

St. Paul's Crossroads

A Monthly News Publication Informing Members and Friends
Encouraging Fellowship & Spiritual Growth



Upcoming Meetings and Events

Coffee Connections
May 1 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

**Last Day of Sunday School
Sunday School Awards**
May 5 | 9 am

Youth Led Worship
May 5 | 10 am

Women's Guild
May 8 | 2 pm

Council Meeting
May 14 | 6:30 pm

Coffee Connections
May 15 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Prayer Shawl Ministry @ Roz O's
May 18 | 9:30—10 am

Adoray Fellowship
May 19 | following Worship

Community Meal
May 21 | 5:00—6:30 pm

In Our Prayers

Lanie Hauschildt, Barbara Cook, Melody Blaisdell, (Merlin & Denise's niece), Jim Gutting, Ethan Harring (Glen & Ruth Baumgartner's great-nephew), Fred Hoyer (Darcy Peterson's brother), Pat McLaughlin (Patti's dad)

In the Military – Walker Baier, Robbie Gausman, Kodi Smith, Jacob Waltz

In Care or at Home - Daryl Feuerhelm, Dale Freier, Earl Kinneman, Anna Schingledecker, Jane Youngquist (Kathy Fuchs' mom)

Treasurer's Report

3/1/24 Beginning Balance	\$675721.34
Receipts	\$ 8965.00
Disbursements	\$10873.65
3/31/24 Ending Balance	\$65663.69

Please prayerfully consider your financial gifts to SPUCC. Giving was \$1910.65 short of the March bills. The cushion we have built up covered the difference. If giving does not increase, eventually the cushion will run out.



**Centering
Prayer
Time**

8:30 am Sunday Mornings
in Pastor Herbert's Study



A Note from Pastor Herbert



Idealist/Realist Reflections on Psalm 8

Somewhere early in life's journey, perhaps, at about age 13-14, living with my grandmother, in the Saturday morning ritual of grandmother's hot oatmeal and bible readings before the meal, I read or heard Psalm 8. I do not know if it was then that I began to seriously reflect on the words; but, at some point in the years that followed, I began to engage with the mystery of life and its meaning. These were the words that brought me into deep thought:

ADONAI! Our Lord! How glorious is your name throughout the earth! The fame of your majesty spreads even above the heavens! When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you set in place —what are mere mortals, that you concern yourself with them, ...humans, that you watch over them with such care?

Psalm 8: 1, 3-4 (Complete Jewish Bible)

Looking at the heavens... the wonders of sun, moon, stars, the murky cluster of light illuminating the pitch dark of night, galaxies and universes beyond distance and light, the confronting questions of causation and creation – the Big Bangs and Dark Holes, the likelihood of life in other planets and universes. The Earth bountiful in life forms – creatures unique, weird, beautiful, colorful, holding smell, texture, character. All in all – symmetry in fractals of fractals. Mysteries of space and time, waves of energy. The mystery of trees' root endings having "brain-clusters," that is, communication systems, connecting one tree to another. Universal consciousness. Interconnectedness. O, the beauty and variety of creation! – The striped snakes, fish, and butterflies, songbirds, hummingbirds, the singing whales. O, the beauty of it all! And, then, there is Man and Woman, homo sapiens.

What are mortals – humans, man and woman – that You are mindful of them?! That You care for them?!

Now, as in so many times in the past, I stop. I wonder. I turn to the sages, asking, What is "man"? What is the meaning of "man"? What is the purpose of humankind? Why are we here? Why am I here? What is my purpose, my calling? Sages answer from scripture. Sages of ancient civilizations – Greek, Roman, African, Asian, Indigenous Peoples each have a say. Enriched by them all. They are nameable, held in mind, appreciated.

Today in this writing, beyond the Bible and texts on Jesus, I reach out to the bookshelf, in hand... Rabindranath Tagore's *Sadhana*—the Realization of Life, Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, Abraham Heschel's *Who Is Man?*, fall into hand, and now one, being re-read, Richard Leider's *The Power of Purpose*. I won't search deeper onto the shelves. No need, though I do. No need because I have Psalm 8 and Psalm 136.

Humans have forever been in search of meaning across all ages and societies. We have our Confucius, Socrates, Sidarta Gautama (Buddha), and writers of the Upanishads, I-Ching, and in our tradition, the Book of Wisdom, Psalms, and Proverbs, Sayings of Jesus in the four gospels, and so many others outside our familiar traditions all addressing the central question, "What are mortals that you concern yourself with them?" ... Who are we anyway? What is our purpose?

In a recent Sunday sermon, I referred to existential sadness. For some, those who dispositionally are inclined to ask about the questions that Psalm 8:4-5 raises – questions about existence, the meaning of existence, questions of meaninglessness in the face of evil, the suffering of the innocent, mortality, the finality of death, the hope of resurrection, and, indeed, of what their own lives are about – what they shall come to or need to come to..., for such people, "sadness" – existential sadness can be an issue, for some, "sadness" is a chronic issue leading to depression and the taking of their own lives (Why live?...).

We are not required to come into a deep reflection of what Psalm 8 means, ...even though sages do. Being a "sage" is a part of who we are as "homo sapiens" – however, we are not required to be "wise" or to seek "wisdom." But, blessed are we if we are, if we do, if we dare. But in wisdom, by our biting the apple (Genesis 3:1-7), "eyes opened," we come to see both the good and the evil in existence – terrifying, dismaying! How do we handle, manage that knowledge? Where does that knowledge leave us?

Having bitten the "forbidden fruit," having knowledge of good and evil, we must now be responsible (response-able) humans? ...We have a will. We can choose.

Do we dare choose! Do we willfully, fully consciously, choose how we shall respond to the challenges of existence? ... Discernably balancing the Sad with the Joys of life? Do we resign to fate, spit in its face, saying, "to hell with it"?" Do we distract ourselves with the busyness of life and with circus? Or do we look at life head-on, accepting what we see in the myriad contradictions, creating and embracing alternative choices among the good/better and the bad/worse, accepting the givenness of life in what it is and could be? ...Being active, agents, co-creators!

We can make a "project" of life. We can find a cause to invest in – through which to create meaning out of life. We can ask of life what it is asking of us, given our gifts and abilities.

O, Adonai, you have made us "response-able." May we response to the wonder of your creation by reflecting on the meaning of the Great Mystery of your creation and our place in it! Give us the courage and the strength to engage such a fearsome reflection. Give us hope and trust that, even in the face of unanswerable questions, you are at our side, assured that whatever there is "out there" and "beyond" you love us and all of creation, that whatever good there is or can be for us, in the eternity of eternities, you shall give that to us. Amen.

*You made mortals but little lower than the angels, you crowned them with glory and honor, you had them rule what your hands made, you put everything under their feet —sheep and oxen, all of them, also the animals in the wilds, the birds in the air, the fish in the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas. ADONAI!
Our Lord! How glorious is your name throughout the earth!*

Psalm 8: 5-9 (CJB)

Women's Guild—Joyce Swan

On April 10 Guild members met to tie quilts. We will tie quilts again on Wednesday, May 8 at 10:00 a.m. Members are asked to bring a sack lunch and our regular monthly meeting is scheduled for 12:00 noon.

On April 20th we were pleased to welcome storyteller Pati Kachel . Donations for the Food Shelf were collected.

We are pleased to announce that the new dishwasher has been purchased and is scheduled for installation.

Church Life – Diane Doheny

Flowers adorned the sanctuary on Easter morning. Thanks to all that ordered them.

On April 7th, we held our annual basket auction. Lots of fun, good food, and again great auctioneers to keep the crowd going. A huge Thank you to Big G, Scott and Merlin plus everyone who donated basket items and who bid on basket items. We really appreciated everyone's participation!

We raised \$2452. The breakdown is:

Church Life 30%
General Fund 40%
OCWM 20%
Building Fund 10%

We found out that the ARC (Assistance Resource Center) in our county is closing. Our group made the decision to take the 10% we had designated to ARC and give it to our building fund.

Our group will donate to the Ellsworth Food Pantry in honor of Mother's Day and Father's Day \$100 each.

On 4/14 and 4/21 we provided cakes for Hadley Schmitt's and Aurora Rabitoy's baptism celebrations.

Looking forward to June we are talking about a picnic outside for Father's Day.

We will keep you posted!

Thank You!

Thank you - Bruce and Peggy Schumaker for taking our directory portraits.

Thank you — Kris webster for playing at all our Care Center worship Services.

Thank you — Volunteers! Easter Breakfast Helpers, Quilt Workers, Shawl Makers, Community Meal Workers, Musicians, Coffee and Snack Makers, Committee Members.

Church Council Bullet Points April 9, 2024

- On Easter Sunday, breakfast was hosted by the Spirituality Center and supported by \$250 from Random Acts of Kindness. The CRSP is considering that this breakfast shall be an annual breakfast.
- Pastor's schedule will be modified due to the timing of the workflow. Monday will now be the Pastor's "work from home" day. Friday will be the Pastor's day off.
- Consideration is being given to providing temporary housing to a family in need. Scott Freier is doing the vetting for this.
- The Easter Egg Hunt was attended by 24 children. The weather was lovely. The year is winding down, May 5th is the last day of Sunday School for this school year. The annual Birthday Cake Drive is underway
- Church Life: The Basket Auction raised \$2,542. Church Life will be donating \$100 to the food shelf for Mother's Day and again for Father's Day.
- The front steps are being worked on and paperwork is almost complete for the grant for the water system.
- Random Acts of Kindness needs someone to take over the community meals over the summer. This would be the months of June, July, and August. Scott Fuchs and Dave Kidd will teach a community CPR class in mid-May.
- Altar Area Improvements were discussed. We will need hard numbers before we can do much. Brickhouse music will give us ideas for the sound system. This would include our streaming of the Sunday service.
- Continuation of the Corn Connection was discussed. No decision was made, more information is needed before we move forward.

Welcome to Our Church Family!

Hadley Schmitt Baptized April 14



Aurora Rabitoy Baptized April 21



Last Day of Sunday School!



Sunday School Awards

Parents, grandparents, and family are encouraged to join us during Sunday School on May 5th for our special Sunday School Awards Celebration.

Then we hope you will stay for worship at 10am when the children will help us lead the worship service.

Sunday School classes will resume in September—enjoy your summer!

Property & Roadside Clean up Day

Information about the property and roadside clean up day will be shared in an upcoming *What's Happening* email.

We appreciate all who are able to help.

Graduate Recognition

If you or a family member is graduating, please let the office know so we can Recognize them.



HELLO FRIEND COMMUNITY MEAL

Random Acts of Kindness would love to invite you to come as you are for a meal free of charge. Stay and hang out while you enjoy your meal or take it to go.



MEAL DATE:

MAY 21

Served 5:00PM to 6:30PM

St. Paul's United Church of Christ
W5706 Hwy 72, Ellsworth WI 54011

Did You Know?

National Poppy Day—May 24, 2024

On the Friday before Memorial Day, people wear a red poppy to honor the fallen and support the living who have worn our nation's uniform.

The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars.