting a new book, *The Ten Commandments from the Backside*, by J. Ellsworth Kalas. They will begin this new study on January 3rd. If interested in joining, please let the office know so that a book can be ordered for you!



No Anniversaries



Christmas Cheer went well again this year! They had 15 families and 31 children that applied this year.



Thank you so much for your continued support of this community outreach. Because of you several families will have a much merrier Christmas! And also, a big thank you to the volunteers that helped make this happen.



Christmas Scavenger Hunt

In place of a yearly Christmas program, a Christmas scavenger hunt was done on December 20th. 14 cars took part and they were given a list of St. Paul décor and/or landmarks to find and return their lists. We hope that everyone who joined in enjoyed this event!

United Methodist Women

The United Methodist Women met on December 8th, at 1:30 pm with 9 members present. The meeting was called to order by Charlene Craig. Masks and social distancing rules were observed. Devotions were given by Marilyn Wahl. The UMW purpose was recited by the group. We are all trying to stay positive during this pandemic so members shared some uplifting thoughts with the group.

In the absence of Mary Ann, minutes from the October meeting were read by Carol Phillips. These were approved as read.

Treasurer's report was given by Jackie Cook. Beginning November balance \$1,037.69, end of year disbursements totaled \$720.00: Gift to Mission 30.00, Thank Offering 130.00, Epworth Village 160.00, Big Garden 60.00, Howard County Food Pantry 160.00, Salvation Army 60.00, Crisis Center 60.00, Hope Harbor 60.00 leaving a balance of \$317.69. Members were again reminded that we have had no fundraisers and few meetings. Because of this we are encouraged to increase our monthly giving so we can continue to make donations such as those listed above.

Old business: It was decided that next year instead of making and donating a quilt for the Epworth fundraiser we would donate some smaller items in addition to a financial donation.

Ursula gave an update on the decorations that were made for the Asera Care Christmas tree that is on display during the Fantasy of Tree display at Stuhr Museum in Grand Island.

It was decided at an Executive Board meeting to discontinue selling the greeting cards. We were all encouraged to buy some to reduce our inventory.

New business: Officers for 2021. The slate of officers was presented and accepted. Marian made the motion to approve the officers, Theda Van Horn seconded.

Charlene Craig and Carol Phillips-Co-chairs

Secretary: Mary Ann Rickertsen

Treasurer: Jackie Cook

Journey in Faith Devotions: Rotating members each meeting

Journey in Learning Reading Program: Marian Odabasi

Journey in Giving: Jackie Cook

Journey in Action: Marian Odabasi and Carol Phillips

Nominations: 2020 Ursula

Coordinators: Prayer chain: Jackie Cook, Work Group Connie Snow and Mary Ann Rickertsen, Quilters and Crafters, Ursula Sorlie and Carol Phillips

Carol will send this slate of officers to Roberta Cool for their records.

Charlene reminded us that the Prairie Rivers newsletter is available on line for everyone to access. This month there were some interesting stories relating to the pandemic, including some fundraising ideas.

It was decided that instead of a group gift for the minister and her family each member of the congregation will give a gift individually if they'd like.

Mission Minute was given by Marian Odabasi. She shared an article from the Response Magazine concerning the difficulties the Navajo population is experiencing during the pandemic.

Charlene read correspondence from Epworth Village, The Big Garden and Hope Harbor, Jane Olson, National CEO of UMW, encouraging us to give to the World Thank Offering.

The next meeting is tentatively set for January 12, 2021 at 1:30. Carol will lead the meeting, Marian will give devotions, there will be no refreshments that day. This may be changed to February 9, depending on the Covid virus.

Birthday and anniversaries: November 28, Mary Ann Rickertsen, November 30, 52nd wedding anniversary for Gary and Charlene Craig, December 2, Lory Thomson birthday, December 4, Ursula Sorlie birthday, December 14, Charlene Craig birthday.

Ursula Sorlie gave the lesson on Christmas Reflections, reading an article titled "A tale of three trees".

Meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm

There are two offerings today, Monthly UMW and Thank Offering

Refreshments were provided by Theda Van Horn. Marian Odabasi furnished each of us a small treat bag as well.





United Methodist Church Prayer Chain

Marilyn Wall	754-5100	Martha Voigt	754-4666	Jackie Cook	754-9115
Deb Wells	754-5620	Rose Ross	754-4993	Charlene Craig	754-5503
Nancy Harrington	754-5136	Darla Voigt	750-1401	Mary Ann Rickertsen	754-4038
Theda Van Horn	754-4541	Lory Thomsen	754-4286	DeEtte Lukasiewicz	750-0246
Cleo Edwards	754-4853	Charlotte Rasmussen	308-863-2281	Brenda Starkey	750-7967
Ashley Meyer	308-627-2808	Vanice Bahensky	754-7873	LuAnn Todd	308-380-5022
				Dorothy Jorgensen	754-4126

The purpose of the prayer chain is to offer special prayers for individuals in critical need. The chain cannot be activated without the permission of the family in need. Call prayer requests to the church office 754-4247. The prayer request will be called to the first person on these lists. Each caller then calls the next person on the list. If that person is unavailable, a call should be placed to the following name and contact made with the first party later in the day. Last name on list does not call anyone. We are in need of more people joining the prayer chain. Praying for each other is an important ministry that we can do for our church family. If you would be interested in becoming part of this mission, please contact the church office.

We are in need of more people joining the prayer chain. All you have to do is pray for someone as the requests are made. Please consider this request to help.

Just a note:

We are currently having in person worship. Social distancing precautions are still in place. A Safety video has been posted onto the church's Facebook page for reference. *Masks are still required at this time* for in-person worship.

School Children Milk Money

Our church is committed to the St. Paul Public Schools for those children who otherwise would not have it available. Please keep this mission in your prayers and consider donating to this wonderful cause. Make sure and note it on your check.



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January

