

News & Notes



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From the Pastor's Desk

Fear Not!

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
Psalm 27:1

What is the most frequent command given by God? What instruction is constantly shared - over and over again - by the angels, by the prophets and the apostles, and even by Jesus Himself?

"Be good?"
"Be holy, for I am holy?"
"Don't sin?"
"Don't be immoral?"

N.T. Wright, in his book, Following Jesus, shares that the most common command in the Bible is this: "*Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Fear not. Don't be afraid.*"

Wow! Did you realize this? Often we paint a picture of God as one who gives all sorts of commands that either take the fun out of life or as one who simply gives a bunch of arbitrary rules. And yet the number one command from God given in the Bible is *don't be afraid*.

But this command from God ends up like all the others – easy to hear, impossible to keep. Think about all the things we worry about in life: money, schooling, jobs, relationships. We're afraid of what people think. We're afraid of being alone. We're afraid we might not do the best at the job that we have. We're afraid of missing an opportunity. We're afraid of growing old. We're afraid of dying. We have so much going on in our life, so much we want to control, that often we like to hold onto fear even when God commands us to *fear not!*

In light of this command, Wright challenges his readers with this:

“...can you imagine living a normal, wise, respectable life without the nagging sense that everything is about to go horribly wrong, that you may have made it through the last day, or week, but that this was simply a happy accident, since the universe is basically unfriendly and Murphy’s Law will take revenge later or, more likely, sooner? That is how most people live.”

What would that look like? What would your life look like without that nagging sense of fear? We all struggle with fear, everyday – from the time we are born.

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.⁵ But the angel said to the women, **“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.”⁷**

Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”

Matthew 28:1-7

The Easter message of the resurrection of Jesus brings with it a surprising command: Do not be afraid. The God who made the world is the same God who raised Jesus from the dead. And this same God calls you to now follow Jesus. In the Gospel of John Jesus says that He lays down His life that He may take it up again (John 10:17). The crucifixion, the resurrection, every singly part of Jesus’ ministry was in the hands of God Himself. Believing in God, trusting in Jesus, means that you are trusting in the One who is in charge of *all* things. It’s believing that everything is going to be alright. And this belief is incompatible with fear.

Brothers and sisters, we know the resurrection. We know and believe certain things about that first Easter morning. But our trust in belief goes beyond the facts of that day to the trusting

and believing in the God *behind* that day. For most of us, this takes a long time to sink in. Wright notes that “it takes us all our life long to let that belief soak through and permeate the rest of our thinking, feeling, and worrying lives.”

It takes our whole life. That’s a long time. Even now, we still know fear. There might be times when we feel like we’ve hit bottom. We might have such a sense of despair that we aren’t even sure if we can make it to the next day. But God’s Good News of the resurrection can reach us even there. Sometimes it’s when we find ourselves at the lowest point in our lives, when we find ourselves the weakest and least in control, that we finally see ourselves relying on the God who raises the dead. Living by faith, and not fear, is hard. But find great comfort – because ultimately God is in control of all things. God rose Jesus from the dead – and in that death and resurrection of Jesus, he had delivered us from sin, death and the devil.

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? **Psalm 27:1**

Rev Matt Conrad



CHURCH NEWS



There will be an IMPORTANT congregational meeting on August 17th at 10:30 am, right after the morning worship service. The roof of our school building is in need of replacement. This repair cannot be put off any longer if we are to be responsible stewards of the facilities in our care. Much of our outreach to the community is, or will be, housed in the school building; we need it in good condition going forward with our ministries. Information will be shared about financing options and a VOTE will be taken. This work will require a focused fund raising effort, and every friend and member of St. Paul is important. Also at the meeting, we need to vote on District business. Please plan of attending on August 17th.



CHURCH PICNIC: Sunday, September 7th, is the date of our church picnic. The picnic will take place on the church grounds beginning with an outdoor worship service at 9 am, followed by food, fun and fellowship. Mark your calendar and plan on attending!

SUNDAY SCHOOL starts on September 14th at 9:15 am in the cafeteria. Children ages 3 (potty trained) through 6th grade are invited to attend.



PANCAKE BREAKFAST: The Skokie Rotary Club will host a charity pancake breakfast on Sunday, August 24th, during the Skokie Backlot Bash, 8 to 11 am, at Oakton Street & Floral Avenue. All the pancakes you can eat, sausage links, orange juice and coffee. Donation is \$6, but Pastor Conrad has 10 free tickets for whoever would like to go. Please call the office to claim your ticket(s)! All proceeds benefit Rotary supported charities.

August Birthdays

8/03	Paul Tasch
8/04	Caitlyn Beutelspacher
8/05	Andrew Mueller
8/07	Henry Fohs
8/07	Andrew Trettin
8/08	Teri Casem
8/08	Paula Raabe
8/08	Marlene Rockel
8/9	Owen Bryant
8/09	William Hebble
8/11	Vicky Schiewe
8/12	Steven Cook
8/13	Kathryn Cobine
8/14	Gary Kolodzik
8/17	Susan Carey
8/17	Constance Malcher
8/17	Jennifer McKinney
8/18	Pamela Hanebutt
8/20	John Witte
8/24	Olivia Lewis
8/24	Brook McAleer
8/24	Victoria McAleer
8/28	Amy Hubner
8/29	Nathan Conrad
8/29	Edna Holmes
8/31	Elizabeth Casem
8/31	Ginny Johnson



August Anniversaries

8/04 Stephen & Leanne Sidlowski

8/07 Phillip and Kimberly Malcman

8/08 Robert and Patricia Eischen

8/13 Robert and Susan Carey

8/15 Casey and Laurie Koniarski

8/15 James and Barbara Struck

8/19 David and Elizabeth Sellke

8/20 Gerry and Mary Bonkoske

8/27 Leo and Renate Harris



A NEW FISCAL YEAR HAS BEGUN

St. Paul's Sunday worship attendance over the past year or two has increased largely due to new young families and their children. This is truly a blessing. However, our congregation's collective offerings, which are needed to fund our budget, have trended downward over this same period. Thankfully we have been especially blessed in recent years when it comes to special gifts and estate bequests from several of our members. These are wonderful occasions that allow special projects and long term investments to be funded, but do not often include monies for our General Fund (check book). This is true because special gifts and estate bequests are often given with stated restrictions as to their use. Our check book must therefore heavily depend on the weekly envelope offerings and loose monies given by our members and guests. This giving is crucial because our General Fund "Check Book" pays for office, church, and church property services, supplies, maintenance, and the salary and benefits for our three employees (Pastor, Office Manager, and Organist/Choir Director). It also covers miscellaneous expenses for Sunday school, Bible classes, bank/bond loan interest payments and more.

Our \$333,000 budget for fiscal year 2014-15 was recently approved by the Church Council and the Voters Assembly. The portion of this new budget that is to come from envelope offerings and loose monies is \$237,000. Therefore, if we are to avoid a repeat of last year's final fiscal 2013-14 deficit of over \$35,000, we need to receive additional monies through increased giving in fiscal year 2014-2015 which began on June 1. So, is there a straight forward way to help that everyone can consider? Yes, there is. Following is one suggested way we can all adopt that will help a great deal in the coming year.

We will begin by stating that St. Paul's average attendance each Sunday is 110-115 persons (every adult and child attending are counted). We will conservatively use 90 adults per week for the following analysis. Let's see the impact when each adult attendee donates \$4.00 more each week for 52 weeks. This level of additional giving will provide \$4.00 more each week from individuals, or \$8.00 a week more from a husband and wife. The math @ \$4.00 per week x 90 attending adults equals an

additional \$360.00 per week. Multiply this times 52 weeks and it will provide an additional \$18,720 per year. If \$4.00 is raised to just \$5.00 per week per person attending, it would provide an additional \$28,080 per year, but still short of need. But at an additional \$10.00 per week for a year, St. Paul would receive \$46,800 more this year and **exceed** our need! How wonderful would that be?

Think about the need outlined above and then pray about helping your church more financially this New Year out of thankfulness to God for all He provides to you and your family.

Review the latest [Giving and Debt](#) summary below that covers the current giving details for the first month of this new fiscal year that is off to a fine start.

God's continuing blessings and many thanks!

Gerry Bonkoske
Chairman Stewardship Committee



ST. PAUL GIVING & DEBT

Fiscal Year – June 1, 2014 to May 31, 2015
Month Ending – June, 2014

Member Contributions + Loose Offerings

Needed total per 2013/2014 budget	\$ 237,000
Needed giving each month	19,750
Giving received this month	21,969
Giving needed so far this year	19,750
Actual giving so far this year	21,969
Variance to need – surplus/(deficit)	2,219

<u>Remaining Debts & Pay Down Progress</u>	<u>Pay Down This Month</u> **
Mortgage (parsonage) @ 5.75%	\$ 73,163 \$ (106)
Line of bank credit (LOC) @ 5%	36,826 \$ ()
Bonds 50K @ 6%, 15K @ 6-1/2%	65,000
Loan from Foundation Fund @ 0% *	25,000
Loan from Schaefer Bequest @ 0% *	<u>25,000</u>
Totals	\$ 224,989 \$ (106)

* Pay back promised when borrowed

** Members: To help pay down our debts, please use the Building Fund envelopes in your packet, or use plain envelopes. When using either envelope type, please mark it **Debt Reduction Only**.

OFFICIAL ACTS

FUNERAL: 7/26 Shawn Afryl

ATTENDANCE

9:00 am **7:00 pm**

July 6	57	July 3	17
July 13	68	July 10	16
July 20	72	July 17	18
July 27	82	July 24	23
		July 31	TBA

