



St. Paul's EPISTLE

September 2018 edition

Now What?

by Pastor Lucas Proeber

It's a feeling we've all gone through. Perhaps it comes through an announcement at work that your position simply doesn't exist anymore; this feeling could come about after the death of a loved one; maybe it weighs heavy on you after a trip to the doctor didn't end the way you had hoped; or maybe this feeling is a frequent visitor each time you feel stuck in life, like you're always caught in traffic and can never find your way out. It's that feeling of "now what?".



There are plenty of "now what" moments in the Bible. Joshua was left to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land after the only leader the people knew, Moses, died. Now what? Generations later, the Israelites saw their beloved Jerusalem, including the glorious temple, be reduced to rubble, and they themselves were carried off into captivity. Now what? Jesus lived his life in the world, but he also died. We hear about the disciples saying among themselves, "Now what?" In times of tragedy or loss, we can often become stuck in a rut, not knowing what steps to take next.

But, that "now what" feeling doesn't only happen during down times. That same feeling can creep up after something fun or positive has happened, too. Think about the party you planned or that vacation you went on or a big life change you went through; after the adrenaline wears off and the dust settles, we can sometimes find ourselves saying, "Now what, God? What do I do now that all that planning is finished? Where do I go from here?"

I think it might be very easy to slip into a "now what" mentality here at St. Paul's. We have gone through a lot of change in the past couple of months. We've seen many people who we grew close to leave us in one way or another. We've had a lot of exciting moments, though, too. New staff and new ministry opportunities help us look forward to the work that awaits us. But, without a direction in which to proceed, we can become stagnant or

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God's House.
Your Home.

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Sunday worship
at 9:00am

www.stpaulswr.org



Trust in the LORD
with all your heart,
and do not rely on
your own under-
standing
- Proverbs 3:5

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simply fall back into the comfortable normalcy we have created for ourselves, which looks different for each individual in the church.

No matter the circumstances, God hears the prayers of his people when they ask him, "Now what, God?" He looks down with mercy and gives words that help us through those times of loss, those times of excitement, and those times of uncertainty. God gives us direction when he says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6 CSB).

Uncertainty can be a scary thing; but, not when you know who your God is; not when you know what your God did and continues to do for you. So, in all the "now what" moments of life, trust in the LORD. Get to know your God better and better through daily devotion, through studying his Word with other believers, through worship and prayer. As we move forward together and take on exciting new opportunities, let our collective prayer be, "God, we want to serve you in all we do. Sometimes, we aren't sure what to do next. But, we trust that you alone will show us the way."

Road Trip!

The adult handbell group of St. Paul's, the Joyful Ringers, has a unique opportunity this September. Zion Lutheran of Peshtigo, WI has invited them to play several handbell pieces during their 150th anniversary service on Sunday, September 16th. This is the childhood congregation of one of our members, Melissa Christenson. They have graciously offered to house any ringers and their families who need it that Saturday night. Additional festivities that day will include a catered meal and a Koine concert. They have already started rehearsals in anticipation of this event. Usually they only pack up the bells and tables for spring handbell festivals. So they have a rare roadtrip in store for them this fall.



Join us for chapel
services on
Wednesdays
at 9:00 a.m.
in September.

Preschool News

by Mrs. Carole Melso

The nametags are being put in place, the shelves are being organized and lesson plans are underway! We are ready for a fantastic year in preschool. We are excited to welcome our new preschool assistant, Mrs. Amy Proeber. We were able to meet with most of our parents on Aug. 21st for our orientation meeting. It looks like we are going to have a great group of families to work with this year.

We are looking forward to a fun year full of messy art projects, building blocks, singing, sharing and lots of learning, but most of all we are thrilled to be teaching our "Little Lambs" about Jesus, their Savior. Feel free to stop by and check out our classroom in action. We are your school and the future of St. Paul's.

Expect Changes for the New School Year

By Mr. John Melso, Principal

The theme chosen for this school year is *Christ's Love Compels Me*. Christ's love compelled Him to make the payment for our sins by His death on a cross. That love for us compels us to live our lives in thankfulness for God's gift of grace. It compels teachers and staff to put their best effort into sharing Christ with the children in their classrooms. It compels parents to make the sacrifices necessary so their children receive a Christian education. It compels members of St. Paul's to support the school through their time, talents, and treasure. Christ's love –received, taught, and lived- truly defines the Christian school. Chapel services on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 a.m. will be centered on that theme. Everyone is invited and encouraged to join our students and staff in beginning the day reminded of the love of Christ.

Christ's love
Compels
Me

Every school year begins with a few changes. This year is no different. In fact, with so many new people on the staff, changes can be expected. Parents and students had the opportunity prior to the start of school to learn about the changes to the classrooms as they conferenced with teachers. Parents had the opportunity to hear of changes from Mr. Melso at the opening service. We have a change in the hot lunch program. Mrs. Kristie Schroeder will take over as the new head cook for the hot lunch program. We thank her in advance of the work she will do in nourishing the bodies of our students and faculty. Other changes are yet to come. A review of school safety and emergency management is under way. Changes will be coming to make our school a safer place. You'll likely see new ways of doing things and new programs to enhance learning. As many things change, many things remain the same. Most importantly our mission remains the same: to assist parents, our congregations, and others in developing in each student a knowledge and love of their Savior, growth in His Word, and lifetime service to Him and His kingdom, both spiritually and academically.

We have many people to thank for getting us ready for the school year. It would be difficult to name them all, but there were a few that volunteered a significant amount of time. When you see the following people, be sure to thank them for getting our school facility ready for the new school year: Ron Schroeder for cleaning and waxing floors, Brody Knutson, Herb Jackson, Mike Paul, and Norm Paul for installing new LED lights. Fred Camacho for his efforts in planning for school safety and emergency management.

Growing the Harvest

Do have a heart for either children or teens? Have you ever wondered how we could improve our Sunday School and Youth Ministry? Then you are invited to "Growing the Harvest: a Sunday School and Youth Ministry Conference" at St. John's in Sparta on Saturday, Oct. 27. Sessions will include ways to enhance programs through technology and music plus age-specific ideas for reaching children and their families. For more information or to fill out a registration form, stop by the ministry table in the Welcome Center or contact Pastor Proeber at pastorproeber@stpaulswr.org or 715-421-3634 ext. 13.



Classes begin
Sept. 16
10:15-11:15 a.m.



Sunday Morning Bible Study
(The Basics of Worship)
10:15-11:15 a.m.
In the cafeteria

Men's Bible Study
(Topic: Hebrews)
Tuesdays at 6:45-7:45 a.m.
At From the Ground Up
Coffee Shop

Women Walking in the Word
(Minor Prophets)
Tuesdays at 9:45-11:00 a.m.
In the Resource Center

Bible Book Group
(Topic: Romans)
Wednesdays at 6:30-8:00 p.m.
In the Resource Center

Men's Small Group
Thursdays at 7:00-7:45 a.m.
At From the Ground Up
Coffee Shop

A People Close to God:
A Bible Information Class
Thursdays at 6:30-8:00 p.m.
In the Bible Study Room

Benefits of Group Bible Study

When we join a Bible study group, we expect to learn more about God's Word. However, there are other benefits as well. For instance, we all have good intentions to study our Bible at home, but distractions provide one reason after another to postpone it. Having a scheduled time and other believers who are expecting us motivates us to stay on track.

Meeting as a group helps us make connections with other believers. Satan loves to separate us from other believers. He wants us to feel alone. But when we get together with other believers, we find partners in our faith walk. And just as God brings friends to support us, He will provide opportunities for us to encourage others in their faith.

Each believer has different life experiences. These experiences give us different insights into the Scriptures and how to live as a believer. Just seeing someone else living out their faith encourages us. Watching another believer shine through adversity lets us know we can face anything with Christ who gives us strength.

So let us encourage you today: Join a group Bible study. You will be glad you did. See the schedule at the left for this fall's studies.

Be a Part of the Plan

Our congregation will be attending the School of Outreach at St. Matthew's in Stoddard on Saturday, October 6. The program is run by the WELS Commission on Evangelism and your District Evangelism Commission. It will help us with planning and implementing a congregational evangelism program. Topics covered will include key components of a congregation's evangelism program, locating people who need Jesus, and connecting with people on our prospect list. Breakout sessions with a trained advisor will help us develop an annual outreach plan with specific strategies and follow-up methods. In the months following the workshop, the advisor will offer follow-up assistance specific to our needs.

There will be a second workshop several months after the first to help us further develop and enhance plans. Topics included at that workshop will be training members for witnessing to people they know, raising awareness of our church in the surrounding community, and improving the way guests are welcomed at worship services.

This is a great opportunity for our congregation to improve our evangelism program. If you have a heart for this ministry, please contact Pastor Proeber; we would love to have you as a part of our team!

Run the Race Together

By Garth Perry, Congregational President

Many have asked the question “When are we going to call a second pastor?” The answer from your leadership is “Yes, we are going to recommend to the voters to call a second pastor.” Notice the response does not answer the question “when.” We do not have an exact timeframe yet of when we will begin the calling process. This month, the leadership council along with the pastors and the principal who are serving us met with our District President to discuss the process for calling a second pastor. We came to the conclusions listed below.

The leadership council believes it is very important for members to have a voice in the direction and mission of the congregation. In his book *The 8th Habit*, Stephen Covey, one of the most famous and best leadership experts in the world, speaks about how many organizations are struggling with their inability to focus and execute their highest priorities. He cited the xQ (Execution Quotient) survey by the Harris Poll of 23,000 US residents which found these results:

- Only 37 percent said they have a clear understanding of what their organization is trying to achieve and why.
- Only 1 in 5 was enthusiastic about their team's and organization's goals.
- Only 1 in 5 workers said they have a clear “line of sight” between their tasks and their team's and organization's goals.
- Only half were satisfied with the work they have accomplished at the end of the week.
- Only 15 percent felt their organization fully enables them to execute key goals.
- Only 15 percent felt they worked in a high-trust environment.
- Only 17 percent felt their organization fosters open communication that is respectful of differing opinions and that results in new and better ideas.
- Only 10 percent felt that their organization holds people accountable for results.
- Only 20 percent fully trusted the organization they work for.
- Only 13 percent have high-trust, highly cooperative working relationships with other groups or departments.

He then goes on to liken this to a soccer team with the same scores as the survey and says, “only four of the eleven players on the field would know which goal is theirs. Only two of the eleven would care. Only two of the eleven would know what position they play and know exactly what they are supposed to do. And all but two players would, in some way, be competing against their own team members rather than the opponent.”

How do the statistics in the survey relate to us as a congregation? How will St. Paul's move forward in the future with the positive changes that are happening in our congregation?



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Run the Race Together continued from pg 4

As leaders in our congregation, we agreed that before calling a new pastor, members of the congregation need to know, understand, and be working together on the same mission and vision. In order to work towards this goal, we plan to have several open forums in the future to discuss our mission as a congregation. As the survey shows, very few people have a clear understanding of the mission – that applies to our congregation as well.

Our congregation developed a vision document with set goals in mind. It has been many years since the end of the time period set in that document. We believe that it is necessary to revisit our congregation's vision for the future before calling a second pastor. This will give members the opportunity to request a pastor that complements the abilities of Pastor Proeber and fulfills the needs of our congregation's vision moving forward.

I will leave you with these verses from Hebrews 12: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Our lives as Christians, and as a Christian congregation, are a race. I would compare these verses to a track meet. Each person contributes in some way to the overall team score. Let's run the race together with the same mission in mind and the same purpose. Not only that, let's also look to Jesus as we work together on the mission that he laid before us – to share the gospel message that Jesus has already won the prize for us on the cross and that we will one day reach our home in heaven.

Help with the Community Meal

Our congregation will be serving the community meal at The Neighborhood Table on Thursday, Sept. 13. We need volunteers to help before, during, and after the meal to set up, prepare food, serve, and clean up. The mission of The Neighborhood Table is to reduce hunger in our community, improve quality of life for our residents, and create an awareness of needs that exist in our community. About 280 meals are served every Thursday and about 150 meals are served each Tuesday (the last two of the month). The meal is served from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, 441 Garfield Street. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Edna or Faith Haferman at 715-423-3776. We will also be taking a door offering on Sunday, Sept. 9 so The Neighborhood Table can purchase food for their weekly meals.



Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble.
Then your light will shine out from the darkness,
and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.

- Isaiah 58:10 (NLT)

- Counting
Our Blessings
- A new school year.
 - We can trust in the Lord.
 - 297 items were collected in the school supply drive.
 - Our many Bible studies
 - New members, Chad & Kellie Jensen and their children
 - Our handbell choir
 - Opportunities to enhance our ministry at St. Paul's

At Peace? Women's Retreat 2018

"For out of His fullness we have all received grace upon grace"
 - John 1:16, Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV)

Spend the day growing in the Word and relaxing in fellowship with your sisters in faith. This year's retreat will focus on God's grace. In addition to group sessions, each woman will participate in three workshops on various topics.

A special guest at this year's retreat is American author, Mahtob Mahmoody, who wrote the autobiographical memoir *My Name is Mahtob*. The book depicts her perspective on her family's story when she and her mother, Betty Mahmoody, were held captive by her father in his country of birth, Iran, for a period of 18 months during the mid-1980s. Her mother wrote her version of their story in her 1987 biography *Not Without My Daughter*. There will be a Q&A with Mahtob, and you will have a chance to purchase her book.

This women's retreat will be held on October 6 at Peace Lutheran Church in Loves Park, Illinois. For more information, please visit www.peacelp.com/at-peace-retreat-2018-1



Special Gifts and Memorials

Through August 19, 2018

Cheerful Givers

- In honor of their wedding anniversary given by Mike & Judy Anderson
- In memory of Mike Foley given by Larry & Veronica Klish and Bill & Elaine Wittrock

Pastor Teacher Fund

- In memory of Mike Foley given by Tom & Barb Reitz



Deaths in Our Church Family

Mike Foley & Naomi Pierce

2018 WEEKENDER CAMP
 September 8 & 9 * Camp Alexander * Wisconsin Rapids

COME JOIN US FOR THE FUN!!

PRAISE HIM!
PSALM 139:14

Contact Kent Schroeder at knks@wtc.net



New members – Chad & Kellie Jensen and their children, Brandon, Dakota & Caleb



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Phone: 715-421-3634
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September 2018 edition

Upcoming Events

First Day of School
Wednesday, Aug. 29

Catechism Classes for gr.6-8
begin Wednesday, Sept. 5 at 6:30p.m.

Serving at the Neighborhood Table
Thursday, Sept. 13 ~ 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Sunday School Kickoff
Sunday, Sept. 16 at 10:15 a.m.

A People Close to God



Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.
Starting Sept. 6

Study the basics of God's Word.
Seasoned Christians can brush up on core biblical truths AND new Christians will learn what the main teachings of the Bible are!
Bring your family and friends!

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