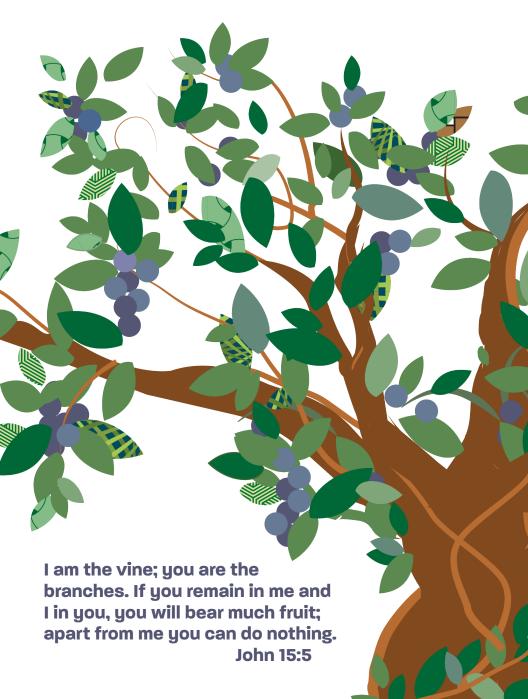


The newsletter of St. Paul's Episcopal Church



Dear Friends,

Church in the age of Covid. What an unexpected moment this is in our lives. Covid came out of the blue, and I'm surprised it hasn't dissipated by now. We have no choice but to live through it, but within that limitation, we do have choices. Our challenge right now is to engage with God in this moment in ways that transform us—to be more faithful, more mature, a better Church.

Please do your part, and we are particularly grateful to all who are going out of their way to tend to our administration and leadership and pastoral and worshipping needs. Make some phone calls and distanced visits! And pray constantly for our people, because God has given us to each other.

So how are we going forward? The answer lies in another question: how are we church? We are a worshipping community, and worship, and community, are paramount to us. We've been speaking about this on Wednesdays and at Vestry (outdoors or online). Some of that is reflected in what I said above. We are a bit stumped at the moment because instructions from the Diocese, intended to be helpful, stand in the way. But we'll find a solution.

Although we are not yet able to put these into practice, here are three of the possibilities that have emerged from our brilliant brains and prayerful prayers, to keep numbers and time spent together within safe parameters:

- Viewing parties of about 10 people gathering to watch the Sunday video together.
- Worship at Church with small numbers in the Sanctuary, Upper Tanner, Brown Hall, the Baptistry, etc etc. Almost the whole Church is wired for sound:-)
- Staggered Church. Two or more short services in a row.

And of course outdoor worship as long as the outdoors permits it.

So what have you learned about this in your prayers? Please share your inspiration with your clergy and Vestry.

One thing we are learning—and this is hardly new—community only works if everyone pitches in. God's work in and amongst us is diminished, even broken, if we don't. It is tempting, I know, to consume church as a product you can take or leave, but that is not real or graceful. You—we—are the Church.



Senior Warden's Vestry Report

Vestry met in July for our regularly-scheduled vestry meeting, and we met last week in a special session to plan our annual stewardship campaign—something that is going to have to look different this year due to the pandemic. Watch for more information on stewardship in the coming weeks. Our next regular meeting will be this coming Thursday, August 27 at 6:30. Below are updates on the topics vestry has been discussing:

Seeking New Treasurer

Jody has officially ended her tenure as our treasurer. She is kindly keeping things running by making sure the bills are paid. If you have been feeling called to serve as treasurer, please let a vestry member know.

Wednesdays in Brown Park

We are still meeting at 6:00pm in the pavilion at Brown Park for a short service of the Eucharist. Please join us for communion and the chance to see some friendly faces. Per ECMN guidelines, masks are required, even though we are outdoors. We realize we have about a month left until we can no longer comfortably meet outdoors. We are discussing how to move forward, which you can read about elsewhere in this issue of the Leaven.



San Jose Obrero

As you may have heard, there was an outbreak of Covid-19 at the Seneca plant in Montgomery. A number of the workers became ill and one died. Many decided to leave early and have headed back to Texas. The mission was canceled for this year. Fr. Neptali was able to provide some pastoral care, and may make the journey down to Texas to check in on some of the workers. Our August Second Sunday offering will still go to San Jose Obrero. John Sullivan, whom many of you know, is leading this mission and is looking out for ways we might still be of service.

Rummage Sale

We are exploring alternate ways to hold the garage sale "off site." Stay tuned.

Sanitizer

As we think about returning to the church building, we need to develop some cleaning/sanitizing procedures. Andy's brother's company donated two large pump bottles of hand sanitizer which we will keep in the most commonused rooms.



From the archives

COMFORT IN THE PEWS THIS SUMMER (June 1973)

Let the hot weather come—humidity and all —we are prepared! The electricians have completed the connections for our church air conditioning system and all is in readiness for the first "attack" of heat. Just think, no more sticking to the pews and pealing off when you stand up, no more little trickles down the spine to distract our attention from the sermon. For those of us who have no such luxury at home. We may even want to lengthen the services and stay longer!

*Note: Air conditioning was deemed necessary after the windows were repaired and sealed. Prior to this there were heavy, protective screens on the outside. The screens were replaced with a glass protection and sealed, which no longer allowed the windows to be opened. The work was done by Hauser Inc., of Winona, at a cost of \$4,000. Parishioners noted how much more light came throughout the windows once the screens were removed and how much more protection from the bitter cold the windows would offer during the winter months.

(Source: Nov. 1972 bulletin)

"Life should be measured not by the number of years but rather the love shared, the memories made, the joy given and the blessings received."

Let's Celebrate Myrtle Brittain's 90th Birthday on August 29th

As the world is forced to stay apart, we are taking an alternate approach to celebrate Myrtle. We are inviting friends and family to send her a birthday wish by sharing a favorite or special memory, funny story, written note, or birthday card. Our hope is to get 90 responses for her to read and cherish on her birthday, August 29th, 2020. If you would like to help us celebrate, please send your special birthday wish to:

Scott and Kathy Brittain 2460 Stony Creek Dr. Owatonna, MN 55060

Thank you for thinking of Myrtle.

Scott & Kathy Wendy & Rocky Jeff & Pauline

We need your cameras!

Did you see Lorraine in last Sunday's video? How about Myrtle a few weeks back? Or Maggie? Or Lynn sitting in the woods? Remember Jody's announcements? Janet's flowers? Andy's dog? Or any of the many St. Paulites who have moved away but are able to join us through these digital services.

Seeing our friends' faces and hearing their voices makes this enforced separation easier to bear. Even if you don't feel comfortable in front of the camera, you can help with these services by working behind the camera.

If you like taking pictures (or videos), consider taking some on Wednesday nights, or while you are out visiting each other. Consider recording a prayer that has been on your heart or an upcoming reading. You can do this on your own initiative, or ask Fr. Michael for material to record.

While we wait to return to our physical building, these video services are one way we can safely worship and stay connected to each other. Please consider how you might help.



Leaven is published monthly to keep the people of St. Paul's informed and united in thought.

Leaven Staff:

Fr. Michael Tippett

stpaulsowatonna@gmail.com kristin.warehime@charter.net Kristin Warehime

Kristin Warehime, Sr. Warden: Vestry Members 2020

Diane Spitzack, Jr. Warden: 507-363-2462

Jody Boisen, Treasurer Pro Temp: 507-456-1418 507-475-4000

Kari Gigstead, Clerk: 507-456-8065

Andy Simon: 612-239-5776 Judy Erck: 507-390-0685

Maria Dodd: 626-419-4076 Drew Meyer: 507-676-3501 Deacon Steve Judd: 507-456-8058 Fr. Michael Tippett: 507-456-7302

Saint Daul's

Owatonna, MN 55060 220 S. Cedar Avenue

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