

St. Paul's News *June 2020*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Apostle Paul wrote these words to the people of the church at Philippi:

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

It is amazing to remember that St. Paul wrote these words while imprisoned. He spoke of being content in all circumstances while he was in the most overwhelming of circumstance. Yet he knew that, as long as he had Christ, that he could be empowered to be content in any situation.

In the past two months, we have found ourselves in circumstances that we did not appreciate, and which did not bring a sense of contentment. The strangest thing about this time in our history is that people have such varying thoughts and opinions; however, no one seems to be claiming contentment during this time.

What is the role of the church and God's people during this time? I believe that we are called to live out the words of our namesake, St. Paul. We are called to demonstrate that we can claim contentment in this trying circumstance because we know that we belong to God. We can, and must, claim contentment because we believe these words of the Holy Scripture that says that the peace of God will guard our hearts and our minds.

What an amazing witness we can be to the world during this time of crisis and deep division! What an exciting opportunity we have to show people that we can rise above the challenges of this time and we can remain content in this circumstance. I believe that the world is desperately crying out for God during this time and people don't even realize it. People are feeling so discontent and disappointed and feeling as if they have nowhere to turn.

But we know, as the body of Christ. We know that we can live out the truth in these words when we claim contentedness in any circumstance. Let our lives be a witness to St. Paul's words and to the life-giving ministry of Jesus Christ!

Seeking His wisdom,
Pastor Charlene

Happy Fathers Day



Sunday, June 21

let's do
lunch

Please join us for Lunch Bunch

Tuesday, June 23 @ 12:00

TU Wall Street Pub

If you plan to attend, please RSVP
to Marilyn Hutchins at (419) 447-9720

Despite closed churches faith seems to be growing

Of all the activities that help organize human life, the communal practice of religion is one of the most unifying.

But like public gatherings of almost every kind, religious services of every denomination and creed have all but disappeared, thanks to the coronavirus.

And while the “virtual” service has been sustaining people of faith during these difficult times, plenty

of people feel spiritually isolated without the fellowship, foundation and accountability that group worship provides. There’s reason to wonder whether, when churches and other houses of worship reopen (some already are), if many of the faithful decide not to return — at first for safety, but eventually because they’ve simply lost the habit.

Add to that the almost universal suffering and despair created by the pandemic, and the circumstances seem ripe for a great falling away from faithfulness altogether.

Yet the opposite appears to be true.

A recent survey by the Pew Research Center found that one-quarter of U.S. adults (24 percent) say their faith has become stronger because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Notably, that’s 24 percent of U.S. adults overall — not just those who identified as being very religious before this all began.

That data is consistent with a Gallup survey which found that 19 percent of Americans said their faith or spirituality has gotten better as a result of the crisis.

In a separate survey conducted in March, Pew found that more than half of all U.S. adults have prayed for an end to the spread of coronavirus, including “some who say they seldom or never pray and people who say they do not belong to any religion (15 percent and 24 percent, respectively).”

And while about half of Americans say their faith hasn’t changed much in the face of the global pandemic, only 2 percent in the Pew study say it has become weaker. Gallup had a similar result, at 3 percent.

That’s an intriguing finding given that religion in America has been declining for decades and accelerating in recent years.

There are complex and intertwined reasons for that — negative political associations, major church scandals, the decline of the family and the rise of secularism.

And whether causal or coincidental, the rise of the “nonés” — people with no religious affiliation — has occurred concurrently with a breakdown of social cohesion.

Some of that can be attributed to younger generations who have not merely eschewed religious labels but filled the faith-shaped void with other (often rootless) endeavors to provide some sense of “meaning.”

The pandemic has abruptly stripped many of those things away — work, routines, the frivolities of life — leaving us all to contemplate our role in the world and the purpose of our existence.

Perhaps that’s part of the reason why 11 percent of adults who seldom or never attend religious services have found their faith is increasing in the wake of COVID-19; and why 7 percent of religiously unaffiliated Americans — included atheists and agnostics — now similarly find themselves drawn to faith.

There’s probably another important factor at play in people’s turn to faith: the failures of science.

While we will ultimately rely on medical treatment to manage the disease, there is no certainty that we will ever completely understand or effectively vaccinate against the coronavirus.

And the fluidity and ambiguity of seemingly every pandemic question (from whether masks can effectively prevent the spread to how the virus can be transmitted) has given pause to many people who have long insisted that science has all the answers all of the time.

Religion may not provide those answers, either. But it’s clearly filling a void of something lost in our current crisis.

Perhaps that something is hope.

If these are the times that try men’s souls, they may also be the times that restore them.

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CYNTHIA M. ALLEN

- *Article from the Tampa Bay Times
Wednesday, May 13, 2020*



Mission Report

Even though we are not meeting at St. Paul’s, you can still donate to **First Call for Help** (our 3rd Sunday “yellow bucket” offering) by mailing your donations directly to them at 201 S. Washington St., Tiffin, Ohio.

The Mission’s Committee have agreed to donate \$100 to CWS for Health Kits.

Your continued support for St. Paul’s mission work is greatly appreciated!

- *Kathy Daniel for Missions Committee*



Ten weeks of Bible Study ended May 21st. Thank you to all the ladies that spent the time in fellowship, friendship, and Bible Study during this unprecedented time. It was good to remember that God is in control and will always lead us. We will see where this study will lead us next. God’s Blessings! – *Molly Lofton*



If your son or daughter is in Third Grade or older and would like to serve as Acolyte, please contact Jill Lindhorst at (419) 443-0273. Please consider helping us!!



The Trustees are back WORKING! Four were in the church on May 8th, getting it ready to reopen or preparing for Ecumenical Sharing Kitchen. Three were in the church on May 9th and possibly two on May 10th. There are many things to do and projects to plan or decide. – *Rich Kinstler*



VBS coming in July?
Stay tuned for updates!!!
Woot-Woot 😊



Hello St. Paul’s members,
We would like to introduce myself and my husband. We have a great opportunity to work with the youth fellowship at St. Paul’s Church. We currently have twenty-one in the youth fellowship group. Since the Covid 19 started we have been delivering packets to the youth at their homes. The packets include curriculum, craft, and a surprise for the theme. Every other Sunday at 5:00 p.m. we have a Zoom meeting over the computer to review the curriculum and the youth have the time to meet with one another via the meeting.

Once the church and the community re-open, we would like to do some activities and some road trips with the youth.

Some of the activities we are looking at are bowling, lock-ins, camp, and sporting events. We also have in mind, to encourage the youth in community service projects, things such as remodeling the youth room at the church, helping with the Sharing Kitchen and a toy or coat drive at Christmas.

I enjoy working with the youth and have for the past 20 years in different professions. I believe this is a critical time for the youth in their decision making, peer pressures and thinking errors that can take place at this age. I believe it is important for the youth to have one another to talk to and be able to learn and talk to God.

My husband, Matt, will be helping me with the youth fellowship group. Matt enjoys watching the youth grow through the years.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with your children and the youth at St. Paul’s.

- *Matt and Tevin Drosky*



**ANNUAL YOUTH
CONFERENCE 2020
HAS MOVED ONLINE**

Youth Annual Conference will be offered to our young people in a new format. Those who attend online will still get to see the scheduled musical acts and speaker online. See Tevin Drosky or Pastor Charlene for details!
Sunday, June 14th, 2020

**GIVE
PLUS+**

**E-GIVING IN
3 EASY STEPS**

1. Download the Give Plus app on the app store (available for Apple and Android)
2. Search for “Tiffin St. Paul’s United Methodist Church” and select our church.
3. Tap “Give Now” and enter your information.

You can also give online by going to our website (www.tiffinstpauls.org) and clicking on the “E-Giving” link.

Important 2020 Dates in the United Methodist Church (East Ohio, Jurisdiction & General Conference)

- Quadrennial General Conference --- **Rescheduled for August 29 – September 7, 2021**
- East Ohio Youth Annual Conference – **Rescheduled online June 14, 2020**
- East Ohio Annual Conference – Lakeside --- **Rescheduled for September 25-27, 2020**
- July 15-18: North Central Jurisdictional Conference - Fort Wayne --- **STILL SCHEDULED**

Rejoice always;
pray without ceasing;
in everything give thanks;
for this is God’s will
for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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RETURNING TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP

The past several months we have been able to enjoy a new way of worshiping together. I praise God for the technology that allowed us to remain connected to each other and which gave us the ability to worship God! Praise God for that technology. I thank each one of you who remained committed to attending weekly worship through our virtual gathering. Special thanks to Dave Thomas who helped me prepare our online worship experience each week.

The East Ohio Conference has released guidelines for the safe return to in-person worship. These extensive guidelines were compiled based on the recommendations from local and state health departments, our state government and CDC guidelines. I understand that there are varying opinions surrounding these guidelines. However, I believe that following these guidelines is the safest way for us to return to in person worship. Therefore, it is vitally important that these guidelines are followed so that we can resume and continue in-person worship.

We will resume in-person worship on June 7th. The worship committee, trustees and lay leaders have met and have communicated extensively and are in agreement that it would be best to meet outdoors when we initially return. Therefore, we will be worshipping outdoors for the month of June. Outdoor worship has always been something that we at St. Paul's have enjoyed, so I am looking forward to this opportunity to reconvene in the side yard (where we typically enjoy outdoor worship). Our conversations surrounding returning to worship inside the building will continue and we will keep you informed. However, we believe that the safest environment for worship at this time is outside, and safety is our top priority.

The following guidelines must be followed when attending outdoor worship:

- Please take your temperature at home and if you are running a fever or feel ill in any way, please worship from home until you are well.
- There will be hand sanitizer available for those who need it.
- Please bring your own chair. There will not be chairs set up outside.
- There will be marked areas for families to sit together. Please sit only with your family unit and observe the social distance.
- Please refrain from any sort of physical interaction. I KNOW that you have missed each other so much (as I have missed you). I also know that there will be the impulse to approach and hug, shake hands or high five each other. However, even if you feel comfortable with physical interaction, the other person may not. Please honor each other's feelings and physical boundaries and do not break the social distance barrier of 6'.
- Offering plates will be placed at the entrance to the worship area. Please deposit your offering in those plates. We will not be passing offering plates.
- Unfortunately, we will not be able to sing or pray out loud together. There are ongoing studies surrounding the expulsion of aerosols while singing and it has not been deemed safe at this time for a congregation to all be singing at the same time. However, we can and will have special music (solo singer, instrumental music). If you are interested in helping with special music offerings, please let Pastor Charlene know.
- Traffic Flow: There will be guidance offered as we gather and choose our chair placement and there will be guidance offered during dismissal.
- We will not be offering coffee hour or fellowship time until further notice.
- No children's church. Children will remain seated with their family units for the entire service.

I know that seems like a lot of things we CAN'T do. Please continue reading for more information on what we CAN do!

RETURNING TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP CONT.

The Key to our Contentment lies in our hearts and minds! Rather than think of the guidelines in a negative way, please try to reframe it to think of them as acts of love for each other (similar to when you ask before touching a newborn baby and sanitize your hands before holding the baby). I understand and honor that we all have differing feelings surrounding these acts of loving kindness. However, I ask that you recognize that someone else in our congregation (someone that you love) may have the opposite feelings and you want to honor their feelings, just as you want to be respected and honored yourself.

Things we CAN do in worship:

- Bring a positive attitude to church each week (along with your chair). This is especially important for the young people in our congregation. They will be watching to see how we handle adversity in the church. Let our actions be worthy of their attention.
- As you sit with your family unit, be sure to smile and wave and greet each other safely from a distance. We have all missed each other so much and it will be wonderful to be in the same space.
- Bring your creativity: We have the opportunity to return to worship in new and creative ways! We can't sing together, but we could raise homemade signs that say AMEN or RAISE A HALLELUJAH. Our worship experience is only limited by our own imaginations!
- Please text me your prayer concerns (567-207-0553) so that they can be shared during prayer time. (You even have permission to text during church if you forget prior to service). We can't share a microphone, but we can still share our joys and concerns!
- We are permitted to share time together in small groups. This might be the time for you to host a small group in your home (or your yard). Let Pastor Charlene know that you would like to host a small group and we can make a plan!
- Participate fully in worship! Do you have a special talent? Play a musical instrument or sing? You are invited to be a part of the worship service and highlight those talents that God gave you.
- Invite someone: Now is the perfect time to invite someone to church. Worshiping in the side yard is much less threatening than entering a church building for worship. Though we know that worship happens in all kinds of places, people who don't attend church feel much more relaxed outdoors. Invite a friend!
- We can keep the MAIN thing as the MAIN thing: We often forget that worship is not about us at all. Worship is about honoring God and praising God. If we enter into worship with that attitude, it keeps us focused on praising and honoring God with our worship.



Psalm 96:1-9



"¹ O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. ² Sing to the LORD, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day. ³ Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples. ⁴ For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be revered above all gods. ⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. ⁶ Honor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. ⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. ⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering and come into His courts. ⁹ Worship the LORD in holy splendor; tremble before Him, all the earth."