



Greetings from the Pastor

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

As I begin this newsletter, we are nearing the end of the season of Lent. In fact, this newsletter should reach most of you during “Holy Week” before Easter. The season of Lent is a time of preparation as we walk the journey of Christ’s ministry to the Cross. As an over-arching theme to my sermons, during this season, I have chosen to incorporate the lessons of Jesus’ divine nature with the nature of his humanness as depicted in Jesus’ Transfiguration which preceded Lent this year. I also strove to bring out Jesus’ divine and human nature by speaking about the miracles that he performed and the signs of humanness that he shown in his anger, tenderness and devotion to the people that surrounded him day-to-day. This morning, in my personal devotional readings, there was a theme of how we need to be real in our humanness towards others and love them, just as Jesus was real in his humanness and loved us. I would like to share some selected verses from Psalm 32 and Matthew 11: 2-19.

Psalm 32:1 begins with; *“Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”* And verse 32:5 tells us; *“Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and you forgave the guilt of my sin.”* Then verse 32: 11 sums up the psalm with; *“Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.”* To be real we need to be able to confess our sins to God and if we do we can be assured that he will forgive us.

Matthew 11: 2-19 tells about how John the Baptist, while in prison, has heard the wonders and good news about Jesus. John then sent word to Jesus and asks if he is the real deal. In verse 11:3 John asks; *“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”* Jesus then told John’s disciples: *“Go and tell John, what do you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them and blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”* Later as Jesus speaks to the crowd that is gathered around him, he says: *“John came neither eating nor drinking and the crowd said, ‘He has a demon.’ The son of Man came eating and drinking, and the crowd said; ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”* These verses, from the Gospel of Matthew, explain that we need to remember who we are as children of God and not follow the wisdom of the crowd or the secular world, for that wisdom may be flawed and unwise. We need to be who God has made us and that will be the real deal.

Pastor message continues on the back...



Pastor Message



I would like to share with you a reading from a well-known author whom some of you may know. This author wrote the children's story called "The Velveteen Rabbit." It is a story that many will remember and many will still love. This section of the story is about being loved and it is love that makes you Real.

The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and showed the seams underneath, and most of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out to string bead necklaces. He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their main-springs and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else. For nursery magic is very strange and wonderful. And only those playthings that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand all about it.

"What is REAL?" asked the [Velveteen]Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt,"

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

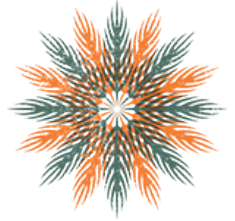
Sometimes it is amazing how well a children's story can say it so well. To love and be loved is what Jesus came to this earth to teach us and it truly is how we can be REAL!

Have a great April and as spring strengthens and the days warm look about and see who you can be real to and embrace those who are real to you.

Blessings always
Pastor Allen

Lay Leader Notes

By Cindy Morse



Greetings to my St. Paul church family----

As we look toward Palm Sunday and Easter with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. We should all know how blessed we are in our lives with family and friends as Christians living in America, that we can worship freely.

Long ago even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

His unchanging plan has always---- been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.

So we praise God for the wonderful kindness he has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved Son.

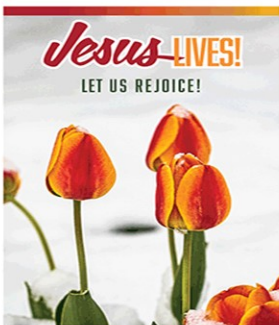
He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven....

God's secret plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ designed long ago according to his good pleasure.

And this is his plan.

At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because of Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us from the beginning, and all things happen just as he decided long ago.

He chose us to be fishers of men.



My wish is for all to have a blessed and happy Easter.

Cindy Morse



Outreach Opportunities



The Bible speaks so many times about helping the poor and giving aid to those in need. To our congregation here at St. Paul:

- ⇒ Thank you for all the Noisy coins and quiet paper on Noisy Sunday. Conditions for the hungry people there are more difficult, and the missionaries' lives are truly in danger.
- ⇒ Thank you for giving to Malawi emergency fund. Since their crops were flooded out and many lives lost, Kelly will once again be our hands and feet there to offer aid in the name of Jesus. We collected \$3350. Kelly is so appreciative.
- ⇒ Thank you for your Lenten and Easter offerings. These will be divided among Henderson Settlement in Appalachia, Heifer Project serving developing countries, and Iowa disaster for more local needs.
- ⇒ Thank you for your gifts to the Birthday Box. We use this for unexpected needs that we learn of. This week we were able to give emergency funds to a local family.

By the time you read this we will have finished watching the first series of The Chosen. These shows remind us that life in Jesus' time was very difficult, and He gave hope to them.

May you also be filled with this hope.

Come Join Us for the Performance

"Once Upon a Morning"

This musical cantata will be presented at the Dysart United Methodist Church on Sunday, April 16 at 7:00 p.m. Several of our church's singers are part of the choir. It is being performed after Easter because it tells the stories of the events after the Resurrection of the Lord.

Finance Update

March 5	\$2188.20
March 12	\$2916.99
March 19	\$2163.01
March 26	\$7087.00

Thank you
for your
continued support
to the general fund
and all the
programs of the
church.





United Women In Faith

April 2023

Spring is here, the Robins and Red Wing Black Birds have arrived. Soon God will be awakening all the trees, bushes, and flowers. Buds will soon be appearing on all of them. Perhaps this is the year that you are going to plant a garden or pick out some new flowers to brighten up your yard. The seed catalogs have arrived and it's time to get out and enjoy the beautiful weather.

The invitations have been sent out for the Senior High School Sunday, April 23. Scholarship applications were included. If you know of a Senior that did not receive one, please let me know.

April 6 we will be helping our local nursing home celebrate their April birthdays. This year we have four ladies celebrating. ; Patty Frank, Susan Foss, Gladys Weatherly, and our own Judy Frank. We will be providing four cakes and a small gift for each of them. We will be serving them cake and ice cream and visiting with them as they open their gifts. Let's make their birthdays more fun by sending them birthday cards.

April 15 is the District Spiritual Growth Day Apart at United Methodist Church at Independence, Iowa. This starts at 9:30 A.M. Please let me Pat Benda know if you would like to attend.

During Lent we are preparing our hearts and minds for Easter Sunday and what Easter means to our Faith and to our lives. This month I am sharing a reading from a Lenten Booklet that our church put together in 1984.

A TIME FOR REFLECTION, WORSHIP, AND CELEBRATION

"Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, even as He said...." Easter— Day of Resurrection. Easter —coming of spring. Easter —new clothes. Easter – egg hunts. Easter – end of Holy Week. Easter –sunrise services. Easter – time of family gatherings. Easter – end of Lent. Take your pick. Easter recalls a plethora of events and memories for most of us. My earliest memories center around new spring clothes and going to church all day. It was hard to separate the "church" meaning of the day from that of the society around us. For many of us the words of the song "Spring Has Now Unwrapped the Flowers" sums up the way we feel about Easter.

To read the Scripture from Luke 24 which tells us of the women's early morning trip to the tomb makes us return to the central theme of this time in the Christian year. Following the tragic events of the previous Friday, the women went early in the morning to anoint Jesus' Body with the spices and oils they had prepared. How amazed those women must have been to return to the tomb, wondering how they would roll the heavy stone away, and find the stone already moved. Then, for them to go inside, and find Jesus gone! What could have happened? I can just imagine how they must have felt as they looked around for the body of Jesus. The appearance of what must have been angels reminded them of what Jesus had told them earlier. Yes, today we need to be reminded just as the early followers of Jesus were. We must learn again of the death and resurrection. Easter serves as a yearly reminder of those events. During Lent we have prepared ourselves to receive anew the Holy Spirit for our lives.

Our Bible Verses for April is found in John 3: 16 and 17.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life."

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Wishing you and your loved ones a "Blessed Easter Day and Season."
Pat and Charlene



Trustees Comments

Trustee Update on New Projects

The Trustee committee presented two projects to the Church Council at their February 14th meeting for their approval. The Council did approve these projects and work will begin soon.

The first project is the renovation of all three bathrooms in the church. There will also be improvements made to the small preschool bathroom. Wade Foulk of W & W Construction will be the general contractor.

The second project will be replacing the gutters and downspouts on the church. For the past few years we have had several water issues in the lower level of the church and despite our efforts to repair the problem areas ourselves, we continue to have water issues. Gutter/Siding Solutions has been hired to install new gutters and downspouts as a permanent fix to this problem.



One additional project that we will be working on as soon as weather permits, is to finish the landscaping on the parking lot side of the church. Again this year we will be asking for volunteers to supply all of the manual labor involved in this project. So get your rakes and shovels ready!! We'll be calling you!!! These projects will cost around \$40,000. If you would like to help support these improvements to our church, your donations would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you –
The Trustee Committee

Are You Interested?

St. Paul United Methodist Church is looking for interested persons from our congregation who would like to be involved in our Prayer Chain ministry. This could include:

- ⇒ Being part of a prayer chain that already exists (there are already three active chains)
- ⇒ Help forming a new chain and/or being a member
- ⇒ Being the chair of the new chain.

If you are interested please contact Pastor Allen or Pat Benda:

Pastor Allen: 319-231-5213

Pat Benda: 319-240-1099

Education News !

- Sunday, April 2nd Quarter donations for Heifer Project!
Children will “bring in the palms” at the beginning of church.
- Sunday, April 9th NO Sunday School
- Sunday, April 23rd “Senior Recognition” Sunday
Children’s Choir during church

Sunday, May 5th Quarter donations for Heifer Project!

Generosity
changes everything

Sunday, May 12th



Happy Mother’s Day!
Last day of Sunday School

DID YOU KNOW?

Do you find yourself with time on your hands? Why not make a visit to St. Paul’s library to see what we have on the shelves. There are movies, music CD’s, resource books if you are planning a lesson for a meeting or circle. On the shelves also are books for children, youth, and adults. On another shelf are lesson books for advent, lent and many others.

Look them over, check one out. The check out basket is located inside the door on the shelves to the right.

Reminder: Did you happen to borrow the DVD Hachi and forgot to check it out? If you are finished please return it to the library.

Thank you,
Library Committee





APRIL 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Palms Sunday Choir Practice @ 9:00 .M. Holy Communion Chimes	3 Bible Study @ 1:30 p.m. Shawl Ministry @ 7:00 p.m.	4 Worship Mtg. @ 9:00 a.m. Outreach @ 5:30 p.m.	5 Education Mtg. @ 5:00 p.m. Confirmation @ 6:00 p.m. Jubilation @ 7:00 pm.	6 Nursing Home Birthdays SPRC Mtg. @ 4:30 p.m. Maundy Service @ 7:00 pm	7 Good Friday Service @ 7:00 p.m.	7
9 Easter Sunday No Sunday School	10 Bible Study @ 1:30 p.m. Shawl Ministry @ 7:00 p.m.	11 Trustees Mtg. @ 5:30 p.m. Ad Council @ 6:30 p.m.	12 Confirmation @ 6:00 p.m. Jubilation @ 7:00 pm.	13	14	15 District Spiritual Growth Day @ 9:30 – Independence
16 Cantata @ 7:00 p.m. at Dysart Methodist Church	17 Bible Study @ 1:30 p.m. Shawl Ministry @ 7:00 p.m.	18	19 Joy Circle @ 9:00 a.m. Confirmation @ 6:00 p.m. Jubilation @ 7:00 pm.	20	21	22
23 High School Senior Recognition Sunday Childrens Choir Noisy Sunday	24 Bible Study @ 1:30 p.m. Shawl Ministry @ 7:00 p.m.	25 Meekness Circle @ @ 7 p.m.	26 Confirmation @ 6:00 p.m. Jubilation @ 7:00 pm.	27	28	29
30						

St. Paul United Methodist Church ~ 501 Sycamore St. Box 187 ~ La Porte City, IA 50651
 319-342-2208 ~ Church email: ipcumchurch@gmail.com
 Website: www.lpcsaintpaulumc.org ~ Facebook: LPC St. Paul UMC
 Pastor Allen Craft ~ Email: revac1955@gmail.com ~ Cell phone: 319-231-5213