

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
201 EAST CHURCH STREET
MARSHALLTOWN, IA 50158



MAY EPISTLE 2023

A Publication of St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Marshalltown, Iowa

St. Paul's Staff and Vestry

The Head of the Church, Jesus Christ
The Bishop, The Right Reverend Betsey Monnot
Priest in Partnership, The Reverend Richard Graves
Senior Warden, PJ Colbert
Junior Warden, Nick Lindborg
Parish Administrator, Michael Bayne
Clerk, Brent deSilva
Organist, Sharon Morrical
Andrew Thelen, Pianist
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Where have They Gone?

Something has been on my mind recently. Before the pandemic, we used to have the poor and needy dropping by the church looking for assistance. Most typically, the assistance they sought was financial – for gas, or rent, or a meal. Sometimes, they sought a prayer or a word of hope to pacify their despair.

The fact that they disappeared in the first place is completely understandable. Because of Covid 19, we were seldom around. We had abandoned our church buildings and limited our contact with one another in every other conceivable way. All our attention was focused on defeating the dreaded virus that was spreading like wildfire -- here, there, and everywhere.

So, we communicated via phone, or e-mail, or text, and we worshiped on-line. Like the hermits of the early church, we separated ourselves from community life as much as was practically possible. After all, we were trying to stay alive, right? Uncontaminated from the world.

But now that the pandemic is less a threat due to the emergence of life sustaining vaccines and we are back in our offices and buildings, and back in church for worship, I keep wondering, "Where have they gone?"

Have they suddenly reached a point of self-sufficiency where they no longer depend on our help and support? Probably not.

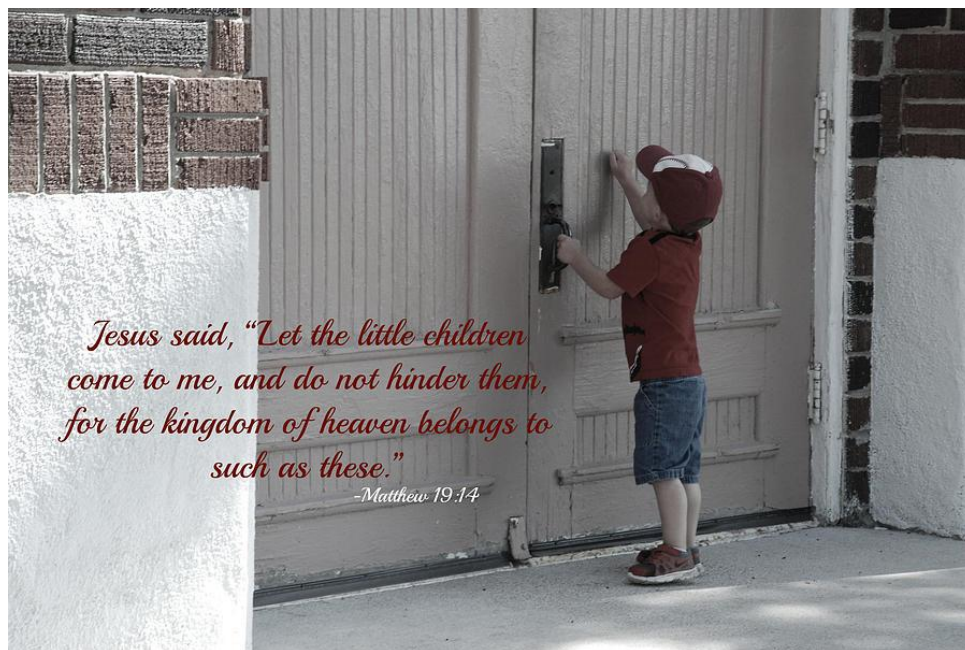
What is more likely is they probably think if they went church door knocking, we wouldn't let them in. Not because there is the threat of viral contamination, but because the pandemic has given us a convenient excuse to keep those outside from coming inside.

We are spared the interruption, the theft of our time. And obviously, if we don't have to open our doors, we reduce the possibility of being victimized by scam artists.

But isn't the church supposed to care at least as much for those outside as it does for those inside? I think Jesus thought this way. The only question that remains is, "Do we?"

Let us pray that those outside find a way inside – and we don't stand in their path.

Richard





Our recent agreement with The Caring Center is finally taking shape in the great hall. They are currently operating in a small space at the Presbyterian church on Center Street but are moving all of the backstock and in-storage items into their new space at St. Paul's. Considering the tiny spaces they have occupied in the past, they have an abundance of display racks, clothing and household items in reserve, items that they have never had enough space to offer to their clients. Their move to St. Paul's, with an opening day of May 8th, should be a massive boost to their service to the less fortunate people of Marshalltown.

As soon as their schedule permits Procrafters Roofing will make repairs to the flat roof covering the offices and conference room area of the facility. A massive crack has developed in the flat roof in that area and over the winter we did experience some leaks. Procrafters has taken good care of our roof since the tornado hit and I know they will do a good job for us.

We expect our third bid on repairs to the bell tower and northeast wall by the end of this week. Should we not receive this bid, from Newmann Construction in Des Moines, the vestry has authorized me to contact E&H Restoration in Davenport to schedule tuck pointing and foundation repairs sometime this summer. The vestry will contact the diocese for any financial assistance they can provide.

Last Wednesday Laurie and Jessie DeMeyer and I participated in the food packaging event at MHS sponsored by the Iowa Extension Service and the Community Foundation of Marshall County. Their goal was to assemble 50,000 prepackaged meals for distribution to the various charitable organizations and food boxes throughout the county. In the hour or so that the three of us worked, our group alone was able to complete nine cases of food, and our Blessing Box was provided with 20 boxes when we left - that's 720 meals! A big thanks to those that helped!



Our first Arts@StPaul's concert for 2023 will be on May 14th, at 3:00pm. We will present the Iowa Guitar Quartet. This Classical music group was formed by its members in 2016 as an outgrowth of their involvement with the Heart of Iowa Classical Guitar Society. Based in the Des Moines area, IGQ has performed in many venues and college campuses across the state of Iowa, and they maintain an active performance schedule.



Finally, I would like to thank Jacque and Tom Heintz for rebuilding and painting our Little Library Box. As you can see in the pictures they did a great job and we can get a lot of use out of it for many years to come. Remember - if you have any surplus books cluttering up the basement or attic bring them here and we can add them to our little library.

Mike Bayne
Parish Administrator

I Loved You First

by Theresa Newell

I recently attended a memorial for my aunt. There was a table with many pictures. One picture, my cousin explained, was of the last hug she shared with her mother – my aunt – before my aunt died. “I love you,” my cousin said to her. “I loved you first,” my aunt had replied—a mother’s love expressed first and at the last.

Perhaps my aunt remembered, as I remember with my own children, wanting them before they were conceived. Even in eighth grade I wanted to someday have children. I loved them even then. Many years later, as I was pregnant, my love grew. I felt the presence of another energy, another life force, inside me. When each was born, my love became embodied—love incarnate. Nothing could ever separate my children from my love. As my aunt said, I loved them first.

How God must see us! Our Creator, who loved us from before we were knit together in our mother’s womb, can see us through nothing other than loving eyes. We are God’s love embodied. Is it any wonder we have the unearned grace of God? God loved us first.

Imagine if we could look at ourselves, and each other, through the loving eyes of God who loved us first. We are God’s love embodied. With such a love, I could afford to love others without counting the cost, because my value cannot be diminished. What if every single person felt loved to this extent? No need for self-loathing or self-harm. “I loved you first,” God cries. The soul feels its worth. Hope arises. Death is defeated. Resurrection reigns.

Reprinted from *The Episcopal Café*, April 23, 2023

Theresa Newell is a hospital chaplain, a postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Olympia, a wife, and a mother to mostly grown foster, adopted and biological children. She lives in the Seattle area with her husband, the youngest of her children, and her Great Dane.

Parish Notices

FIRST THURSDAY PARISH POTLUCK: On Thursday, May 4, we will gather for food and fellowship in our Conference Room, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Pastor Brent and Janet deSilva are providing chicken for our main course and other attendees are asked to bring a dish to share. Please plan to attend!

FR. RICHARD'S TIME AWAY: A long anticipated visit to see his new granddaughter in Santa Maria, CA will happen in early May (4-14) for your Priest in Partnership. Drew Marie Mathews, who was born in late December two months prematurely, is thriving, growing like a proverbial weed – much to the delight of her parents, Corydon and Chris. Sunday worship on May 7 will be conducted by the Reverend Don Keeler, the priest of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, in Perry. On May 14, we will have Morning Prayer.

DIOCESAN HISTORY UPDATE: After 17 years of fruitful ministry, Bishop Alan Scarfe retired at the end of 2021. His successor, Bishop Betsey Monnot, has directed Hal Chase, a retired History professor and current Historiographer of the Diocese of Iowa, to create a new chapter of our diocesan history that includes Bishop's Alan's tenure as our Bishop.

To be known as ***Touched By Alan***, this new work will be comprised of stories, typed or handwritten, produced by members of our diocese, which tell of interactions with Bishop Alan during his time as our Diocesan Bishop. If you have a story to share, please send it via e-mail to Hal Chase: halchasebeyondrace@gmail.com or via mail to his home: 2 SW 58th Dr., Des Moines, IA 50312. Photos are also welcome.

MONTHLY VESTRY MEETING: Our church board will meet on Wednesday, 17 May, in the Conference Room at 4:30 p.m. If you have anything for the Vestry Agenda, please contact Mike Bayne in the Church Office.

prayer Requests

Let us pray for those who have asked for our prayers: Orlin Klinkefus, Ruth Davis, Dan and Carroll McInroy, Alice, Brian DeSilva, Jillian.

We pray for all who have died that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

We pray for all those during the month of May who are celebrating birthdays, especially Glen Davis, Dan McInroy, Jonathan Hull, Hannah Carter, and Griffin Mayo, and for those observing anniversaries, especially David and Karen Bursley. We also belatedly pray for Nick and Scott Lindborg, who celebrated their 1st anniversary on April 30.

We pray for the clergy and people of every parish in our diocese. We also pray for our companion dioceses of Nzara and Swaziland in Africa, and Brechin in Eastern Scotland.

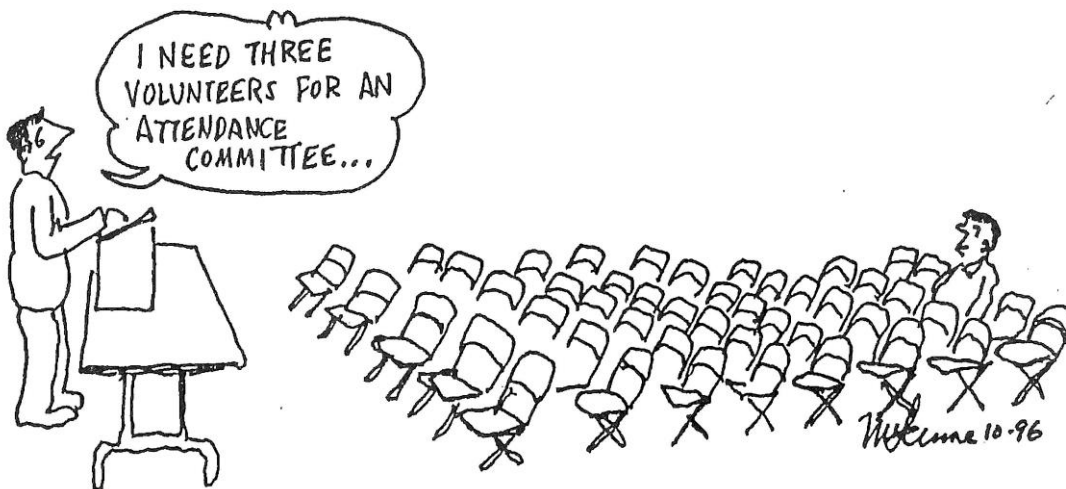
We pray for leaders in every community and nation we entrust with the authority of government, especially for Joseph, our President and Kimberly, our Governor, that they may be filled with the love of truth and righteousness and seek the common good.

We pray for the people of Ukraine, for all those suffering or afraid, that they will soon know justice and peace in their land. We also pray for the people of Sudan.

We pray for all those whose lives have been appallingly ended by the heartless use of firearms.

We pray for an end to the coronavirus pandemic and pray for all those working world-wide to care for those who have contracted the virus.

On the Lighter Side





C. PVS VICTORIS. CRIVELLV. VENETI