
St. Paul's United Methodist Church

Summer 2023 Newsletter

*St. Paul's is a compassionate community,
led and transformed by the Spirit*



The Pastor's Epistle

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for God. Don't become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what God wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."
(Romans 12: 1-2, MSG, adapted)

Time passes so quickly, doesn't it? What will the Summer bring? We may have plans for our church, our families, vacation, recreation, work, and more, but we have no idea how God will surprise us.

I wonder ~ how many folks reading this have made plans for their Christian discipleship for this Summer? What three people will you be inviting to attend church with you? For whom do you pray for a softening of the heart? From whom do you need to seek forgiveness? What will be your chosen mission project for the Summer? What young person will you equip to attend church camp? What older person would benefit from your listening care?

God desires to utilize each of us (our passions, our time, our skills and talents) for the ministry of Christ in our area and far beyond. EVERYONE is capable of some, or many, forms of ministry in Christ's name. Here are some suggestions (some of which I alluded to above):

- ♥ Invite a family member, neighbor, or an acquaintance to attend worship with you. Offer to give them a ride, sit with them, and introduce them to others.
- ♥ Find a mission project that intrigues you and commit your time to service once each month. Some ideas: The Village at Ithaca distribution; serving at Loaves & Fishes; volunteering at a local thrift shop; discover ways to assist our refugee families; and many more!
- ♥ Encourage a young person to attend or volunteer at camp. If you don't know someone going to camp, you may still make a donation to a campership fund at the church or at the camp to help kids you don't know to experience the love of God in a beautiful outdoor setting.
- ♥ Do you know someone who's lonely? Or have a friend you haven't seen in a while? Go and visit! Take some iced tea and enjoy some unhurried time of sharing.
- ♥ Write notes of gratitude. Write notes seeking forgiveness. Write notes to people you miss.
- ♥ Go for a walk or hike. Use that cell phone to capture pictures of the beauty of God's creation and then share them with others. Give God the credit and the glory.

Remember to include serving God in your plans for this summer!

~Pastor Beckie

Summer Worship Series: “Tending the New Creation”

*“And if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away;
see, everything has become new!”*

2 Corinthians 5:17

What does it mean to be a “new creation in Christ?” We all yearn for renewal – but are we willing to pursue it? How is our own personal renewal connected to “new creation” in others, in our communities and in the world itself? “Tending” means to lean in the direction of something...to “attend” to something is to nurture it, grow it, build it, pay... “attention!” So this is what we will do in the eight-week journey toward the New Creation Christ in-tends for us! The series begins on July 9th!

Choose Love

By Jami Breedlove-Crouch, Loving Care Ministries Coordinator

I recently attended a Retiree Union meeting of Regional Officers in Albany. At dinner that night, Diana and I sat at a table and were joined by an African American man and his wife who were officers of their local.

During dinner, after making introductions all around, we had a conversation about our past careers and our present retirement. I mentioned that I was working part-time for the church and described my role as Loving Care Ministries Coordinator. When dinner finished, spouses left the room and the officers held their meeting.

The next morning Ron and Belinda, our new friends, joined me for breakfast. Belinda inquired where Diana was, and I told her that she was back in the hotel room still resting and preparing to work.

Belinda began telling me about a conversation she’d had with Ron the night before. “I told Ron I was really blessed to know you’re working for the church. It tells me you belong to a church where you are truly loved and accepted for the person that you are.”

I responded that we’d been attending St. Paul’s since 2003 because of their inclusivity. Belinda replied, “A lot of white people like mentioning that they have at least really good black friend; I’m a black woman who has at least one really good gay friend.”

Belinda began talking about how her friend has been hurt by the church, and how she believes God calls us to love all people. She attends church, but Ron has been looking for a place more inclusive since he hadn’t yet found a community where he felt at home.

After Belinda left, Ron and I continued the conversation as I pulled up the “Reconciling Ministries Network” website on my phone, searching for Reconciling congregations in their area. I was quickly able to give him the name and address of a Reconciling congregation close to their home.

Whenever we travel, Diana and I find that we often feel uncomfortable in social situations where we don’t know people because we’re required to “come out” again and again, and we’re never sure how it will go. Little did we know that what would bring us connection to the others this time around would be St. Paul’s and its witness of inclusivity for “All” people.

1st Peter 3:15 states that we should: Regard God as holy in our heart and whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope you will be ready to defend it.

This is the hope I have in Christ. Because of the witness of St. Paul’s welcome to all people, I’m able to minister to those I don’t know. God will ordain meeting people and having conversations and will use the witness of Christ in me for the glory of God.

God’s love can be evident in us and will draw people to be in fellowship together with God for the good of all people. After twenty years in this congregation, I’m grateful for the decision and the hard work that took place to choose love. I am blessed because of Christ in you!

Events from a Joyous Spring

A Beautiful Altar for Our Easter Celebration

Thanks to everyone who donated Easter Lilies to adorn our sanctuary on Resurrection Sunday! What a beautiful stage it set to celebrate and honor everyone! We had thirty lilies throughout the church and over half were delivered to parishioners unable to be present in our building for worship. Your gift made each person's day special, helping them to remember that St. Paul's is praying for them and that they are a vital part of our congregation! A special "Thank You" to Cheryl McGraw for making the beautiful butterflies gracing the lilies. They made our flowers extra special!

Remember, if you would like to contribute by purchasing flowers that add beauty to our sanctuary each week, contact Jami Breedlove-Crouch at lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org.



Household Donations Project Benefited Village at Ithaca

In April, St. Paul's Local and World Missions team began supporting the Village at Ithaca, coordinating local congregations in donating household goods to thirty participating families. The project has been coordinated for the last three years by the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca and Temple Beth El; now St. Paul's is working to involve other congregations in helping support families with household items once a month. Many have seen a reduction in the extra SNAP benefits available during the pandemic.



Each month, different congregations sponsor one assigned household item—say, dishwashing liquid—along with individual four packs of toilet paper. At the end of the month, all items are joined together and distributed by volunteer drivers to families who might lack transportation to stores or other agencies where they might be able to procure these items.

Founded in 2002 by Cal Walker, the important work of Village at Ithaca continues making a difference in many children's lives, serving families by advocating for educational equity and excellence for all students, particularly Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino/Latinx low income and any underserved students within Tompkins County. If you or your church would like to be a part of this project, please contact: Jami Breedlove-Crouch at lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org.

Pictured are Friends Marquis Godfrey (from the Village), Judith Jones (from FUSIT), and Jami Breedlove-Crouch (from St. Paul's) packing household goods for Village at Ithaca.

Introducing the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

By Alice Mehlman

As the Chair of St. Paul's SPRC, I would like to introduce you to the mission of this committee and the people who currently serve. Generally, the purpose of SPRC is to connect the Pastor, staff, and congregation; to support the ministry goals of the church in concrete ways through personnel administrative functions, and in spiritual ways through commitment to being a light for Christ in the congregation and beyond. Some essential tasks, as stated in the "Guidelines" document created by the United Methodist Church for SPRCs, include (1) Encouraging, strengthening, nurturing, supporting and respecting the pastor and staff and their families; (2) Conferring with the staff on the effectiveness of ministry goals; (3) Writing job descriptions for staff and participating in evaluations; (4) Recommending positions to the church council when needed; (5) Creating personnel policies; (6) Conferring with staff about continuing education and spiritual formation. St. Paul's SPRC meets monthly. St. Paulians who currently serve on the SPRC are Michael Culotta (past Chair), John Marohn (Secretary), Tigran Chatrchyan (Lay Leader), Larry Roberts, Denise Beeners, Ann Bohman, Leah Dodd (past Secretary), Pastor Beckie (ex-officio, meaning non-voting member), and myself (Chair). Thank you, SPRC, and to those who serve on other committees as well!

Well Done SPUMC!

We received \$3,100 for our Easter Offering ~ Buffalo 10 Scholarships. This donation will support scholarships for residents on the East Side of Buffalo, in the neighborhood of the 2022 racist mass shooting. The hope is that education will help to heal and transform this community, which has been plagued with structural racism, poverty, social segregation, and lack of resources to provide for even basic human needs. Thank you St. Paul's UMC for your generosity!

Flower Sale Success

Festival Chimes wishes to thank everyone participating in our annual flower sale. This year's offering of hanging baskets was an unqualified success, resulting in nearly sixty baskets sold. The monies earned help fund our participation in festivals, as well as buy special equipment or music to enhance your enjoyment of services. Thank you!

In Appreciation

Many thanks to Festival Chimes for their beautiful musical offerings during worship services throughout the year. Under the direction of Dorothy Preston, the ringers include: Melissa Gould, Sara Jane Hymes, Becca Missal, Kathie Modisher, David Orr, Kathy Orr, Crystal Pebbles, Joan Reppert, Matt Talbot, Aleta Tessaglia-Hymes, and Joellyn Tuttle.

Substitute ringers include: Nancy Lovell, Sherry Smart, Pastor Beckie Sweet, and Diane Tessaglia-Hymes.

The energy and dedication these talented musicians bring to the music ministry of St. Paul's cannot be underestimated.

A Memorial Garden for Dottie Scott

Festival Chimes are in the process of establishing a garden in loving memory of Dottie Scott, who passed away last October. Dottie was a longtime member of St. Paul's and sang with the Chancel Choir: she also rang bells in the hand bell choir for over 40 years. Look for a garden of Coral Bells (Heuchera) on the Court Street side of the church to celebrate her life, and of her love of music.

Upcoming Events

Still Time to Register for Summer Camp!

The Upper New York Conference has opened registration for summer camps for persons of all ages and abilities. To register for Camp Casowasco, visit casowasco.org. To register for camps at Sky Lake, visit skylakecenter.org. St. Paul's has "camperships" available to assist our children and youth in attending camp. For more information, contact Pastor Beckie at pastor@stpaulsithaca.org or Cheryl McGraw at cherylmcgraw@cornell.edu.

June Picnic in Stewart Park

St. Paul's Older Adult Ministry invites all to a "Bring-Your-Own-Lunch" picnic and program at the Stewart Park Small Pavilion on Thursday, June 15, 12:30-2:30pm. Join Global Roots Play School Director, Bronwyn Losey, and representatives from Ithaca Welcomes Refugees and Open Doors English for a panel presentation about their work with immigrants and refugees in our community. Look for an invitation in your email or contact Jamie Breedlove-Crouch at lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org if you would like to attend.



Music Camps for Kids

Opus Ithaca School of Music offers a variety of summer music camps and workshops for students ages 5 and up. Here is a listing of our camps below. Scholarships are available.



July 12-14: Chamber Music for Strings Workshop — FULL DAY CAMP

July 17-21: Piano Camp — FULL DAY CAMP

July 24-28: Improvisation Camp for Strings, Flute and Piano — HALF DAY CAMP

July 31-August 4: Jazz Camp — FULL DAY CAMP

August 14-18: Flute Camp — FULL DAY CAMP

August 14-18: General Music Camp — HALF DAY CAMP

August 21-25: Choir Camp — HALF DAY CAMP

Please visit opusithaca.org/summer-camp for more information and to register.

Summer Singing

Summer Sing registration is now open for the Affiliated Choruses of Ithaca Summer Sing. Rehearsals begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 7th and conclude with a free "Family and Friends" concert on Wednesday, July 26th. As always, there are no auditions and all are welcome regardless of singing experience. On-site registration and music folder handout begins at 6:30 p.m. for the first three rehearsals. If you're not 100% sure that you want to sing with us, we allow the first three rehearsals to "try us out." The fee for registration is \$40. Proof of COVID vaccination is required to participate and mask wearing is recommended. For further info and to register, go to <https://acithaca.org/groups/summersing/join>.

Benefit Yard and Bake Sale

The Church of Latter Day Saints is hosting a Charity Yard and Bake Sale in support of the Feed My Starving Children Ithaca MobilePack on June 10th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 114 Burleigh Drive, Ithaca in the LDS parking lot. Items needed include gently used clothes, small furniture, antiques, appliances, décor, books, toys, cookies, bread, and pies. Donated items can be dropped off on Wednesday, June 7th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and Thursday, June 8th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. For more information visit the <http://ithacamobilepack.org/> or email Ijust76@gmail.com.



Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are needed to make sandwiches and deliver them to the Friendship Center at St. John's Community Services (our local homeless shelter on State St.). They can be made at home, or you can reserve the church kitchen for a group. Please contact [Carolyn Aslan](mailto:Carolyn.Aslan@gmail.com) at carolyn.aslan@gmail.com if you have any questions. Help is needed on the following dates: June 13, August 8, September 12, and October 10.

* * *

Do you enjoy coffee, treats and fellowship after church? Please consider signing up for a week or two as a host! Supplies, training, and appreciation provided! See Jami or Diana Breedlove Crouch to get on the calendar!



Volume 86, Issue 3 St. Paul's Letter (USPS 477-060) is published for free by St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 402 N. Aurora St., Ithaca, NY 14850. Postmaster: Please send all address changes to 402 N. Aurora St. Ithaca, NY 14850. Periodical Postage Paid at Ithaca, NY 14850-9998

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
402 N. Aurora St
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 273-5971
www.stpaulsithaca.org

Periodicals Postage Paid
Ithaca, NY