

Welcome

- Reading Values Statement
St. Paul's United Methodist Church: A Compassionate Community Led and Transformed by the Spirit
Values:

Striving for Beloved Community:

St. Paul's seeks to create a community that reflects the dream of God, wonderfully diverse and deeply united. We seek to create a place that welcomes a diversity of race, ethnicity, citizenship, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental ability, faith background, economic status, appearance, marital condition, political persuasion, education and life experience. We strive to do so in a way that protects the most vulnerable among us.

Connecting With and Through the Spirit:

Though we are all in unique places on our lifelong spiritual journey, St. Paul's seeks to connect us for mutual support, fellowship, guidance and transformation. St. Paul's offers connection with the sacred through authentic worship, study, practice, nurture, and prayerful engagement with one another and the wider world. With the Spirit's direction, we continually evaluate, dream, and create opportunities and spaces for divine revelation and relationship.

Acting with Compassion:

Jesus taught his followers in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, that when they minister to the 'least of these' -the hungry and thirsty, the sick and imprisoned, the naked and the stranger- they minister to Jesus. Following the leading of the Spirit, we at St. Paul's strive to see Jesus Christ in each person and come together from a variety of places within the mystery of compassion to serve those most in need in our world, often in partnership with community agencies and groups, and with other faith communities. Through our beloved community and sacred connections, we open ourselves to the world, discerning where joy, peace and compassion are most needed.

Standing Up for Justice:

Throughout the Book of Acts, the movement of the Holy Spirit challenged the infant church to redefine who was included in God's dream for the human community. The Spirit revealed to the early church that "God shows no partiality." As those who follow the Spirit's call, St. Paul's stands for justice and works alongside those who are marginalized, oppressed, and silenced in our society and the larger world. We are constantly listening, learning, and acting to end "injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves (United Methodist Baptismal Covenant)." Our Beloved Community and connections to the sacred give us the courage and endurance we need to "realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice (Martin Luther King, Jr.)."

Our Priorities in this Time of Two Pandemics:

- Health, safety, and well-being of our church family, staff, guests, and visitors.
- Spiritual healing and wholeness for all who connect with St. Paul's.
- Opportunities to serve with compassion and work for justice.

Scripture Reading Luke 9:28-37 (CEB) The Transfiguration

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said these things, he took Peter, John, and James, and went up on a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes

flashed white like lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with him. ³¹ They were clothed with heavenly splendor and spoke about Jesus' departure, which he would achieve in Jerusalem. ³² Peter and those with him were almost overcome by sleep, but they managed to stay awake and saw his glory as well as the two men with him.

³³ As the two men were about to leave Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it's good that we're here. We should construct three shrines: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—but he didn't know what he was saying. ³⁴ Peter was still speaking when a cloud overshadowed them. As they entered the cloud, they were overcome with awe.

³⁵ Then a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, my chosen one. Listen to him!" ³⁶ Even as the voice spoke, Jesus was found alone. They were speechless and at the time told no one what they had seen.

³⁷ The next day, when Jesus, Peter, John, and James had come down from the mountain, a large crowd met Jesus.

Praying Together

Holy Mystery,

Something drew us together as a community.

Something we can't always name but which we experience as a love
that weaves us together as a family in faith.

Your holy mystery that we name God.

Your sacred calling we witness in the life of Jesus.

Your indescribable hope we feel when we gather in the Spirit, even
across this distance.

May our experience of the Divine transform our doubts and fears
and prepare us to love the world and to be love in the world.

Holy and gracious God, Beloved Jesus, Connecting Spirit,
you are beyond words and description,
your love is beyond knowledge and explanation.

Make our hearts ready to receive you this night.

Change us, we pray, that our lives may reflect the glory of your transfiguration.

We rejoice in the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

~ Looking Back ~

Introduction

The story of the Transfiguration is a wondrous story where past, present and future are experienced together. Prophets of old, representing the Law and all the teaching of the prophets, come to converse with Jesus. Moses and Elijah join the Christ in radiance before Peter, James and John. The 'lifting of the veil' that reveals the glory of God in the person Jesus in the present moment for the disciples, much needed assurance for the hard work to come. And the glory of Jesus promises the coming of God's Kin-dom, God's Beloved Community, a future hope. Yet this future hope is also a very real call to be about the work of the kin-dom, the Beloved Community, as Jesus and the disciples come down the mountain and encounter the desperate needs of the crowd below.

Tonight we will spend a little time with past, present and future as well as we engage in our church conference. Let us begin with where we have been since our last church conference, utilizing the forms we must vote on this evening as a guide. As we move through this first grouping of forms, if you have prayers about our past year you wish to lift up, please type them in the chat feature. You may also pose any questions or comments and I will address/share within this time of looking back. We will close this section with a time of prayer.

Minutes & Audit

- simple items that must be approved from last year
- share minutes: overview of cluster conference at Lansing 10/26/19
- share audit: no issues, all is accounted.

Report of the Pastor

- Baptisms
- New Members
- Transfers out
- Membership records—sharing of names
- Those who have died (Teresa will share names slowly, respond with “Thank you, Lord, for these your servants)
- Teresa’s Report (Supplement—see labeled link)

Report of Retired Pastors

- Rev. Bob McCune
- Rev. Nelson Reppert

Volunteers in Missions Report—Local & World Missions Carolyn Aslan – Anne Horst

Safe Sanctuaries Compliance Form-Teresa overview

INR Question Form

Thank you to Leslie Meyerhoff, Susanne Morgan, Anne Horst
upcoming groups—Kendi’s Book, Saad’s Book (show them)

Disciple-Making Pathways (what we did in the past)

Pictures of our Past Year

Time of Prayer

God of Abraham and Sarah, of Moses and Miriam, of Mary Magdalene and Peter, James and John;

Hear our prayers from this past year:

(Debbie reads prayers)

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers. Amen.

~ **In the Present** ~

Introduction

As we move from past reflections to an exploration of ‘current affairs,’ we will again be watching chat for prayers for our current reality and any questions or comments you may have.

Let us explore where we are in this time of pandemic and division and racial tension as a faithful community of Christ.

Reports from our Staff:

- Debbie—Loving Care Ministries
- Alexa and Kayla—Family Ministries
- Anne—Hospitality & Connections Ministries

- Michelle—Building & current financial status
- Teresa—Worship, Holidays, & Interfaith work

Time of Prayer

~ **Looking Forward** ~

Introduction

As Jesus' appearance returned to normal, he immediately led the disciples down the mountain and began ministry among the crowds who waited below. The promise of the future, fully-realized Beloved Community is found in the daily work of mission and ministry of the Body of Christ-the Church-in the world. In this next year we have much change and transition. Let us explore this immediate future in light of the promised Kin-dom, always coming near us.

Again, we will watch the chat feature for prayers you wish to share for the future of our church, community and world, and for any comments or questions you may have. I will have a Q & A toward the end and my address some of your questions/comments then.

Our Lay Servants

- Introduce each lay servant and allow a moment to share before taking the vote to approve for the coming year:
 - Jami Breedlove
 - Diana Crouch
 - Dick Tabor
 - Karen Kaufmann

Our Leadership

- Leaders were asked to 'hold in place' for the moment as we work toward an Advent and Christmas season that will be filled with much change due to the pandemic. Leaders were gracious in their responses.
 - Ask for any nominations outside of those listed. Elect Trustees through separate vote
 - Share the full roster of leadership, ask for any nominations, and vote
 - thank you to our amazing leaders!!!—Tigran! BZB Team
 - Thank you Committee on Lay Leadership

Pastoral Compensation—Steve Beyers leaders (slide with compensation)

Touching Base with our Teams:

- Trustees—Parsonage Inspection, Building Reopening, Other
- Finance—Stewardship, PPP Loan, Giving needs
- Council—Thoughts for future

Q & A with Pastor Teresa

Time of Prayer

God of today, God of this moment,
 God of November days and December celebrations,
 Hear our prayers for this present moment:
(Debbie shares prayers)
 Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.

~ **Closing our Holy Conferencing** ~

Final Things

- Announcements
- Thank yous

Closing Poem-Blessing by Jan Richardson “Dazzling”

Believe me, I know
how tempting it is
to remain inside this blessing,
to linger where everything
is dazzling
and clear.

We could build walls
around this blessing,
put a roof over it.
We could bring in
a table, chairs,
have the most amazing meals.
We could make a home.
We could stay.

But this blessing
is built for leaving.
This blessing
is made for coming down
the mountain.
This blessing
wants to be in motion,
to travel with you
as you return
to level ground.

It will seem strange
how quiet this blessing becomes
when it returns to earth.
It is not shy.
It is not afraid.

It simply knows
how to bide its time,
to watch and wait,
to discern and pray

until the moment comes
when it will reveal
everything it knows,
when it will shine forth
with all it has seen,
when it will dazzle
with the unforgettable light

you have carried
all this way.

Go in Peace.