

AUGUST 2023

The magazine of St. Paul Lutheran Church

# journey





# Planting trees



**ON THE COVER:**

Nick & Anna Villareal with one-year-old Charlotte

## journey

**AUGUST 2023**

Volume 11 | Issue 6

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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.

*Journey* (USPS 8314) is published monthly by St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA, 2136 Brady St., Davenport, IA, 52803. Periodicals Postage Paid at Davenport, IA.

**POSTMASTER**

Send address changes to *Journey*, 2136 Brady Street, Davenport, Iowa 52803

At a planning meeting earlier this summer, one of my colleagues received a text message that stirred him to step out of the room quietly and quickly. Later we heard the news: one of our members lost a limb.

It wasn't one of our human members, thankfully. But tragedy had struck another important part of St. Paul – a large limb had broken off the large pin oak that stood in the north lawn. Thankfully, the branch of that tree hurt no one, but the crash exposed the fact that carpenter ants had been eating away at our beloved tree.

Like many of us, I've appreciated that tree since I first saw her, with her wide trunk and broad limbs that spread wide to cast shadows on hot days. But it wasn't until the pandemic that I grew to love her. We spent a lot of time with that tree when so much of our church life was pushed outside. We'd schedule meetings "at the oak tree," and gather in the shade she provided for classes, gatherings, conversations.

When the arborists took her down, we learned by counting the rings that she was 77 years old. (I can't seem to call the tree an "it" – as the oak, with such a strong living presence is no mere thing). Imagine the things that tree has witnessed. As a tender sapling in 1954, she'd have watched the people of St. Paul walking into the old sanctuary doors, not quite so dependent on cars as we are now. The tree grew and shaded children as they came to learn in the then-new education wing and stretched her arms of care over little ones when the preschool started.

Through all the changes in the building, in technology, in the people who gathered – that oak tree stood strong and steady. In the decades of her life, she kept growing steadily, simply being what she was made to be. The Psalmist wrote that a person of faith, who takes daily delight in the word of God is like a "tree planted by streams of water" (Psalm 1:3). Our beloved pin oak taught us to simply dig our roots deep to soak up God's word of life, and then to just keep growing, becoming the person we are made to be.

I've also thought about those faithful St. Paul people who, 77 years ago, planted a tree. They couldn't possibly have imagined what the church would like in 70 years – with women clergy, the beau-

tiful diversity of people and families, enormous generosity to far corners of the world, technological advances, and so much more. Or maybe they did begin to imagine it, because they planted a tree, and to do so means to live into an only imagined future, to trust a future they could not yet see.

The people of St. Paul in the 1950s tended to their good soil of generosity to the neighborhood and world, a rich life of worship and music, a commitment to learning and hospitality. They dared to trust that the congregation would grow in faithfulness like a tree planted by the water (or a Vander Veer fountain). They planted a tree as a gift for future generations, as a commitment, a hope for the church to come.

We, too, will be planting trees around St. Paul, at least four of them will be planted into the rich soil of the campus. In this, we, too, will be investing in a future we can't see, a church now and yet to come. We cannot know what a church or world will look like in the year 2100, 77 years from now. But we can trust these trees, along with our daily acts of compassion and faithfulness, witness and stewardship, will grow into something that will bless our city, and this earth.

Martin Luther supposedly said once that, "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would plant a tree today." We don't know what the future holds, for the planet or for the church, but today we can plant trees, real and metaphorical ones, not only for our sake now, but in hopes of shaping and shading a future for generations to come.



*Sara Olson-Smith*

**SARA OLSON-SMITH**  
associate pastor

# Welcoming all

**St. Paul receives \$10,000 grant from the ELCA Disability Ministry fund to support neurodiverse children, teens, and their families.**

Last summer, pastoral resident Megan Eide saw a need to better accommodate neurodiverse children, teens, and their families. From this idea, the *Social Spectrum* group began to take shape with the goal to give participants a space to build relationships and collectively voice their ideas for ways St. Paul can be more hospitable toward families with neurodiverse family members.

Participants of *Social Spectrum* gather once a month to share stories and thoughts on a range of topics from children's ministries and worship to autism resources in the Quad Cities. Megan has seen first-hand the impact this group has had on participants.

"There's such a wide variety of ways that people participate and develop communally and spiritually. For a church to not only acknowledge that but to reach out and say 'what more can we do?' was monumental for them."

## Impact

Debby Reed knows first-hand some of the challenges families with neurodiverse loved ones face. Her adult daughter Jennifer was diagnosed with Asperger's and while she is a highly functioning adult, Debby seeks to find more opportunities for Jennifer to connect with others.

"To have St. Paul explore these topics is huge for our family. One of the most important parts of the *Social Spectrum* group is the feeling that you're not alone. You're surrounded by other families that are figuring it out as well," Debby said. "I feel hopeful that these conversations will raise awareness among other members of the church and provide more understanding and connection."

Thanks to the generosity of the St. Paul Memorial Fund Committee, the initial pieces of the project were implemented last year. Noise reduction headphones, weight-



**This initiative is another reason to be proud of the faith community you're in. Truly being welcoming of all people is a community effort.**

PASTOR MEGAN EIDE

ed lap pads, fidgets, and more tools were added to the Sanctuary, available at the ushers station. But Megan and others soon realized there were additional initiatives they wanted to champion and the timing was just right. The lower-level Education Wing was in the early stages of receiving its own makeover. But it was a fortuitous moment when Megan saw a first-of-its-kind grant opportunity from the ELCA Disability Ministries fund.

The Disability Ministries grant helps to provide funding for projects that aim to educate leaders on serving people with disabilities, supporting inclusive participation in congregations, and providing education to enable congregations to more fully welcome and support individuals with dis-

abilities. A \$10,000 grant was awarded to five congregations who submitted grant proposals (out of more than 60 applicants) and St. Paul was one of these five national recipients.

The St. Paul accessibility project will consist of a family-learning style Sunday school class and sensory-friendly space, training for staff and volunteers, and a buddy program that pairs neurotypical teens with their neurodivergent peers.

## Educating all

The grant covers specialized training and workshops for staff and volunteers. Training will be designed and led by five core consultants who are also St. Paul members. The buddy program operates in a similar fashion. Middle and high school-aged youth who exhibit a particular sense of leadership, compassion, and thoughtfulness have the opportunity to attend workshops and educational programs specially crafted by local graduate students. The objective of the group is to equip neurotypical teens with the knowledge and skills they need to act as buddies and advocates for their neurodivergent peers.

# august

## HAPPENINGS

### Back-to-school blessing on Sunday, Aug. 20

The anticipation of a new school year is in the air: school supplies, backpacks, and the eagerness of learning new things.

On Sunday, Aug. 20, St. Paul will hold its annual back-to-school blessing. Students of all ages can bring backpacks to worship at 9 and 11:15 a.m. for a special blessing. Before worship, place your bag at the front of the Sanctuary near the altar. The blessing will be during the children's message. Children will receive a small item to remind them God is with them as they return to school.

Sunday morning learning at St. Paul begins again on Sunday, Sept. 10. Classes will be held from 10:15-11:00 a.m.

### Women of St. Paul fall gathering on Aug. 26

The annual fall gathering for the women of St. Paul is Saturday, Aug. 26, 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the Chapel Commons. Come to connect, grow, and serve together—with old and new friends. Learn about a wide variety of St. Paul ministries and meet the new St. Paul resident pastor, McIver “Mac” Mullins.

Brunch food and drinks will be served. Childcare is available upon request. Sign up at [stpaulqc.org/signups](http://stpaulqc.org/signups) or at the Info Center. Contact Linda Allebach, 563-349-9407, [lindajallebach@gmail.com](mailto:lindajallebach@gmail.com) or Beth Johnson, 309-269-9543, [bajohnson4008@gmail.com](mailto:bajohnson4008@gmail.com).

### Food ingathering planned for Aug. 26 & 27

Fill a bag with nonperishable food items, diapers/wipes, and feminine hygiene products, and bring it to church for St. Paul's annual back-to-school ingathering.

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). You can also write a check to St. Paul with “Food Pantry” in the memo line.

Contact: Jessica Taylor, [jessica@stpaulqc.org](mailto:jessica@stpaulqc.org).



### Help clean up the St. Paul neighborhood on Aug. 26

The St. Paul corner of the world is a beautiful place. On Saturday, Aug. 26, 10 a.m.-12 noon, gather to pick up trash and debris in the blocks surrounding the campus. It's called the *Make It Yours* Neighborhood Cleanup. No need to sign up, just gather at the preschool entrance of the building. Supplies and snacks are provided. Contact: Jules Irish, [julesi@mchsi.com](mailto:julesi@mchsi.com).

### Vets on a Mission

Are you a veteran from any era? Led by Lyle Peterson, this group connects in a variety of ways to provide camaraderie, support, and conversation. Contact: Lyle Peterson, [petedav72@gmail.com](mailto:petedav72@gmail.com), 563-343-1817.



## 7th-graders: Sign up for confirmation

Students entering 7th grade this fall are encouraged to sign up now for St. Paul's confirmation ministry. Meeting on Wednesday evenings, 6:30-8 p.m., September through April, confirmation is key to shaping the faith of middle school students.

Teenagers and parents are asked to attend a family orientation session in August before confirmation begins next month. Families can sign up for one session by going to [stpaulqc.org/signups](https://stpaulqc.org/signups). For more information and registration materials, contact Katy Warren, [katy@stpaulqc.org](mailto:katy@stpaulqc.org), 563-326-3547 ext. 232.

## Dementia Caregivers Group

Caring for someone with dementia can be overwhelming. All who walk this journey are welcome to gather this fall beginning Sept. 19. This group will meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 2 p.m. in the Church House Living Room. Both new and returning members are welcome.

These six sessions will provide an opportunity to share ideas, gather resources, learn how to support loved ones, and be a support to one another. Angie Vaaler facilitates. Questions? Contact: Angie Vaaler, 563-326-3547 ext. 312.



## Congregational forum

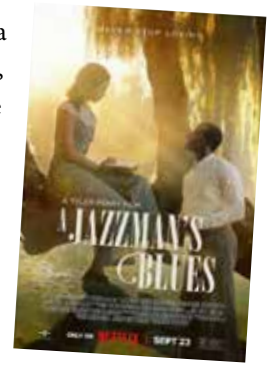
As the call process for St. Paul's next senior pastor emerges over the coming year, many steps will lead to a successful outcome. Among the early steps will be several informal forums for conversation and comment, hosted by the church council and personnel committee.

An August forum will take place on Sunday, Aug. 13, 10:15-11 a.m. in the Chapel. Anybody in the congregation is welcome to attend. It's an opportunity for members to share personal impressions of our congregation's current ministry as well as their hopes and dreams for the future.

## Racial awareness film screening on Aug. 10

On Thursday, Aug. 10, 6:30 p.m., come watch *A Jazzman's Blues*, a film by Tyler Perry. It traces a fascinating story line through the Jim Crow south, interracial marriage, "passing," loyalty, betrayal, the Chicago jazz scene with Black performers and white audiences, to an ending that is both tragically predictable and a complete surprise.

The screening is open to all with parental discretion advised; the Racial Awareness Team will lead discussion following the film. Contact: Peter A. Pettit, [ppettit@stpaulqc.org](mailto:ppettit@stpaulqc.org).



## Family night at the ballpark

Take me out to the ball game! Spots are still open for family time at the ballpark. Spend an evening at Modern Woodmen with other St. Paul families on Friday, Aug. 11. The game starts at 6:30 p.m. Cost is \$3 per person. Sign up online at [stpaulqc.org/signups](https://stpaulqc.org/signups). Contact: Maddy Carroll, [maddy@stpaulqc.org](mailto:maddy@stpaulqc.org).

## So All May Eat meal serving

People assemble meals at St. Paul and serve a meal at Zion Lutheran Church, Davenport. The initiative is called So All May Eat. Needed for Wednesday, Aug. 30 are shoppers, cooks, and servers at various times. Providing a warm meal to those who are struggling is one way we show God's grace to others. Sign up at [stpaulqc.org/signups](https://stpaulqc.org/signups). Contact: Katy Warren, [katy@stpaulqc.org](mailto:katy@stpaulqc.org).

## Habitat for Humanity build date: August 5

Put on a tool belt and help build simple, decent houses through this ecumenical ministry on Saturday, Aug. 5. The morning shifts are 8 a.m.-12 noon, the afternoon shifts are noon-4 p.m. No previous building experience is necessary. Sign up at [stpaulqc.org/signups](https://stpaulqc.org/signups). Contact: Katy Warren, [katy@stpaulqc.org](mailto:katy@stpaulqc.org).





# FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

St. Paul seeks to be a loving sign of God's grace for kids and families.

Back to school time is on everyone's minds and soon the classrooms around St. Paul will begin to fill again with the voices of small ones. In these rooms, seeds are planted. Seeds that help to guide and nurture growth, compassion, community, and love in our swiftly growing children. From the littlest in childcare and preschool to the kids in the children's and youth programming, St. Paul staff and volunteers create intentional and purposeful programming for all ages and with all stages of development in mind.

## Childcare

It starts from the earliest of ages. At St. Paul we believe that children belong in worship but sometimes infants and toddlers, and their parents, need a break.

Some of the most challenging times as parents are those first few forays into childcare and St. Paul childcare coordinator Brittany Guy not only knows that, she's lived it as well. As a former St. Paul preschool teacher and mom to a nine-year-old, Brittany has journeyed through the early stages of parenthood and knows how to bring comfort and peace to both the infants and toddlers and their families.

"A major goal for us in the childcare room is for

everyone to feel like they have a spot in this church. When we give an infant a place they can feel safe, they can always count on that," Brittany said. "It's a challenge for parents, especially after being with their babies and younger kids nonstop during COVID, to walk away and trust us with this irreplaceable child. I'm beyond grateful they instill that confidence in us to be part of that separation journey."

## Kids

The learning ministries at St. Paul are alive, thriving, and growing. Maddy Carroll grew up in the children's program at St. Paul and has since returned to lead as the Director of Children's Ministries. Maddy brings her knowledge and passion for children's ministry as well as new and innovative ways to engage young children.

"It's important to start a foundation of faith understanding at a young age. We do our best to make the content understandable and interactive," Maddy said. "Learning in the church with friends and family is so important. Kids have a lot of questions about faith and being able to teach them stories and concepts that are understandable to them helps answer those and further their faith lives."





## Youth

St. Paul youth ministry is marked by five guideposts. Significance, transformation, identity, challenge, and memories. These guiding factors challenge, nurture, and grow the faith experiences of St. Paul youth.

As students enter their high school years, their experiences hit the road, taking steps outside of the church and into the greater world through increased volunteerism, mission trips, retreats, and time of connection as growing young people. (See pg. 8 & 9 for Kansas City mission trip photos)

## Growing up

Anna (Mullen) Villareal spent her childhood growing up at St. Paul. She and her husband Nick were married here in 2015 and upon moving back to Iowa and welcoming their daughter Charlotte, their family of three knew St. Paul was the place for young Charlotte to grow. (See cover photo)

“St. Paul has always been an important place for our family. The heart of St. Paul is its people. Their daily commitment to live the values of radical hospitality and courageous service played a critical role in bringing us to membership,” Anna said. “At St. Paul we know Charlotte will be surrounded by a loving, inclusive congregation where she is encouraged to explore all aspects of faith through critical study, active worship, and extensive service to others.”

Anna and Nick say they look forward to what the future will bring for Charlotte, for their family, and as individuals growing in faith.

“As Charlotte grows, we know that the weekly learning hour and singing in the children’s choirs

“AT ST. PAUL WE KNOW CHARLOTTE  
WILL BE SURROUNDED BY A LOVING,  
INCLUSIVE CONGREGATION.”

will be cornerstones of our Sunday mornings, and donuts too,” Anna replied. “We look forward to fostering her developing interests which may lead to anything from instrumental music participation and weeding in the community garden to participating in yearly book clubs and advocating for accessible services for others. That is the remarkable aspect of faith formation at St. Paul, the endless opportunities to grow within oneself and the larger community of God; not only for Charlotte but for ourselves as well.”

## Milestones for kids and youth

Diapers to digital identities. Newborns to newly graduated. First backpack to first driving experience. These are milestones and life experiences that have the biggest impact on kids and their families. St. Paul milestones celebrate and support these important stops on the growing up journey. Here parents and kids discover God’s presence in seemingly ordinary happenings. Three-year-olds and kindergartners at St. Paul will mark important faith milestones this month. Sign up online at [stpaulqc.org/signups](https://stpaulqc.org/signups).

### ► Three-year-olds | Sunday School Milestone

Come for a pizza lunch and connect with other families on Sunday, Aug. 20, 12:15 p.m. We welcome 3-year-olds into Sunday-morning learning — it’s a big step into a classroom setting. Each child receives a storybook Bible.

### ► Kindergarten | Discovering Worship Milestone

Kids ask questions and explore St. Paul worship during this interactive session on Sunday, Aug. 27, 12:15 p.m. A monogrammed worship bag for each child and a pizza lunch adds to the fun. Contact: Maddy Carroll, [maddy@stpaulqc.org](mailto:maddy@stpaulqc.org).



# Explore AND Serve

A team of St. Paul youth and adult leaders traveled to Kansas City in July to learn and serve in the city. It was a week filled with service projects: serving in urban gardens, packaging medical supplies, and assisting with food and clothing distribution. In the evenings, the group explored the city's outdoor spaces including Worlds of Fun amusement park and local cuisine.









# Expanding our digital footprint at St. Paul

Over the next several months, we're unveiling three new and exciting ways to connect with St. Paul through your phone, computer, tablet, and more.

## Available to use today

An online giving platform that's never been easier to use. This platform offers a simple, secure, and seamless way to give online at any time.

You'll notice (if you haven't already) some small changes during worship. The green offering cards in the pews are no more. Look instead for the blue pew cards to help guide you through the ways to give online to St. Paul. The offering moment during worship is a special time. A time when gifts are given and voices are lifted in thanks to the Lord. That offering moment may look a little different as members pull out their phones in place of an envelope in a basket but it remains just as precious. Need help getting started? Visit the Info Center in the coming weeks as you familiarize yourself with new St. Paul technology or call the main office or email [info@stpaulqc.org](mailto:info@stpaulqc.org) to speak with a member of the giving team.



## Coming later this month

This new app will put St. Paul in your hands anywhere you go. It's a mobile optimized extension of our current website so you stay connected. Access the calendar, manage your online giving, connect with small groups, sign up for your favorite events, listen to the podcast, and so much more.

Look for the app and app updates late August or early September. It will be available free on the App Store for iPhones and Google Play for Androids.

## Coming this fall

The St. Paul online membership photo directory will be accessible directly from the new St. Paul app beginning later this fall. The directory will allow St. Paul members to view photos and connect via directory messaging with other St. Paul members. Use of the online membership photo directory will be limited to St. Paul members only and access to your information is completely customizable by each individual user, giving you complete control of your personal information.

## WAYS TO GIVE



**Envelope**  
cash + check



**Online**  
[stpaulqc.org/give](http://stpaulqc.org/give)



**Mobile**  
Text GIVE to  
(833) 223-4745

Questions? Stop by the Info Center on Sundays or call (563) 326-3547 or email [info@stpaulqc.org](mailto:info@stpaulqc.org) to speak with a member of the giving team.

## Directory Photo day!

In preparation for the release of the online photo directory, come get your photo taken on Sunday, Aug. 20 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.





## Council Notes

Council president Patty Herzberg opened the meeting with appreciation for the extent of volunteerism and the many forms of service by St. Paul people who work in community events around the Quad Cities.

The recent youth mission trip to Kansas City was deemed a great success. Strong adult leaders made the week run smoothly and great experiences were had by all. Youth coordinator Liz Franks and a group of incoming high school seniors are next headed to Athelstane, Wisconsin for their annual Adventure Trip. White water rafting, a high ropes course, and zip-lining are all part of the leadership development weekend.

Around the St. Paul building, various renovation projects are in progress. Lower-level classroom painting and floor recarpeting are in high

gear. Roof leaks around the sanctuary tower are being repaired, even as we go to press. The brand-new playground on the north lawn, which will include a resurfacing of the play area, is 50-percent complete.

The Youth Director search committee met recently to review candidates for the permanent position of director. The personnel committee and council are hosting two congregational forums in July and August as part of this next year's search process for a new senior pastor.

St. Paul council voted to call a special congregational meeting for Sunday, Aug. 6, 10:10 a.m., to vote on the purchase of the 2001 Main St., Davenport property. This property is situated on the southwest corner of our campus.

## Summer learning opportunities for adults

### ► Exploring Christian Nationalism

*Mondays in August, 12 noon and 7 p.m.*

Christian Nationalism is a movement that is influencing lives in Iowa and across the country. What does it advocate? What are its roots? How does it represent the past, present, and future of the United States and the Christian faith? What appeal does it offer? With Pastor Peter A. Pettit.

### ► Sunday learning: The Safer Foundation

*Sunday, Aug. 20, 10:15-11 a.m., Chapel*

In our penal system, the time spent in incarceration "pays the debt" to society that is owed by those who break the law. Yet many are released with a deficit of the skills, resources, and goodwill that are necessary to start fresh. The Safer Foundation supports those who want to make the most of their second chance. Explore the dynamics and challenges of this work with Director Erica Lee and Asst. Director Brian Monroe.

## Special congregational meeting

The Council has called for a special congregational meeting to consider the purchase of property at 2001 Main Street, Davenport to become a part of the St. Paul campus. The brief meeting will be held on Sunday, Aug. 6, 10:10 a.m., in the Sanctuary.



## WORSHIP at St. Paul

### ► August 5 & 6

*Season after Pentecost*

#### **Preaching:**

All services: Peter A. Pettit

#### **Liturgical tradition:**

5pm/8 & 9am

#### **Contemporary Open Spirit:**

11:15am

### ► August 12 & 13

*Season after Pentecost*

#### **Preaching:**

All services: Peter W. Marty

#### **Liturgical tradition:**

5pm/8 & 9am

#### **Contemporary Open Spirit:**

11:15am

### ► August 19 & 20

*Season after Pentecost*

#### **Preaching:**

All services: Peter W. Marty

#### **Liturgical tradition:**

5pm/8 & 9am

#### **Contemporary Open Spirit:**

11:15am

### ► August 26 & 27

*Season after Pentecost*

#### **Preaching:**

All services: Sara Olson-Smith

#### **Liturgical tradition:**

5pm/8 & 9am

#### **Contemporary Open Spirit:**

11:15am



ST. PAUL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

2136 Brady Street  
Davenport, IA 52803

# Family camp at Camp Shalom

*Saturday, Aug. 19, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.*

Enjoy and explore nature with other St. Paul families during Family Camp Day at Camp Shalom in Maquoketa, IA. The day will feature camp activities, crafts, low ropes, field games, and more. The afternoon consists of an adult Bible study, children's Bible study, lunch, and more before the day concludes.

Sign up online at [stpaulqc.org/signups](http://stpaulqc.org/signups).

