

News & Notes



**St. Paul Lutheran Church
5201 Galitz Street
Skokie, IL 60077-2737
(847)673-5030
www.stpaulskokie.org
office@stpaulskokie.org
The Rev. Matt Conrad, Pastor**

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From the Pastor's Desk

When ministry doesn't go as planned

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Phi 1:3-6 ESV)

Have you ever felt as if God was leading you to do something, but it didn't work out as you had planned? Believe it or not, this happens to pastors quite a bit. Sometimes we have in our minds how a program or ministry is going to work out - but reality gives us something different. Sometimes the results are good, sometimes the results aren't so good. More often than not the final result ends up being less than what we had in mind. It's hard not to feel disappointed in these situations.

Pastors know this – it doesn't make the disappointment any easier – but deep down we know it. Some of the people here at St Paul know this too. Over the years we have had many dedicated leaders and volunteers who try to do their best at getting something off of the ground, but the end result isn't always what we had hoped. How should we respond in these situations?

I'll tell you what I have to do. Often I have to remind myself that God asks us to be faithful - not necessarily successful. I don't mean this as an excuse to be lazy. Faithful workers, like we've had here at St Paul, put their heart, soul, and might into that work of ministry placed before them. They give; and they give a lot. Part of being faithful is putting your faith into action. It's living out those beliefs you know and hold to be true.

But sometimes it's good to be reminded that God is actually doing all the work when we foolishly think we are doing so much for Him.

Let me give you an example. St Paul has had a long relationship with the Grove Nursing home. When I first came to St Paul, I would go with Ruth Kemnitz for a monthly worship service. Ruth would play piano, and I would lead worship. Over time our hymn books disappeared. No problem, we'll bring our own. Then the piano was removed. Then there was a period of time when my services would be unexpectedly cancelled or changed – I'd show up and something else was planned. It became very difficult for me to nail down a regular time for worship. Sometimes I'd be ready for worship – but no one would be brought down for the service!

I remember one day when I had had enough. It was the third reschedule of the month (I had come twice already that month and was turned away). I told myself that if this happens again today, we're done. I felt as if St Paul was being edged out of this ministry and I was tired of banging my head against a wall. This just wasn't working as I had planned, I was frustrated beyond belief, and no one even really shows up for worship.

So with this bad attitude – (the perfect attitude to start a worship service, right?) – I walk into the common room. But this time it's full of people. I recognize a few of them from our previous services, but now I see many new faces. My first thought is that there's another scheduling conflict and that everyone is here for something else. But no, one of the activities ladies says, "Yeah! Pastor Conrad's here for church! Is everyone ready?" And everyone gets so excited.

Wow, did I have a few things to confess as we read Psalm 51 together for our time of confession: my poor attitude, my hard heart, not putting the best construction on everything! It took a room full of nursing home residents, all excited for worship, to help open my eyes that these seemingly little worship services weren't about me and my schedule and what I think should be happening. This was time for God to come and meet us in Word and prayer as we are reminded again of His love for us. God wasn't asking me to make this the biggest and most successful

worship service we've ever had at Grove Nursing home. He was asking me to be faithful, to come with His Word, and to give that to His people there. I was putting myself in the way of God's ministry there at the Grove.

I don't want to give the impression that the services have been perfect ever since. We still have scheduling conflicts. There was a section of time when worship was crammed into the end of a hallway while construction was done in the common room. But it's interesting how I can see this all differently, now that I realize this is about God's work in this place, not mine. In fact, now I'm at the Grove twice a month, rather than just once a month. Just this past week there were so many people crammed into that room, I don't think we could get many more in there. I noticed that another group has been meeting in the room during our time for worship – but they stop when it's time for church. So now there's an entire new audience that's hearing of Jesus' love for them. (And some of their frowns and looks of frustration have now turned into smiles when I arrive)

We have some new opportunities starting here at St Paul. And of course we always want to do the very best with what we've been given. Excellence should be one of the marks of everything that we do – we should strive to give God our very best. But let's always keep in mind that God does the real work in any of the ministries we have before us. It's God, working through His people, who brings hearts and souls to Jesus. We should evaluate and tweak and strive to be better in the ministry we do. But remember that God is asking us to be faithful – not necessarily successful in the eyes of this world. May we always endeavour to heed the call of our Lord, and do His work as He places it before us.

Rev Matt Conrad

Pastor Conrad

CHURCH NEWS

L.W.M.L. NEWS



I am happy and proud to announce that I have taken the position of President of LWML here at St. Paul.

We have had a long and proud tradition of mission work with many of our members such as Marie Kamps, Arlene Ricci and Ruth Kemnitz to name a few. I want to take this time to say thanks to them for their dedication to this mission work for so many years.

As we embark on this work from this time forward, I want to invite and encourage you to join me in forming a strong group of Lutheran women from St. Paul in this mission work. We would be joining other groups already formed at other local churches. I look forward to a call from any woman who would like to be a part of change in the world. We are all members of LWML already because we are Lutheran.

I attended the Northern Illinois District convention on September 26 & 27, and have more information to provide about past, present and upcoming events the organization is planning.

October 5 is LWML Sunday. On October 5, please join me in pledging your support to missions by taking a mite box to fill or making an immediate donation when leaving church.

Penny Luytgaarden
847-679-8487

DID YOU NOTICE the beautiful flower pot full of fall flowers in front of the church? They are courtesy of Meinke's Gardening Center. Thank you again to the Meinke family for their generous donation of flowers and plants that will beautify our church this fall.



SAVE THE DATE!



We're doing a pictorial directory to draw our church family closer together, to create a tool for telling people about our ministries, and to celebrate our church. We will begin scheduling appointments in church on October 5th for photography beginning October 29th. There is no cost to the church and no sitting fee for your family. You will receive a complimentary 8x10 portrait and a copy of the directory for participation. You will be photographed, choose your pose for the directory and have the chance to make additional purchases all in one trip to the church. Please sign up when you come to church or by calling MyChurch Family Album direct at (877)764-4535 beginning October 6th. Our directory won't be complete without you!



TRUNK OR TREAT

Mark your calendars and plan to join us in the St Paul parking lot on Saturday, October 25 from 10am to 12 noon. Set up begins at 9:30 am. We need people to decorate their car trunks and hand out treats, run a game or help with refreshments. We need lots of help. More information will be out soon and there will be a sign up board in the back of church. Contact Kim Malcman @ mrsmalcman@hotmail.com with any questions.

WEDNESDAY MORNING PRAYER

The church sanctuary is open every Wednesday from 9am-10am for a time of prayer. We will gather and pray over the requests we've received this past week, as well as for our community and our world. Everyone is welcome to attend and pray with us. But if even if you are not comfortable leading us in a prayer out loud, you are more than welcome to come and pray silently as we pray.

If you have a prayer request you'd like to share, we have many different ways for you to get that request to our prayer warriors. You can always call the church office at 847-673-5030. You can email Pastor Conrad at pastorconrad@stpaulskokie.org You can write your requests on the welcome cards during Sunday service. Or there's also a prayer box in the back of church, and you can give as little, or as much information as you would like. We can also send requests through our prayer chain – if you let us know that this is ok. If you'd like to be a part of the prayer chain, call the church office and leave your email address.

Please use our Wednesday prayer meetings as an opportunity for friends and family. As you hear of people in the community who are in need of prayer, share this opportunity and ask if you would like for St Paul to be praying for them. Then get that request to us. If you provide contact information, we'll even send them a postcard saying that we've prayed for them.

PLEASE HELP!

The Niles Township Food Pantry fulfills a need for many families in the area. They are extremely grateful for the many donations they receive. The Pantry follows a strict rule that no item that is outdated can be accepted. Our collection box, upon careful sorting, has contained expired items that must be discarded before delivery to the Pantry. A recent discussion with the Pantry Director revealed that cash is much more helpful than boxes or cans of food. This is because of their affiliation with The Greater Chicago Food Depository where cash allows the purchase of up to 20 cans of food for the price of 1 or 2 cans at the store and none have expired. So, please check expiration dates before donating, and cash or checks made out to "Niles Township Food Pantry" in a clearly marked envelope actually helps the Pantry obtain more food items. Unexpired food items and cash or checks will continue to be collected at St. Paul and delivered to the Pantry. Questions? Please contact Gerry or Mary Bonkoske at (847) 679-2339, or email to: gerrybon@aol.com

Reminder: The Pantry also needs volunteer help anytime, but especially on Wednesdays or Thursdays when fresh supplies arrive. Call ahead to check their need at (847) 983-0073.

OFFICIAL ACTS

Marriage: 9/13 Timothy Suhajda & Jacquelynn Muench

Funeral: 9/17 Sybille Schroeder

ATTENDANCE

September 7 (9 am church picnic) 85

8:00 am 10:30 am

September 14 24 60

September 21 29 60

September 28 33 67



THE FOLLOWING MEMORIALS WERE RECEIVED IN THE CHURCH OFFICE:

In memory of Ron Culling, Al & Olga Schroeder, and Al & Sybille Schroeder

Jean Culling

In memory of Ed Bridge

Ruth Kemnitz

In memory of Richard Schnell

Bob & Sue Carey



HAVE YOU BEEN LISTENING?

In previous issues of *News & Notes*, I've suggested a way everyone can adopt to assure our General Fund (checkbook) will end this fiscal year balanced. Remember the plan? If every adult attendee (man and woman) gave \$10 more each week than last year, we'd exceed our need of \$4,558/week or \$237,000 this fiscal year that ends May 31, 2015.

Our wealth in this world may be large or small, but either belong to God and we are to be good stewards on His behalf while it is in our care. God suggests we return to His work on earth 10 percent of our gross income, save 10 percent, and "live" on the 80 percent remaining each year. Whatever the amount 10 percent represents when given will be blessed by God as promised. Be reminded of our admonition in Matthew 6:19-21: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

A Final Footnote

I'd like to explain the \$13,845 pay down this month on our bank line of credit (LOC) seen below under "Remaining Debts." The Church Council recently voted to take the accrued \$13,845 in our "Building Fund" account as of the May 31 close of the 2013/14 fiscal year, and apply it to paying down the LOC we currently have with our bank. This means we now have \$77,019 (an LOC maximum \$100,000 minus \$22,981) in funds available for our future use. With the formidable pending expenses for flood control at the parsonage, and the urgent need for a new roof on our school building, we can expect the current LOC indebtedness of \$22,981 to rise again shortly.

Many thanks to all that have contributed to our reduced debt, and thereby also the bank interest we pay each quarter. Keep using the Building Fund envelope in your packet each month.

God's continued blessings and keep looking up.

Gerry Bonkoske, Stewardship Chairman

ST. PAUL GIVING & DEBT

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

Member Contributions + Loose Offerings

Needed total per 2013/2014 budget	\$ 237,000
Needed giving each month	19,750
Giving received this month	19,790
Giving needed so far this year	59,250
Actual giving so far this year	58,716
Variance to need – surplus/(deficit)	(534)

<u>Remaining Debts & Pay Down Progress</u>		<u>Pay Down This Month</u> **
Mortgage (parsonage) @ 5.75%	\$ 72,940	\$ (107)
Line of bank credit (LOC) @ 5%	22,981	\$ (13,845)
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 \$ 210,921	\$ (13,952)

* 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.**

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

10/01 Chanel Beer
10/01 Kay Hildner
10/02 Amanda Gucwa
10/03 Pastor Conrad
10/03 Jack Pinkerton
10/06 Katherine Fohs
10/07 Marianne Fiebelkorn
10/07 Nicholas Meccia
10/08 Brian Krier
10/11 Gerry Bonkoske
10/11 Janet Kay
10/14 Sarah Meinke
10/14 Maria Mirk
10/15 James Beer
10/15 Henry Meinke, Jr.
10/15 Karl Schroeder
10/15 Dennis Stephans
10/17 Adam Andrew Plant
10/18 Kimberly Patchett
10/24 Laura Cobine
10/25 Patricia Petersen
10/26 Timothy Hacker
10/26 Benjamin Taber
10/28 Christine Fohs
10/29 Florence Krispin
10/29 Debra Suriano
10/31 Dorothy Dokey



OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

10/7 Michael & Kristin Li

10/9 William & Kathleen Fern

10/11 Steven & Cheryl Gucwa

10/11 Gary & Janet Kay

10/12 Timothy & Hayley Smith

10/15 Tom & Tanja Flugum

10/18 Peter & Cherie Govis

10/26 Michael & Debra Rossi

10/27 Brandon & Kimberly Patchett

10/27 Paul & Debra Suriano

10/28 Robinson & Heide Sweet



\$ ATTENTION: THRIVENT MEMBERS \$

Until March 31, 2015, you can direct your 2014 “Choice Dollars” to our St. Paul congregation. This can easily be done online or by phone by following the steps below:

Online

Step 1: Visit thrivent.com/thriventchoice

Step 2: Click on “log in” and enter your Thrivent user ID and password. If you do not have these, click on “register” now.” Once you have registered, start over with Step 1.

Step 3: Your Choice Dollars available will appear on the right side of the screen.

Step 4: Now click on “Direct Choice Dollars”

Step 5: Use the “search organizations” box to the right and enter keywords “Skokie Illinois”. Click on “search”. From the dropdown menu, scroll down to find “St. Paul Lutheran Church” and check “Direct All.”

Step 6: Click on “Direct Now”

Step 7: Thank you!

By Phone

Step 1: Call 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted say, “Thrivent Choice.” When next prompted, say “Choice Dollars.”

Step 2: Say or enter your social security number.

Step 3: Press 1 to help direct Choice Dollars.

Step 4: Thank you!