

THE CLEAR VOICE

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SUMMER 2020

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Well, friends, it has been quite a season.

(Deep breath.)

And it's not over yet.

(Deep breath.)

Perhaps the hardest part of the pandemic is that we have no idea how many miles are left to run. It's a marathon with no stopwatch to check our pace, no GPS to monitor our progress toward the finish line, and not nearly enough snack stations or water stops. We just have to keep running. And not lose heart. And be of good courage. (And keep wearing our masks!) And keep our hearts and minds centered in Christ so that we may abide in love.

We are working earnestly to find an acceptable way to resume some form of in-person worship soon. (See the notice in this newsletter about our reopening task force.) We are taking very seriously the advice of the leadership of the national setting of the United Church of Christ to "wait until ALL safety concerns have been addressed" before gathering again. When we do so, it will be vitally important to remember that 'safe' is a relative term, and that we will need to be diligent and steadfast in following the recommendations of public health officials so that we are fulfilling the Christian ethic of care for the most vulnerable members of our community.

If you haven't already, please take the time to complete the online survey from the reopening task force. We rely on your input as we discern our next steps.

Finally, I want to draw your attention to two items in this newsletter:

1. Sacred Conversations on Race: Seeking to respond creatively to the racial crisis in America, I invite you to join me for a 4-week Zoom discussion series on race and racism. What do we need to learn? What does our faith teach us? Where is God calling us? See the piece in this newsletter for more information.
2. Summer Mission: This summer we will have a mission focus on the hunger relief ministry of the Lord's Pantry of Downingtown. I hope that you'll give generously, as you are able, to help us bless our neighbors who are struggling to meet the most basic needs. More information follows . . .

As always, God be with you, and give you peace.

Jonathan

Meet Clark Lash, St. Paul's New Music Director

I grew up in Wyomissing, Pa. and always focused on music. I studied at The University of the Arts majoring in Voice/ Opera Emphasis. A Bass-Baritone, my first Professional/Public Venue was at age 17 performing as the Bass Soloist of the Messiah's Christmas Portion. After College I performed in over a dozen Operas including Carmen and La Boheme and also performed solo work for Secular and Spiritual events for over 35 years. In 1998 I changed musical direction when I began to direct the Choir at Trinity UCC in Hellam, Pa. Since then, I have been leading and directing choirs from different denominations focusing on Traditional and Contemporary music. I enjoy an eclectic variety of music.

I also work as the Activities Director at Exton Senior Living, planning and implementing programs for the residents, incorporating music, puzzles, Trivia, crafts, and other activities. My goal is to keep our residents engaged in an activity as much as I can. This has been especially important during this pandemic with everyone needing to stay in their rooms for the majority of the day. I use my music background when I have the opportunity.

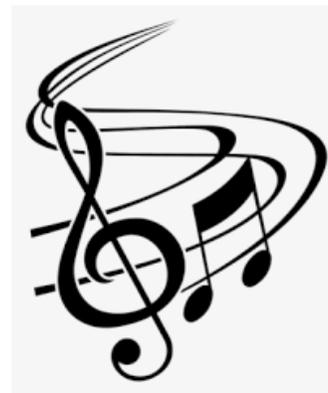
I am married with two teenage children. We look forward to being a part of St. Paul's and sharing our gifts and talents to giving God the glory.

Clark



St. Paul's Covid-19 Task Force

A few church members have volunteered to participate in a task force committee to identify how the church can phase-in plans for re-opening. The members include Jonathan, Lisa and Greg Allen, Ryan Vandermeulen, Bill Miller and Fran Pluchino. The group is reviewing CDC, UCC, Insurance board, local and state recommendations on how to re-open churches safely while limiting risk to both church members and the local community. One of our short-term goals is to decide how we can offer some outdoor gathering opportunities for both worship services and meetings. You will receive a short survey on your preference for participating in church services. We hope to have a good response from church members to help guide us in making decisions and setting up re-opening guidelines for St. Paul's. Thank you in advance for your assistance.



SUMMER WORSHIP LECTIONARY

Online Worship Service Sundays at 10:30 am

JULY 5

Scriptures: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 and Psalm 45:10-17 or Song of Solomon 2:8-13 • Zechariah 9:9-12 and Psalm 145:8-14 • Romans 7:15-25a • Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

JULY 12

Scriptures: Genesis 25:19-34 and Psalm 119:105-112 • Isaiah 55:10-13 and Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13 • Romans 8:1-11 • Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

JULY 19

Scriptures: Genesis 28:10-19a and Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 • Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19 or Isaiah 44:6-8 and Psalm 86:11-17 • Romans 8:12-25 • Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

JULY 26

Scriptures: Genesis 29:15-28 and Psalm 105:1-11, 45b or Psalm 128 • 1 Kings 3:5-12 and Psalm 119:129-136 • Romans 8:26-39 • Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

AUGUST 2

Scriptures: Genesis 32:22-31 and Psalm 17:1-7, 15 • Isaiah 55:1-5 and Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21 • Romans 9:1-5 • Matthew 14:13-21

AUGUST 9

Scriptures: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28 and Psalm 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b • 1 Kings 19:9-18 and Psalm 85:8-13 • Romans 10:5-15 • Matthew 14:22-33

AUGUST 16

Scriptures: Genesis 45:1-15 and Psalm 133 • Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 and Psalm 67 • Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32 • Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

AUGUST 23

Scriptures: Exodus 1:8-2:10 and Psalm 124 • Isaiah 51:1-6 and Psalm 138 • Romans 12:1-8 • Matthew 16:13-20

AUGUST 30

Scriptures: Exodus 3:1-15 and Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b • Jeremiah 15:15-21 and Psalm 26:1-8 • Romans 12:9-21 • Matthew 16:21-28

Many Thanks to Marcy Hessinger, Wendy Davenport, and Melanie McCausland who see to it that the altar is adorned with fresh flowers each week, and also to Ryan VanderMeulen, who along with Daphne Hill, Clark Lash, and Pastor Jonathan, 'make a joyful noise' ensuring services are never without special music.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

1st Friday Fun Nights — *Meeting Via Zoom During the Summer*

Friday, July 10 at 7:00 pm
Friday, August 7 at 7:00 pm

Zoom Coffee Hour –

Each Sunday following Church Service (around 11:30 am)

Zoom Social Hour –

Each Wednesday evening at 6:30 pm

Summer Consistory Meetings

Monday, July 20; Tuesday, July 21; Monday, August 17; Tuesday, August 18

Consistory has been meeting on the third Monday and Tuesday of each month during the pandemic with each board meeting electronically on Monday and the full Consistory meeting together on Tuesday via Zoom.

*It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;
You made both summer and winter. Psalm 74:17*

St. Paul's Financial Update

May Monthly Financial Snapshot –

\$10,984 income (\$12,642 budget), \$14,293 expense (\$16,344 budget), \$3,309 deficit

Year to Date Financial Snapshot –

\$81,954 income (\$75,208 budget), \$76,978 expense (\$83,721 budget), \$4,975 surplus

The treasurer and Board of Deacons would like to thank everyone for their continued financial support of St. Paul's this spring and into the summer. Many churches are seeing significant financial strains as a result of the pandemic but St. Paul's is blessed to be in a stable financial position, in part due to the faithfulness of the financial contributions of the congregation. We have seen a slight drop-off in giving, which has been offset by a slight drop-off in expenses, primarily in utilities. However, expenses for building maintenance, insurance, and salaries continue. Income from facilities rent is down, investments are suffering from the extended downturn in the stock market, and we will likely forfeit the usual 4-5,000 holiday fair fundraising income, so we need to remain diligent in our financial management. With everyone's help, St. Paul's will come through the year in a firm financial standing.

*To say that God turns away from the sinful is like saying
that the sun hides from the blind.*

Anthony the Great

SPECIAL SUMMER MISSION

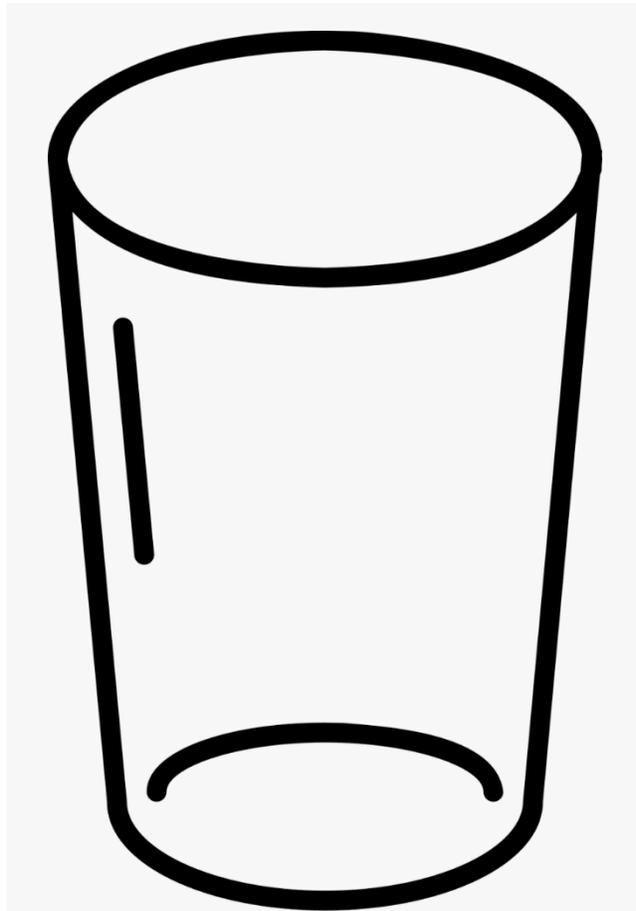
The Lord's Pantry in Downingtown

*"I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat;
I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink . . ."*
– Matthew 25:25

*"whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a
disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." -Matthew 10:42*

As many of our neighbors face an increased need for food support during this time, we invite our members and friends to support a summer mission to raise money for the Lord's Pantry of Downingtown. Across the nation, the dual impact of a health crisis and an economic crisis is leading to increased levels of food insecurity. By supporting our local food pantry, we can help to share the love of Christ with our neighbors whose lives and livelihoods are at risk.

Will you help us to fill this glass of giving? You can support this mission by writing a check to "St. Paul's UCC" and writing "Lord's Pantry" in the MEMO section. Gifts may be mailed to St. Paul's UCC, 101 Worthington Rd, Exton, PA 19341. Every dollar will help us to fulfill Christ's call to compassion. Thank you!



←\$2,117 (John 21:17: Jesus said to him,
"Feed my sheep.")

*How
much
can
we
raise?*

←\$0 START OF MISSION

SACRED CONVERSATIONS ON RACE

In an effort to make some space in our congregation for learning, conversation, and Christian education about race and racism, we'll be starting a four-week Zoom discussion series this month. The goal here is to come together in a spirit of grace, humility, and mutual respect, to begin addressing some of the hard questions about the problem of racism that holds human spirits and systems in bondage. What failures do we need to own? What good news, and what challenges, does the gospel bring? What part might we play in God's work of healing and redemption?

Stay tuned for an announcement about reading material and times. In the meantime, if you want to get started online, you can download a resource (PDF) from Sojourners magazine that we'll be using as our primary curriculum. This is divided into four sections, and we will follow this order as we work through our four discussion sessions. Even if you don't end up participating in this series, I hope that you'll give this resource a prayerful look. Here's the link:

https://sojo.net/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/DG_racialjustice.pdf

SUMMER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

7/2	Stephanie Madison	8/3	Paul Harrop
7/4	Samantha King	8/4	Frank Perina
7/9	Abby Chester	8/9	Greg Allen
7/10	Robin Madison	8/11	Rajaan Foster
7/14	Maggie Layman	8/12	Steve Mayhue
7/21	Ryan VanderMeulen	8/13	Johanna Baumann
7/24	Evan Battilana Carson King	8/15	Jen Benner
7/28	Lynn Norwood	8/16	Coleman Anderson
7/30	Ed Kuznick Marilynn Ayotte	8/23	Robert Propsner
		8/24	Page Toghill Hunter Demharter
7/24	Keith & Amy Layman (Av)	8/12	Ryan & Becky VanderMeulen (Av)
		8/17	Fran & Joe Pluchino (Av)
		8/19	Frances & Barry Chester (Av)

QUARAN-TIMES

Lauren Alexandro reports : During lockdown Mayson, Oakley, and I tried acro-yoga. When things felt difficult, scary, lonely... we would literally lift each other up. Pictures Below:



News from Diane Umile – I have been conducting online piano lessons since mid-March. I put together an online piano recital and 24 of my students participated. It was really rewarding and I was quite happy with how well it turned out.

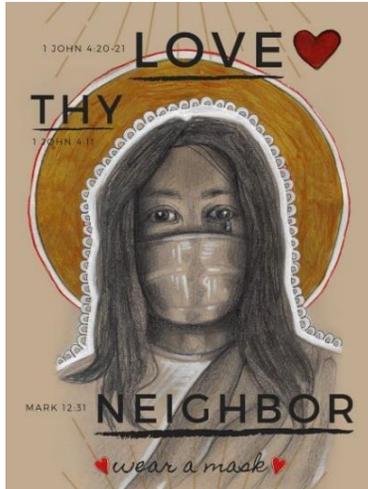
From the VanderMeulen Family: We've enjoyed lots of take-out. In order to support local businesses we made a conscious effort to get take-out from a local restaurant once a week.

From Diane Battilana: I attended a Zoom wedding that was surprisingly intimate and moving. The wedding party was paired down to family, the substitute officiant was a close family friend who had to get credentialed online in a hurry, the witnesses were either online literally surrounding the happy couple or looking on from afar. Love conquers all.

From Mary Lee Sailer – We have not been able to leave our apartments much here at Ashbridge Manor. So it was quite exciting when the fire alarms went off the other night by accident. Even though it was very late, many of us sat in front of the elevators for over an hour. Normally this would be stressful and tiring. But it really served to provide a little amusement.

News From Nancy Greger - I've spent more time working on the yard and gardens. I have a much larger and diverse vegetable garden than I've had in years and I've been keeping up with the weeds! My daylilies have not been eaten by the deer for the first time in roughly a decade so I've been enjoying those! And of course, I've been spending more time indulging in my regular genealogy hobby. I've gotten a lead on a 3rd generation grandfather who's been eluding me for the last 40 years, which is very exciting for me but not usually interesting to others. :)

Mary Scripko and her husband Kevin Huhn bought their first house and moved in recently, despite the challenges caused by lockdowns.



My Mask Protects You Your Mask Protects Me

How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering

Wear your Face Covering Correctly

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily

Use the Face Covering to Protect Others

- Wear a face covering to help protect others in case you're infected but don't have symptoms
- Wear the covering in public settings when around people outside of your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain
- **Don't** put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- **Don't** touch the face covering, and, if you do, wash your hands

Follow Everyday Health Habits

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

Take Off Your Cloth Face Covering Carefully, When You're Home

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing.