

The Link



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

September 2021

Pastor Page:

Dear People of St. Paul's,

I admit that I've stopped paying close attention to the news, for my own self-care. The pandemic-whiplash, natural disasters, Afghanistan... it's all a lot to take. Perhaps you, like I, just need some space to pray. For those for whom that is the case, I have included as my column this month a lovely "prayer for a hurting world," written by Teri McDowell Ott in *The Presbyterian Outlook* (Aug 16, 2021). I have adapted it to include Hurricane Ida. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer:

God of mercy, as wildfires and wars rage, earthquakes shake the planet, hurricanes and tropical storms threaten, we are at a loss as to what to say or do. In these moments of anguish and fear and grief, we turn to you in prayer, Holy God, confident that you hear the cries of your people.

As we send our daughters back to school, free to raise their hands in class, free to study and to speak, we pray for the daughters of Afghanistan. We pray for women shrouding themselves in fear, for liberties recently gained to hold despite the new oppressive regime. We pray for the Afghani men—fathers, brothers, sons, uncles—desperately seeking refuge for their families. We pray for all the Afghani people whose lives are trapped in a war zone. We pray for American troops, morally torn over leaving this country and their service behind. Lord, have mercy. Turn us from violence as a justified means for achieving our ends. Guide humanity toward your path of peace.

In your mercy, God, hear also our prayers for Haiti. Why, O God, have the people of Haiti suffered so? How long, O Lord, must your people on this island endure tragedy after tragedy? We pray for this nation rocked by economic crisis, political assassination, a spiraling pandemic, and now an earthquake causing death and destruction. O God, we see the faces of those who have lost their homes and their loved ones. We grieve for your beloved ones and cry out on their behalf. Rescue the people of Haiti, God, desperate for help. Protect them from the next deluge heading their way, from the flooding and the mudslides. Guide us in global mission so our efforts might provide relief and support.

Great God of all, you know us so well. You know our pain. You know our loss. You grieve with us as wildfires consume homes, hurricanes displace people and devastate cities, and COVID-19 fills hospital beds. You cry with us as tragedies plague your people. You work beside us in ministry and mission. God of grace, open our eyes, hearts and hands to the movement of your Spirit in this broken world. Restore hope to the suffering, mend the hearts of the hurting, grant us all the strength to support those in need. As we forage for hope along the path of tragedy, may we bear the good fruit of faith, turning to each other and to you in love. Restore us, Holy God, with your hope.

We pray this in the name of Christ. Amen.

Yours in hope,
Pastor Johanna

From the Church Office

Articles for the **October issue of the “*Link*”** must be received by 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 15th.

We will continue to use Sign-up Genius for **Lay Ministry volunteering** and other opportunities, including **flower sponsorship and this year’s Church Picnic**. If you are having trouble accessing any sign-up page, please email michelle@stpaulspittsford.org for assistance.

The church foyer is open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10-11 a.m.

The church office is open Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 2:00-6:00 p.m. I remain available via email on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, 8-12.

Prayers and blessings this Fall as many of you send your children back to school this month.

In faith and hope,
Michelle



The Rev. Lee M. Miller, II, Bishop of the Upstate New York Synod

Bishop Miller’s Installation Service will be held on Saturday, September 18th at 2:00 PM at Bethany Baptist Church in Syracuse, NY

This special event in the life of the synod will be streamed live on the synod’s YouTube channel: (<https://www.youtube.com/c/upstatenysynodorg>).

Learn more about Bishop Miller, including his vision for the synod at www.upstatenysynod.org or by clicking [HERE](#).

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The Church Calendar can be found online: www.stpaulspittsford.org

Lay Ministry – Sign up Today!

With the return of in-person worship, we are in need of lay ministers every Sunday. Below is a summary of available positions. More instruction on what is involved is available upon request (there is also a link in the weekly email).

Lector – read the day’s appointed scripture

Prayers – read the day’s prayers of intercession

Usher – help people check in for each service, count and record attendance, take offering

Coffee hour – provide, set up, and clean up a small, outdoor coffee hour.

Communion assistant – hold tray of pre-filled cups and say, “blood of Christ, shed for you.”

Communion set-up and clean up – prepare the sacrament before and clean up afterward (training available)

Flower delivery – if flowers are sponsored and donated, this person delivers them to a shut-in

Click [HERE](#) or see the weekly email for a link to sign up – sign up early and often!

The Congregation Council met most recently on August 16th, our first meeting since our retreat in June. At the retreat, we brainstormed ideas on what drives the culture at St. Paul's. Our next steps are to focus on how we can all work to improve in several areas. We'll be asking your help in this at our picnic on September 19 – stay tuned!

Here are some other updates:

- As you know, COVID-19 is a wily beast, and the changes in recommendations from public health experts makes us adapt frequently. Please keep checking for updates in your emails and on our website, where you'll find the most up-to-date information. **Thank you all for your flexibility as we try to keep all of our members safe!**
- Even as we welcome congregants back to the pews, we will continue to offer the livestreamed worship. This is not because we don't want people to worship in person -we absolutely do! What we've learned is:
 - There are still some members who are not comfortable with returning to in-person worship.
 - We can reach people at a distance – we've had folks from out of state viewing the livestream.
 - New members have joined because they checked us out online first. This has become a trend especially among younger families.

To that end, we will be installing A/V equipment in the sanctuary. We purchased equipment from Applied Audio, which will be installed in late 2021 or early 2022. This equipment will provide a set-up that is less conspicuous and easier to use. Until it is installed (delayed due to pandemic-

related disruptions in supply chains) we'll continue to livestream using the current set-up.

- The Council had some changes in its officers. Jeff Haynes has stepped down as Recording Secretary, and Patty Cain has stepped into that role. Mark Mette has resigned from the Council; past Council President Laurie Zaucha is returning in the position of Financial Secretary. Welcome Laurie!

*Respectfully submitted by Sue Wyatt,
Council President*

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***Livestream Service  
Attendance Statistics for  
July and August 2021***

| Date          | Unique Viewers | Est. actual total |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| June 27       | 37             | 63                |
| July 4        | 32             | 54                |
| July 11       | 26             | 44                |
| July 18       | 33             | 56                |
| July 25       | 27             | 46                |
| August 1      | 30             | 51                |
| August 8      | 23             | 39                |
| August 15     | 20             | 34                |
| August 22     | 26             | 44                |
| August 29     | 30             | 51                |
| July totals   | 155            | 264               |
| August totals | 129            | 219               |

*Changed multiplier from 1.8 to 1.7 (this is the most common multiplier used by churches to measure online attendance)*

*Note: We've had a good increase in in-person attendance. In-person attendance will be recorded more accurately and reported via the weekly usher sheet starting in September. If you are interested in ushering at a Sunday service, please sign up via the lay ministry sign-up sheet [HERE](#) or on our website [www.stpaulspittsford.org](http://www.stpaulspittsford.org)*

## St. Paul's is still OPEN for Worship!

Beginning this month (Sept 5), we will be resuming our usual single service worship schedule, 9:30 on Sunday. This service will be livestreamed, and *will* include communion. (See more on this below.) Due to the danger posed by the Delta variant, the resurgence we are seeing all over the country, and the reality that even vaccinated people can still both be infected and spread the disease, we are **resuming wearing masks in worship.**

***Safety Measures: We continue to require a sign-in so that we can contact trace, and we strongly encourage masks. We will continue opening all the windows as long as weather allows, and have fans and two air purifiers continuously running.***

### Communion and Livestreamed Worship

You may have wondered why we haven't been including communion in our livestreamed service. The reasons are both theological and practical (namely, too much equipment in the way). As we plan to start including it this month, I wanted to address some theological concerns.

Since its inception, holy communion has been something that is done in the physically gathered community. To that end, it is not the pastor's words that make it communion, but rather, the gathered *communion* of saints, the congregation. Of course, one thing 2020 illuminated for us was the power of a community gathered online – and that such a communion/community can be every bit as powerful and authentic. With this in mind, some may feel inclined to participate in holy communion from home, with their own elements. Is this communion? Is Jesus as “truly present” in that meal as in the sanctuary? I don't know. If it makes you feel

connected to the body of Christ, who am I to stop it? My theological preference would be for communion only to be received within the physically gathered community, or in the context of a home visit (which I'm happy to make!). But you can make your own decisions about that. **One thing I would definitely advise against, however, is participating in the sacrament at home if you are watching the service after the live streaming.** In real time, online participants are an extension of the physically gathered assembly. After the fact, there is no longer a gathered assembly to be a part of. While you may still find great fulfillment in being fed by the Word while watching at a later time, I discourage this particular form of engagement. I look forward to when we can celebrate the sacrament ALL together once again!



### Annual Worship and Picnic in the Park: Sept 19, 11am

Join us at the Riverbend Shelter in Genesee Valley Park for our annual picnic. We will begin with worship, and then enjoy fellowship over a catered meal. (Please BYO beverage) Come and reconnect with your church family! The shelter is located on Moore Rd, off Elmwood. It is just past the large Roundhouse Shelter, closer to the river. There is parking by the shelter, as well as permanent bathrooms and a nearby playground. Bring whatever yard games you like to play!

This is also typically the day of our God's Work, Our Hands service project. This year, as we continue to strive for health and safety, we will be collecting monetary donations that will be split between Loop Ministries, Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS).

## Seafarers International House

Seafarers International House is a social agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a ministry partner of the ELCA synods of Metro New York, New Jersey, New England, Upstate New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Upper Susquehanna(PA) and Delaware-Maryland.

While its roots are decidedly Lutheran, Seafarers International House's mission clientele are multi-national and multi-faith. We offer pastoral care, hospitality, social assistance, advocacy, and prayer to all seafarers and immigrants without trepidation.

Women of the ELCA are knitting hats for Seafarers and sending them to the Seafarer's International House to be distributed ALL YEAR LONG!

Most of the recipients are men and darker colors are appreciated. The preferred yarn is Red Heart Super Saver or any worsted weight yarn- **NOT WOOL.**

There is a collection box in the Fellowship Hall, you can also find pattern directions attached to the box!

If you have any questions please see Leisa North. Thanks!

### ***Fundraiser for Loop Ministries Urban Food Pantry***

Loop Ministries' fundraiser last January, collecting used clothing and linens for which Savers' thrift store in Webster paid Loop by the pound, was so successful that Loop Ministries is repeating it in September, 2021. We hope that as you prepare for the end of summer and the beginning of fall, that you will contribute clothing and linens you may be parting with to this collection.



***Please leave your donated items in the lobby of St. Paul's***

*~ or ~*

*Call, text or email Theo Haynes (404-312-6216, [haynes.theo@gmail.com](mailto:haynes.theo@gmail.com)) who will gladly pick up your donations any time before September 11, 2021.*

Examples of Items needed for this Loop fundraiser are used items like:

- Clothes (men, women, children)
- Hats
- Mittens and gloves
- Scarves
- Ties
- Socks
- Shoes
- Purses
- Wallets
- Bags
- Bed/bath towels
- Sheets & blankets
- Pillows
- Curtains & tablecloths

### **Habitat for Humanity St. Paul's Point Person Needed**

St. Paul's was a founding member of the Habitat Interfaith Partnership, a coalition that has sponsored 8 Habitat houses in the inner city of Rochester over more than 2 decades.

In addition to St. Paul's, current members include First Presbyterian of Pittsford, St. Louis, United Church of Pittsford, Pittsford Rotary, Christ Clarion, Temple Sinai, and The Islamic Center of Rochester making us truly ecumenical. We have a Steering Committee of members from each group in the coalition that oversees our fund raising and construction volunteer efforts. Trish Blake was the representative from St. Paul's until she moved away, and we are looking for someone to fill that role. The committee meets about monthly during years that build (about every three years) and less often in other years. Please consider joining us in this work to provide housing to those in need.



## Dorcas Rachel Circle

Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021

Time: 9:45am- Fellowship

10:00am- Meeting

10:20am- Program/Bible Study

Place: St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Program: Gather Bible study facilitated  
by Pastor Johanna

The gift of the Spirit- Session 1: Spirit  
of God: Revealer and resource

Hostesses: Nancy Graser and  
Shari MacFarlane

***Bring your paper good donations for  
the Pittsford Food Cupboard!***

**Items needed: paper towels, facial  
tissue, toilet paper and napkins**

**As always..... all are welcome!**

**Please RSVP to Leisa North via email  
or phone**

**by: Thursday, September 2nd, by 4pm.**

**[leisanorth@gmail.com](mailto:leisanorth@gmail.com)**

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issues) of Gather for only \$9.95-  
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## Quilting for a Cause

The Women of St. Paul's have started up a quilting group. The purpose of the group is to make quilts for LWR and other local organization or individuals in need of a quilt. Our goal is to complete 5 quilts on 2021!

All are welcome to join the group, no sewing experience needed. At this point the group will be meeting monthly during the day, but if we have enough interest an evening group could be easily started.

If you would be interested in joining our group please contact Leisa North.

If you would like to contribute in other ways, here's how you can:

### **Material Donations:**

- Cotton and Flannel material- **washed and ironed.**
- Material by the yard- (**nothing less than 1 yard, please**)
- No material with Religious or American symbols
- **Crochet yarn**
- **Twin flat sheets or fabric for backing- 64" x 84"**
- **Monetary donations** – Checks can be made out to Dorcas Rachel Circle
- Memo line- Quilting for a Cause

If you have any questions please contact Leisa North at [leisanorth@gmail.com](mailto:leisanorth@gmail.com)

Our next quilting gathering will be **Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10am in the Dorcas Rachel Room.**

**\*\*There will be a collection tote located in the Fellowship Hall for donations\*\***

# **WELCA of the Genesee Finger Lakes**

is hosting an event this September.

*Please see the information below. All are welcome, bring a friend!*

## ***Living The Labyrinth***

Walking the labyrinth is an exercise in  
self-healing

*"You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy."  
(Psalm 16:11)*

And Jesus' words, *"I am the way, the truth and the life."* (John 14:16)

Saturday, September 11, 2021

Tinker Park Nature Center

Tyler Pavilion

1525 Calkins Road

Henrietta, NY 14534

Program begins at 11:30

Cost \$3.00

Please bring your known lunch, beverages and dessert will be provided.

RSVP by August 27, 2021  
to Anne Seppa (585) 889-4413

