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THE EPISTLE



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Inside this issue

Rector's Corner.....	2
Bible Study/News.....	3
Sr. Warden.....	4
Jr. Warden.....	5
Building & Grounds.....	6
Zoom Worship Info ..	7
Church History.....	8
ECW.....	9
Birthdays & Anniversaries	10

Rector's Corner

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. Hebrews 11:1-3

Oh, friends many days I look around for signs of hope and find very few. I've realized though, I'm looking to the wrong source so I'm beginning to ask the question of folks I talk to in person or on the phone "What are you hoping for?" The question gives us the opportunity to dream, and as Christians, we dream for a world that looks like "the kingdom of God" as Jesus' has been teaching in our Sunday Gospel readings from Matthew. The kingdom of God produces peace, justice, joy and love and whenever we find these things in our own lives or the lives of others, we can say the kingdom of God is near.

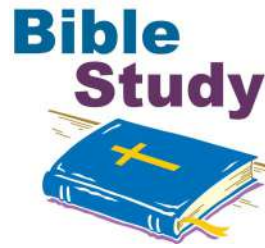
When we work and live together in harmony, the kingdom of God is near. When we love each other and know we are loved, the kingdom of God is near. When our hearts are full of joy for what we or others experience in life the kingdom of God is near. When I see peaceful conversation between diverse groups the kingdom of God is near. When I see laws changed to protect the oppressed the kingdom of God is near. Righteous living seeks and enacts these aspects of the kingdom everywhere. We have all seen disappointments in these past few months of illness, pain, fear and conflict and yet our hope is not based on these things. We have felt the strain of division, hatred and corruption and yet our hope is not based on these things either. Our hope is in Christ. In Christ, as we draw near to Him each day, we are grounded in kingdom living and will produce peace, justice, joy and love. This is the true measure of our Christian lives and only by being in His presence in prayer, study, worship and service will we continue in the hope He gives us. The hymn says "My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' love and righteousness...On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand." No matter what signs the world gives us we read the signs that Jesus gives us and live His life of love, joy, peace and justice together. We are privileged to live in and share with the world this kingdom of God with Jesus as our guide and no doubt or disappointment can move us from that rock.

Please know that we are happy to provide you the tools to help in your practice of prayer at home while we work to bring our worship back to St. Paul's sanctuary. We have bibles, prayer books, devotionals and online tools as well as print so don't hesitate to ask! We hope to stream our services from our sanctuary by mid-August and to be back in person for worship as long as our infection rates stay stable. You will be notified of any change to our current worship arrangements. I'm so grateful for our technology and building and grounds committees who are working diligently with our staff and vestry to move us closer to re-opening. Keep us all in your prayers for guidance and safety.

Finally, I do hope you are finding times of refreshment and fun during these summer months. All of us need play and relaxation to stay healthy and whole. God's every blessing as you find those times and places for yourself and your family.

Faithfully,

Sarah+



Pastor Sarah's Weekly Zoom Bible Study
Wednesdays at 10am

Please join us as we read through the book of Judges, focusing on the life of Deborah.

Follow this link to Zoom in: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83005898502>
No Password required



As our technology project moves forward our hope is to be in person for worship later this month. We are also aware the bishops might pull us back from in person worship if our infection rates rise. We will keep you informed as to any changes in our worship.

Rev. Sarah will be away the weekend of Aug. 9th and the Rev. Donna McNeil of All Saints Church/Canterbury East Lansing will be the preacher that Sunday. Rev. Donna will host questions about campus ministry this fall at the coffee hour that Sunday so plan to stay and visit with her on Zoom!

From our Sr. Warden...

These are getting harder and harder to write because I'm so tired of this Covid stuff...oh wait, I said that last month...and the month before...and the month before that ***sigh***. I'm so ready to get back to sitting in the pew, no distractions, feeling the presence and love of each of you in my favorite Holy place. I miss my people and I miss a sense of normalcy. Despite all this chaos, I'm choosing to step back and practice gratitude. Today, I am grateful for technology and the people who run it. I am grateful for the friends who giggle at the silly antics of a squirrel. And I'm grateful for those same friends who pray for me and my squirrel as we both face a new chapter in our lives. I'm grateful for Sarah, who has provided me with comfort and peace in the knowledge that God is here with me amid this chaos. I am grateful for special friends who lift me up and keep me laughing. I am grateful for those who love me unconditionally. I am grateful for the logical and gentle voices of fellow vestry members who have provided me with the wisdom to face into challenging times with courage. I am grateful for our B&G team who are working hard to create a safe place for us to come back to worship. I am grateful for our kitchen manager who can kickstart his catering business during his time of furlough (which also allowed me to savor some of the most amazing shrimp and grits to cross these lips). I am grateful for hobbies that keep me happily occupied. I'm grateful that I get to work for a company that is environmentally conscientious and strives to embrace diversity. I'm grateful to do the work that I get to do. And I'm grateful that I have the St. Paul's congregation by my side to help weather this storm.

It has been a tough few months, no one can deny that. Seeking help and guidance when I needed it has helped me face the challenges and maintain a small bit of sanity. Recognizing the good people, their efforts and practicing gratitude is really quite an effective mood enhancer. I do feel that we are in the home stretch. Keep the faith, reach out when you need to and practice gratitude. We are not alone in this. In case I haven't told you lately... I appreciate you all.

Peace,
Michelle



From our Jr. Warden...

I am disappointed that we are not be able to open our church for another couple of weeks, but I am very encouraged that progress is being made and the new technology system in the sanctuary should be completed soon. It is a huge job and has taken time to determine how best to approach the project, what is needed, and what will work best with our existing system. Thank you to Sarah, Alice and the technology committee for bringing this project to fruition. We will soon be able to be in our beautiful sanctuary, at least virtually, if not in person. We want to make sure that when we do open up our church, that we are doing it safely for all concerned.

It will be wonderful for all our congregation, as well as our new participants to have the option of attending church in person or virtually. Many of us will not be comfortable attending with big, or small, crowds and we will now have options. It will also provide more opportunities for those who are traveling or unable to attend in person for whatever reason. Now our snowbirds will have the opportunity to join us on Sunday morning no matter where they are currently residing.

For those of us who do not like to drive in the snow and ice, we can be snug and warm at home partaking in the Sunday service. Many more advantages will pop up with our new system. Again, thank you to all who have worked so hard to get this up and running.

-Debbie Batchelder



Building & Grounds



There are no major concerns currently. We've been maintaining the grounds with watering schedule via timers, however Harry Strait has been watering the trees on South Jackson street between the curb and sidewalk. Susan Smar has been our gardener, keeping things neat and keeping the weeds at bay. When you are able, please thank them for their efforts.

The flat roof over the office area and the education building has had some extensive repairs. They should be fine for the next few years. The plan back in 2006 was a new hall and offices to be built. Funds ran low so what you see today is the extent of accomplishments, minus the office and reception area. Will we ever find a way to finish what was to be? Until then, the roofs will be inspected ever year for any additional leaks.

There are plans to change out some circulation pump motors in the old church. This change will give our heating and air conditioning systems more reliability.

We have begun installing new stations for sanitizing our facility in preparation of opening the door to St. Paul's. More news to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle King

Chairperson Buildings & Grounds.



A visitor enjoying the St. Paul's memorial garden.



This little friend has been a frequent visitor to St. Paul's lately. She(?) likes to stare in at us at work.





Our Sunday 10:30 am worship will continue this week on Zoom. Follow this link to watch online or you can call in from any phone to participate each Sunday. Zoom is not hard to use and will allow us to see and hear each other!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9046084672>

Meeting ID: 904 608 4672

Or dial in by phone

+1 929 205 6099 US (New

Meeting ID: 904 608 4672

You can also view the service later on Facebook.

Follow the link: <https://www.facebook.com/stpauljxmi/>

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HAVE A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT TO VIEW OUR VIDEOS!



Diana Sinclair is faithfully collecting names for our prayer list, so please call **(517-250-9729)** or email her finnikki96@aol.com to add anyone for whom you'd like the Church to pray. We are so grateful for the prayers of this Church family and join with you in asking God's blessing on those we love and all who are fighting to keep us safe and healthy.



**OUR CHURCH'S
HISTORY**

From The Archives of St. Paul's...

**Mary Louise Stanton
First paid organist at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in 1856**

“The purchase by the vestry back in the year 1845 of “an instrument of music” was the beginning of musical history in the parish. For a considerable period thereafter, music was furnished on a volunteer basis. It seems that Dr. W. B. Stanton (vestryman 1851-1859) had a pleasing voice; his wife also had a pleasing voice and finger dexterity on the days, and for a number of years, prior to 1855, they bestowed their talents gratuitously upon the congregation. The congregation was so appreciative that the year 1855 a “service of plate” was purchased by them for Dr. and Mrs. Stanton and presented through the vestry, accompanied by a resolution of that body, from which running excerpts are as follows: “Whereas Dr. Stanton and his Lady . . .with the able assistance of their associates . . .have so far succeeded as to render it (the music) not only the pride of our parish but deservedly the admiration of all who attended our services . . . etc.” Then followed the presentation of the service of plate.

Miss Mary Stanton, daughter of Dr. Stanton and his lady, became the first paid organist of the church, in 1856.

-The First One Hundred Years by Gilbert S. Loomis pages:27-29

1850 Census: Albany City & County, New York

William B. Stanton 34 born NY, physician

wife Emily E. (Wells) Stanton 30 born NY (And now his 'Lady' has a name – see above!)

daughter Mary L. 11 born NY

daughter Sarah E. 1 born NY

June 15, 1858 Ralph Connable 23 of Chicago & Mary Louise Stanton 19 of Michigan married by the Rev. T. Grinnell. Witnesses: W. B. Stanton & Willard Lewis.

-St. Paul's Episcopal Church Records: Marriages – page:105

Organist research was begun last week after receiving a request about another organist that served for over 40 years at St. Paul's, Mr. Edward M. Foster. That request was for a photo of Mr. Foster but unfortunately, we are short on photos. Thankfully to Mr. Loomis we have the first 100 years of written history. I hope you enjoy reading this update about “Dr. Stanton and his Lady”, as Mr. Loomis didn't have access to her given name.

I realized it was my goal to do a notebook on all our organists and what better time to do it than during Covid 19. Now there is a whole chapter complimenting this short excerpt in our library (or will be when we get back to the building) and the archival notebook has a beginning with the first four organists' histories completed!

-Respectfully submitted by Janet Wesch, St. Paul's Archive Ministry

The Women of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

ECW

Hello, Dear Friends,

The Women of St. Paul's Episcopal Church Women (ECW) hope you are all well and safe as we continue to struggle through our new normal. Just a quick update. ECW is not currently meeting but that does not mean things are not still happening. Our NUT SALE will be back. Sales will be pre-order only. You will find an order form in the September Epistle and it will need to be turned in by the end of September. Unfortunately, we won't have a way to share the catalog so if you have questions about any items, please contact Romelle Frey, 517-414-3768. You can mail the forms to her at 2022 Forest Park Dr., 49201 Pick-up will be by appointment only and Romelle will schedule those. There will be no sales at the church, but since we have to order cases, there may be some extra items and these will be sold as a one time, first come/first serve basis between Thanksgiving and Christmas (ordered by phone). We hope to keep this sale as safe as possible but still help people replenish their supplies. Please contact me (517-262-0365) or Romelle with questions.

We are hoping that Covid will begin to settle after the fall and winter and we look forward to the possibility of an outdoor meeting in late spring or early summer. Also, in the spring we hope to have discussions about possible donations to some non-profit groups. In the meantime, know that we are praying for each of you and keeping you in our thoughts. If there are any questions about anything, please contact me. Continue to be safe and may God wrap you in his comfort and peace.

Respectfully submitted by:
Sandra Kilian
President, ECW



*The grass withers,
the flower fades,
But the word of our
God stands forever.*

-Isaiah 40:8





Rhys Grant	August 4
Eric Hughes	August 6
Melissa Congleton	August 7
Donna Thomas	August 11
Cheryl Gumper	August 14
Helen Greene	August 22
Bob Fowler	August 22
Lindy Perlos	August 26
Henry Themm	August 27
Carol Scheerbaum	August 30
Heather Youell	August 30
Heidi Lathrop	August 31



Loren & Christie Swanson Aug 22



We now have an easier way to donate online!
You can use our new "Give Now" button on our website.

https://stpauljxmi.org/