

St. Paul Lutheran Church
235 Jefferson
Hanover, IL 61041



St. Paul's EPISTLE

Dateline: July, 2017

Notes from the Pastor's Desk

"God's Country"

One of our professors at seminary is from Guyana in South America and finds one American expression very humorous. He is constantly amazed that no matter where he travels in our very large country, people will always tell him that their particular part of the U.S.A. is God's country. Well, I'd hate for this professor to hear me say this and find me funny, I must agree that our rolling hills and our villages in Jo Daviess could make a good claim on being God's country. Our two beautiful country churches seated

picturesque hills or our Hanover church planted in a quaint bend of the Apple River are certainly lovely places to have worship.

Bishop Clements said at our Synod Assembly recently that he believes that every church in our synod has been planted there by God for a reason. And he pointed out that he didn't mean just how they were planted where they are now for a purpose some 50 or even 150 years ago. The bishop wants to ask every church why they think God planted them where they are for ministry today because God works for the long range and the future.

So that's what I was thinking about. The question for us personally and for our churches is, "Why has God planted me here and what does God have for me to do?" For many of us as we get older, we may sometimes wonder what is left for us to do. For many of us as we struggle with jobs or directions in life we may wonder how we are important in any way. For many of us when problems come we wonder if somehow life would have been better if only....

But God's message to us in scripture is always that we are each made differently individually and given different and special gifts for God's plans for our lives. In Jeremiah God says to those in exile, people that had had their homes destroyed and been forcibly removed hundreds of miles to a foreign land, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." And in the second chapter of Ephesians we find Paul writing, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

I still haven't finished planting all the flowers Lisa and I bought. But I wonder if the ones that are still in the flats are starting to wonder where and when they will ever be planted! God, why have you planted me here? God, what is special about where I am and the people I know that you brought me here? We are in beautiful surroundings with wonderful people and good towns. But to be fulfilled all of us need to find our purpose and know that our lives matter. We've been planted in a wonderful land, but we still need to ask, "Why, God, did you plant me here?"

Blessings for a Summer of growth!

Pastor Bruce

***** **Parish Women's Group**

The Women's Group will meet at 11 am on Tuesday, July 25, at St. John.

***** **Parish Men's Group**

The Men's Group will meet on Saturday, July 15, at Welcome Inn at 8:30 as usual. We have more cook outs to plan and will try to reschedule the Youth Group trip to LOMC in early August. We would love to have a few more good men interested in supporting and growing our ministries at our churches!

Summer Cookouts Continue!

We will have a cookout at Trinity on Sunday, August 6th. We will provide grilled hot dogs, chips, soda and people may bring sides if they wish to share. There will be music, games and activities for all ages. This event is being planned as an opportunity to showcase our churches to the wider community. Please consider inviting some friends who do not have a church home to

come and see our wonderful churches and experience the fun we have as a church family!

***** **Vacation Bible School**

A Huge Success!

Thank you to everyone, especially VBS Director Linda Reitz, for helping to make this year's ecumenical VBS such a success. We had 47 kids, 12 youth helpers and 20 adult helpers. Everyone had a great time on our "Roman Holiday."

***** **Bikers' Lunch Also a Huge**

Success!

This year's Bikers' Lunch raised over \$1,000, which was more than last year. Thanks to all who baked, cooked and staffed the tables. Thanks also to those who set up and took down the tents and tables. This will go a long way toward the ministries of the church.

***** **Thank You From Jill Harmston**

Jill writes: "Dear congregation of St. Paul's: Thank you for your generous gift! Also, thank you for allowing me be a part of your services for the past few years. I have always felt welcome and have enjoyed it immensely! I will definitely miss you all, come this fall!! Love always, Jill Harmston."

***** **Elizabeth Nursing Home Service**

Please note that we will have a worship service at the Elizabeth Nursing Home on the second Sunday in July (July 9) instead of the first Sunday.

***** **Upcoming Meetings**

Church Council Meetings Tues., July 11 - 7:00 pm - Trinity Sun., July
16 - 11:30 am - St. Paul Tues., July 18 - 7:30 pm - St. John

Mutual Ministry Meeting

Tues., September 5, 7:30 pm - St. John

***** **Youth Group**

Our Youth Group will be very busy this summer raising funds for their next mission trip in 2018. Please look for them and support them when you see them out working hard to raise money. They will be at Hanover Days, July 3rd, selling Culver's ice cream. They will also be at the Elizabeth Fair, July 21-23, selling walking tacos and lemon/orange shake-ups. Please continue to support our kids as they seek to do outreach and ministry in Jesus' name.

***** **Public Housing Program**

Applications Being Accepted

The Jo Daviess County Housing Authority is currently accepting applications for their Public Housing Program. Applications can be obtained at their office located at 347 Franklin Street, Galena, IL 61036. If you have any questions, please contact their office at 815-777-0782

Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – noon and 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

WELCA Triennial

The national WELCA will host their Triennial Gathering in Minneapolis, MN July 13-16. Contact your WELCA leaders if you want more information.

Synod Assembly

The Bishop’s Report at the Synod Assembly, held on July 16 and 17 at Augustana, gave the results of the visioning process that was conducted last year with rostered ministers, lay congregation members and youth. The four common themes that came up most often were these:

- 1) RENEWAL: Congregations are feeling pressured by fewer resources, fewer people, lack of young members and dwindling communities. Many are asking for help in renewing their congregations and mission. God planted congregations in a certain place for mission, not just for 100 years ago, but for today. Some congregations need to rediscover what that mission is.
- 2) COLLABORATION: There is often a desire for collaboration between congregations.
- 3) COMMUNICATION: Information is often not reaching the people who need it most. Often the pastor’s desk is a choke point for communication.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: There is a need for more affordable, geographically closer, continuing education opportunities for pastors. ELCA expects pastors to engage in 50 contact hours of continuing education each year.

In the visioning process of collecting input from everybody, certain ‘re’-words appeared over and over again in the comments. “Renew, rethink, revive, reimagine, reform,” and the most common word: “REVITALIZE.” Congregations will be invited to participate in congregational renewal and vitality projects. The Synod Assembly next year may take a different form where the entire gathering will focus on learning from experts and each other about revitalization. The goals laid out by the ELCA in the Called Forward Together in Christ are as follows:

A Thriving Church

An Equipping Church

A Welcoming Church

A Deeply Committed Church

A Well-governed, Connected and Sustainable Church

The Bishop finished with these remarks, “I am proposing that we work together to develop revitalization plans for every one of our congregations. I am trusting the Holy Spirit to lead us as we walk this road together. It is an exciting and challenging time to be the church, and I believe with my whole heart, that this broken world needs us and the

message that we have to share....You and I have been called, gathered, enlightened and sanctified, not for our sake, but for the sake of others.”

***** **Elizabeth Country Churches VBS**

Beginning on Monday, July 31, and running through Friday, August 4, Trinity will host our rural Vacation Bible School from 6 – 8:15 p.m. Pam Albrecht will be the director this year, and we will be learning about some of God’s wonderful Weird Animals. Watch for posters and more information in the bulletins, and contact Pam if you’d like to help or have your kids attend.

Elizabeth Town VBS

There will be a “town” ecumenical Vacation Bible School in Elizabeth July 24-28 from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 309 S. Main St. in Elizabeth. The theme is Barnyard Roundup and will for the first time include a community service project which 6th-8th grade students will participate in while the younger ones are in the VBS program. For a registration form, go to firstumcofelizabeth@gmail.com, or www.myvbs.org/eumcvbs to register. The program is free. ***** **Holy**

Communion in July

Sun., July 2 - St. John – 9 am Sun., July 2 - St. Paul - 10:30 am Sun., July
9 - Trinity - 9 am Sunday, July 16 - St. John - 9 am
Sunday, July 16 - St. Paul - 10:30 am Sun., July 23 - Trinity - 9 am

PRAYER LIST

continue to pray for: The ELCA Bishops Eaton and Clements, the Church and Synod Councils, those serving our country in the military or the diplomatic corps, those who have served and returned with wounds, scars and emotional effects of war; all medical, aid and relief workers here and around the world, firefighters, first responders, doctors and nurses; and those grieving..

Those with special prayer needs: Kay Watson, Doris Schaible, Loren Ahmedi, Pastor Ben Ahles-Iverson (Mara's husband), Jim Buckholz, Jim Thulen (Trish Krug's father), Jackie Reusch, sister-in-law of Anna Appleby (Raymond's wife), Sheri Lafrancois, David Smith, Karl Croffoot, and Austin Nack.

Our shut-ins: Marvin Krug. If you would like to serve as a "prayer warrior" on the Prayer Chains and pray for special needs OR know of someone who needs prayer, please call Barbara Schaible (815-591-3306) at St. Paul. You may only get the name. Thank you for helping to bring the healing grace of our Lord into the lives of so many people. Prayer touches and changes the lives of those we pray for as well as the life of the one who prays. Whether you are on the prayer teams or pray by yourself, please keep all those listed

in your prayers. Many of those on the list have already received miracles and we must pray that God grants `many more.

James 5:15 – “The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; and the Lord will raise them up.”

Contact Information

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Email:

Parsonage Phone: 815-591-9970

Church E-mail: churchsecretary@sandprairie.net

Parish Website address: **www.scenichillslutheran.com**.

Parish Calendar

Mon. July 10 - 6:30 pm - Website Meeting

**at Kathy Teberg's
Meeting at Hanover**

**Tues., July 11 - 1 pm - All Church Bazaar
Presbyterian Church**

Sat., July 15 - 8:30 am - Men's Group

**Meeting at Welcome Inn
Council Meeting**

**Sun., July 16 - 11:30 am - St. Paul
following Worship**

Tues., July 25 - 11 am - Parish Women's

Meeting at St. John

**Sun., Aug. 6 - 4:30-7:30 pm - Parish
- 6 pm - Youth Group**

**Cookout at Trinity
Meeting at Trinity**

Mon.-Thurs., July 17-20 - County 4-H Fair in Elizabeth (Pork Chop BBQ on Wed., July 19)

Fri.-Sun., July 21-23 - Elizabeth Comm. Fair
