

St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church
405 Emma
Chenoa, IL 61726

April 29, 2021

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

This past year has been a challenging one. Some of the stresses that started outside the church have inevitably made their way inside our doors and into our pews. Throughout the last year your pastor and elders have been doing their best to navigate conflicting reports, ever-shifting guidelines and recommendations, and differing viewpoints when it comes to how we go about doing the work and worship of the congregation. We are aware that when it comes to things we either have or have not done, we have not made everyone happy. We do not deny that mistakes



have probably been made. We ask for your forgiveness. Please understand and believe that our primary goal in everything we do is to make St. Paul a place where the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and the people of God feel

comfortable coming to worship and receive the precious gifts of His Word and sacraments.

This has been and continues to be our goal. As time has gone on, as understanding about this virus grows, and as the number of people who have been vaccinated grows, governmental guidelines and people's comfort levels change. While we continue to get closer to things returning to their pre-COVID "normal," we aren't there yet. At this point in time some people still feel safer when everyone around them is masked. Others do not share that same concern. There is enough varying information from the medical and scientific communities that it feels impossible to say definitively what *singular* approach is correct, however much we might be individually inclined to agree with one position or another.

As Christians we are called to bear with one another in love. As was mentioned at the end of worship this past Sunday, one of the fruits of the Spirit is to be patient, or longsuffering, with our fellow believers. The Eighth Commandment also compels us to speak well of our neighbor, and explain everything in the kindest way. This includes their feelings or decisions about how we carry out our times of worship.

So, what does that mean for how we are going to do things going forward? First, we are going to continue having two services. Our hope is that in the coming months we can go back to gathering together at one time, but for now we are going to continue providing those two options. Along with that, the early service will continue operating as it has been. The practices and procedures we have used since we resumed in-person worship last June will remain in place. We know there are people who really like and appreciate that service, and we want to respect and provide that for them.

The main change we will be making is that the late service will resume singing along with the organ. For the sake of time and space the various reasons and thinking that went into that decision won't be delved into too deeply here. We recognize that doing so isn't without any risk at all. However, as we considered the rise in vaccinations, the relationships and interactions that occur between many of those in attendance outside of the worship service, and the practices and experiences of our sister churches in our circuit, it was decided that we would leave it to people to make informed choices regarding their own health and safety. It is also part of the reason we are continuing to offer the early service and doing it the way we have been. Beyond that, if you have any questions, please speak to pastor or one of the elders. But please trust that it was not a decision that was made flippantly or without any regard to the concerns that had us not doing it to begin with.



We are aware of the desire some have to do away with it, but we are going to continue making use of the online sign-up, or at least signing in as you enter church. Besides helping us be sure who to contact *should* it turn out someone was in worship while being COVID-positive, it makes tracking attendance easier for Joy than having to deal with all the individual cards. We also continue to encourage every-other-pew seating at both services as we have the space to do so and is a simple step toward helping mitigate any existing risk of transmission.

Once again, if you have any other questions, please contact Pastor Latzke or one of the elders, whose names are included below. As stated above, our desire is for St. Paul to be a place where people feel comfortable and at peace as they come to be comforted, strengthened, and encouraged by God's Word. So please continue to keep pastor, the elders, and the full fellowship of believers in our congregation in your prayers that we may be kept firm in our faith to resist Satan's efforts to sow discord and division among God's people, that we remain and go forward together, united in love for one another.

In Christ,
Pastor Latzke

Dave Coan- Head Elder
Brian Verdun- Elder
Randy Miller- Elder
Steve Shrewsbury- Elder
Blake Beitz- Elder

NEEDING OUR CONTINUING PRAYER

Alma Brucker
Leila Carlson [*Fred Rhoda's sister*]
Terry Colston [*nephew of Fred Rhoda, on liver transplant list*]
Michelle Darguzis
Stacie Hensley
Dr. Jim May [*cousin of Pat Wahls*]
Trent Nelson [*Natashia Nelson's father-in-law*]
Carla Nobis [*at Good Samaritan Home*]
Thom Palmer [*high school friend of Pat Wahls*]
Elaine Rhoda
Mary Lou Schuler [*now at Fairview Haven*]
Roger Shiflett [*at the Nursing Home in El Paso*]
Jalene Wollford [*grade school student at St. Mary's, Pontiac*]

Please notify Joy if anyone could be removed from the Prayer List.

ST. PAUL DISCIPLESHIP

04-01	28	340.00	
04-02	39	550 .00	
04-04	118	2028.00	50.00
04-04 Debt Retirement		7677.36	
04-11	91	1884.00	45.00
04-18	78	2084.00	25.00
04-25	61	1940.00	45.00
Ladies Restroom		160.00	



Faith In Action provides spiritual, physical and emotional support to seniors, over 60 years in age, and their caregivers to maintain independence, dignity and improved quality of life. We accomplish this through an interfaith network of volunteers, congregations and community organizations. The Faith in action informational meeting has been set for Tuesday, May 11, at 5:30 PM at Trinity Lutheran Church here in Chenoa. Please plan to attend this meeting to learn more about this volunteer opportunity. If you are unable to attend you can go to bnfia.org to learn more.



If you should need to contact Pastor or one of the Elders, their names and phone numbers are listed below.

Pastor Jeremy Latzke	217 653-9593
Blake Beitz	309-261-0496
David Coan	815 674-1830
Randy Miller	815 419-8593
Steve Shrewsbury	815 674-0132
Brian Verdun	815 419-8241

HIS KIDS PRESCHOOL

Soon HIS Kids will be graduating our final class of Pre K children, and sending them off to Kindergarten in the Fall. Starting HIS Kids in the Fall of 2004 has been such a blessing...not only for the children, but also for me. I thank God every day that He has been with us! I also want to thank St. Paul's Lutheran Church and the families in the communities surrounding us for the wonderful support they have provided.

As you know, I retired previously from the Chenoa Unit #9 School District in 2003. I spent one year out of teaching before beginning this path. I guess I just wasn't ready to retire! However, now, after 50 years in the teaching profession, I am ready! I have been blessed to have served 192 children and their families here at HIS Kids; an experience I am so happy to have taken advantage of! I am happy that we have had a spiritual influence on these children as well as a developmental one.

It is such a pleasure to see many of my former students and their families in person and on social media, and to learn and follow their life's path. I am so happy to have been a small part of their beginnings!

I want to give all Praise to God! He (and His people!) has provided everything I have needed along the way, and He continues to lead.

God Bless our graduates as they continue on Life's way!