

JUNE 2022

The magazine of St. Paul Lutheran Church

journey



BUILD YOUR OWN BUDDHA BOWL.

RICE (vegan) (GF)

GOUSCOUS (vegan)

HAM (BURNHAM FAMILY FARM) (GF)

SUCGOTASH (vegan) (GF)

BROCCOLI (vegan)

PEPPERS - ONIONS (vegan) (GF)

MIXED GREENS (MID FARMERS)

CARROTS, SAUCE

At the heart of it all



ON THE COVER:
Laura Mahn

journey

JUNE 2022

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MISSION

St. Paul Lutheran Church is a faith community, shaped around five core values: radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith formation, courageous service, extravagant generosity.

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There's something about the phrase, "black hole," that immediately strikes most of us as negative. That's not fair to the positive impact on our lives of "negative space" like our ear canals or the white background on this page, nor to the biblical and cultural witness to the ways "black is beautiful" (Song of Songs 1:5; Kwame Braithwaite, Marcus Garvey). Still, anything called a "black hole" has a ways to go to get any respect in this world.

What did astrophysicists think when they used "black hole" to dub the super-massive cosmic objects they were theorizing? Since one essential characteristic of a black hole is its "swallowing" of any light that gets near it, perhaps they figured it would have to be the darkest dark anyone could imagine, with all that light being sucked into something big enough to hold it and "hide" it. The historic image released on May 12 of Sagittarius A*, the black hole at the center of our Milky Way galaxy, might help black holes get a better reputation, as it helps us think about God at the center of everything.

We cannot see God any more than we can see a black hole. Nevertheless, we can see the powerful effect that both have on everything around them. Indeed, it may be that black holes exert their influence on everything in the universe, which is certainly true of God. Creator of heaven and earth; the one in whom we live and move and have our being – these biblical phrases speak to God's involvement in everything that is, whether or not those affected know it.

Objects closest to a black hole get excited. The image of a black hole is actually radiation from huge amounts of energy from particles near it. One need only think of Jesus Christ as the light of the world to see that those closest to God beam out God's energy, too. Have you met people "on fire for the Lord?" Still, notice that even in that circle of excitement, some burn brighter and others are more reserved.

The discovery of Sagittarius A* was the work of years among a network of scientists using eight



radio telescopes around the globe. Even to confirm its existence was a communal project. No one scientist or telescope could have done it. So, too, with God. The author of 1 John counsels the community to "test the spirits" (4:1). Most often in scripture, an encounter with God is confirmed by a community of God's people, not by individual conviction. The apostle Paul spoke of the community as a single, interdependent "body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12).

A black hole, as far as we know, treats everything the same. Whatever comes within its pull, or especially its "event horizon" where it absorbs the object, is subject to the same forces. Those are forces of attraction; like God, a black hole draws all things to itself. I will be your God and you will be my people, God said over and over to Israel, through which all people are blessed. "And when I am lifted up," said Jesus, "I will draw all things to myself" (John 12:32). All creation is equally the focus of God's love and desire for an energizing relationship.

Sagittarius A* is not God; no black hole is. But perhaps we can think of each one as one of God's fingerprints – a place where the mighty finger of God pressed into the fabric of space and time to leave us a hint of who God is and how we can know God.

PETER A. PETTIT
teaching pastor

Habitat for Humanity

build dates set for summer

Put on a tool belt and help build simple, decent houses through this ecumenical ministry. Each summer, St. Paul volunteers work alongside families who dream of owning a home – and do the work necessary to make that dream a reality.

The Quad-Cities Habitat chapter has built more than 100 homes, including those constructed with St. Paul funding and labor. Several Saturday dates are available to work with fellow St. Paul people, with morning or afternoon shifts available:

- ▶ **Saturday, June 18, 8 a.m.-12 noon or 12 noon-3:30 p.m.**
- ▶ **Saturday, July 16, 8 a.m.-12 noon or 12 noon-3:30 p.m.**
- ▶ **Saturday, August 6, 8 a.m.-12 noon or 12 noon-3:30 p.m.**
- ▶ **Help in providing lunch is also needed each date**

No previous building experience is necessary. To help, visit stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Katy Warren, katy@stpaulqc.org.



Habitat dedicates three houses

In the summer of 2021, Habitat for Humanity and three families broke ground together on neighboring plots of land along 6th Street in downtown Davenport. Now, almost exactly a year later, the fully completed homes of Godja, Marcia, and Hannah received a final dedication ceremony. On Saturday, May 21 the homeowners, their mentors, volunteers, and Habitat staff came together in celebration of the years of work that went into making these plots of land into homes.

In 2021, St. Paul supported Habitat for Humanity with \$24,000 and sponsored the construction of Godja's home. St. Paul member Pam Crowe serves as a Habitat mentor, guiding Godja throughout the entire homeownership process. From accruing "sweat equity" hours, volunteering at Habitat and on the home itself to attending educational classes, Pam was beside Godja all the way, answering questions as well as picking up hammers and paintbrushes.

A mentor is a dedicated support person to an individual or family in the process of obtaining a Habitat home. "We walk alongside them every step of the way," Pam says. "There's a lot to navigate for a first-time homeowner. A mentor is there to answer questions, help problem solve, and offer encouragement throughout what is often a multi-year process before the family finally moves into their new home."

St. Paul member Belinda Holbrook has served as a mentor to Marcia Ellingsworth, who also happens to be a St. Paul member. And while Belinda and Marcia knew each other a little bit from church, being paired together the last few years during the Habitat process has brought them much closer.

After years of hard work, it's time for these families to officially call these homes their own.



june

HAPPENINGS



Fall preschool openings

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool provides a rich variety of age-appropriate developmental activities in a Christian atmosphere. Opportunities abound for growth and learning for kids ages 2-5.

Openings are still available in four-year-old preschool classes for the fall of 2022. If you are looking for a preschool option and are interested in more information including tuition and registration details, contact the preschool director, Karen Strusz, 326-3547, ext. 219, or karenstrusz@stpaulqc.org.

Occasional Tuesdays book group begins in July

Gather for conversation centered around a good book on Tuesdays, July 12, 19, & 26, 7-7:45 a.m., in the Library Commons. In Susan Cain's *Bittersweet: How Sorrow and Longing Make Us Whole*, explore why we experience sorrow and longing, and the surprising lessons these states of mind teach us about creativity, compassion, leadership, spirituality, and love.

Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Katy Warren, katy@stpaulqc.org.

June events for young adults

The St. Paul young adult ministry is for those in their 20's and 30's looking for ways to connect and build relationships at church. Come to one of the upcoming events planned for June:

Friday, June 3, 7-8 p.m., gather at Peachwave in Bettendorf to cool off with a scoop (or two) of frozen yogurt. No need to sign up, just come!

Saturday, June 18, 12 noon-3:30 p.m., volunteer at the Habitat for Humanity build. Please sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups.

Watch the young adult Facebook page for more details and upcoming summer events. Contact: Pastor Megan Eide, megan@stpaulqc.org.

Iowa State carillon performance on the North Lawn

Gather on the North lawn on Sunday, June 19 from 3-5 p.m. to enjoy music from the Iowa State Alumni Association. Come a little early for mingling and light snacks followed by a program featuring brief remarks from the Alumni Association president and faculty from ISU followed by a concert of the model carillon. The model carillon is a mini replica of the campanile, or bell tower, on the ISU campus.



Ambassadors for Christ! St. Paul to host women's synodical convention June 10-11

All women of St. Paul are invited to attend the SEIA Women's Organization Gathering held at St. Paul on Friday and Saturday, June 10-11.

This is an opportunity to meet and connect with other women in the synod, to experience Bible study, worship, guest presentations related to the Madison Marketplace and Tapestry Farms, and participate in a hymn sing and organ demonstration by Chris Nelson.

The cost for both days is \$80 which includes two meals. For one day, either Friday or Saturday, the cost is \$45 and includes one meal. For registration forms and information call or email Cindy Bleich, 563-355-4850, georgebleich@mchsi.com.

Support, prayer groups continue to meet during summer

While the pace at St. Paul slows down a bit during the summer, prayer and support groups continue their meeting times.

Adult Children of Alcoholics: On Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m., this is a group for people who grew up in dysfunctional homes of any type. Learn together and support each other using a spiritual approach to problems. Contact: Dick Jensen, rrjensen65@gmail.com.

Centering Prayer: Centering prayer was originally used by Christian monks. Today, this holistic prayer helps release unhealthy emotions, while deepening and personalizing your relationship with God. Meet online on Thursday evenings, 6-7 p.m. Contact: Marcia Jensen, jensenyetta@gmail.com.

Survivors of Suicide Loss: People who have suffered a loss from suicide often feel angry, depressed, hopeless, and isolated. This group provides a setting that offers nonjudgmental support, compassion, and hope. It meets on the first Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m. Contact: Deb and Joe James, jo-edeb1984@gmail.com.

Search for Director of Youth Ministries gathers momentum

St. Paul is conducting a national search for a new director of youth ministries. This opportunity will allow a mature individual with youth ministry skills and experience to advance a solid program and establish new frontiers. St. Paul people are encouraged to explore networks and connections of their own for help with identifying potential candidates. See stpaulqc.org/employment for further information. All questions, suggestions, and other inquiries may be directed to: youthsearch@stpaulqc.org.

In May, the church council appointed a search committee for a new director of youth ministries. Serving on this team (left to right): Andrew Harris, Jeff Carroll, Rowan Appel, Asa Mahn, Lisa Fiedler, Janelle Carter, Derek Ball, and Patty Herzberg. Please keep their work and the kids of this church in your prayers.



Growing food, in community

The garden plot on the St. Paul campus is growing. Help is needed to weed, water, and harvest.

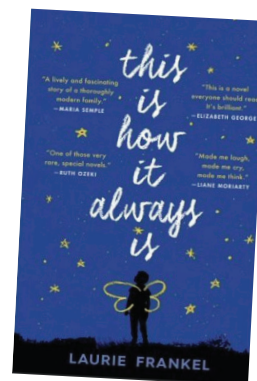
The garden grows through a partnership with Tapestry Farms, a nonprofit urban farm system that invests in refugees. It provides a place of nourishment, care, and joy this coming growing season.

To express interest, please contact Ann McGlynn, ann@tapestryfarms.org, 563-370-0004.

St. Paul Book Corner features new selections

The St. Paul Book Corner has new selections for adults and children. Every book is carefully selected by St. Paul pastors, staff, and avid St. Paul readers. The new books can also be checked out from the St. Paul Library. They include:

- *Call Us What We Carry* by Amanda Gorman
- *Iowa's Remarkable Soils* by Kathleen Woida
- *This Is How It Always Is* by Laurie Frankel
- *I Am God's Dream* by Matthew Paul Turner
- *Out of My Heart* by Sharon M. Draper
- *Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience* by Brené Brown
- *Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection* by Kate Bowler
- *A Time to Mourn and a Time to Dance: A Love Story of Grief, Trauma, Healing, and Faith* by Jennifer Ohman-Rodriguez





Nourishing souls

A new restaurant, nestled in the heart of downtown Rock Island, is putting healthy, nutrient-dense foods on tables for everyone, regardless of financial situation. Owner Laura Mahn's 20 years of ideas, experiences, and plans have brought NEST Cafe to life.

A man sits at a café in downtown Rock Island. He is unkempt from years of homelessness, tears on his face. The owner of the restaurant, Laura, approaches the man, concerned that something is wrong with his food. But the man just wants to take it all in, the fresh herbs growing out front, the china plates on the tables, the nutritious meal he was able to pay for himself with the two dollars and change he had. He is tired of taking handouts. He wants every inch of this moment to sink in.

This is just one of the many customers that walk through the doors of NEST Cafe. The mission of the restaurant is to provide a full restaurant and community experience, complete with a community table to sit and enjoy a meal with anyone else who may sit beside you.

While N.E.S.T is an acronym for Nourish Everyone Sustainably Together, the restaurant also embodies the feeling of a bird's nest from the decor on the walls to the lighting hanging from the ceiling. And like a bird's nest, it evokes the feeling of home and family, bringing nourishment and connection to those that come to the cafe to share a meal.

Nourish Everyone

NEST officially opened the doors to its new permanent location at 1524 4th Avenue in Rock Island on April 15, 2022, after a year and a half of serving the community as a 'pop up' style restaurant, but it's been an idea in owner Laura Mahn's mind for years. Laura, her husband Jason, and their two sons Asa and Gabe are all St. Paul members.

"My mom was very involved in food ministries when I was growing up in North Carolina. The idea started forming close to 20 years ago and took shape over the last five to six years," Laura said. "I took church groups in Atlanta to this amazing cafe that served primarily homeless people. We volunteered and served quality food. The division between the people serving and the people who are served got under my skin so eliminating that division was important to me. Here at NEST, groups of people from different economic situations are coming together to share a healthy meal without even necessarily knowing each other's economic background."

Weaving it all together

Laura, an ordained deacon, spent countless hours researching, traveling, and putting the pieces in place for NEST to take form. From Farm



Cafe in Boone, NC to the vegan Tricklebee Cafe in Milwaukee, Wisc., and everywhere in between, Laura visited, volunteered, and learned best practices to bring back to the Quad Cities.

“A permanent location in Rock Island was always the plan. It’s the most diverse and has the most need in the Quad Cities. It’s important to spotlight that and say, ‘look at our diversity, look at all the gifts we have.’

Rock Island/Milan is the most racially diverse school district in the state of Illinois. It’s a hub for refugees and immigrants of all sorts of backgrounds so we want to be representative of all cultures. We’re trying to educate people on how we think of food insecurity. Almost 25% of the Rock Island community is considered food insecure. These are people that work with us and go to school with us. You can’t necessarily walk into a room and identify someone as being in need.”

And so NEST Cafe found its home, just a few blocks from the Centennial Bridge, not far from public transportation, in a location that is easily accessible to all.

One World, Everybody Eats

Laura credits partner organization, *One World, Everybody Eats* with providing guidance and resources to get started.

“I thought I was a genius for coming up with this idea,” Laura laughed. “I should see if anyone else has ever done this and then I found *One World, Everybody Eats*.”

Four years ago, Laura attended the or-

ganization’s annual summit.

“I walked in nervously. I was by myself, I was the only person there with no actual restaurant and it felt like home. I thought *these are my people*. They’ve been a real gift. We are able to learn from other people’s 17 years of experience. Anytime I have a question about something from doing a budget to setting up our POS system, I have someone to call. They’re like a big family.”

How it works

Open Sundays through Thursdays for lunch from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and for dinner on Mondays from 5-8 p.m., NEST Cafe is run almost entirely by volunteers, with only three full-time employees on staff. Laura, Director of Culinary Operations Chef Elly Voss, and Cafe Manager Grecia Lopez are the three responsible for NEST’s day-to-day operations with two part-time employees now on staff.

“It’s a total team effort. I didn’t know Elly or Grecia just a few weeks before we opened. I don’t know how I found those two, I really don’t. I couldn’t imagine a better team.”

Volunteers fill the additional roles of greeting patrons at the door and explaining the mission of the cafe, serving guests, and assisting with clean up. Volunteer shifts take three hours or less to fulfill and there are five to six volunteer opportunities each day.

“All we look for in a volunteer is open-mindedness and a willingness to work and connect with others. We have all kinds

of volunteers so if you’re someone who doesn’t like being around people, you’d do great in the dish room. If you’re someone who’s really social, host or server opportunities are perfect. There really is a spot for everyone.”

For guests attending for the first time, a colorful chalkboard walks you through the process. Simply select your portion size, give what you’re able on that day, then find a seat, take it all in, and enjoy.

At NEST, groups of people from different economic situations are coming together to share a healthy meal.

LAURA MAHN



Levi the Artist:

Just have fun!

In May, St. Paul preschoolers were treated to a presentation by local artist and St. Paul preschool alum, Levi Folker. Levi talked about what it means to be an artist, how to work with watercolors, and where to find his artwork currently on display throughout the Quad Cities. But one detail that made this presentation different from others, Levi is not much older than his audience, in fact, he's only nine-years-old.

Levi Folker stood in front of nearly 30 preschoolers, an easel behind him arranged with watercolor paintings of animals, his favorite subject, and the photographs he used as inspiration. Before the presentation began, he walked around the room, kneeling before each art desk, introducing himself personally, and asking each student their name.

During his presentation, Levi spoke about the artistic term 'value' or the lightness/darkness of the color and the process of using more water for lighter colors and less water for darker colors. But the lesson he stressed most was to "just have fun."

While a preschooler at St. Paul, Levi was in the Rainbow Room with Kathy Becker and Chris Hoeing. Levi, younger brother Rory, and mom Elaine are all St. Paul members. Kathy has followed his journey, as she does with many of her students, and arranged to have Levi present to the kids. While Levi's artistic talents have always been part of him, it was his connection and empathy with other students that resonated with Kathy, now the assistant preschool director.

"I don't just remember Levi as an artist, I remember Levi most for what a kind person he was and is, his empathy and attention to others around him," Kathy said. "He'd know if a friend needed extra time or if they needed someone to play with."

Kathy and Chris have both watched Levi grow into the artist and young man he has become.

"The kids were just enthralled with him. He really connected with them and because of that, the students were just so into their paintings. He's having fun with it like he told the preschoolers," Kathy said. "I commissioned a piece from him of the Vander Veer

fountain. He's waiting until he can get a picture of the fountain in the proper lighting. The lighting is important. He's just got the eye of an artist. He's all in."

When he's not doing presentations for other kids, Levi is a third-grader at Adams Elementary school where music happens to be his favorite subject. And though he's loved art most of his life, it wasn't until his time at home in 2020 during COVID and the arrival of his baby brother, Rory, when his artistic exploration really took off. Elaine, Levi's mom, homeschooled him and his interest in art grew from videos of Bob Ross to his new favorite YouTube channel, Emily Olson Art.

"I was one or two when I realized I loved art. I did fingerpainting then," Levi said in his cheery, upbeat voice. "Later, I started with only landscapes then transitioned to watercolor and animals. Animals are my favorite, especially dogs".

His art studio is a section of his bedroom and his art desk looks like that of

*There are no
rules to painting.
You can create
art any way
you want.*

LEVI FOLKER



a seasoned professional, filled with cupholders of brushes, tubs of paint tubes and watercolor palettes, and splattered with paint. The desk itself has become a work of art. Currently sitting just adjacent to his workstation are white pieces of paper filled with colorful squares demonstrating each hue of the watercolors Levi is currently working with and tests of various tools and color experiments plus a partially completed painting of a spaniel as he practices his newest project.

Levi puts a lot of time and research into each work he creates. From deciding what his next subject will be to finding the right photo to use and which techniques best suit his work, Levi puts lots of focused thought and attention into the entire process.

"Most of my paintings come from my imagination. I pick what I want to paint then I look through photos, usually online. Once I choose one, I sketch it lightly. From there you start layering it up. You have to start light and go darker. If you start too dark, you can't go anywhere with it. One of my favorites is the snowy deer. How I did the techniques and the paint make him look calm."

Levi is very in tune with his artistic process. He knows he prefers a quiet space and often challenges himself to grow, experimenting with new materials and techniques.

"I like to test out new colors and materials. I don't do acrylic paints much anymore and I haven't done oil painting. I love watercolor. You have to work in layers to create your painting. I like how that works. The next things I'm learning are fluffy fur and curly fur for dogs," he said. "They're two different techniques. My advice to artists just starting out is to have fun and start experimenting. Just have fun."

Both of Levi's parents are artists as well. Elaine and his dad, Stephen, own Giraffe Photography together. Stephen is also a busy filmmaker and Elaine recently opened Moss + Mercantiles Interiors, an interior decorating and home design company. But Elaine says Levi's painting talents are entirely unique.

"We don't share the same artistic talents with Levi. I can't draw a circle," Elaine joked. "This is something he found himself. He loves it. We don't pressure him at all. He paints what he wants when he wants."

Levi loves painting and wants to share his art with everyone. Follow his art on Facebook at facebook.com/LeviTheArtistQC or on his website at levitheartist.com/gallery



Making his mark around the Quad Cities



Last spring, Levi's colorful flowers, landscapes, and animals adorned the walls of the QC Botanical Center in Rock Island. He is the youngest artist to have his own exhibit since the Botanical Center opened 23 years ago. Some of those works are now hanging at Quad City Arts.

The empathy that Levi demonstrated as a preschooler has stayed with him and is even inspiring his artwork. Recently, Levi's parents posted on Facebook that he was deeply affected by the war in Ukraine. "He's seen enough to know that those people need help and he wants to help," the post reads. So Levi got to work painting a sunflower, the national flower of Ukraine. A portion of the proceeds from the sales of Levi's watercolor sunflower prints go to the International Rescue Committee to help families in Ukraine.

"I saw Levi was raising money to help families in Ukraine. I wasn't surprised to hear he was doing that. That's so Levi," Kathy Becker said. "Even the sunflower is Levi, so bright and cheery."

Levi knows he wants to continue his artistic journey but he hasn't mapped it out too definitively yet. "I want to be an artist and help nature. It feels good to have my artwork purchased. I don't know what I'll do with the money I make. Probably save most of it and buy some ice cream."

new beginnings

As the weather turned warmer and the flowers began to bloom we celebrated the endings that lead to us greeting new beginnings. From just born to toddling around, preschool to kindergarten, high school to college, and at every milestone in life, may we welcome every day as an opportunity to start anew.



Council Notes

Council met on a warm, sunny May evening. Gratitude was expressed for the evening in April that the council spent with incoming pastoral resident Max Franks and his wife, Liz. Office renovations are currently underway in the 125 House on the north lawn for St. Paul social worker/counselor Angie Vaaler to move into when Pastor Max arrives.

The St. Paul staff met for a half-day retreat on May 11 for team and communication building activities, time for reflection, and looking to the future. St. Paul preschoolers recently celebrated their graduations with class ceremonies, snacks, and ice cream on the north lawn.

Jamie Carroll and Sarah Lammers were

appointed as co-leaders of the youth transition team. These two, along with other adult volunteers, are planning high school youth gatherings throughout the summer months. A communication plan is being established to keep families of teenagers in the loop.

Recruitment for two staff positions – business office assistant and youth director – are continuing, as we go to press. The council expressed gratitude for Carrie Bowman's service. She will be retiring from the business office on May 31. The search committee for a new director of youth ministries is meeting (see p. 5) and actively developing recruitment strategies to reach potential candidates.

BEHIND THE SCENES:

around the building

1 The Memorial Garden received a spring makeover thanks to a new partnership with local non-profit One Eighty.



2 St. Paul's 70-year-old safe – weighing in at 1,600 lbs. – spent a few nights on the church's driveway before heavy equipment arrived to haul it away.



3 The three-stall garage near the south parking lots is nearing completion. Once done, the church vans, lawn mowers, and other equipment will be stored inside.



WORSHIP at St. Paul

▶ June 4 & 5

Day of Pentecost

Preaching:

5pm/11:15 am: Sara Olson-Smith
8 & 9 am: Peter A. Pettit

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

▶ June 11 & 12

Season after Pentecost

Preaching:

5pm: Peter W. Marty
8, 9, & 11:15 am: Katy Warren

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

▶ June 18 & 19

Season after Pentecost

Preaching:

All services: Peter W. Marty

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

▶ June 25 & 26

Season after Pentecost

Preaching:

5pm/9 am: Sara Olson-Smith
8 & 11:15 am: Megan Eide

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am



ST. PAUL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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***"Life is short, and we have not much time for
gladdening the hearts of those who travel the way
with us. Oh, be swift to love. Make haste to be kind."***

— Henri Frederic Amiel, 1821-1881

