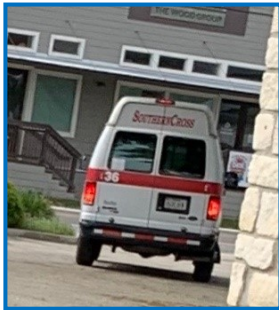


Easter - Connecting at a Distance

While our Easter Flower Cross has been a tradition, we put a new twist on it this year by placing them outside so that the congregation and members of the community could continue to show their faith and demonstrate their resiliency by coming to decorate them with flowers and ribbons.

He has Risen!



Simply Engaging

During these unprecedented and challenging times, we are facing in our world today, your staff is making every effort to keep in close contact with you, our congregation. While many of us are working from home or splitting our time between home and the church office, our new routine is unusual for us as well. Because we have physical restrictions we must adhere to, we are making every effort to utilize and learn new technology to keep in contact with each of you. While some of these modes of communication we have already been using, we have fine tuned or ramped up our usage of them, for example, our use of church-wide emails, our website, the *Epistle*, our Face Book presence, and on-line giving.

As we all know, the coronavirus tends to affect our senior population and the people with underlying health conditions, the most. Therefore, our seniors are being quarantined to their homes. The church has implemented a telephone tree to help our seniors stay connected and engaged in ministry. Most everyone over the age of 65 has been contacted at least once by a staff member or a volunteer. The purpose of the call is to check on your well-being, to see if the church can help with anything, and to keep seniors informed of our online/Face Book services and more. Seniors that do NOT have access to Face Book or the website have information mailed to them regularly.

In addition to implementing the telephone tree, we have begun utilizing new church technology such as 1) texting, 2) voice mails, 3) daily/weekly videos that appear on Face Book and our website, 4) live streaming special services and Sunday sermons, 5) maintaining our Board and Council meetings via teleconference, and 6) providing small group leaders the opportunity to continue with their small groups via the phone and internet.

While many of these things have been new to us as well, we have managed to learn a lot and keep moving forward. We can't wait until we are able to meet again and see your faces, but until that time, if there is anything the church can help with, please call (830) 625-9191. Someone answers the phone daily from 9:00a.m. – 3:00p.m.

As a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven Congregation, we are called by our Lord Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations. We will be a congregation that engages people in order to help families follow Jesus.

* Promote a culture of family ... supporting home prayer & Bible study with parents as key teachers

* Increase our outreach and mission presence outside our walls* Strive for excellence in spiritual leadership

Dear Fellow Disciples of St. Paul Lutheran Church,

What a way to start off the year 2020. Everyone can see the pandemic of Covid-19 by looking outside, turning on the television, or scrolling through social media platforms. It is everywhere. Every person in this country will be touched by this moment in history. Whether it is financially, socially, spiritually, or possibly even losing their fight against the virus itself, we as Americans will witness it firsthand. For us here at St. Paul, this is surely hitting home. The church stands empty, craving for its congregation to return. The pews and nursery cry out for all the lively children big and small, young and old, to come bumbling through the halls, in the doors and up the stairs to hear the message of our Lord. And yet, the opportunity to thrive as Disciples of Christ and for St. Paul remains. Our favorite verse around this little corner of downtown New Braunfels: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19) still lingers in our hearts. We still have this opportunity, and we can do that together, while social distancing of course!

How? You might ask. Simple. Continue to do the same things you did before, just from a little farther away. Brighten the light in our community, and represent St. Paul as God intended you to do. Call upon your neighbor and check up on them, help another disciple with some chores or errands they might not be able to do by themselves. Now is the time to show God’s love and forgiveness to our community. It is up to us to persevere through this trying time together, as a church.

Another attribute special to St Paul is our non-profit organizations that we support. These groups survive on the giving from their community partners. How better to impact someone while you are stuck at home? St. Paul wishes to continue the support that we offer, but we can only do that if the congregation is there to help. We need your help, now more than ever. The SOS Food Bank, Salvation Army, Family Promise, Lutheran World Relief, to name a few, are all in need at this time. The coordinators, staff, and volunteers of these organizations are working tirelessly to get through the uncertainty of today so that tomorrow will matter for someone else. I challenge St. Paul to do the same thing. While we are all being affected by this pandemic, “There is no better time to beat the Devil” as Pastor Paul keeps telling me. Let us spiritually come together as we ‘shelter in place’ and continue to be the church and fulfill our promises and commitments to our community with your help today.

At the end of each service, we all pray aloud from the screen “We are your managers, your stewards, help us use monies in your ways...” and I will be the first one to admit, I usually just say that to get to the next part, so I can yell out ‘And we will!’ and then it’s doughnut time! However, this pandemic has shown me, that it is time for me to be a steward for God’s money and help those who need it more than I do. I truly hope that some other Disciples at St. Paul who have been doing the same, just reading aloud, will be inspired to give as well. Just because you haven’t sat in the pew in a few weeks doesn’t mean we’re not still at work sharing the Gospel. If you’re on Tex Brown’s email list, you don’t have time to do anything else but read devotionals, and bible lessons. While we meet over the Internet now, the message is still clear for me: help those who need it most.

I will leave you with this: Ten years ago a wise old man supposedly said at a conference at St. Paul, “What a great time to be the Church.” Pastor Paul used it in the latest newsletter I believe and I remember it because he told me that same thing a few weeks ago, and I have been pondering on that phrase ever since. I believe it stands true today. No matter what is going on outside, it is a great time to be the Church! So help us out, and give what you can. The mailbox is still being checked at the office. Also, thank you Grandpa for being that wise, *but now older*, old man.

God bless all of us from one of your ‘newer fellow disciples’ (even though I’ve been sitting in this church for a long time). I know He is with us now more than ever through this pandemic. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7). If anyone would like a full list of our partners we support, you can go online to the church website, or call the office.

Thank you,

Stewardship Board

Matthew 25 Fund

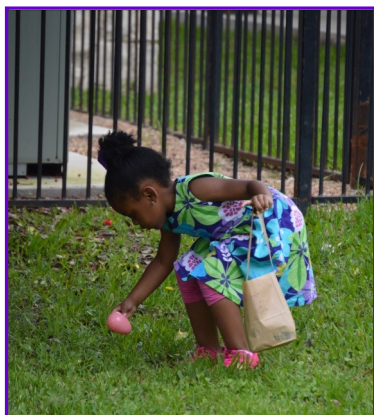
The Matthew 25 Fund helps members of St. Paul who are in need of financial assistance due to job loss, insurmountable medical bills, elderly on fixed income, divorced mothers with minor children, spouses of deployed military service members, etc. Distributions from this fund shall be in keeping with Matthew 25:35-36 – “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” There are funds readily available to assist our members that are experiencing difficulty during these challenging times. If you know someone in need, please contact the church office (830) 625-9191 so that we may disperse these funds to our neighbors in need.

Preschool Ministry

The Preschool is open! We are currently serving Essential Personnel/Business families only. We have 20-25 children each day and are following very strict guidelines set out by the State and Federal government to help keep the teachers, staff, children and families healthy. It has been a huge challenge to meet the ever changing guidelines. It is certainly strange times. With all of these changes, challenges and regulations; we have not forgotten the importance of Lent and Easter with our Preschool children and families. We were able to go LIVE on Facebook with our chapel time about Palm Sunday, the Last Supper and what Easter really is: Jesus' glorious victory over death. The children know that God loves us so much he gave his son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. We are BLESSED!

We are praying every day for health care workers, essential personnel, our church family and our leaders. We are so thankful for the full support of the congregation during this time. The families of the Preschool children are so grateful the Preschool is open to serve their needs. During this Easter season one of our favorite classic hymns brings us comfort and peace, we hope it does for you as well!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4M-zwE33zHA> Because he lives, I can face tomorrow. Because he lives, all fear is gone. Because I know he holds the future, and life is worth the living just because he lives!



Prayer Requests

If you have any prayer requests, you may fill this out and enclose it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope included in this mailing, or you may fill out a prayer request online at <https://www.nbstpaul.org>. These petitions will be offered in private prayer for you by St. Paul Prayer Groups.

For this reason also since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. - Colossians 1:9 Please pray with me for:

I love the Lord because He hears my prayers and answers me. Because He bends down and listens I will continue to pray as long as I breathe. - Psalm 116:1-2

Senior Pastor - Rev. Paul Owens - pastorpaul@nbstpaul.org
Pastor - Rev. Chip Reynolds - currently deployed until November 2020
Executive Director of Operations & Preschool - Michelle Rivera - michelle@nbstpaul.org
Communications Coordinator - Jennifer Burrows - jennifer@nbstpaul.org
Bookkeeper/Controller - Stacy Garcia - stacy@nbstpaul.org
Director of Music & Creative Arts - Jody Noblett - jody@nbstpaul.org
F3 Ministry Manager - Kimberly Wunderlich - Kimberly@nbstpaul.org
Organist - Ann Brown - annb003@aol.com
Staff - Alison Setser - alison@nbstpaul.org
Staff - Jo Schomberg - jo@nbstpaul.org
Multi-Media Staff - Lorrie Cook - lorrie@nbstpaul.org

CHURCH OFFICE (830) 625-9191
PRESCHOOL (830) 625-2044
FAX (830) 620-7715

**April 2020
Special Edition**



www.nbstpaul.org

During the time our face-to-face church services are suspended, please join us Sunday mornings on Face Book OR our website for worship at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. being streamed live.



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