



The Link

Summer 2021

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

July & August 2021

Pastor Page: Renewal

Dear People of St. Paul's,

Remember Star Gifts from Epiphany? The star gift I drew was perfect for this year: RENEWAL. It's an invitation to reflect upon as we in this country emerge from this pandemic, and take a look at what new thing God will be doing in and through the Church in the coming months and years. Ours is a faith based on a story of life always winning over death, about how God can take a death and turn it into something new, extraordinary, and unexpected. I am certain we will be watching this happen in most facets of our lives as the world considers what we have learned during a global pandemic, and the Church is no exception.

As we have embarked upon the exciting journey of discovering St. Paul's own, unique story (see a draft of this work on page 4 of this newsletter), I have been dreaming about the next phase of our life, and wondering how we can take the things we already do intuitively, and do them with more intention. I encourage you to read that story, consider/discuss the reflection questions I've provided, and let me know what you think. Here are some of my thoughts on some of the values that have emerged:

- ***We yearn for connection with God and one another.*** How are we finding it? What activities or study outside of Sunday worship can help us connect more meaningfully with God? What format/time will work well for this, given our busy lives? (See page 3 in this newsletter for ideas for doing this over the summer!)
- ***St. Paul's values children and youth.*** How can we invest in them more intentionally? How can we make scripture come alive for them, in a way that equips them to see sacred text as a resource that is alive and meaningful for their lives? How can we equip parents to support this throughout the week, not just an hour on Sunday? Can we better celebrate the various stepping-stones of faith? Can we do something to more intentionally develop relationships with these young Christians and the older, more mature-in-faith Christians in our congregation?
- ***Many have come to our congregation through our livestream this year,*** which we are already working to improve and make permanent. How else can we lean into a reality in which digital ministry is increasingly important and giving people access to the life-giving message of Jesus in a way we haven't before? How can we embrace the benefits of both in-person AND online community, without making them two separate things?
- ***St. Paul's is a welcoming and accepting community.*** But who may *not* feel welcome even to walk through our doors and why? What are the barriers? How can we communicate, with our building and our message, that we are a safe space, no matter what you may bring with you?
- ***We're paying off our mortgage soon.*** So how can we better use this beautiful space for ministry during the week? Shared remote work space for community members? Tutoring space? Hosting more support groups?

Thanks for thinking through these things with me, my friends! I look forward to seeing renewal happen in myriad ways in the coming months. With Christ, all things are possible!

Yours in hope,
Pastor Johanna

From the Church Office

Articles for the **September issue of the "Link"** must be received by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, August 16th.

We will continue to use Sign-up Genius for **Lay Ministry volunteering** and other opportunities, including **flower sponsorship**. Please see the Altar Guild article within this newsletter for full details including a sign-up link. 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 now open Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 2:00-6:00 p.m. I remain available via email on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, 8-12.

Please note: Pastor Johanna will be on vacation July 5th through the 12th. Pastor Eric Madsen will be on call for pastoral emergencies during this time.

Michelle will be on vacation from July 10th through the 16th. The church office will be closed on Wednesday, 7/14 and Thursday, 7/15.

Pastor on the Porch: Tuesdays 10-noon

Pastor Johanna will be sitting on the office building porch (facing Lincoln Ave.) each Tuesday beginning July 13. Come on by and have a chat about something, or nothing! If you'd like to chat but this time doesn't work, give Pastor Johanna a call/email/text and we can schedule something that works for you (she is quite flexible in the summers). See you on the porch!



Meet Upstate New York Synod's Bishop-elect: *The Rev. Lee M. Miller, II*



Date of Ordination:
June 20, 1998

Current Position:
Senior Pastor, Holy Trinity

Congregational Membership: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Buffalo, NY

Learn more about our new Bishop-elect, including Pastor Miller's vision for the synod at www.upstatenysynod.org or by clicking [HERE](#). Please keep Bishop-elect Miller, his family, our synod staff and leaders in your prayers.

Congratulations to our Seniors!



We are so proud of the young people in our congregation. Please see our correction below. Congratulations to all of our high school and college graduates!!

~ College ~

Kryslin Kane – graduated with honors from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Kryslin was awarded Presidential medals in both her majors of Marketing & Leadership and Ethics & Organizational Sustainability.

In the June Link

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The Church Calendar can be found online:

www.stpaulspittsford.org

Spend the Summer with the Word

As you travel and get back to the things we missed last summer, consider including some intentional faith growth activities. Here are some to try as an individual or as a family:

FAITH5: This is an easy devotional to do with a partner, kids, or even by yourself in a journal. First, you **SHARE** your highs and lows from the day, then **READ** something from the Bible (you could use the previous Sunday's readings), then **TALK** about how that Bible reading speaks to your highs and lows. Then **PRAY** for each other, thanking God for the highs and asking God's presence in the lows. Finally, **BLESS** each other. Do this at dinnertime, or bedtime, or anytime!

Meditate & Memorize: Pick one verse from Sunday's Psalm, and commit to sitting quietly with that verse for at least 5 minutes every day. You may choose to breathe deeply and repeat the line in your head, or write it out and color around it, or whatever you wish! Try to memorize one Psalm verse each week.

Story of the Week: Read one story in the Bible each week, and spend the week journaling or talking about it with someone. Use these questions as prompts:

- *What word, phrase or image jumps out to me in this story today? Why?*
- *What is God saying to me in this image? What does it speak to me in my life right now?*
- *How does this story show me how God is with me?*
- *How does this story direct me in my life of faith?*
- *Where do I see brokenness in this story? Where do I see God's grace?*
- Here are some stories to use (you may need to read just before for context):
 - Week of July 4: Hagar Sees God (Genesis 16)
 - Week of July 11: Jacob Wrestles an Angel (Genesis 32:22-32)
 - Week of July 18: Baby Moses is Spared (Exodus 1:8-2:10)
 - Week of July 25: After the Whale Incident (Jonah 4)
 - Week of Aug. 1: Jesus Sends some Pigs off a Cliff (Mark 5:1-20)
 - Week of Aug. 8: A Woman Stands Up Straight (Luke 13:10-17)
 - Week of Aug. 15: A Man Born Blind Can See (John 9:1-41)
 - Week of Aug. 22: So Many Fish (John 21:1-14)
 - Week of Aug. 29: The Scales Fell From His Eyes (Acts 9:1-19)



St. Paul's Story

Who is St. Paul's today, and what is the best version of who we could be? A group of 8 members (a representative sample of our congregation) set out to answer these questions. After sharing stories, values and experiences, we discovered some common values and goals. From there we began discerning and telling our collective St. Paul's story about who we are and who we could be. Below is what we came up with, including input from several others in discussion groups. Read it with your family, engage in the discussion questions below, and then let Pastor Johanna know your thoughts.

Humans are hard-wired for connection. We long to be in authentic relationship with God and one another, to be accepted as we are, to find safe spaces where we can belong, and to serve one another generously and genuinely. We look to our families, our communities, and our church to fulfill these desires, and believe that when we experience these connections, we are experiencing the life abundant that Jesus died and rose to provide for us.

Life in this broken world, however, makes this difficult to attain. God's vision for us gets mixed up with the demands, priorities, and expectations of the world, and we are left feeling over-extended, and like we and others have to be and act a certain way in order truly to be loved and accepted. In trying to fit in, we often feel more alone than connected.

The good news is we know that God created us good, claims us in our baptism as beloved, and promises that nothing we can say or do (or fail to say or do!) will ever make God love us any less. The people of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Pittsford know what it is to be seeking, and to feel broken and lost, and we have also seen how God can use our experiences to bring about something beautiful. Our journeys have enabled us to find space for authenticity, opportunity for resiliency and hope to bloom, and a community where hearing and sharing in one another's stories of pain can make us feel less alone, more supported, and more connected to God and to one another. There is grace and great freedom in walking this journey together with others seeking genuine connection with God and one another.

We want to create space for asking questions, and not always knowing the answer; we seek to value vulnerability, over always appearing to "have it together"; we aim to accept others, in Jesus' name, wherever they are on their journey and however they self-identify. Inspired by the Word, we serve one another both within and beyond our walls, listen to one another's stories, support and celebrate each other and our shared life as often as we can. Most of all, we worship together the living God, who centers and grounds us, and brings us peace and fullness of life.

Such fullness of life can happen when we commit to a practice of spirituality and active service. We "practice" because there is always room to grow, but we believe that when we commit together, we can support and uphold one another in the process of deepening connection with God and one another. Many may try to find their value and worth in success and achievement. We invite you instead to find the life-giving connection humans crave through prayer, worship, spiritual formation activities, and community service projects.

Come and be a part of the mission of St. Paul's, and find yourself connected to a story larger than your own, where you are loved and accepted as you are, and where you will be equipped to live out this life-giving message of love and grace for a world in need.

Discussion:

- *How did reading this story make you feel? Excited? Confused? Inspired? Neutral? What made you feel that way?*
- *Was there a particular part of this story that resonated with you? What part, and why?*
- *Was there any part that did not speak to your experience at St. Paul's?*
- *Does reading this story shed light on some part of either your personal faith or our shared life at St. Paul's as a place where you or we can grow? What personal commitments can you make to live better into this "best version of ourselves"?*

St. Paul's is OPEN for Worship

We have two options for worshipping in person in our beautiful sanctuary (see below). Since NY State has lifted masking requirements, and vaccination rates in Pittsford for eligible people are even higher than the state as a whole (nearly 90%), we are being more relaxed about masking: you are still encouraged to wear a mask, especially if you see a child under 12 in worship who cannot be vaccinated, and if you are singing. But we will leave this to your faithful discretion.

Here are the two options to attend worship and what you need to know:

9:30 – Attend the live-stream:

- This service will include everything you experience on the livestream, including singing.
- **Masked congregation members will be permitted to sing**, and may also participate fully in spoken responses without masks.
- Please plan to arrive at least 5-10 min early to allow for check in, and so that we can give any instructions before the mics go live.

11:00 – Attend following the live-stream:

- This service will include organ/piano music, but **no singing**.
- This service will include communion.
- We will aim to keep this to ~40 min, including reading, sermon, prayers, and communion.

Safety Measures: We continue to require a sign-in so that we can contact trace, and we encourage masks, especially if you are singing or if there are children present, or if someone you are talking to is wearing a mask. We have all the windows open, and fans on, and two air purifiers continuously running.



News from the Altar Guild....

Hello! It's great to be reaching out to you all, it's been such a long time. Now with St. Paul's reopening slowly there are several volunteer opportunities available for you!

Pastor has done a fantastic job detailing each Lay Ministry Position for each service. Please take a few minutes to review and see where you may want to help out. If you are interested in volunteering please call the office (585-586-0580) or sign up through Signup Genius at the churches website -stpaulspittsford.org or here

<https://www.signupgenius.com/index.cfm?go=c.SignUpSearch&eid=01C1CAD6FECCF960&cs=09C2BADE8FBC8B637B7A64745BCF9BCE&sortby=l.title>

If you have any questions or would like to try a Altar Guild Volunteer area out or have any questions, please feel free to email Mara Berndt or Leisa North at

Mara- mberndt49@gmail.com

Leisa- leisanorth@gmail.com

Lay Ministry Positions (2021)

As we gradually return from pandemic

As we return to holding in person services, some of our lay ministry positions are not yet needed, and some have changed form somewhat. Below is a description of each position.

9:30 Livestreamed Service

Lector – This position is unchanged. The lector practices the readings ahead of time, then reads the first and second reading from the lectern. A cantor will lead the Psalm. Lectors do not wear masks while on screen.

Continued on next page.

Prayers – This position is unchanged. The prayer reads the offering prayer and the prayers of intercession. Pastor will lead the spiritual communion prayer and the Lord’s Prayer. Prayers do not wear masks while on screen.

Usher – Currently the role of usher includes the following:

- Arrive by 9:20.
- Greet people as they arrive, encourage them to clean hands, and make sure they know safety protocols (masks are encouraged but optional if vaccinated, required if not; clean hands). Orient them to the space as needed (offering plate, be sure to take a bulletin from the white podium, point out bathrooms if a visitor, etc.).
- Make sure they sign in – we are still contact tracing. If they have trouble reading all the words, help them.
- Once the service begins, bring offering plate into sanctuary. During the offertory, you may choose to bring the plate down the aisles to give people a chance to give, but this need not be too formal. Place offering plate back on table for people as they exit.
- Count number of attendees and record it in the book.
- Stay until 11:10, in order to check in people for the next service, and count and record number of attendees.

Acolyte – This is currently being covered by our Sexton. Youth who would normally do this job are encouraged to volunteer elsewhere!

Coffee Hour – With the nicer weather, we are beginning to offer coffee hour *outdoors between services*. If someone is signed up, we (the staff) will set up a table near the parking lot door, along with providing lemonade and cups. You are in charge of setting everything up, providing edible treats, bringing an additional beverage if you would like and clean up afterward. We will take care of the table.

11am Communion Service

Prayer – This is unchanged. Come to the lectern and read the Prayers of Intercession. *It is preferred that this person also assists with communion, but not required.*

Communion set-up/clean-up – The set up currently looks a little different; there are pictures and instructions in the sacristy. We are using gluten-free bread (located in the small refrigerator in the sacristy) and pre-filling glass cups, and filling trays halfway (every other slot)

Communion assistant – The assistant sanitizes hands and wears a mask before coming forward, then stands with a tray of pre-filled glasses and offers the words, “The blood of Christ, shed for you,” as people take a glass. The assistant receives communion from the pastor at the end, and then serves the pastor communion. *It is preferred that this person also reads the prayers, but not required.*

Altar Linen Care – Take home linen that has been soiled to clean and return to drawers in the cabinet in the sacristy.

Altar Care – Is making sure the paraments colors follow the Words and Season Calendar, making sure the candles have oil filled each week. In this long, green season (until the end of October), this position is mostly making sure the candles are filled with oil.

Other:

Flowers Delivery – When someone sponsors flowers and donates them, this person delivers them to one of our homebound.

Food Delivery – This person delivers any food donations either to Loop Ministries or the Pittsford Food Cupboard.

Thank you for your willingness to serve!

Service Attendance Statistics for May and June 2021



St Paul's Altar Flower Sponsorship

Our sign up for sponsorship is now on-line!

You can either go to the [Church website](#) or click the button below to be taken to the sign-up page where you'll be able to sponsor and pay for flowers on a selected Sunday.

You also have the option of sending your check payment directly to :

St Paul's Lutheran Church
Flower Sponsorship
P.O. Box 363
Pittsford, NY 14534

<https://www.signupgenius.com/index.cfm?go=c.SignUpSearch&eid=01C1CAD6FECCF960&cs=09C2BADE8FBC8B637B7A64745BCF9BCE&sortBy=1.title>

We are hoping to have a sign-up calendar in the foyer by the beginning of July as an alternate way for folks to sign up.

You can sponsor both urns or just one. Each urn will be \$25. We are asking to have forms turned in by Monday of the Sunday before, so the florist has time to order flowers. If we don't have any sponsored flowers by the end of Monday, that Sunday service will have silk flower arrangements on display

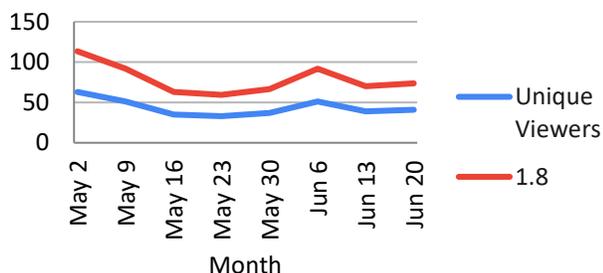
Please don't forget to fill out in memory of or in honor of and if you would like to take your flowers with you or not. If nothing is indicated they will be delivered to a Homebound member.

If you have any questions, please feel free to leave a message with the office or email

Mara- mberndt49@gmail.com
Leisa- leisanorth@gmail.com

Date	Unique Viewers	Est. actual total	In-person (2 services)
May 2	63	113	13
May 9	51	92	25
May 16	35	63	19
May 23	33	59	17
May 30	37	67	19
Jun 6	51	92	20
Jun 13	39	70	30
June 20	41	74	20
May totals- 5wks	219	394	487
June totals- 3wks	131	236	326

Unique TWITCH Viewers and multiplier



We started in-person service in May 2021. The Estimated actual total column indicates an estimate of the total number of people watching per unique viewer device by multiplying the unique viewer number by 1.8.

The in-person attendance numbers are based on online sign-ups (May) and sign-in sheets for those dates in June where registration was no longer required.

~ SOCIAL EVENTS ~

Second Sundays: Sweets and Singing

Get back your singing chops, and join us on the lawn (on Washington Ave) on the July 10th for a good old fashioned hymn sing. Bring an instrument if you like (hand percussion and scarves will be available for kids and anyone else), or just your smile, and we'll sing through some favorites. After we sing, we'll enjoy some treats together. Bring the whole family!

Porch Jamz Returns: July 24, 11am-1pm

Come hear some live music from St. Paul's porch, brought to you by Jonathan Madden, Pastor Johanna Rehbaum, and members of St. Paul's. Bring a chair and stay a while, or just stay on your feet and dance. Instruments available for a real jam session. Before or after, you can also check out the Pittsford Farmer's Market. Rain date: July 31. *If you'd like to play or sing something*, email Jonathan at jmadden@stpaulspittsford.org.

It's Warm – Let's Get Together!

We all miss connecting with our St. Paul's family. 'Tis the season when Rochesterians can be *outside*, so let's do it! If you have an idea for an outdoor gathering, however small, let us know and we will publicize it. Wouldn't it be fun to have small gatherings of church folks all through the summer? For example:

- A gentle hike
- A picnic at the beach, or in a park
- A prayer gathering in a pretty place
- Playground playdate with Sunday School friends (and their friends!)
- Drinks and goodies in your backyard
- A walk along the canal

Can't wait to see some folks!

Courtesy of
Dorcas Rachel Circle



At Day's End

Is anybody happier because you passed
his way?
Does anyone remember that you spoke
to him today?
The day is almost over, and it's toiling
time is through;
Is there anyone to utter now a kindly
word of you?
Can you say tonight, in parting with u
the day that's slipping fast,
That you helped a single brother of the
many that you passed?
Is a single heart rejoicing over what
you did or said;
Does the man whose hopes were fading,
now with courage look ahead?
Did you waste the day, or lose it?
Was it well or sorely spent?
Did you leave a trail of kindness;
or a scar of discontent?
As you close your eyes in slumber,
do you think that God will say,
"You have earned one more tomorrow
by the work you did today"?

- John Hall



