

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The story of St. Paul Lutheran
Church in a time of pandemic



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ROOTED AND GROWING



ROOTED IN THE VINE; GROWING AS BRANCHES

"I am the vine. You all are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them will bear much fruit." Jesus to his disciples, Gospel of John, 15:5

This year's annual report tells a beautiful story. It tells the story of St. Paul congregation worshipping, learning and serving in the year of pandemic. Like in any good story there are surprising plot twists and heartaches. Also, like in any good story, the characters in the story grow through adversity even while they mourn their losses. Finally, like in any good story, God's grace and faithfulness is revealed.

This story is our story. Through your adapting to the latest round of restrictions or worship technology; through your calling or texting to check-in on one another; through your praying; through your giving; through your honking of car horns during worship; through your sharing in a grief group; through your helping your child learn in zoom Sunday School; through your braving to come in-person for the first time; through your planting a tree; through your making of an LWR kit; through of all these actions and more, you are a character in this story. This story is our story.

More importantly, it is God's story. God has been at work, offering us hope in darkness; guidance in confusion and grace in the world's brokenness. The following pages bear witness to some of the ways in which God has been at work, bearing fruit in our hearts and lives. My hope is not simply that we find it moving but that as we and our spiritual descendants read it, we can all be encouraged in times of future trial.

This story is also a story whose ending hasn't yet been written. Many ministries of past year – born out of necessity – worked so well that we cannot imagine doing them any other way. Yet how do we balance doing them while doing the things we had been doing? Furthermore, we know that this past year has given many reasons to step back from their church, including St. Paul. Will these folks return to their previous congregations? New congregations? Or stay away from church altogether?

So, what does the next chapter hold in store? I've given up on making predictions, but we know the setting for the next chapter: A world with deep spiritual hunger post-pandemic. The characters – you, the congregation of St. Paul – ready for ministry (and even new folks to join us!). Most importantly, God, eager to root us more deeply in grace so that we might bear fruit!

...But before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let's savor a grateful reflection on God's bearing fruit among us this past year.

In Christ,

Pastor Rob Myallis

PROLOGUE

Lenten Prayer

Loving God,
help us through the crises and tragedies in life.
Amen.

We posted prayers on social media during Lent of 2020. You will see them throughout this report. Little did we know how prophetic they were.



The story begins as we gathered for a Lenten Supper, at the onset of our Journey through Lent in 2020. We worshipped, prayed and broke bread *together*.



We cooked , talked, laughed & sang *together*.



Until the world shut down.



SPRING



Baptism of Owen Gunzenhauser with parents Brian & Mallory



Esrael & Girum Charles enjoying Zoom Sunday School. The boys were also baptized during outdoor worship in 2020.



Jenn, Rick, Patrick & Collin Maryniak

St. Paul was absolutely amazing at finding creative ways to worship safely and connect with others to grow our faith during a year when that was needed more than ever.

We enjoyed the zoom option to connect with Sunday School friends, both for kids and adults. Our Talk and Tots class met weekly without missing a beat, and has become a close group of friends. Having this lovely group of people who pray for each other and lift each other up during all of our challenges was wonderfully fulfilling. It felt like a weekly faith-based pandemic support group!

~ Jenn Maryniak



We supported local food drives.



We are grateful to Pastor Rob, Deacon Emily and the entire St. Paul staff for their tireless efforts to create new ways of conducting Bible Study and Worship during this past year. Having those opportunities to connect with each other and attend outdoor worship has been invaluable. Also, being able to witness the creation of a sacred grounds area with trees now planted, raised bed planters and a field of wildflowers yet to come is wonderful to both see and anticipate. Praise and thanksgiving to God for so many gifts!
~Dick and Elaine Bell



Troy Smith sharing his gift of music during outdoor worship



Creativity & adaptability were essential this year in all aspects of ministry!



Easter 2020

429 views · 1 year ago

We began to livestream our worship services, reaching people in our church, in our community & across the globe.

SUMMER

Lenten Prayer

Creator God, thank you for all the ways you remind us of your presence. Amen.

The youth group has supported me and kept me connected throughout quarantine. I have missed singing and events where we can all gather together like the empty bowls, pancake breakfast, and Christmas activities. I enjoyed listening to online church around a campfire in my backyard and the summer outside services. I am looking forward to seeing more people at church and hopefully doing some fun activities in person.

~Audrey Hovan



St. Paul youth on a summer hike.

The effort and dedication by Pastor Rob and staff to make St Paul as close to normal as possible was and is remarkable. To keep my faith and relationship with God in a very difficult time is only part of what St. Paul provided.

~Joe Doster



What was your favorite worship service of the year? *"Bluegrass Sunday!"*
~Shepherd Todd

12 yr old Shepherd was also baptized in 2020. When asked what he is looking forward to in 2021? Shepherd replied *"Confirmation!"*





Tom, Jenn & Ross Weise with their pup enjoying camp.

St. Paul, even in its new form, was the constant during this past year for me. The group that has most affected/supported me is the staff at St. Paul. My faith is stronger than ever and without St. Paul, in such a turbulent time (politically, socially and a pandemic), previously my faith would have been put to the test.

I'm missing: Human to human fellowship - missing Easter 2020, Vacation Bible school, in-person Sunday school teaching and on and on. Talking with people, being with people, showing affection to people - I miss it all.

Favorite worship service - Christmas eve eve, followed closely by the day we planted the trees and the car church service - all moved me deeply.

~Beth Hoffer



Science Squad kept the kids busy discovering treasures in the woods & streams.



Maggie Turner achieved a Girl Scout Silver Award for her work on the Wittel Farm. Maggie built a fire pit and this wood storage bin which is a great addition to the farm!



What have you missed this year at St. Paul?
Singing together inside. Singing as a choir.

Do you have a favorite worship service from this year?
The Holden evening prayer services during Lent.

~D. Michael Byler



Faith Formation: St. Paul Lutheran Church offered over 10 study groups that ran continually throughout 2020.

FALL

Lenten Prayer

O Lord, help us to see and reach out to others today. Thank you for giving us the tools to help them. Amen.



Confirmation class of 2020

I don't think my family would have survived without the assistance of our St. Paul family. They have prayed for each and every member of my family during various struggles. Several St. Paul members have provided me with dinners weekly. 12 members of St. Paul helped me pack up my house and get it ready to sell. I have reached out to St. Paul members on a moment's notice when I had an emergency. When I have needed help, it was my St. Paul family that I knew I could turn to! The Holy Spirit is clearly present within our congregation.

~Melissa Wainmann



Jim, Nathan & Beth Hoffer digging in!



The Miller Family, Sarah, Justin, Wyatt & Addy doing their part to help God's creation.



Susanna Myallis with help from her sister, Audrey showing Pastor Rob how it's done!



Sunday School remained outside while the temperatures were still comfortable.

I greatly appreciated Emily's safe and creative ways for kids to be together. With our family choosing homeschooling for most of the year, having safe ways for our kids to gather was very valuable! This really helped us make our faith a priority in our family.

~Jenn Maryniak



Heritage Press brought its mobile museum to St. Paul for Reformation Sunday!



The Adult Choir on a field trip to Longwood Gardens

How has St. Paul supported you/ kept you connected this year?

The opportunity to join others in worship together outside, when we could not safely worship together inside.

Pastor Rob's Bible studies over Zoom when we could not meet in person together. The Augsburg Sunday classes. The Anti-racism groups.

~ D. Michael Byler



Kendall Eby on violin, as guest musician for outdoor worship.

WINTER

Lenten Prayer

*Gracious God, thank you for bringing us closer to you.
Help us always to seek you and find our hope in you.
Amen.*



I was really supported by the consistency of services no matter the format. I miss singing, especially with the choir. I also miss the organ when we are outside.

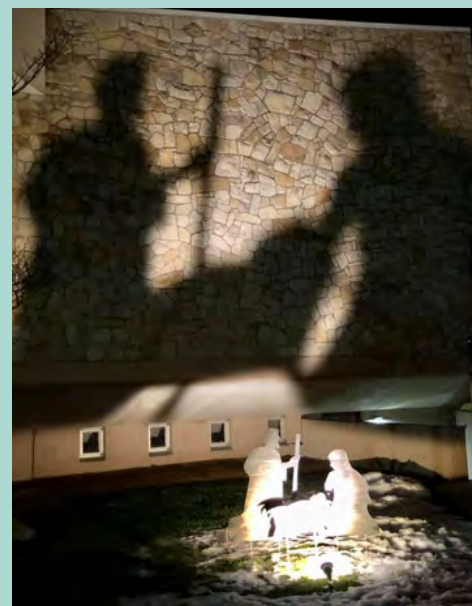
My favorite service would be the Christmas Eve service.

~Kathy Schmick



The Hovan family bundled up for a beautiful Christmas Eve service under the stars.

Bethany, Audrey, Jim & Nate



Sights & sounds of this special Christmas service could be heard and seen by our neighbors on Walnut St. and beyond.



The St. Paul Christmas walk told the story of Christmas for those strolling down Orange Street.

I look forward to the return of some of the things that we have adapted for safety like bread for communion and singing inside but also the new things we have discovered joy in (like outdoor worship).

In many ways I believe that St. Paul will be stronger than it ever was when COVID is in the rearview mirror.

~Beth Hoffer



St. Paul's newest Acolytes were eager to complete their training to begin serving.



Waltraut Wegner has not stopped stitching as she and the other talented women of St. Paul have been making blankets & quilts for those in need year after year. 2020 was no exception!



Tom & Melissa Wainmann renewed their vows at St. Paul along with 6 other couples.

What have you missed in 2020?
I've missed seeing familiar faces in the sanctuary.

What was your favorite service?
The renewal of Wedding vows on February 14, 2021.

What are you looking forward to in 2021?
I look forward to seeing more people in person again. I look forward to meeting the newer members that have joined this year. I look forward to going where the spirit is leading us!

~Melissa Wainmann

EASTER 2021



***He Is Risen!
&
we are Alive as a Congregation!
THANKS BE TO GOD!***



I. Finances

1. Overall

The finances of St. Paul are strong. First and foremost, the members of St. Paul have been extremely faithful this past year. Our revenues outpaced our expenses in 2020 in spite of the fact that we needed to suspend in person worship during lockdown. We also received money through the PPP program and our investments performed well.

Account Balances as of 12/31/2020

	Fund Balance	Total for Institution
JBT Bank Account		
General Fund	\$ 197 K	
Designated Giving	\$ 66 K	
Capital Campaign	\$ 24 K	
Endowment Fund	\$ 1 K	
Total JBT		\$ 288 K
Endowment Fund	\$ 672 K	
Cemetery Perpetual Care	\$ 219 K	
ELCA Accounts Balance		\$ 891 K
All Accounts Total		\$ 1,179 K

2. General Fund

General Fund Income and Expenses

	2020	2019
Offering	\$ 580,834.99	\$ 551,242.26
Additional Income	\$ 35,349.51	\$ 56,306.01
Total Revenue	\$ 616,184.50	\$ 607,548.27
Staff	\$ 401,938.70	\$ 340,123.25
Building	\$ 115,776.07	\$ 122,120.06
Other Expenses	\$ 81,235.53	\$ 95,574.96
Total Expenses	\$ 598,950.30	\$ 557,818.27
Net	\$ 17,234.20	\$ 49,730.00

Income met (and exceeded) revenues. A few key points

- In regards to income
 - This congregation is faithful and generous.
 - Roughly 40% of our giving is done through automatic online giving.
 - This offering and income does not include any PPP money.
- In regards to expenses
 - The staff costs in 2020 reflect an extra pay period due to the calendar (This is around \$15K per pay period).
 - The reduction in additional income is due to fewer building use rentals and most significantly, Council approving the CELC stopping their contribution to the church. This proved essential for the CELC and their reopening. Another way we supported the re-opening of the CELC is through increased sanitation costs throughout the year.
 - The congregation met all of its outreach commitments in 2020.
- This surplus, combined with the remaining capital campaign funds and a grant from the endowment allowed us to finish a roof project in 2021.

3. Designated Giving

The account balances chart shows that we have \$66K in designated funds in our checking. Throughout the year there are a variety of income and expenses that move between the designated funds, the general fund, the endowment fund and the cemetery fund. Three designated giving expenditures worth pointing out:

- \$16,178 to partner ministries, charities and direct aid to people in need.
- \$7,177 in upgrades related to COVID (new air filtration system and sound equipment). This does not place a value on the extensive equipment donated to us by Clair Global.
- \$2,392 for creation of a new archives room.

4. Endowment

In 2020 the Endowment distributed \$29,000 to various agencies. The entire list is available through the office. A few highlights:

- \$9,000 toward the social hall area roof project at St. Paul
- \$8,000 toward ministry partners and charities within Lancaster County
- \$6,750 toward international (and two national) ministry partners and charities
- \$5,250 toward St. Paul ministries and initiatives

We also received two significant gifts to the Endowment this past year, one for \$10,000 and another for \$50,000. We thank these families for their generosity during a time of pandemic. The \$50,000 gift came from an estate. If you would like to discuss including St. Paul in your will or estate planning, contact the church.

5. PPP

Last Spring St Paul applied for and was approved for PPP loan funds. Our application was made through our bank, JBT Bank, and then approved by the Small Business Administration (SBA). The loan amount received at that time by St Paul was \$71,595. This winter we applied for forgiveness of this loan to the SBA through JBT Bank. On February 4, 2021 the SBA forgave the loan (and surprised us by including interest of \$556.85, which we never paid, but they still decided to give to us). The net amount to St Paul was \$72,151.85.

The purpose of these funds that were made available to businesses and organizations like ours as part of the CARES Act was to keep people employed and to stimulate the economy. In the case of St Paul, it allowed the church to keep our employees on the active payroll during incredibly uncertain times and keep our focus on ministry. We are truly blessed to have received these funds.

At the time the church applied for the above funds, the CELC did not apply for any funding. The CELC later applied and was denied by the SBA since the church had already applied for and received funds. The underlying reason for the denial was that the CELC and the church use the same Tax ID number and the rules stated there could only be one approval per Tax ID number. Unfortunately, that left the CELC with no access to PPP Funds at that time.

Most recently the PPP program reopened with new funds available and this was called the Second Draw PPP Loan Program. Our Treasurer and Finance Committee recommended that we utilize this new program since we again qualified and Council approved. The primary reason for this recommendation was to support the CELC, which has been severely impacted by Covid-19. The church and CELC needed to combine their financials to calculate the amount of the loan.

This Spring we received \$172,000 (60% CELC, 40% church) in a second PPP loan. The majority of this will cover CELC payroll and some other qualifying expenses. This will provide the CELC some much needed funds to bolster and continue their ministry. If we meet the rules and deadlines of the program (which we fully anticipate doing) we can again apply for forgiveness of the loan but that will only occur some months down the road if the funds are spent as required.

II. Additional Administrative Items

Council has prioritized four areas of administrative focus.

1. Volunteering

During the past year, volunteering was difficult in and through St. Paul. We thank so many volunteers who found creative ways to lead and participate in ministry. That said, many people have stepped down from leadership and back from participation. Throughout the next year, a top priority is welcoming, recruiting and equipping volunteers to worship, servant ministries, small groups and administration.

2. Roof and Building

The roof area around the social hall is completed. This was paid for mainly out of existing capital campaign funds. This roof was the most critically in need of repair, however, the other church areas have roofs in need of addressing. Over the 2nd half of the year, we would like to develop a more comprehensive plan for major repairs and fundraising.

3. CELC (Christian Learning Center)

The last year has revealed how closely the CELC and the church need to work. This has caused the Council leadership to request revisions to the CELC-Church Memorandum of Understanding. Hopefully as COVID-related changes lesson, both groups will be able to devote more time to working on this.

4. Zion Lutheran, Akron

In 2019, our church had begun partnering with Zion Lutheran in Akron to increase our ministry impact, especially related to outreach ministry. At this point, the partnership is resuming with the following shape:

- Pastor Matt Lehanan leads our outreach ministries, including those that involve the transformation of the outdoor space into an area for ministry.
- St. Paul and Zion Akron work together for ministries involving poverty and food scarcity: Peter's Porch located at Zion and Wittle Farm (which Pastor Matt directs). Other ministries that involve members of both churches include: Anti-racism learning groups and Rail Trail church.
- Zion Akron joins St. Paul for worship the first Sunday of the month. Their Sunday morning congregation drove *en masse* to join us for Easter worship.

At this point, the congregations are not discussing a merger, but continue to seek ways to partner for the sake of the Gospel.

III. Elections

1. Council

We thank Doug Minnich and Mary Turner for concluding their service on Council. We also thank both Beth Hoffer (Council Secretary) and Christine Runkle for their time on Council and their willingness to serve another term.

Sandra Bingaman and Jed Kensinger have accepted the nominating committee's invitation to serve on Council and Council has approved them for voting.

Nominated and approved for Council election:

Sandra Bingaman, Beth Hoffer, Jed Kensinger and Christine Runkle.

Remaining Council officers and members:

(2020 elected): Peter Brye (President), Corey Troxell (Vice-President), Roger Oravec

(2019 elected): Audrey Hovan, Briana Legerlotz, Brenda Penny, Meghan Shober

We also thank Stan Sneegas for serving as Council treasurer these past three years. Stan has helped us upgrade our accounting software, train a financial assistant and lead us through the pandemic. Wow! Deb Rothermel has agreed to serve as the next Council Treasurer. Thank you both!

2. Endowment

In 2019, we elected Deb Rothermel to serve on this committee.

However, when she becomes Treasurer, she is automatically on this committee. Kathy Hinton's term is also coming to an end and we thank her for serving on this committee. Therefore, we need two people to serve on Endowment.

The nominating committee invited Jane Brye and Mary Turner to serve on this committee; both accepted and Council approved them.

Nominated and approved for Endowment Committee:

Jane Brye and Mary Turner

Remaining Endowment committee members are: Mark Nestleroth (Chair), Dick Mearig, Sam Lynch