



2020



ANNUAL REPORT

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Rev. Michelle Torigian

Senior Pastor

This past year has been a unique experience for all at St. Paul United Church of Christ. We've been faced with making many decisions throughout the year, looking to God for wisdom, and working to ensure the safety for all involved in our congregation. Near the end of March 2020, we began our sheltering in place. Our ways of worshiping changed at that time. Each of us recorded our parts in our homes. With the help of Rick Haar as well as Tina Lake-Hopper and Bill Wade, each piece of the service was edited together.

Besides worship, we had to pause many of our in-person activities and meetings and began to use Zoom as a way to meet. Each week, after our 9am service, we hold a fellowship hour, and during the initial months of the pandemic, we had Wednesday night social hour. I used Facebook Live to check in with our congregants while we faced weeks in our homes with limited interaction with others. Our educational opportunities like Confirmation and our Social Justice Book Group continued through Zoom. And our first virtual congregational meeting happened on Zoom in December 2020. (The Bylaws were adjusted to include online meetings.)

This also gave us an opportunity to be creative as possible, thinking outside of the box to be St. Paul UCC in the midst of a pandemic. Our Congregational Care team delivered little items to members who were not connected online. More phone calls were made and letters sent by teams and individuals. Our Stewardship team created new fundraising opportunities (such as masks, postcards, bookmarks, and 50/50 drawings) since we couldn't hold an event this year. And our Christian Education team held VBS online for the first time this year and visited our young people at Christmastime with Santa in our caravan.

Many lengthy conversations occurred and difficult decisions were made regarding regathering the church and reopening MDO. We produced a video which indicated how our worship services would flow. In the summer, we began our outdoor services, knowing that guidelines recommend holding outdoor events when possible for the safety of all. Within a couple of months, we began to hold our indoor services with a number of guidelines. We were happy to have these events until November when the virus numbers increased. We switched back to holding the worship services virtually, including our Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve services. Neal Holliday helped us record our weekly non-traditional services on Zoom.

MDO leaders also met throughout the year to decide the best time to reopen and worked on guidelines to keep our students, teachers, and helpers safe. In January 2020, MDO held its first classes for the 2020-2021 school year.

I believe that this past year has transformed our congregation for the future and for the better. Streaming our services will be part of our Sunday morning offerings - even when times are back to "normal." We have seen how communicating on many different platforms to many different generations is a crucial part of our congregation. Having tools like Zoom will give us the opportunity to include congregants in our meetings even when they are out of town, recovering from surgery, or when we need to stay home during inclement weather.

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I look forward to the time when we can safely have over 50 in worship and hold the grand opening for Heritage Hall that we planned for last spring. We may be wearing masks and adjusting our worship and meetings for a while, but I see us gathering more and more in the coming weeks and months.

I continue to serve on the Illinois South Conference Gathering Team. I attended the Day of Discipleship in February 2020 (held in Waterloo) and Annual Conference Gathering for Illinois South UCC in October 2020 which was held online. I've taken part in online learning opportunities - including a continuing education through Boston University School of Theology and a series on worship from the Worship Design Studio.

Thank you to Wayne Caughman for his leadership throughout 2020 as well as all of our leaders and those involved in conversations regarding regathering. Your time and energy kept us going and growing even when we weren't physically together. Finally, I would like to thank you to all of you for your well wishes and gifts for my recent wedding in July 2020!

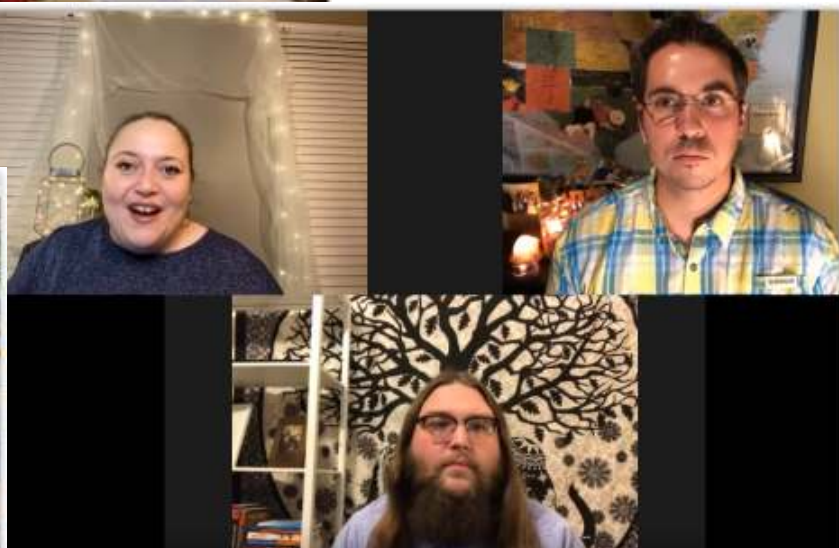
Blessings on a healthy 2021,
Pastor Michelle



Top: Pastor Michelle, Christmas Eve

Bottom left: Pastor Michelle and Dr. Bill Wade during an outdoor service.

Right: Pastor Michelle, Craig Bielke, & John Posth during 4pm online service in December.



Music Ministry

Dr. Bill Wade

I began as director of music and organist on January 2, 2020. The music ministry as of January, 2020 included the adult Chancel Choir (18 active members), Glory Ringers (12 ringers), Women's Ensemble, and Men's Ensemble.

Among the priorities of the first couple of months was continuing the choral and handbell program and preparing weekly service music for worship. I was also tasked with an unfinished project of researching a music storage system, and participating in the recruitment of a non-traditional music director. I also discovered many music survey responses from the congregation during the previous year. I responded to each of the surveys with a personal note addressing the celebrations and concerns identified.

In February, we had the pleasure of bringing John Posth on staff as the music director for non-traditional music. John immediately ingratiated himself by becoming an important participant in the chancel choir and the handbell choir. It has been a pleasure working with this talented and knowledgeable colleague.

There were some significant deferred maintenance issues with the Schantz organ and I worked closely with Richard and Luanne Murphy from Murphy Music Service to identify and repair most of the problems.

The handbell choir prepared several pieces for the SpRINGfest 2020 mass handbell ringing event at Peace Lutheran in Saint Louis on February 29, 2020, facilitated by composer and artist David Weck. We had about 10 ringers who participated in a day-long workshop and culminating concert. This was a wonderful educational and team building experience for the handbell choir and exposed our ringers to about 100 other ringers from the Saint Louis metro area.

We were able to locate and purchase a music shelving system and have it installed thanks to the hard work of Pat Kinney and the Property Management team. Because of Pat's efforts, music began being relocated from the bell room to the music storage room in January, 2021.

By March 2020, it became apparent that mitigation strategies were going to be needed to address the emerging pandemic of COVID-19. The leadership teams and staff worked tirelessly to address the ongoing needs of the congregation, the music ministry, and the public health implications of all stakeholders at St. Paul UCC. Once it was decided that we would suspend group activities and in-person worship, the entire music program, like all other programs in the church, faced the daunting task of quickly migrating to a pre-recorded, virtual program.

Choir practice continued with 15 dedicated individuals who met online once a week for rehearsal and videotaping of the hymns and anthems and then individually recorded each of their voice parts and submitted them asynchronously for compilation and mixing each week. There was some attrition because some singers either didn't have the technical equipment necessary to continue participating in virtual choir, or did not feel they had the

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additional two to three hours each week for this type of endeavor. We have been able to gain at least one singer who had moved out of state, but is able to join us each week now that we are meeting online! For the handbell choir, rehearsals were suspended until the Spring when gathering outside was possible. We did meet several times during the Summer and recorded some service music for airing during our online worship.

Music for each worship service has been mostly recorded and edited in advance and then streamed online at the appropriate time. This has enabled us to offer a worship service that is available at any time at the convenience of worshippers near and far.

We began the Sunday afternoon/evening Non-Traditional Worship service throughout the Spring and Summer and that provided an opportunity for people to experience a semblance of congregational worship, albeit socially distanced and adorned with masks.

We had a very different but worshipful Lent/Easter and Advent/Christmas in 2020. Thanks to the assistance of the staff and volunteers we have been able to continue a music program that looks and feels much different than any of us anticipated in January, 2020! This has been a year of opportunity, necessary flexibility, and no insignificant amount of stress for everyone. Nevertheless, we have survived, maybe even thrived, and emerged stronger.



Top left: Dr. Bill Wade playing the Shantz Organ

Top Right: Dr. Bill Wade and John Posth with our Chancel Choir in Sunday recording.

Bottom Left: Dr. Bill Wade and John Posth at Bell rehearsal / recording.

John Posth

Non-Traditional

I started working for St. Paul on March 1, 2020, just before the pandemic made us change the way we worship and gather. During the short time before the quarantine, I attended a seminar in Iowa held at Luther College under the direction of Paul Vassile and the organization Music Makes Community. At this seminar we spent time singing together and teaching songs without any paper. I was excited to get back to St. Paul so that I could start to implement what I learned in Iowa with our congregation.

We were planning, at the time, to start a non-traditional service sometime around May that would incorporate different worship techniques like singing by rote, hands-on worship stations, and a conversational and physical aspect from the congregation. Luckily, we were still able to start this non-traditional service, even though it had to take a different form than Pastor Michelle and I had imagined before. Our non-traditional service began in July of 2020. We met outside every Sunday (except for two that were cancelled for weather) from July 12th through November 8th, at which time we moved online to our Zoom format that we have done since November 15th through today. I believe that our services are getting better each week and our non-traditional service is starting to define itself into something truly unique.

Before our non-traditional service began in July, I sang hymns for our 9am service to help with some music before the choir took over weekly hymn duties. Once our 9am service went indoors for a short time, I helped with our technology team to stream our services live. We encountered a few issues that persisted, but I am confident that when we go back inside we will be able to work out those issues.

I have also sang in the choir and played with handbells under Bill Wade's leadership, and assisted with some technology for choir. I have been blessed to be able to work with such a wonderful team. Thanks to Michelle, Craig, Bill, and Tina for being such an easy team to work with so that we were able to provide services for our congregation through this crazy time!

Thank you everyone for a wonderful year during a not so wonderful time!



Top: Pastor Michelle, Craig Bielke, & John Posth during 4pm online service.

Right: John Posth singing during 4pm service.

Director of Faith Formation and Care

Craig Bielke

The scripture Ecclesiastes 1:9 says “there is nothing new under the sun”. Fashion trends and aesthetically pleasing decor come and go, but eventually work their way back in vogue with enough time gone by. What seems to be a new way to style one's hair, or the latest food craze can probably be found in either old family photos, cookbooks, or magazines of eras long past. The year 2020 is a very real exception to this proverb though. While global pandemics, political turmoil, and divisive rhetoric is nothing new; 2020 took all of these up a notch and threw a major curveball to every single individual, business and organization.

What also was new is how we responded to the adversity and challenges posed by the past year. St. Paul UCC is no exception in our response to what we were facing. With diligence, discernment, and prayer, St. Paul worshipped together, cared for each other, and continued to grow in knowledge of our Christian faith. Though things looked markedly different, the Church pushed on and continued to carry out the mission given to us directly from Jesus, “to make disciples of the nations” (Matthew 28:19) by “loving your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).

The Christian Education Team worked hard during this time of pandemic to stay connected with the kids and students of St. Paul UCC. In July a take home Vacation Bible School kit helped kids know the story of Moses and the ancient Hebrews as they wandered in the wilderness. Then, in December, Team members along with Pastor Michelle drove in a Santa Parade to visit the kids and students, delivering a note from the whole Team and an Advent activity booklet. St. Paul Students (aka, Youth Group) met a few times virtually, and once in person to stay connected and have fun at Al and Nancy Scharf's home. Confirmation continued to go strong with regular class meetings happening virtually.

Pastoral care visits were not able to be had due to the in person nature of them. For the safety of the members, With You team members, and the pastor(s) that decision was made. But, phone calls, letters and cards, and virtual visits were still able to be done. The Congregational Care Team called each member of the homebound/shut-in list along with others identified by the church staff and With You Team.

It was a difficult year. One that will hopefully never be repeated. But, with the knowledge of Ecclesiastes 1:9 it is probable that hope will inevitably fail. The faithful knowing that we have been through this past year and emerged on the other side makes another faith a reality; that we are strong, ingenuitive, and flexible.

Respectfully yours in service to Christ,

Craig Bielke Director of Faith Formation & Care

Right: Craig Bielke during online service.



St. Paul Mother's Day Out

St. Paul Mother's Day Out Annual Report 2021

Mother's Day Out is a program created by St. Paul Church to serve the community by providing a caring, enriching environment for children. Mother's Day Out recognizes the educational, emotional, and physical needs of children from the ages of two to five. We affirm parents as the primary educator of their children and our role is one of support and enrichment.

Our program is governed, and policies are set by the MDO team. This panel is chaired by Lisa Smith, Rick Haar, Rachel Budko, Sue Hoffmann, Pastor Michelle and a teacher representative.

Classes meet Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 12:30 for children two through five years of age. Our total present enrollment is 62 children, we only have one opening currently.

Our 2020-2021 fee schedule is: 1 child attending 1 day per week.....\$75.00 per month
1 child attending 2 days per week.....\$125.00 per month
1 child attending 3 days per week.....\$175.00 per month

We offer a sibling discount that will be taken off tuition. There is a \$50.00 nonreturnable/non-transferrable annual registration fee for currently enrolled students; and a \$75.00 nonreturnable/non-transferrable annual registration fee for new students.

Our class schedule is as follows:

CLASSES	ENROLLMENT	TEACHER	ASSISTANT
<u>2 Year Old</u>			
Wednesday & Friday	7	Deneshia Brock	Allison Jardee
Mond/Wed/Fri	8	Diana Haar	Danny Bauer/Jerry Pierce/Cindy Peterson
Tuesday & Thursday	8	Diana Haar	Maureen Prescott/ Jessica Jones
<u>3 Year Old</u>			
Tuesday & Thursday	12	Amy LeGrand	Carol Thorn
Mon-Wed-Fri	12	Laura Osborn	Deneshia Brock/Kay Ortman/ Maddisen Baughman
<u>4 Year Old</u>			
Tue/Thur/Fri	15	Nicole McCullough	Lindsey Davis

Respectfully Submitted by Rachel Budko, Director



2020 Council President

Wayne Caughman

My term as President for 2020 was different than normal in that I served you as your President for only 10 months from March through December. Adding to that was the corona virus that we all had to respect and battle that started in mid-March. However, it was a wonderful and most inspiring term for me. I learned so much about our staff, our members, volunteers and others and what it takes to keep our church operations going on a daily basis. I was supported by many others who didn't hesitate to help me when required. A special thank you to all. In spite of the Covid 19 pandemic, St. Paul still was a busy place in 2020 as it was in prior years.

In order to continue with our worship services and other related events with the virus all around us, we all had to learn a lot and adapt to in conducting many church events and activities virtually. For us to be even safer, we also started successful worship services outside of the church on Sunday afternoons for a period of time. Then as the virus numbers allowed, we also had some inside services in the fall with a limited number of our attendees. Our ushers and staff served an instrumental role in insuring the safety of our people when worshipping inside.

Our staff starting with Pastor Michelle performed much above and beyond during all of this time. I also want to recognize and thank the members of the Choir under the direction of Dr. Wade for their wonderful music that we all enjoyed in 2020. I also would be remiss without mentioning the church Regathering Team and the many countless hours they put in to insure that we were all as safe as possible when we did return to the church. Likewise, the MDO regathering team spent countless hours planning for the MDO reopening safely in early 2021.

From a personnel standpoint, John Posth joined us as our Director of Non-traditional music. Also, Erin Adams joined us as a part time custodian. Both have done an outstanding job for St. Paul!

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize and thank all of our Council teams for all of their outstanding work during the year. The Executive Council and the Council itself tackled all of the issues that came up in a superb way. I am so supportive and thankful for them supporting me and the other officers. I'm confident our new officers and members will continue that tradition.

I wanted to mention that the improvements to Heritage Hall under the excellent direction of Dave Hoffmann and Roger Harris were completed early in the year. Thanks also to all of the volunteers who helped with this project. It is a beautiful renovation to our original church that we will I know all enjoy for years to come!

As we all know, one person cannot do everything by themselves. Instead, it takes a team effort by many to make things happen. And that's what we have at St. Paul with our church members.

Again, a most heartfelt thanks to all of you for your unwavering support.

Peace to All,

Wayne Caughman, 2020 Council President



Finance Team

Serving on the 2020 Finance Team were Dana Rosenzweig, Laurence Walton, Mike Pierce, Terry Kalinowski, Wayne Kniepkamp and Staff Liaison Stephenie Bauza. The Team once again willingly took on role of being responsible stewards of the Church's financial resources. As in past years, the Team worked closely with other groups within the Church to coordinate responsible budgeting and spending. Approvals for levels of expenditures were once again employed and there continued to be good fiscal controls and practices in place.

As with every entity within the Church, 2020 was marked by responding to the challenges created by the pandemic. Initially there was concern regarding potential for markedly reduced revenues. The 2020 budget had been crafted using historical data and both expenses and revenues were felt to be accurate representations. There was little room to significantly reduce operational expenses, thus the concern regarding inadequate revenues. We recognized that certain revenues, such as building income, would be impossible to recover if the pandemic continued. Much to the dismay of all of us, the pandemic did continue longer than hoped.

However, what was also not fully anticipated was the commitment and generosity of all members during 2020. The above concerns over lower revenues were not realized because of your giving - nearly \$30,000 more than in 2019! This amount does not include giving for Outreach & Missions that was \$2,000 more than in 2019. Of note, contributions to the Food Pantry doubled.

Other significant achievements:

- Revenues (\$677,837) exceeded Expenses (\$603,411) – a net of \$74,426.

- Year end on-hand cash was increased to nearly 1.5 months of operating expenses.
(First time in recent history and a great relief.)

- Secured a \$67,300 PPP loan. (All indicators suggest it will be fully forgiven.)

- Continued to eliminate dormant Cash Accounts.

The continued responsible management of the Church's finances allowed us to end 2020 fully in a position of strength. In collaboration with all Church Teams and staff, we are poised to meet the new challenges and opportunities for St. Paul in the coming year. Again, our many thanks to all members for their generosity in 2020!

Respectfully,

Dana Rosenzweig

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Personnel Team

Members:

Sue Hoffmann (Chair 2020)

Doug Bush (Chair 2021)

Donna Nettleton

Al Scharf

Al Stahl

Rusty Wagner

Coordinated with Church Council on the hiring of Non-Traditional Music Director, John Posth.

Worked on the proposal adopted by the Council regarding revisions of sick leave to be added to Personnel Policy.

Supervised the coordinating of personnel files to be housed securely in the Senior Pastor's office.

Worked with Mothers Day Out regarding the MDO Executive Team and establishment of a Parent Group.

Worked with the staff and church council on the termination of one custodian, the resignation of one custodian, the hiring on a part-time custodian, while considering our needs to time of closures for the church and MDO.

Coordinated with MDO Director on the release of one employee.

Worked with staff and church council on establishing a Covid-19 Plan in the Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Worked with staff on requests regarding personal education fund.

Worked with office staff regarding cross training in the event of illness.

Worked with Mothers Day out regarding opening and closing during the pandemic; policies relating to pay and continued improvement of the program.

Submitted by Sue Hoffmann and Doug Bush

Property Team

2020What a year of challenges, in every aspect of the word. During the year the board met via zoom a couple of times to go over matters happening at that moment. We did not need to meet every month, as there was nothing going on due to the entire facility being shut down.

The members of the team that attended the meetings that we did have via zoom were Wayne Caughman, Pat Kinney, Lou Ryseff, myself. Dave Hoffmann and Roger Harris also attended to provide any information regarding Heritage Hall's completion.

Even though we did not meet every month, I stayed in touch with Pat Kinney, our facility manager, and others through our monthly council zoom meetings.

The regular maintenance and preventative maintenance were continued even though we were not in the church by Pat Kinney. He finds plenty to do, and we thank him for that. He is a real team player!

Right before the pandemic started, we were trying to find instructions as to how to put together the new mobile music filing system that we purchased used in 2019. To no avail, we could not put it together in house, and we were faced with finding an outside installation company. I had used a group in St. Louis called Precision, and they were able to build a flooring subfloor that contained the tracks for the mobile files to move on. They got the installation completed in 1 day and Pat assembled the shelves to move along the tracks. To date, Pat, and Erin, our new custodial worker, have organized and filled the shelves with our vast music library. Thank you to them!

The biggest challenge that we faced this year had to do with the playground that is used by MDO. The weeds that grow in the mulch continue to be a difficult problem to deal with all spring, summer and fall. We were also concerned with the children's safety with the wood product. So, a small group met outside, socially distanced, at the playground to discuss how to go about amending the situation. Those in attendance were Dave Hoffmann, Sue Hoffmann, Wayne Caughman, Lou Ryseff, Pat Kinney, myself and Dana Rosenweig. Through many meetings and a good deal of research by all, we determined that a product called Kiddie Cushion would be used. We checked with state and local boards, and decided it would be the best product. Sonnenberg's provided a nice discount for the product, along with the delivery. We also determined that Pat could do the work of leveling the existing product, putting a weed barrier down, and then installing the product over the top of the weed barrier. The Kiddie Cushion was purchased, with our budgeted money, along with a nice donation. Pat tried to do this before winter, but the rainy weather did not allow for the mulch to dry thoroughly enough before winter set in. He plans to do this in the next coming months.

We organized an outside work day to help spruce up the front of the church. About 12 people showed up to power wash, plant, weed, and apply rock. We had to tear out the existing foliage and replace with the rock due to burrowing by problematic ground hogs on the South side of the main sanctuary. Groundhogs may be cute, but they do a great deal of damage. We are trying to amend the situation with them by applying rock, along with a layer of chicken wire to keep them from digging, and causing potential damage to our foundation. Keep your fingers crossed!

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Pat painted the original wood doors to Heritage Hall on the exterior side. He removed and painted the wrought iron hardware, and even painted the steps leading to them, so that when we are ready to use the space, it looks nice. We added 2 planting beds with new donated perennials and black granite chip rock, on either side of both of those doors to provide some much needed curb appeal!

During the long shut down of the church, we decided that it would be a great time to paint the corridors. Pat, Kyle, when he was with us, and then Erin, all took part in this project. It looks wonderful!

Another donation came in for additional screen shades, like the ones installed in 2019 in the library, for the windows in the church's business offices. Three windows were covered, and the original 2" faux wood blinds were moved to the youth room on the North side of the building. Again, Pat Kinney removed the blinds and re-installed them for us.

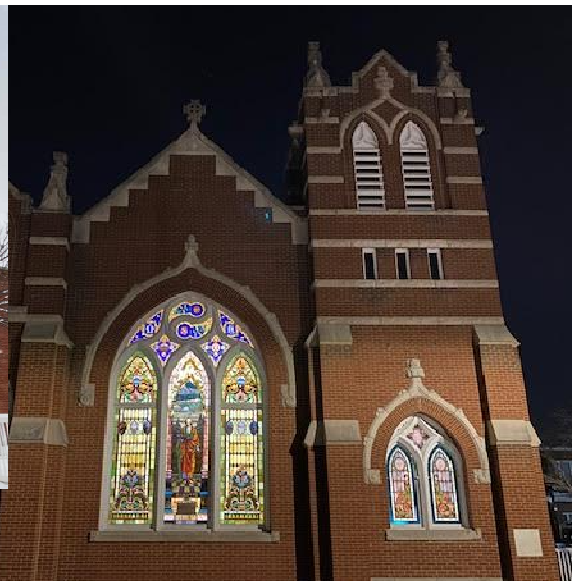
A new lease was signed with the Belleville Area Special Service Cooperative (BASSC) to continue using our residential facility at 205 West B street for a special needs school until June 30th of 2021. They continued to pay the rent throughout the pandemic. We plan on a slight increase in their rent to cover the damage that some residents create, which is then our responsibility to repair, being the landlord. We will also be adding a "time and material" clause to this contract to cover our costs.

As some of you know, we mysteriously had 4 large holes in the St. Paul window back in July. The church staff looked at the video footage, and did not see any human do any damage. It is still a mystery to this day. Pat put protection over the window until it could be fixed. We hired Art Glass Unlimited to take a look and provide a quote, as they have done all of the other repair work for our stained glass. They repaired it and matched the original color, texture and writing, without a problem. This was at a cost of \$2,300 which was paid for through donations.

I would like to thank our team members and especially Pat Kinney for all of his work, and for all of the volunteers and donations that helped with the many projects this past year! On to a new year, and a new set of goals! Here's to 2021!!!



*Top left: Light thru
Heritage Hall window
Bottom left: Sanctuary
Middle: Heritage Hall
in winter
Right: Heritage Hall at
night*



Stewardship

Members: Stephenie Bauza, Peggy Burke – team leader, Sue Sutherland, Donna Thomas, Sandy Wagner, Larry Walton, Pastor Michelle Torigian - staff liaison.

Stewardship moments for the 5 for 5 appeals were done virtually and included in worship. To supplement the general operating fund, St. Paul face masks, postcards featuring member artwork, and Heritage Hall bookmarks were sold. Remaining limited issue Heritage Hall ornaments were also sold. These items will be available until sold out. Summer and Fall 50/50 drawings were held and will continue on a quarterly basis.

Stewardship 2020 focused on the Three Great Loves with photos from the past year included in worship. Advent cards (from SALT Project) were mailed to members to provide scriptures, practices, and prayers during the Advent season. Handwritten thank you notes were sent to all members who contributed to the church during the year.

Below: Ads for St Paul Postcards, Ornaments, and Bookmarks, all still available.



A colorful advertisement for St. Paul Postcards. At the top is a blue envelope with a white card inside featuring a red heart. Below it, the text "St. Paul Postcards" is written in a large, orange, cursive font. Underneath, it says "St. Paul UCC is proud to selling 12 postcards for \$12 by St. Paul UCC Artists. Proceeds go to St. Paul UCC." A collage of various postcard designs is shown, including a rainbow, a sunflower, a penguin, a windmill, and a bird. At the bottom, contact information for St. Paul United Church of Christ is provided: "115 West B Street, Belleville, Illinois 62220, 618-233-3303, stpaulucc.org".



A green diamond-shaped advertisement for Heritage Hall Ornaments. At the top is the St. Paul UCC logo. The text "HERITAGE HALL ORNAMENTS" is written in large, bold, yellow letters. Below it, it says "ORNAMENTS FROM OUR ARCHIVES \$5 EACH". A photo shows a blue ornament with a gold bell and a tag that says "St. Paul UCC Heritage Hall". To the right, contact information is provided: "Contact the Church Office for purchase & pickup/mailling info 618-233-3303 stpaulucc.org".



A dark brown advertisement for Heritage Hall Bookmarks. On the left is a photo of a bookmark with a blue tassel and a tag that says "St. Paul UCC Heritage Hall". To the right, the text "St. Paul United Church of Christ Heritage Hall Bookmark" is written in a large, white, cursive font. Below it, it says "On sale through the St. Paul Church Office \$1 each or 2 for \$5". At the bottom, contact information is provided: "stpaulucc.org 618-233-3303 115 West B Street, Belleville, IL 62220".

CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM

CO-CHAIRS: Debbie Lippert and Susan Relfe

The Congregational Care Team represents all of the groups in the church who provide support for and develop relationships among the members of St. Paul UCC, Belleville. Although the pandemic during the past year ceased most on site gatherings and stopped in person visits, our congregation actively volunteered to send cards, make delivery to homes, phone regularly, assure all were informed of church gatherings, develop new relationships while nourishing the current ones. Through these activities, God's work was continued and we became stronger.

SUBTEAMS

CHOIR/MUSIC

At the beginning of January, we were blessed to welcome Dr. Bill Wade to the leadership role of our Music Ministry. We thank him for his constant dedication, creativity, sharing his wide range of expertise, and for helping us to grow together. In February, a second blessing came through the vocals, dedication and musical skills of John Posth, Non-Traditional Music Director. We are grateful to these two people for bringing to our congregation their amazing abilities to lead us and to work together through the many 2020 challenges.

The Choir continued to meet every Wednesday evening throughout the year, resorting to Zoom rehearsals. Director Dr. Bill Wade e-mailed the music and instructions to each choir member prior to each rehearsal. On Wednesday, as the choir practiced the newly assigned music, they were visually recorded singing each selection. During the rehearsal or the following days, each choir member recorded their voices on their cell phones and e-mailed the recordings to our Director. The Technology Team then blended the visual recordings with the voices to create each Sunday's service. Everyone's skills expanded as the year progressed, even participating in video classes to learn how to improve our Zooming. Choir members became closer as we critiqued each others homes and even welcomed members who no longer were in the area. Mary Mayo joined us every week from Nashville, TN. Choir members from other churches and areas were invited to join us, too.

The city of Belleville approved the closing of the block of 1st street east of the church so we could comfortably Social Distance for the Sunday 6:00 p.m. outdoor services, which changed to 4:00 p.m. as the days grew shorter. We rocked the neighborhood with guest vocalists and musicians at this non-traditional service, with Dr. Bill Wade weekly at the keyboard and John Posth with his vocals. During the pandemic, singing was discouraged, but foot tapping and moving to the music stirred our souls. Our well-attended outdoor services continued as long as the weather was in our favor.

In February, the Glory Ringers Handbell Choir, led by Dr. Bill Wade, joined ringers from across the St. Louis Metro area for the Handbell Springfest at Peace Lutheran Church, St. Louis. Practicing in the choir room ceased with the arrival of COVID19, but as soon as the weather warmed, passers-by enjoyed our ringers practicing outside of the Sanctuary on Friday mornings. The bell choir was able to record for a few Sunday services before the outdoor temperature dropped and the sanctuary was again closed. Many are ready to play & sing with their new, specially designed choir masks.

2020 Choir Members led by Dr. Bill Wade and John Posth: Linda Baumgarte, Stephenie Bauza, Tom Birkner, Karen Boeschen, Mary Lu Bretsch, Lucy Bradley, Peggy Burke, Bill Guthrie, Linda Hermann, Lisa Hudnall, Mimi Llamas, Mary Mayo, Kris Mueller, Osceola Mueller, Susan & Roger Relfe, Hector Rivera, Lou Ryseff, Laura & Karey Sadler, Mona Scheibel, Barb Seuss, Diana Trickey, Pam Walton, Sandy & Rusty Wagner



Above: Choir members for a Sunday recording in December

CULINAIRES led by Dave Hoffmann and Ken Nettleton

Early in the year the church kitchen was closed due to the pandemic. But, the Culinares were still ready to cook. They offered to personally prepare meals in their homes to deliver to our church members in need. Unused food in the kitchen was sent to the local Food Pantry.

FIRESIDE from Carol Hotz

No meetings were held. The officers elected will retain their office for 2021: Fred Hotz –President; Jane Bonaldi – Vice President; Bob Harms – Treasurer; Carol Hotz – Secretary. Fireside meets the 4th Sunday of the month, usually at 6:00 p.m.

FRIENDS, FUN, FOOD (formerly Mingles and Singles)

The group, Mingles & Singles met January 24 at the home of Judy Koch & Al Stahl to schedule 2020 calendar events. At that time, it was decided that the group would change its name to Friends, Fun & Food because that name better describes who we are and what we do.

On February 21, a Mardi Gras celebration was held at the home of Rusty & Sandy Wagner and a St. Patrick's Day gathering was held on March 13 at the home of Dave & Sue Hoffmann.

The remaining calendar events were cancelled due to COVID 19 and no donations were made.

Judy Koch is the coordinator. In lieu of fundraisers, attendees are invited to donate \$10 per person at each social event. Any and all of our St. Paul family are invited to participate in any of the scheduled events.

PRAYER GROUPS

St. Paul member: Donna Davis, Steve Schmidt, Annette Eckert

The members of the Prayer Group offered support by phone and e-mail.

The Centering Prayer Group was placed On Hold due to the pandemic.

TECHNOLOGY/AV

The Technology Team has been very busy during COVID. We have been creating 2 virtual video services each week since the beginning of the pandemic. During November-December, we were able to get a small group of people back into the Sanctuary where we created an online streaming solution which worked very well. Once we open the church back up, online streaming will become a permanent option for members to attend Sunday services from anywhere in the world! A big thank you to Pastor Michelle, Dr. Bill Wade, Craig Bielke, and John Posth for their on-camera talents, and a big thank you to Tina Lake-Hopper, Neal Holliday, and Rick Haar for their technical skills.

Finally, while the Sanctuary and Heritage Hall are not being used, we would like to take advantage and look at enhancing the sound and lighting in the Sanctuary. We are also looking at sound and acoustic options for the newly renovated Heritage Hall. We are currently collecting quotes to improve both.

Thanks! Rick Haar

ST. PAUL WITH YOU

Many people volunteered to help with the ongoing activities of this group throughout the year.

Susan Relfe, Debbie Lippert, and Laureen Torigian delivered “Thinking of You” cards to 50+ members of our congregation who did not have social media. The three masked visitors chatted with those who were home and left cards on the doorknobs of those who did not answer. Pastor Michelle created the Thinking of You cards with palm crosses attached.

“Soft Opening” Phone Contacts were made to 127 members of our congregation who did not have e-mail addresses on file. Calls were made to inform of the new reservations to attend Sunday services. Thank you to our 7 callers: Peggy Burke, Judy Koch, Mimi Llamas, Susan Relfe, Sandy Ritter, Laureen Torigian, and Larry Walton.

The St. Paul With You visiting team were no longer able to visit our members in the local hospitals due to the pandemic. The team continued to receive daily reports from Donna Young so cards could be sent. Hospital Visitors are: Donna Davis, Judy Koch, Betty Leppard, Debbie Lippert, Susan Relfe, Lou Ryseff, and Laureen Torigian.

Over a few months, thirteen members of our church participated in the 2020 Annual Alzheimer’s Walk Team. This was twice the number of team participants as last year and twice the amount of money collected for this unusual “virtual” event. Our team donated to Alzheimer’s Research \$2,330. On October 3rd we social distanced down Belleville’s Main Street to celebrate the event. Team Members were: Susan Relfe (captain), Peggy Burke, Wayne Caughman, Edie Elliott, Debbie Lippert, Mimi Llamas, Marlene Mueller, Sonja Myland, Roger Relfe, Bette Rotert, Laureen Torigian, Pastor Michelle Torigian, Larry Walton, Linda Asunkis. Earlier in the year many of our members donated shoes to the campaign kick-off fundraiser. *(see picture below)*



Information was shared monthly in our OSP about the local Metro East Community Wellness Program provided by the Southwestern Illinois Visiting Nurses Association offering check-up calls to any Senior in need, free of charge.

Jeanne Swain introduced us to “Dignity Bibs”, using discarded shirts and blouses to sew clothing covers for identified residents at St. Paul’s Senior Community.

ST. PAUL’S SENIOR COMMUNITY

Dolly Kirsch organized the ongoing team of Sunday Worship Leaders for St. Paul’s Senior Community. The 2020 pandemic caused services to be placed On Hold for the first time since our church began this mission. Thank you to our accompanists: Peggy Burke and Kim Brosh.

And, to our Worship Leaders: Gay Eckert, Shirley Holcomb, Dolly Kirsch, Susan Relfe, Judy Saeger. More leaders are needed for this caring mission. If you can help, contact Dolly Kirsch.

USHERS

Wayne Caughman led the ushers to be ready for any direction our Sunday Services moved. Thank you to our dependable, dedicated team who served after the pandemic started: Wayne Caughman, Dana & Beverly Rosenzweig, Bruce & Pam Elser, Jan Friedrich, Terry Kalinowski, Sheri Gerieke, Jerry Pierce-Heisler, Larry Walton, Sam Sivewright, and Scott Gentry. Additional ushers are needed in 2021. Contact Wayne Caughman if you can help.

WELCOME TEAM

Led by Fred and Carol Hotz
On Hold

WOMEN’S GUILD

Stephenie Bauza, Guild President

We last met in February, however, have kept in touch with each other through a letter that I sent to all members and by phone calls. We were still able to deliver wrapped boxes of tissues and Christmas cards for all residents at St. Paul Senior Community.

We also sponsored the “Star” Tree. This year was different, receiving monetary donations rather than actual gifts. I had fun shopping at Target, Kohls and more. All the kids received gifts and each family received a bag of mandarin oranges AND a Target gift card. All of the gifts were picked up at Franklin Neighborhood by the parents.

We continue with prayers for our Guild members when needed. And, we all look forward to getting back to fellowship and “dessert”!!!

WORSHIP

Members: Wayne Caughman, Janice Friedrich, Tina Lake-Hopper, Debbie Lippert, Lynn Koehler, Pam Walton

When we closed in March, Lent/Easter decorations were in place. Easter flowers were ordered and had to be cancelled. Altar paraments, banners, and decorations continued to change as we celebrated liturgical seasons. World Communion, Totenfest, Advent, Blue Christmas, and Christmas Eve services continued.

Decorations for the Christmas season were scaled back but the sanctuary still looked beautiful. We couldn't have more than one or two people decorating at one time. Communion continued. We shared by using common home elements.

Throughout the year, the quality of our music remained excellent with Dr. Bill at the organ and the choir and bells. Did you notice Dr. Bill's socks as he played the organ? Outdoor services had Dr. Bill and John Posth working together presenting music. Our Christmas Eve service was spectacular. The luminaries were awesome.

Even though we left our beautiful sanctuary in person, we still were able to connect with our pastor, sermon and beautiful music. We advanced in our knowledge of technology to keep us connected to the teachings of God and Jesus till we can worship in person again.

Thank you to Laura Strohm Armstrong and Pat Kinney for your help with Christmas decorations.

Respectfully, Janice Friedrich



Top: Saint Paul sign on B Street



Left: First Street entrance

Christian Education

Since the Covid virus hit in this area in late February and the Church was closed it left the board with having to do things differently or nothing at all.

Craig kept in contact with the youth thru social media. His report will give you an idea on how active they were able to be.

VBS was run by Craig virtually with Concordia's UCC Becky Avarro and their youth assisting. St. Paul UCC in Lebanon also joined in the virtual classes. We bagged activity projects from the theme for 50 youth who would participate virtually. We had close to 40 that actually participated and it was held the end of June for 4 days.

We had the youth participate in some of the outside worship services and during the holiday services. Craig and Pastor Michelle led a small caravan to visit some of the children and congregation for Christmas. Craig was Santa, elves were Pastor Michelle, Syndy and Terry Kalinowski and Sandy and Bobby Lee Frerking. They gave out christmas cards, candy canes and a God's Eye craft.

Diane Drake reported there are 3 enrolled in the Cradle Roll.

Mary Lu reported that the new software allows access to the library catalog thru the church website. New books and donated books were added even though the Library was never really opened this year.

Roger Harris reported that none of the activities or renovating projects this year took place at Dubois due to the virus.

Sandy Ritter, co-chair

Archives

I finished up digitizing records of member deaths this year. Spanning 1939-2020, almost six thousand newspaper obituaries and related material are permanently saved in our computer files.

I also performed the same tasks in saving all confirmation records.

The renovation of Heritage Hall was completed. Significant artifacts were found and are being processed in the St. Paul UCC Archives.

A catalog of Archives material exists. It is an Excel spreadsheet listing our inventory of items (newspaper, photographs, church records, artifacts, you name it...). The catalog is always updated as I find things in the Archive or from church members. This is a first for the Archives in that it is organizing the entire collection into one reference document.

I continue to find, organize, and digitize material every day.

Your archivist,
Roger Henke

Outreach Team

The Outreach Team consists of the following sub teams and programs:

- Community Dinner
- Community Events
- Fine Arts
- Mission
- Mission Trips
- Outreach and Publicity
- Prayer Shawls
- Quilters / Threads of Hope
- Radio
- Website



*Left: Pete & Sherry Kobernus & Judy Koch help with collection for KinderCottage.**

Mission Sub Team

Co-chairs: Pete Kobernus and Sherry Davinroy

Members: Roger Harris, Donna Kelly, Judy Koch, Jan Spencer, Bev Vokes

Although the pandemic impacted the Mission Sub Team's plans for 2020, the team continued to support some of our traditional missions during the year thanks to the generosity of our congregation:

- Mother's Day and Father's Day Honor Roll donations were equally divided between KinderCottage and Camp DuBois

- St. Paul sponsored a hole for Hoyleton Youth and Family Services golf tournament and some St. Paul members played in the tournament

- Hats, gloves, undies, PPE, etc. were collected and donated to KinderCottage*

- Food collected for Community Interfaith Food Pantry

- Monetary donation to Franklin Neighborhood Association for their Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday baskets

- Monetary donation to Hoyleton Youth and Family Services to help with furnishing their new treatment foster care home located in Belleville

Unfortunately, the team was unable to conduct their peanut square fundraiser in 2020.

Radio and Website Teams

St. Paul Sunday morning services continue to be broadcast on radio. In person church services were suspended early in 2020. The Radio and Website Teams had an essential role in providing weekly church services to our congregation throughout the rest of 2020.

Other Outreach Sub Teams

The pandemic forced the remaining Outreach Sub Teams to cancel their 2020 plans since these teams rely on in-person activities. Hopefully, these sub teams will be able to restart their activities in 2021 after the state eases the pandemic restrictions.

Fine Arts Committee

All concerts for the 2020 Fine Arts were cancelled due to Covid restrictions. Members of the committee include: Tom Birkner, Bill Guthrie, Barb Suess, Luci Bradley, Osceola Mueller, Marilae Perkins, Eileen Peter, Mimi Llamas, Peggy Burke, Judy Saeger, Music Director, Dr. Bill Wade, and Sandy Wagner, Chair.



YOU'RE INVITED

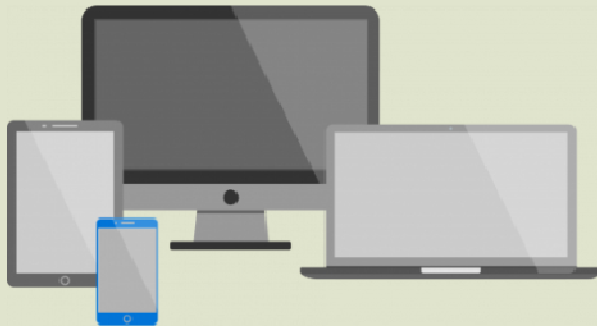


to our Congregational
ZOOM MEETING

*Meeting to vote on Annual Reports
Annual Reports will be mailed out 2 weeks prior*

DATE: SUNDAY, FEB 28

TIME: 10:30 AM



**LINK WILL BE POSTED DAY
BEFORE THE MEETING ON
FACEBOOK & STPAULUCC.ORG**

**PHONE # TO CALL IN
1-312-626-6799**

DOWNLOAD THE ZOOM APP IN ADVANCE ON YOUR PHONE, COMPUTER, OR TABLET.



ASH WEDNESDAY

Online Worship
Wednesday, Feb 17
7pm
stpaulucc.org

