

NOVEMBER 2022

The magazine of St. Paul Lutheran Church

journey



What's grabbing your attention these days



ON THE COVER:
Paula & Dave McPherson

journey

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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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In the 1970s, the average American was exposed to about 500 advertisements a day. In 2022, that number rose to 5000 ads per day. So, what grabs your attention these days?

Once upon a time, before mobile phones, we had limited escape routes for our attention while waiting in the doctor's office or during lengthy road trips. Sure, there were magazines, books, and newspapers, but those had limited length. Today, my iPhone alone allows me access to more information than any single library in the world.

This shift from paper to screen, from analog to digital, is as profound a shift as any in any other time. Lutheran Christians are historically aware of the impact of technology. A significant debt is owed to the technological advancement of the printing press, for without access to printing capabilities to distribute the Bible and other writings, Martin Luther would not have been a successful reformer but an unknown German Catholic monk. Transformative technologies don't just help make tasks easier and more efficient; they allow fresh players to challenge the status quo and transform enduring systems and institutions. The economy is one of those systems that this new technological age is impacting.

Some economists describe our current era as the "attention economy." Traditionally, economists study how potentially limited resources, like food or housing, get allocated. Yet, in a time of bottomless information at our fingertips, what really constitutes scarcity? Now that information is no longer scarce, our attention looks like the new "scarce" resource that fuels a substantial portion of this new economic engine.

To what do you pay attention? I've been asking myself this question because I find it's easy to allow my own attention to deviate. Sometimes I mindlessly check Facebook, search for a video on YouTube, or scroll through Twitter when I want to connect with what's happening in the world. Unfortunately, those sorts of sites have advertisements eagerly awaiting my arrival, already aware of which ad to feature based on my own internet searches. I can end up spending an embarrassing amount of time scouring content that



adds little value to my life. Time usually flies by in those moments.

The writer of Proverbs says this about paying attention: "Focus your eyes straight ahead; keep your gaze on what is in front of you" (2:25). The Apostle Paul writes in Hebrews: "We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away" (2:1). In both of these Bible passages, what's in front of us, or something important we have heard, deserves our attention far more than any iPhone app, internet site, or social media platform.

Above everything else we might recognize, or that captures our attention, Jesus directs our gaze toward the Holy Spirit. It's a different gaze than the one prompted by this "attention economy," where we're often inundated with stimulating information that easily distracts. Attending to God's Spirit will lead and guide us toward places, encounters, and destinations we may not be expecting at all. So, let's aim to focus our attention on what's important, what lies ahead, and what truly matters. In this way, we can discover that what provides the greatest meaning and purpose for our lives will stretch way beyond what any algorithm from any device in our hand can ever offer.

MAX FRANKS
pastor in residency

Building a relationship with God

Faith stories are the culmination of confirmation at St. Paul every fall. Ninth-graders share brief presentations describing how they see God at work in the world and in their lives.

“I can’t think of exactly when my faith story started. My first memories of going to church were Sunday learning and Vacation Bible School. At that time, I didn’t have a concept of who God was. All I knew about the Bible was that it was a big book with confusing words that sounded like they were from Star Wars.

However, what I did know was that my Sunday school teacher could give those words a less complicated meaning and then turn that meaning into fun songs with actions that I still remember today.

During VBS, I remember wearing a bright orange shirt, playing with friends, and singing. However, young me did not understand the real meaning of why I was there. I was there to build a strong relationship with God while I was young, so I could trust God throughout the rest of my life. Little did I know that I would really need God on days when I felt sad or lost.

Fast forward to a few years later, I now know more of those “confusing words in the big book,” known as the Bible. I understand the real meaning of those catchy songs with the dance moves. God loves me and God is there even when I don’t think God is.

My first year of middle school was a big change for me. All new teachers, students, and a whole new building. This was one of the first times I ever truly felt lost. I had to make new friends and adjust to myself changing too. But I knew I had God by my side every time I walked into that building and, eventually, I didn’t feel so alone or nervous.”



Zach Carney



Brody Bishop

“Dear Brody,
You know that big building you go to every Sunday? At first, you won’t pay attention or know what’s happening, but it is going to play a big role in your life.

Your first real experience with church will be your baptism. Your family will come and celebrate but you won’t remember it. However, you will talk about it a lot in the future. It’s important because it is when you became a part of the church.

As you get older you will start to go to Sunday school. You will get to know Jesus through stories in the Bible. Your favorite will be David and Goliath because it shows a great lesson on standing up for and believing in yourself.

In fourth grade, you will have your first communion. When you can take communion, you will feel like you are a part of the church community. You will also start listening to everything, not just the children’s message. You will learn lessons that stick with you.

In sixth grade, you will start confirmation. You won’t want to go because you don’t think it will be fun. But your mom will make you. She plays a big part in your faith story

by helping you understand and taking you to church events.

Just when you start getting comfortable COVID hits. It will be a setback. But don’t worry, your church will go out of its way to make you feel connected. You won’t meet in person for confirmation, but you will connect on Zoom. Eventually, you will start meeting in person outside. Make sure to bring a sweatshirt because it gets cold and middle schoolers are too cool for coats.

Before you know it, you’re an 8th grader. Confirmation will be some of the best experiences you have at church. As a 9th grader, you will be asked to share your faith story. You will be nervous. But all the things you’ve done through church will help you share your story. And I have one last thing to say. Make sure to thank your parents. Respect and appreciate all the people that have helped you become the person you are today.”

november

HAPPENINGS



Cleaning up the St. Paul neighborhood

The St. Paul corner of the world is a beautiful place. But with a location near busy streets, businesses, and schools, litter and debris accumulate.

On Nov. 5, 10 a.m.-12 noon, St. Paul people will gather to pick up trash in the blocks surrounding the campus. Grab a picker-upper, a snazzy safety vest, gloves, and a garbage bag. Head out with family and friends new and old to clear away things that should be recycled or pitched instead.

All supplies are provided. No need to sign up, just come! Contact: Jules Irish, julesi@mchsi.com.

Food and care ingathering to mark Thanksgiving

Fill a bag with nonperishable food items and toiletries and bring it to church for St. Paul's annual Thanksgiving ingathering. Items may be brought to the church any time in November, especially Thanksgiving Eve worship on Wednesday, Nov. 23, 7 p.m. Or, write a check to St. Paul, put Food Pantry in the memo line, and drop it off or mail it to church.

The food goes to the Friendly House Food Pantry in Davenport and the women's and baby products go to families served by Madison Market.

What's needed? Soups, mac & cheese, canned meat (chicken & tuna), cereal, peanut butter, jelly, toilet paper, bar soap, laundry soap, diapers (sizes 5 and 6), wipes and feminine hygiene products (tampons and pads).

Interested in helping to sort the food received? The ingathering food sorting will be Nov. 27 at 12 noon. Questions? Jessica Taylor, jessica@stpaulqc.org.

10th Grade faith milestone: Share, Save, Spend

Milestones are foundational faith moments that shape our spiritual lives. Families gather for these celebrations; they mark moments in the rhythm of the congregation.

On Sunday, Nov. 13, 10:15-11 a.m., tenth-graders and their families will gather in Fellowship Hall for the Share, Save, Spend milestone. This is a moment to pause to talk about money intentionally and examine our hopes and values. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Liz Franks, liz@stpaulqc.org.

Home Communion to begin again: Volunteers needed

Illness or age sideline many members from worshipping at St. Paul. Home Communion wraps them warmly into congregational life. Equipped with special communion kits and pre-printed liturgies, volunteers visit homebound members in care facilities and private homes four times a year. After pausing this ministry due to the pandemic, we are restarting it now. If you are interested in participating, contact Pastor Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.



Faith BasiX happening Nov. 22

The basics of the Christian faith, St. Paul style, for anyone — really, anyone! This once-a-month-series is an exploration of worship in its patterns and variety. The next meeting will be Nov. 22, 7-8 p.m. in the Luther Loft. No background needed; all questions welcome! Contact: Peter Pettit, ppettit@stpaulqc.org.

Guys Coffee Group continues to connect for fellowship

Grab a cup of coffee and settle in to connect with fellow St. Paul men. This group meets twice a month with November gatherings on Mondays, Nov. 14 and 28, 10 a.m., in the Library Commons. The idea is to strengthen guys in faith and friendship. Contact: Dave McPherson, davemcph@msn.com.

Heading south for the winter?

Are you a St. Paul snowbird? If you plan to be elsewhere this winter, please let our business office know so we can stay in touch. Send us your mailing address and dates you plan to be gone. Connect with Allison Winter by emailing allison@stpaulqc.org, or calling 563-326-3547.



Racial Awareness Team to screen Eyes on the Prize documentary

Gather to watch episodes of the award-winning series *Eyes on the Prize* that documents the history of the Civil Rights movement in the US. The first screening will be Tuesday, Nov. 15, 6-8 p.m., and continue on the second Tuesdays of the month. After viewing each episode, discussion follows.

At the end of each evening, the Racial Awareness Team will meet to plan and converse about our continued work to expand awareness, deepen empathy, advocate for change, celebrate diversity, and join in partnership with others in our community.

Come just to watch the documentary, or just for the meeting, or both. Everyone is welcome. Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

Season OF Advent

Advent in the Book Corner

The St. Paul Book Corner is preparing for the change of seasons with devotional books and calendars for Advent, which begins Sunday, Nov. 27.

Devotionals: *Prophets and Promises: Devotions for Advent & Christmas* explores the Advent season and celebrates the joy of the 12 days of Christmas and the day of Epiphany. Available for \$3, large print for \$5.

Families Celebrate Advent & Christmas is a colorful deck of cards that is full of rituals, prayers, and reflections. Create a new after-meal ritual, use them as decorations, or take them with you on the go. Available for \$8.

Advent calendars: The Book Corner will have a couple of different options, including a chocolate Advent calendar from SERRV International. Milk chocolate hearts hide behind the visual story. Purchases of the SERRV Advent calendar help fund SERRV's Eye Care for Artisans program. Available for \$10.

Advent daily devotions begin Nov. 27

During the season of Advent, focus on the promise of God's love with St. Paul's annual tradition of daily devotions. Featuring an array of St. Paul voices, these devotions will land in your email inbox and the St. Paul website. The final devotion will be posted on Christmas Day.

Sign up to receive the devotions by email at ow.ly/TGYC5, or read them on the website beginning Sunday, Nov. 27, at stpaulqc.org/blog. Note: If you have received the Advent devotions in the past, you do not need to sign up again.

Family Advent Learning on Nov. 27

On the first Sunday in Advent, Nov. 27, 10:15-11 a.m., an Advent lesson, carols, and a family craft activity will turn our focus toward the wonder of Jesus' birth. Meet in Fellowship Hall. Contact: Maddy Carroll, maddy@stpaulqc.org.



GRACE *upon* GRACE

Autumn is the season when every St. Paul member is asked to make a financial commitment for the life and work of St. Paul in the coming year. The vitality of the church depends on the involvement and generous giving of every household. The pledges of St. Paul people are what fund our entire ministry. Each and every pledge adds up for strong ministry and mission. Please count yourself among the faithful with your financial pledge for Daily Ministry in 2023.

Sharing our gifts

It's hard to accept God's underserved love through grace, and we don't have to do anything except that which makes me want to give back in return. I find it impossible to just sit back and watch things happen. If there is a need to fill, I jump in and help. That's why I wanted to work with kids even after I retired from 34 years of teaching. Since I was young that was always my gift to share; connecting with and teaching kids things they might not always receive elsewhere.

I ended up at Hope at the Brick House and have been there for about five years. A St. Paul friend said, "I have a place for you." It was divine intervention that led me there. It takes a lot of hands to get things done. It doesn't just magically happen.

— Paula McPherson

In 2002, I went to a work camp on an Indian Reservation in North Dakota with a church group from our former church. That was the first time I really felt the presence of God in my life. After that experience, I started getting more involved. I know that trip sparked something special in me; it was because of those 300 kids and adults on an Indian Reservation. When I got there, I thought I'd just be working, and I was made a crew chief, leading a crew of seven kids for the week. That's where I really saw God's grace. I see grace often and, in many places, especially with being married to Paula, but that trip ignited something in me.

— Dave McPherson



Pledge in print

During the week of Nov. 7, watch for a letter from Pastor Marty. The envelope will include your financial pledge card for Daily Ministry 2023. Take some time to consider, and if you can, grow your pledge. Return your cards on Joy Weekend, Nov. 12 & 13.



Pledge online

Visit stpaulqc.org/pledge-2023 to complete your pledge online.

To give and receive

I have always held and acted on the belief that I can make a difference if I put my mind to it. When I started to get more involved with some of the incredible groups offered at St. Paul, it gave me an opportunity to do just that. Connecting, supporting, and encouraging other people, especially other moms, is such a blessing. Parenting is tough and having a support system in place is an amazing comfort. A shoulder to cry on, a note of encouragement, or a small act can make a big difference in a person's life. Being kind, generous, and respectful to others is an important thing for our children to see and practice themselves.

I don't believe it was by accident that I chose a career (as a school psychologist) serving and supporting others. Much of the joy I feel in life is an outcome of helping others. You know the saying "it's better to give than to receive?" The happiness, gratitude, and relief that one small act of kindness or act of generosity can bring to another person is powerful, rewarding, and humbling. I'm so blessed to be part of a community like St. Paul where I can not only give, but also be the recipient of such acts of service. — *Chelsea & Tyler Clark*



Supporting others

God's grace overflows in our family because my husband's work allows me to stay home with our kids and work on the things that are important to us as a family, like helping others through volunteer work. We seek out opportunities in which to give our time, talents, and resources. We feel more fulfilled in our lives when we do.

I was told by my grandfather that putting others first promotes the development of positive character traits and enhances the quality of your life and relationships, whether it be friendships or even your marriage. He was a wise and selfless man!

I volunteer with Feeding America. Every Wednesday, I go to Starbucks locations to retrieve food they are unable to use and deliver it to the Salvation Army. Some days there isn't much, but the days there is a lot I feel the happiest. I also volunteer at Nest Café. Hearing the owner's story moved me and got me excited to share it with friends.

Darrel's passion is working with youth. Whether it is teaching classes in Jr. Achievement, coaching, or helping to coach sports. He's always willing to help others and often does so without being asked. — *Chassie & Darrel Peck*

It's a promise

A financial pledge to your congregation is a financial promise. It's your best indication of what you would like to give during the coming year. It's possible that one could give whenever one feels like it, absent of a pledge. But that does little to help the church plan its ministries and mission, locally and globally. It also turns giving into an ad-hoc exercise instead of a long-range spiritual practice that reflects and keeps your life priorities. So pledge, please!

It's a building block

Every St. Paul member is asked to complete a pledge commitment. It's one of the expectations of belonging to a congregation that is moving in the same direction. Our Daily Ministry Budget is shaped entirely on the up-front generosity of member pledges. Without them, we have no operating budget.

It's first fruits

The Bible calls this kind of considerate giving *first fruits* giving. As an ancient farmer would have pulled the best vegetables and fruits to make an offering to God, we aim not to give what's left over from our living. As unselfishly as possible, we pledge to God ahead of other financial responsibilities. Challenge your giving to grow each year. That's how our church grows its impact. Remember, it's all a faith-based estimate of your personal desire and potential.

fall@st. paul

It's been a fall full of faith and fun for St. Paul people. Worship, confirmation, the NAMI Walk, Golden Agers, kids' learning, youth group, and building projects. We gather during this beautiful season to be in the presence of God and each other.



Thank you for 26 years of combined service

Two long-time St. Paul staff members plan for retirement.

Paula Durham, *business manager*

Paula Durham, who oversees all the financial affairs of the church and works in close partnership with the Finance Committee, recently submitted a letter of retirement to the Personnel Committee, effective February 2023. Both the Personnel Committee and the Church Council expressed deep gratitude for Paula's leadership since assuming the position in April 2010. Her skill has advanced the strong financial practices that have helped St. Paul build its solid footing.

The mother of two adult sons and the grandmother of six grandchildren, Paula makes her home in Muscatine, where she is an active member of the First Presbyterian Church. In her spare time, and in fair weather, she can often be found on her bike.



St. Paul Lutheran Church seeks a full-time business manager to join the church's staff team. This individual will have primary responsibility for managing the accounting systems and procedures of the church, in addition to myriad other duties related to budget, payroll, contribution statements, insurance, and more. Candidates with awareness and knowledge of the membership is helpful. To see the job description for this position, visit stpaulqc.org/employment. Employment would begin early 2023. Send a letter of interest, resume, and a list of at least three references to: businessmgrsearch@stpaulqc.org.

Karen Holden, *book corner manager*

Karen Holden has spent the last decade overseeing the mission of the St. Paul Book Corner. She has embodied the outreach purpose of this non-profit store with her own keen eye for resources that ground lives in faith, support fair trade enterprises, provide thoughtful gifts, and engage justice initiatives around the world. She will be hosting the 20th annual All St. Paul Reads book event this coming February, before retiring at the end of that month.

Karen began her work at St. Paul as business office assistant in 2008. She moved into her current position as bookstore manager in 2012. Karen and her husband Mark are the parents of two adult children and the grandparents of four.



St. Paul Lutheran Church seeks a part-time bookstore manager to join the church's staff team. This individual will manage all aspects of the store from book and gift ordering to sales record-keeping and inventory oversight. The manager is also responsible for providing oversight and support to a cadre of bookstore volunteers. To see the job description for this position, visit stpaulqc.org/employment. Employment would begin in February 2023. Send a letter of interest, resume, and a list of at least three references to: bookstoremgrsearch@stpaulqc.org.

new members



Mark & Shari Duncan enjoy spending time with family and come to St. Paul through friends. Mark works in sales for Trane and Shari is newly retired from DHS where she was a support staff supervisor.



Shelly Hansen is employed at Unity-Point Robert Young Center as a mental health provider. She enjoys spending time with family and friends and crafting. She has a young adult son named David.



Tricia Judge is a stay-at-home mom and is passionate about inclusion for all. She is married to husband Joe and has three children, Sam, Charlie (*pictured here*), and Kate. What attracted her to St. Paul? “Christian faith in action.”



Max & Liz Franks like to read, walk their dog Charlie, and cheer for the Iowa Hawkeyes. Max is resident pastor at St. Paul and Liz works as the St. Paul youth coordinator.



Bryce & Carolyn Heathman are both retired – Bryce from teaching and Carolyn from social work. They like to travel, play pickleball, and spend time with family.



Nathan & Kendra Kramer are parents to Reese and Sophie. Nathan works for John Deere in marketing and Kendra is a stay-at-home mom. The children’s ministries and congregational spirit drew them to St. Paul.



Heather Greene is mom to three-year-old Ellie. She works as a speech-language pathologist. She comes to St. Paul through family. Her parents, Tim & Becky Clark, and brother and family, Tyler and Chelsea Clark, are members.



Jen & Jerry Henry enjoy writing, reading, the Hawkeyes, and recently, a trip around the world. Jen is a newly retired ELCA pastor from Bethany Lutheran Church in Spencer, Iowa. Jerry is a violinist and retired orchestra teacher.

Allan Rathje & Francie Hill (*not pictured*) have strong ties to Clinton, Iowa. Allan is retired from ADM and Francie is closely connected with the Bickelhaupt Arboretum and Clinton Family Foundation. They like to read and are passionate about supporting people through AA. They come to St. Paul through friends.

Council Notes

Council members met in late October, celebrating an uptick in worship attendance, program life, and full and active weekends. They received an update on the 16-church members who traveled to Jonesville, Virginia for a week of service. This trip tradition of St. Paul, restarted after a three-year break due to the pandemic, is done in partnership with the Appalachian Service Project, an organization committed to making homes warmer, safer, and drier.

The annual Golden Agers service in mid-October saw its highest attendance to date. At least 100 seniors gathered for worship, lunch, and conversation.

The re-roofing project of 16 separate flat-roof areas on the church structure remains on track for completion this fall. Obviously, good weather in November is key.

With much appreciation, the council accepted business manager Paula Durham's retirement, slated for February 2023. An interview committee is being assembled to meet with qualified candidates (see p. 9).

Council received an update on the staff's recent transition from the Google platform to Microsoft Office 365.

new members continued



Garrick & Mercedes Wayne are parents to 9-month-old Harper. Garrick works as a manager with Rochester Armored Car. Mercedes is a nurse with Trinity Hospital. They enjoy spending time together on Lake Delhi, boating, swimming, and jet skiing. The community involvement is what drew them to St. Paul.



Tara & Gina Zelle are parents to two-year-old Elouise. Tara works in supply management with John Deere and Gina is a nurse with Genesis. They like to be outside hiking, snowboarding, and spending time in the mountains. They are passionate about issues of equality and were attracted by the faith community at St. Paul.

New to St. Paul life? Pick a membership class

St. Paul Membership Inquiry classes, designed for people who are new to life here, focus on the church's core values, faith expressions, and ministries. Classes are offered each and every month. Childcare is provided on advance request. Pick a class that fits your schedule:

- ▶ Saturday, November 12, 9-11 a.m.
- ▶ Thursday, December 8, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups, or contact Pastor Sara at sara@stpaulqc.org, 563-326-3547 ext. 248.

WORSHIP at St. Paul

▶ November 5 & 6

*Season after Pentecost
All Saints Weekend*

Preaching:

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

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

▶ November 12 & 13

*Season after Pentecost
Joy Weekend*

Preaching:

All services: Peter W. Marty

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

▶ November 19 & 20

Reign of Christ

Preaching:

5pm/9 am: Sara Olson-Smith
8 & 11:15 am: Max Franks

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

▶ November 23

Thanksgiving Eve worship

Preaching:

7 pm: Megan Eide

▶ November 26 & 27

First Sunday of Advent

Preaching:

All services: Katy Warren

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am



ST. PAUL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

2136 Brady Street
Davenport, IA 52803

THANKSGIVING EVE WORSHIP

Wednesday, Nov. 23, 7 p.m.
Grocery cart procession. Music by the Chorale