



# ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH “LOVELETTER”

Share God’s Love; Serve all People

329 East State Street, Mason City, IA 50401

641-423-7749

OFFICE HOURS: Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

April 2021

## TWO QUESTIONS & A DEFINITION

There’s been a lot of talk lately about change: how everything is so different now due to all that is happening in the world. Though it is true that much of how we do certain things in the world has changed, including how we as the Body of Christ are working God’s mission in the world, there are some things that haven’t changed. I’d like to illustrate what those are with two questions and by offering a definition.

### ***Question 1: What is the church’s mission?***

Scripture offers a few different ways of looking at the church’s mission, whether emphasizing the teaching and preaching, the fellowship and discipleship, or restoration and reconnection:

- *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded...* [Matthew 28:19-20]

- *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*” [John 13:34-35]

- *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.* [2 Corinthians 5:17-19]

Whatever way we look at the mission of the church, we need to be mindful of God’s larger mission for the whole Church. In spite of the hard work that we put into our ministries, if we are not seeing the larger activity that God is working to make happen in and through us, we can be setting ourselves up for failure.

Before I go further, a trigger warning that I’m about to use the “e” word. If the biblical purpose of the church involves evangelism, to share our faith in our daily life in ways that are meaningful and actionable by ourselves and others; if we are to be about developing faithful followers of Christ in discipleship, loving servants through ministry, and cultivating a community of gratitude and generosity in response to all that God has done and is doing in our worship and stewardship, then what the ‘mission’ question means is: *What specific objective is the church devoted to accomplishing, through our different activities and the various purposes and points of ministry towards which we are all working? What is the church trying to do through our Holy Spirit inspired and fueled evangelism, discipleship, ministry, worship and stewardship?*

Jesus made many statements that spoke to how he was guiding and equipping his followers to become his church, to grow and follow in his ways as they came together in a singular mission. By following our calling in the Great Commission, we are called as a community in Christ to reach out to those who have learned only to trust in themselves and in the things this world has taught them are verifiable. We are called to introduce them to Christ and his ways of wisdom and walking in the world differently and to invite them to the transformative trust that is called “faith,” so that walking along with existing believers we develop and grow as a community of mature, committed followers of Christ. This is the mission that the purposes of the church are intending to accomplish.

Yet I'm not the first to observe that many churches have other missions in mind for those who walk through their doors: wanting people to 'believe like us' doctrinally, to 'behave like us' morally, to 'have an experience like ours' emotionally, to 'become like us' culturally, to 'support the church like us' institutionally through time and money (after all, we are tired and have been at this for a long time), or to 'participate with us' sacramentally through baptism, confirmation or communion. Now hear me say this, *goals such as these are not in and of themselves wrong*. The problem is that it would be possible to realize most of these goals within one's life and never find yourself following anything that Christ asked us to do or to be – you can do all this and never be a Christian. In other words, they have little to do with the genuine mission given by Christ to his church. Even more disturbing are those findings through recent studies that find that the vast majority of church members believe that the mission of the church exists to take care of *their* needs—as opposed to building up trust in Christ and in growing a world of love and to trust walking in his ways. This leads us to the next question.

**Question #2: *What determines whether the church is alive and growing?***

Upon recognizing our purpose as Christ's church, considering how it fits into the larger mission of reaching the various children of God who have yet to put their trust in Christ, our next foundational question—one that is notoriously overlooked in the development and growth of many churches yet is essential for rethinking—relates to the definition of success. Some might say that “we are not called to be successful, but only faithful.” If you are among them, I would challenge you to redefine your definition of “success.” After all, it is a scriptural promise that faithfulness to Christ and our calling will not always be rewarded with what the world calls “success,” but God is always calling and equipping us as the body of Christ to be healthy and thriving as we strive and reach toward our full reconciling potential.

**So here is a definition of success worth pondering that I would offer:**

*Success for the body of Christ at work in the world involves those who are striving to walk in the way of Christ, fulfilling our purposes in such a way to reach our intended audience with our intended message in order to complete Christ-given mission.* In other words, we are called and equipped by the Holy Spirit to proclaim that gospel we ourselves have experienced in and through Christ in an unmistakable, “no-strings-attached” way.

Effective Christian ministry therefore is mission that:

- Proclaims a distinctive message of the Good News of Jesus Christ
- Grows out of our own authentic experience and expression of Christ's love and the Gospel message
- Is applicable to the people and community we wish to accompany on the journey of faith and life
- Is shared in a way that engages, edifies & enlightens, while inviting renewal, reformation, & reconciliation.

Through employing a definition such as the one above, we can build ministries rooted in Christ-like, servant-hearted discernment which gears our entire community towards more than just “trying to survive” or to keep our church alive, instead proclaiming the faith and trust we have: in the Holy Spirit who makes us the active, living church, and through our trust in Christ and all that he is and all that has done and continues to do in and through our ministry. I hope discussion of these questions and pondering this definition can be helpful to you and to our community. As we continue to walk forward together, let us use our discernment and our trust to seek God's answer for how we are being called, gathered, enlightened, made and held by the Holy Spirit to be “better together” as the one Body in Christ, than we could ever hope to be trying to exist as separate congregations trying to “make it” on our own.

Peace in Christ  
Pastor Matthew Muters

## YOUTH NIGHT IS COMING!!!



Calling all youth and their friends, please join us on April 21st for our first Youth Night at Our Saviour's in the fellowship hall. Parents can drop kids off anytime after 5:30 and a meal will be served at 6 p.m. Please notify either church office on how many youth and friends will be attending so we can plan for dinner.

Come and learn a new game, make a craft and meet some new friends. We plan on doing this once per month for the next several months.



### NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

We are very excited to welcome Valerie Hasbrouck as our new Administrative Assistant. Valerie has been in Mason City for 5 years and is originally from north Iowa. She is looking forward to meeting everyone. She will be in the office Monday-Friday from 9-11 so be sure and stop in and say "Hello".

### LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF PERSONAL CARE KITS

Starting Easter Sunday our churches will work together in response to an overwhelming need for more LWR Personal Care Kits. Lutheran World Relief reports that in 2020, they only received 40% of anticipated donations to their warehouses for this ongoing need. St Paul has set a goal for 100 kits. During the month of April we will be collecting items and monetary donations toward this goal. There will be a pink collection box in the narthex for items and monetary donations. Please consider helping meet this goal! Items needed are:

*Toothbrushes*

*Bars of soap (3 to 4 oz. size)*

*Dark colored **bath** towels no larger than 27x52"*

*Sturdy combs*

*Metal nail clippers*

**ST. PAUL COUNCIL MINUTES - MARCH 7, 2021**

**Attendance:** The following council persons were in attendance: Ron Lundblad, Diane Murphy, Bryan Bjorklund, Lavern Dahl, Sue Aves, Beth Rozen, Kristen Stockberger and Lori Cornick-Angell. Visitors at the meeting: Geri Barker and Mike Olson.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Ron began the meeting by recognizing the new council members for 2021: Lori Angell, Beth Rozen, Diane Murphy, Sue Aves and LaVern Dahl. He also recognized the officers for 2021:

President	-Ron Lundblad	Vice President -	Kristen Stockberger
Secretary	Lori Angell	Treasurer -	Diane Murphy

**PASTOR'S REPORT:** Pastor has been working on his Touch Point and Ministry Call the last couple of months at both churches. He reports making one to two calls a week, along with other contacts with church members out in the community. He discussed working on setting up bible study. Pastor was encouraged by the number of attendees at the St. Paul Annual meeting, along with six on video participating. He expressed continuing to widen the ministry with video-Zoom, etc. He continues with his zoom meetings with Pastors locally and with the synod office.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** None.

**TREASURER REPORT:** Diane updated the changing roles for herself with regard to paying bills. Linda Koopman has done a tremendous job with this and we are very grateful for her help with this over many years. Offerings in 2020 were down almost \$29,000.00 from 2019. Hopefully with more church members in attendance, that this will start an upward trend. Ron explained that \$7500.00 was withdrawn from investments in January to help meet expenses.

**COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE MONTH:** The duties were discussed and the months were filled. Also discussion was made with regards to committee assignments also.

**UPDATE ON CHURCH SECRETARY:** Interviews have been held for this part-time position. Further interviews and final decisions will be upcoming with Pastor participating in the next round of interviews also.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Church coffee hour was discussed and we will table that for next month as more and more church members will be vaccinated and also familiarize ourselves with COVID-19 protocol. Discussion was had with regard to having security at the front door. Research with regards to a Ring doorbell or other options will be completed. Discussion regarding janitor duties was discussed with further investigation into our options for this position.

**OATMEAL CONTAINERS:** Will start using the oatmeal containers during the Sunday services in April. Will also begin having local and global council donations each month: local designation and a global designation switching months. Motion was made by Kristen Stockberger, seconded by Diane Murphy with council approval.

**BAND FESTIVAL:** The church will plan on having a food stand for the parade and will involve Our Saviour's. They will follow and practice all COVID-19 protocol for the event and more specifics will be discussed at the April meeting.

**CANNONBALL DAYS:** The church in conjunction with Our Saviour's will probably have a root beer float stand and sell hot dogs like they did in 2019 but will wait until they receive more details. They again would practice and follow all COVID-19 protocol if the event happens.

**ROOF:** Discussion was held with regard to the issues of the flat roof and necessary repairs. Property committee will research and get various bids for this. If a major repair is needed, a special congregational meeting will need to be held.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** None.

**NEXT MEETING:** April 11, 2021, after church at Our Saviour's

**MOTION:** Motion to adjourn by Kristen Stockberger, second by Sue Aves and approved by the council.  
Lord's Prayer in closing,  
Lori

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**It's important to pray for ALL our family & friends, so our list is rotated among our congregation.**

*Keep this in a convenient place for prayer time. If you don't have a daily prayer time, this might be a good time to begin.*

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|---|--|
| 1. NE Iowa Synod  | 16. Micah & Jessica Stockberger & family |
| 2. St. Paul Lutheran Church                             | 17. Bryan & Michele Thenhaus & family    |
| 3. Our Saviour's Lutheran Church                        | 18. Bob & Heather Thompson & family      |
| 4. Our government, military leaders, troops & families  | 19. Ken & Dawn Truka & family            |
| 5. All who suffer from illness, infirmity or loneliness | 20. Jim & Chris Wallace & family         |
| 6. Confined shut-ins (home, hospital, nursing home)     | 21. Karol Wallskog & family              |
| 7. Those who are dealing with losses in their lives     | 22. Tom & Patricia Wetter & family       |
| 8. All who hunger and/or are homeless                   | 23. Jim & Elaine Aberg & family          |
| 9. All who seek God; finding comfort, peace, renewal    | 24. Lori Angell & family                 |
| 10. Carlyn Schriver & family                            | 25. Michael Angell & family              |
| 11. Kirk Schriver & family                              | 26. Stephanie & Shaun Arneson & family   |
| 12. Megan Slocum & family                               | 27. Susan Aves & family                  |
| 13. Pat Steinfort & family                              | 28. Jim & Jo Ellen Bailey & family       |
| 14. Ian & Kristen Stockberger & family                  | 29. Don & Geri Barker & family           |
| 15. Larry & Deb Stockberger & family                    | 30. Dane Birkholz & family               |
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**Lectors**

- 4 Deb Stockberger
- 11 Our Saviour's
- 18 Ron Lundblad
- 25 Our Saviour's

**Acolytes**

- 4 Lori Angell
- 11 Our Saviour's
- 18 Pat Steinfort
- 25 Our Saviour's

**Council Person:** Ron Lundblad

**Altar Guild:** Geri Barker

**Financial Assistant:**

Lori Angell

**Community Kitchen:**

*3rd Thursday of each month*  
Thu April 15 at 4:00

**Council Meeting:**

Thur April 11 after worship at  
Our Saviour's

**M&Ms Quilting:**

Each Wednesday at 9:30

**WELCA:**

Wed, April 7 @ 9:30

**Worship & Music:**

Thursday, April 8 at Noon @  
Our Saviour's

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Loveletter deadline: 25th  
Bulletin deadline each Wed.  
12:00

Sign up for or  
unsubscribe from our  
newsletter [HERE](#) or by  
calling the office  
641.423.7749.

**Happy March  
Birthday!**

- 04/04 Lyle Butler
- 04/06 LaVern Dahl
- 04/17 Geri Barker
- 04/21 Don Barker
- 04/30 Kayden Birkholz

*If we have missed you, please  
let us know. Thanks!*



**PRAYER CHAIN**

Please call any Prayer Chain member below if you have a prayer request. All requests are kept confidential and you can share as much information as you are comfortable with. You may call any member and they will start the chain.

**Prayer Chain members:**

- Geri Barker 641-423-5525 (please do not leave message)
- Anne Gannett 641-421-6852 (leave message)
- Margaret Movick 641-201-1250 (leave message)
- Diane Murphy 641-512-5851 (leave message)

Your name could be added here \_\_\_\_\_



**PRAYERS**

Should you or a family member be admitted to the hospital and would like prayers/visits, list St. Paul on forms and request they call us. Also please contact Pastor Matthew Muters at 641-231-4418 or the church office at 641-423-7749.

# April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Website:</b> www.stpaulmc.com <b>Facebook:</b> facebook.com/stpaulmc <b>Office Hours:</b> M—F 9-11 <b>Phone:</b> 641-423-7749 <b>Email:</b> secretary@stpaulmc.com pastormuters@gmail.com				<b>1</b> 5:30 Maundy Thursday/ Communion at OS 7 NA	<b>2</b> Pastor's Sabbath 5:30 Good Friday at OS	<b>3</b> 8 NA
<b>4 EASTER SUNDAY</b> 9 Worship w/Holy Communion At SP 10:30 Easter Egg Hunt	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:30 M&M's 9:30 WELCA Meeting 12 Pastor's Text Study	<b>8</b> 10 St. Paul Knitters 12 Worship Plan 7 NA	<b>9</b> Pastor's Sabbath	<b>10</b> 8 NA
<b>11</b> 9 Worship w/Holy Communion At OS 10St. Paul Council Meeting at OS 2:00 2 4 Stitchers @SP	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9:30 M& M's 12 Pastor's Text Study	<b>15</b> 10 St. Paul Knitters 4 Community kitchen 7 NA	<b>16</b> Pastor's Sabbath	<b>17</b> 8 NA
<b>18</b> 9 Worship at SP	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 9:30 M & M's 12 Pastor's Text Study 5:30 Youth Night	<b>22</b> 10 St. Paul Knitters 7 NA	<b>23</b> Pastor's Sabbath	<b>24</b> 8 NA
<b>25</b> 9 Worship at OS 2:00 2 4 Stitchers @SP	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 9:30 M&M's 12 Pastor's Text Study	<b>29</b> 10 St. Paul Knitters 7 NA	<b>30</b> Pastor's Sabbath	