

St. Paul's News August 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Happy August! As part of one of my classes at MTSO, we were asked to prepare a reflection on what ministry and pastoring looked like during a pandemic. They asked us to do this for a couple of reasons. First, they wanted us to be able to share ideas with one another, as many churches in our denomination have yet to return to in-person worship and as we all are still trying to re-imagine what church can look like now. Secondly, they wanted us to have a record of the kinds of things that we did during this time for us to look back on.

When they told us that we should have a record, I immediately thought of St. Paul's and our love for history and I thought that this record could become part of our collective history and so I thought that I could include it in our newsletter.

My reflection was entitled "Pastoring During a Global Pandemic" and I thought I would share an excerpt with you.

"As a second career pastor, I have life experience and work experience and four years of pastoral experience, but none of these experiences could prepare me for pastoring during a global pandemic.

When our state shut down and businesses of all kinds were shuttered, we were called into a period of quick re-imagining. We were called to make decisions quickly on how we would continue to be "the church" while we couldn't be at church.

I recall the day that our Bishop instructed us that it would not be safe for us to worship in person. We initially thought that a three-week shut down would suffice and that things should be back to "normal" soon. How wrong we were! I remember going to the church on that first weekend and recording just my sermon. My husband stood there with my iPhone in hand and he recorded my sermon. We

were not entirely sure what we would do with the recording, but we knew that we had to continue to preach the gospel in some way. Just stopping was not an acceptable course.

We took our recorded message and made a YouTube channel. That was the best way we could think of to distribute the videos. I am so grateful for my tech-savvy husband who made all of this just a bit easier and I can't even tally the hours that he has spent helping me with the technical side of things. I called each household in two out of my three churches (Pastor Amy handled Melmore) and I told everyone that I could reach to watch for a worship service that would come via e-mail.

That was how we kicked off our virtual worship services. The process has evolved over time. Now I record the worship service during the week and David edits the recording and then uploads it onto YouTube. I still pre-record worship, even though St. Paul's has returned to in-person worship, because I want people who are at home to be able to worship at the normal time. Trying to establish some sense of normality has been a focus of mine during this time.

For most of the time we were worshipping exclusively online, I recorded the worship service twice (once for Republic Trinity and once for St. Paul's). I utilized a photo of the sanctuary as my backdrop for each recording and I tried to incorporate people from each congregation in any way that I could.

Additionally, we did the following during the shut-down:

- Digital worship services recorded weekly (e-mailed and premiered live on Facebook. Interacted on Facebook with those watching live premiere to engage with folks)
- Digital announcement slides shown prior to worship video to keep people updated

- Solicited people to submit videos for children's moments and to act as liturgist
- Send copy of sermon transcript and bulletin to those without technology
- Easter worship service recorded on DVD and delivered to members
- Connection with members: Sending text messages, cards, e-mails and making calls. (Utilized a pastoral care spreadsheet and tried to make contact with each household at least one time every two weeks, alternating adults and children)
- Worship at home boxes (hand delivered 2 times during shut down)
- Holy week at home devotional packet delivered
- Drive-In Communion service
- Weekly Women's Bible study via zoom
- Faith and Film discussion group via zoom
- Committee meetings via e-mail and zoom
- Increased social media presence (including Facebook live sessions and devotional times)
- Creation of St. Paul's Youth Fellowship Facebook group with activities (Tevin Drosky helped with this.)
- Hosted online Youth Annual Conference outside in the parsonage yard
- Participation in district and conference meetings via zoom (including meetings with District Superintendent and ongoing participation in Learning Cohort, Geek Pastor learning sessions with Kelly Brown from EOC and had zoom meeting with local schools)
- Coordinated with First Presbyterian about distributing their pantry bags on Sharing Kitchen distribution days.
- Participated in local ministerial meetings via zoom, including meetings with health dept.
- Delivered graduation presents (devotional and cookies) to high school graduates and highlighted them on Facebook and during worship service.
- Had musicians come in and we recorded music so that people could have familiar organ music and hymns sung (used for online and outdoor worship services)
- Began having outdoor worship as soon as the DS gave me permission

- Hybrid VBS program at St. Paul's (group gathering for story and video and sent home with activity packet). At Home VBS packets for Melmore/Republic.

This list is not inclusive of all of the things that were done during the pandemic, but it offers an idea of the types of things that we did at St. Paul's. Rev. Chip Freed said in one of our conference meetings that the church was never closed at any point during the pandemic. The buildings were temporarily closed, but the church was deployed. I have thought of those words often during the days that I was discouraged. God promised in His word that His church would be built on solid rock and that nothing, not even the gates of Hades, would defeat it. God is making good on that promise each day during this time of uncertainty as His church, His people, stand firm in their faith and continue the work of God's son, Jesus Christ.

Blessings ~ Pastor Charlene



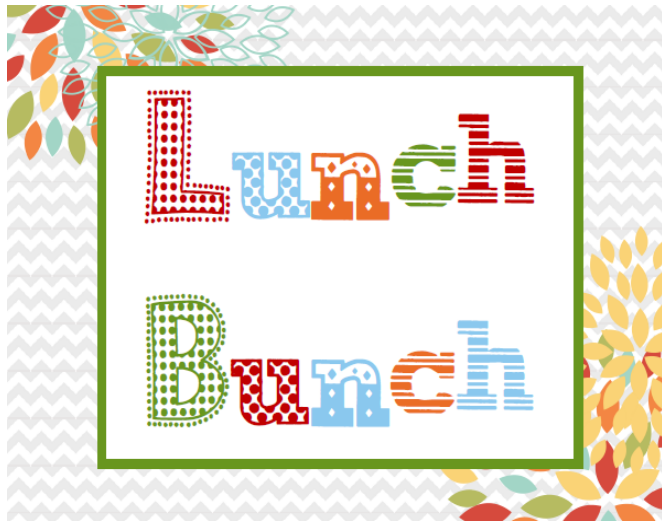
happy birthday!

August birthday celebrations:

Ann Harry 8-26

If you are over 80 years old and would like your birthday listed so we can celebrate you, please let the church secretary know.

Thank you!



If you would like to host Lunch Bunch on August 25th, please contact the church secretary.



If your son or daughter is in Third Grade or older and would like to serve as Acolyte, please contact Jill Lindhorst at (419) 443-0273.

Thank you!



OUTDOOR WORSHIP FOR CONFIRMATION



We are planning on celebrating confirmation with our 2020 confirmation class during an outdoor worship service on August 23rd. These young people worked hard to complete their confirmation class and we are excited to celebrate with them as they take this step in their faith journeys. Should it rain on August 23rd, we will celebrate confirmation the following Sunday, August 29th. Please come (BYOC- Bring Your Own Chair and an umbrella if it is really sunny) and celebrate with our confirmands. There will be refreshments to share after the worship service. Please maintain social distancing at all times. Assuming the mandate is still in place, masks must be worn if social distancing is not possible.

AJ Lindhorst

Charlie Garcia

Ryan Brown

Wyatt Crow

Ryann Arnold

Mystery Island - Tracking Down the One True God August 9th - 13th 6:30 pm-7:15 pm



This is how VBS will safely be taking place for the kids: the parents will be staying with their children during their time at the church, social distancing will be maintained, the music selection will be played for them, they will watch a video, have the bible story read to them and then take their craft/snack home with them. All this will take approximately 45 minutes at the church.

It's wonderful that VBS will still be able to take place this year! Thank you to Kyle Paxson, Brian Arnold, and all those behind the scenes for making VBS happen. Hopefully, we will have some pictures for our September newsletter....

Update of Youth Fellowship



Well it has been a busy month for the Youth Fellowship. The first week we discussed No Bummer Summer week 1 regarding family members, and how we should talk to them about God. We made beach bags as our craft and played a game in the gym that Dominic presented. Unfortunately, No Bummer Summer week 2 was cancelled for Sunday, July 26th due to not enough youth were able to attend.

The youth have been helping remodel the group room! First thing we did was go through everything in the room and got rid of things that were broken or damaged. Then we cleaned the walls and floors and painted. By the end of the week, July 24th, I organized everything and decorated. Hopefully, the room will be done in the beginning of August for the youth. Lots of long hours and hard work and the youth were great. Thanks to the parents and youth that have helped with the Youth Fellowship room.

Our meetings are every other Sunday from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm at the church. We usually play a game, eat snacks, learn a lesson, and make a craft. If you have any questions, please contact Tevin Drosky.

~ Tevin Drosky, Youth Fellowship Ministry