



FEBRUARY 2021

# The Spirit of St. Paul's

[www.stpaulslutheran.ca](http://www.stpaulslutheran.ca)

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

## In-person worship resumes

St. Paul's will be resuming in-person Divine Services starting **Sunday, February 7, at 10:00 a.m.**

In accord with the provincial restrictions on capacity, we will be registering a maximum of 30 people in the order received. You can register by phoning the office (please leave a message if no one is available to take your call) or by filling out our online registration form.

A link to the online registration form will be emailed to those on

our email list every Monday (please contact the office if you would like to be added) and we ask that you complete and submit the form no later than the Wednesday prior to the service. Please note that a registration form will need to be submitted by each individual instead of household registrations.

## And for Lent...

Due to the pandemic the LCC churches in the Saskatoon area have

decided to individually host our own midweek Lenten Services this year.

Our first midweek service will be on **February 17 at 7:00 p.m.** for Ash Wednesday.

## Continuing...

Videos of our services will continue to be provided for those who are not able to join us in person.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

*Pastor Keith*

## My COVID adventure by Verla Schmirler

Given the current restrictions for a "household of one," I was certain I had not been on any adventures. Then, our dear Lord reminded me otherwise.

It was a cousin's request for information that prompted me to use my spare time to dig deeper into my father's family history. I hoped to discover the birth order of my grandparents' siblings, to place my father's cousins into their respective families, and to learn more about my great-grandparents. I did not anticipate the rabbit-trail on which I would be led, or the golden nuggets I would find along the way.

As I "googled" family names I remembered from Christmas greetings, their obituaries provided important dates and confirmed names of children and/or siblings. A posting made by someone unknown to me revealed my great-grandmother's maiden name,

some of her family background, and that she had died of a stroke at age sixty. A response added by a grandson of my father's Uncle Walter revealed that, after his wife's passing, our great-grandfather moved to Saskatchewan with Walter to join family members who had homesteads here. It took a leap of faith for me to follow the contact link Walter's grandson had included. As we corresponded by email, I learned it had been the challenges of the "great depression" that led Walter to return to Wisconsin with his wife and children, and I gathered other tidbits of information that Walter's son had passed down to his family. I was also connected with a distant relative who provided information from marriage records that included the names of my great-great-grandparents. As I continued to "google," I read census records,

grave site information, obituaries, and family tree accounts. Some entries provided answers, while others raised more questions. When I needed a change of scenery, I dug deeper into my mother's ancestry and was thrilled to discover many new treasures there as well.

What had begun as a search for details, resulted in a clearer vision of the "big picture." Historical records had confirmed at least four generations of Lutheran heritage, with some of my ancestors being charter members of new congregations. The same Triune God – Father Son and Holy Spirit – who created, redeemed, and sanctified us, had done the same for my ancestors and countless others. The same Lord, who walks with us through this pandemic, was with them during their times of challenge and loss. The same Jesus

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## Reminders

- Please remember that, because we have a number of members with allergies to nuts, any foods brought to church events should be nut-free.

- Also, several have allergies to fragrances. Please consider them when choosing toiletries and whether or not to wear perfumes.

- LWMLC mites and offerings will once again be collected the first Sunday of each month when we return to worship in our church building. For now mites only may be given with your offering to St. Paul's as long as they are clearly marked as LWMLC mites.

## Classifieds

Something to sell or give away? Need something? Services to offer to fellow members? Try The Spirit Classifieds first. No cost. Leave your ads at the church office or give them to the editor.



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### *Adventure, continued*

Christ, who is our Hope, was their Hope too.

Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV encourages us, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

## Pastor's Corner

One of the consequences of Adam and Eve's fall into sin was that they were no longer able to be in God's presence. After they sinned, they separated themselves from their Creator and hid. Sinners cannot be in God's holy presence without being destroyed. We see this when God appeared to His people at Mount Sinai and He warned them to not even touch the mountain because it was holy with His presence (Exodus 29:38-42). God graciously and mercifully provided means of sacrifice so that His people could be cleansed of their sin by the blood of an animal. These sin offerings were only preparatory for the final and ultimate sacrifice of Jesus the true Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The blood of Jesus is the sacrifice to end all sacrifices, offered once and for all. Now we are able to be in God's holy presence. In the letter to the Hebrews we read, *“For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will*

As my list of faithful relatives grew, so did my awareness of the “so great a cloud of witnesses” who have gone before me. I realize how many I know by name. I envision them as I see them in photo albums and history books – young and vibrant. I remember good times shared with those I met here, and I look forward to meeting everyone else in glory. Suddenly, my feeling of being a “household of one” has disappeared. Instead, I have the strong sense of being “surrounded.” Yes, I have been on an adventure I will never forget!

*the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God”* (Hebrews 9:13-14).

Wherever Jesus is, there is righteousness and holiness, and by faith in Him we are given to participate in it. That means that we need to be in Christ's presence. If you think of a bonfire in the night, the closer you are to the fire, the better you can see and the warmer you are. It's no different in our participating in God's righteousness and holiness, we need to be in close proximity to the source. The further we are from Him, the more we are under the influence of this fallen world, our own sinful flesh, and the Evil One. So enter into God's presence where He has promised to make you holy by the most holy things: His Word and Sacraments. All holiness flows from God so we want to be where He is. This involves daily repentance so that our sins can be washed away. We want to keep

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*Pastor, continued*

holy what God by His Word and Sacraments has made holy.

Since many of us have not been able to attend in-person church services for a while now, we might be feeling far away from God or that He is far away from us. There is no doubt that God is present in our Divine Services at St. Paul's and He richly lavishes us with His gifts. But God's presence in our lives is

not confined to the sanctuary. In the washing waters of our Baptism we have put on Christ (Romans 6:3-4) and we now live in Him and Him in us. As we spend time in devotion and prayer, meditating on His Word, we are in God's holy presence and we die to sin and rise to newness of life in Christ. I encourage you to make use of devotional resources like *Portals of Prayer*, or the *Treasury of Daily Prayer*, or *Daily Devotions* from

Lutheran Hour Ministries to assist you in being in God's holy presence through His Word. I am looking forward to when we can again be together in close proximity to God in the sanctuary at St. Paul's to receive His gifts of forgiveness, holiness, and eternal life. Until that time, know that God is with you and you are with Him now and forever.

*God's blessings,  
Pastor Keith*

## Stewardship

*"I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:8-9).*

Without commands or even arm-twisting, St. Paul encourages, even challenges, the Church in Corinth to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by their generosity in giving. He does this because giving generously is a gift of the Spirit given to us through the Gospel.

St. Paul wrote: *"But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7).* In other words, just as we grow in faith and speech and knowledge of eternal things by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, so also do we grow in giving from the same Spirit through the same Word.

The problem is that the grace of generosity often grows cold in us. It's not so much that we stop giving, but we don't put it first. We treat it like all the other bills that must be paid. It

becomes a chore, just one more thing to check off a list of things to do. That empties it of its spiritual power and robs us of the joy that Christ and the Scriptures assign to it.

On top of that, since this generosity is linked to faith and knowledge of divine things, a lack of excelling in giving is sure sign that our faith and knowledge of God are under attack as well.

Thus St. Paul points to the foundation of generosity: the generosity of Christ Himself. Even though He was rich, He became poor so that we who are poor might become rich. Thus, the incarnation, suffering, and death of our Lord on the cross is the reason, source, and driving force for our generosity in giving to the church.

And since Christ who was rich became poor so that we might be rich in His grace—of which generous giving is part—so we also who are rich in His grace can excel in pressing His grace into service toward the gracious work of the church.

Pay attention to what you give to the church so that you may excel at it. And if you find that your heart has grown cold or indifferent toward it, immerse yourself in God's Word. Read it at home. Attend Bible Class.

Hear and listen to it preached in the Divine Service. Be reminded of what Christ has done for you in His incarnation, suffering, and death. For this will strengthen your faith and knowledge. And where that excels, so will the grace of giving excel also.

While we don't have our 2020 yearend financial results available at the time of writing this article, the Board of Stewardship wants to thank you sincerely for your support and generosity last year. We all know what a challenging time we have gone through—and continue to experience going into 2021. While we were not able to worship together for much of the year, we continued to be fed spiritually by Pastor Keith through virtual worship services made available to the congregation. Offerings continued to come in through the Royal Mail, by members dropping envelopes off, through e-transfer and pre-authorized remittances. We thank you for your continued support. Offerings in November and December were strong and we anticipate a better yearend result than we were looking at in early fall.

As we look forward to 2021, we  
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*Stewardship, continued*

know we are not able to get back to normal gatherings and other activities for a while. We hope and pray for God's continued blessings on our congregation and our society to get us through the pandemic. We encourage you to support St. Paul's in its mission, programs and activities through your prayers and financial support.

Thanks be to God!

*Board of Stewardship*

To Garry Johnston, Church Council Chairman  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Saskatoon

Dear Garry,

On behalf of the members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, I would like to thank the members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church for their generous gift of \$5,000. As requested, the money will be set aside for use in local missions and outreach.

Due to the pandemic, we have not been able to have a voters' meeting to discuss how we can use this gift to spread God's Word. However, when we can meet again, we will discuss how to best use this generous gift.

Blessings, Elton Harper, President, St. Paul's Lutheran Church

## Evangelism and Public Relations

### Holding the Hand of God: Mentorship

Wikipedia's definition: "Mentorship is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The mentor may be older or younger than the person being mentored but they have a certain area of expertise."

Mentorship occurs in all phases of one's life, but my intention is to focus on our Christian life.

We have been blessed by many mentors in our lives who, I believe, God has given us to be there at the right moment to help shape how we live life. Some have guided us when we were children, as young adults, in our relationships, in our workplaces, in our families and in our spiritual life. They have been our parents, our teachers, our friends, our co-workers, our pastors, our Christian friends and there may be more than mentioned here.

If I was asked to share just one mentor in my life who made the most profound impact in my Christian life, I would choose my father. In a simple fatherly way he encouraged me to follow my ultimate mentor God. He would say

that he was only my earthly father and there would come a day when he would no longer be with me and that I should always go to God, my Heavenly Father, for guidance.

To show his impact a little further, I will share this personal story with you.

My parents gave me a white RSV Bible for Christmas in 1966. I was 22 years old at the time. In 1969 Bruno and I married and instead of the traditional bouquet of flowers, I chose to carry my white Bible with a white orchid on it. It was dressed up a bit more with some smaller white flowers and ribbons. Unknown to me at the time my dad had written a note or maybe one could say a love poem to me and had it inserted into the Bible. I must have missed it at Christmas or it was added later. This is what he wrote.

*THIS GIFT, the Book of Life,  
Shall always be a remembrance  
As a Christmas gift for you,  
In Loving Memory  
From your father and mother  
On this Christmas Day  
And when we shall be called  
Home some day  
From this earthly life,*

*And can no longer be at your side  
To guide your life,  
Then remember that  
This book shall always be  
A light to guide you through life.  
If thou hast faith  
And believest on Him that said:  
"This is life eternal,  
That they might know Thee,  
The only true God,  
And Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast  
sent,"  
He shall give thee my child,  
Eternal Life of happiness.*

I have treasured these words all my life and I thank God for my earthly father for putting my hand in the hand of God, through this gift of His Word, *The Holy Bible*.

I encourage us all, myself included, to share God's gift of the Book of Life, our faith, and be mentors to those God has placed in our lives. Help them see God's priority in our life as our guide and our Saviour. Share the one who died for us and rose again that we might have life with Him forever. His resurrection is our proof and He promises that as He lives we will too.

*Clara Zirk,  
Board of Evangelism*