



**ST. PAUL**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ANAMOSA, IOWA

CREATIVELY CONNECT • INTENTIONALLY GROW • JOYFULLY SERVE

**June 28, 2020**  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after  
Pentecost

**Prayer Concerns:** For Denny Oltmann, Troy Lyon, and Leslie Swartz (niece of Jan Allaire); for all facing issues from the corona virus—sickness or social isolation. (send prayer requests to [stpaulanamosa@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulanamosa@gmail.com); include your name, prayer recipient name, and family relationship)

**Introduction:** Moses tells the Israelites that they are called to be a priestly kingdom and a holy people. Jesus sends out the disciples as laborers into the harvest. In baptism we too are anointed for ministry, sharing God's compassion with our needy world. From the Lord's table we go forth to proclaim the good news, to heal the sick, and to share our bread with the hungry.

### VBS Announcement!

Due to the current Covid-19 guidelines and St. Paul wanting to keep our community as safe as possible we will be taking

**Pre-registered students only.**  
**Registration is now closed.**

**Service in the "Park"ing Lot:** Weather permitting, an outdoor worship experience will be offered at 10 A.M. each Sunday on the east side of the Education Building. **Bring your lawn chairs** for versatile social distancing in the parking lot. A few spaces within earshot will be made available for those who are unable to exit their vehicles. The service will be comprised of an opening song, a reading, a brief testimonial or reflection, prayers of intercession, the Our Father, and a closing song. This service is not intended to replace the recorded Sunday service but to accentuate it. An e-blast announcement will be sent by 9:00 a.m. if the service is cancelled. Wear your favorite Live Generously shirt.

**The ALY Board of Directors** has decided to suspend its summer sack lunch program for 2020, due to Covid 19 concerns. The Anamosa Community School lunch program will continue to serve all community students with sack lunches through June, then will begin hot lunches in July, gathering and returning the children with school buses though out the community. The ALY Board supports this program, and will continue to use its time and resources to provide weekend backpacks of food during the 2020-2021 school year. ALY appreciates the work of its many volunteers as well as the support of the community as these decisions are being made.

**Jones County Food Bank:** To donate money, make checks payable to Jones County Community Food Bank (NOT HACAP) and mailed to 105 Broadway Place, Anamosa IA 52205. For appointment to drop off/pick up call 462-4343. **They need pancake mix to match the large donation of pancake syrup just received; also canned fruit, peas, green beans and corn.**

(more community events on page 4)

All are invited to join us for the Saint Paul



at the CE Building Parking Lot  
Immediately following 10:00 A.M. service.  
(Rain date: Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>)

**Congratulations to Arianah Tjaden and Connor Paulsen** who celebrated their First Communion on Wednesday, June 24, 2020. Welcome to the table.

**First Reading: Jeremiah 28:5-9 NIV**

<sup>5</sup> Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> He said, "Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the LORD's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: <sup>8</sup> From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. <sup>9</sup> But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true."

Jeremiah is writing about a turbulent time (circa 598 BCE) to King Zedekiah who has been placed on the thrown over Judah by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. All of this turmoil was brought about by King Jehoiakim who had made a pact with Egypt in an attempt to sustain their power and wealth in the face of a

potential Babylonian takeover, around 605 BCE. This pact was a direct violation of the covenant with Yahweh because the Egyptians were not Yahweh-fearers. To rely on the military power of a pagan nation was to render Yahweh's authority impotent.

Jeremiah had pointed out the folly of this move and so began the condemnation of the kings as bad shepherds. Any prophet who challenged Jehoiakim put his life in danger because the king had only his own interest in mind. Jehoiakim put Jeremiah on trial for treason because Jeremiah had pointed out the folly of relying on human powers instead of God's. Likewise, a few short years later, King Zedekiah (whose name means "Yahweh is righteousness"), Jehoiakim's son, rebelled against Babylonian rule, then looked to Jeremiah for a comforting word; he wanted to be told that he was doing right. Instead, Jeremiah had sharp and cutting words, referring to Zedekiah and the kings of his line as "shepherds who mislead and scatter my people." In fact, Nebuchadnezzar became angry over the rebellion and sacked Jerusalem for the final time in 586 BCE. The result of the king's decisions was disastrous; the people of Judah were taken into exile against their will or were scattered throughout the known world. The Temple was destroyed and the city of Yahweh razed. Jeremiah was not in Jerusalem when he dictated this book to his disciple, Baruch. This passage ends with the prediction for a new future king from the line of David who will rule wisely, exact punishment on the self-serving shepherds, and lead the lambs (Israel) with justice. Jeremiah's message as presented in today's reading is highly optimistic because YHWH is a God of power, hope, promise, and long suffering. The God he knows longs to bring Israel back to him {hear the words of YHWH from the Book of the prophet Hosea: "Come back to me with all your heart. Long have I waited for your return"} and to make the people holy. Even though the people are not able to fulfill their communal duties to each other or secure their own release from their bitter exile, YHWH God will act on their behalf and show favor to the powerless and dependent, the blind and lame and pregnant. God has given them a righteous prophet in Jeremiah, unlike the lie embellishing Hananiah. Following Hananiah's demise, God himself will lead them back on a new Exodus to the fertile and peaceful lands they call home. God desires nothing more than to restore the tribes of the northern kingdom so they can honor Him.

### **Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 NIV All read together**

<sup>1</sup> I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.

<sup>2</sup> I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself. <sup>3</sup> You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant,

<sup>4</sup> I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations."

<sup>15</sup> Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, LORD.

<sup>16</sup> They rejoice in your name all day long; they celebrate your righteousness. <sup>17</sup> For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn. <sup>18</sup> Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.

### **Second Reading: Paul's letter to the Christian community in Rome 6:12-23 NIV**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. <sup>13</sup> Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

<sup>15</sup> What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!

<sup>16</sup> Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.

<sup>18</sup> You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. <sup>19</sup> I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. <sup>20</sup> When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul is not talking about magic in this letter. He doesn't think that once someone is baptized all desires of the flesh go away. However, he does challenge those who wish to believe that they can claim belief in Jesus as the Christ, be baptized, and then go on acting the same old selfish way. When a person chooses to be baptized, s/he is choosing to die to sin, the kind of self-centeredness the lack of belief in God brings about, the kind of sin that the faithless of the world present. Baptism is the transition between existences: the former is the old, sinful life, the water is the tomb in which we are buried with Christ, and the new is life within the community of the holy ones. The stages of RCIA are

hinted at in Paul's writing: the initial separation from old allegiances to non-Christian ways through inquiry, a period of standing at the thresh hold when a person is neither outside nor fully inside the community of believers, and finally the ritual passing into full acceptance through the baptismal bath.

Our culture is similar to Rome in the time of Paul because its inhabitants were quite focused on self-indulgence, greed, and material possessions. Many members of the community were being neglected, and rulers were often egotistical and ruthless. This was not the kind of community the Christians were called to create. Paul wanted the Christians to be intentional about not participating in the sin of disbelief. He wanted them, (and us for that matter), to think of themselves as dead to sin, meaning that actions outside the will of God were not even a possibility. They were to live in Christ Jesus, choosing life in all situations, physical and spiritual. A person who lives for Christ will naturally avoid sinful behavior and will promote reconciliation, healing, and communion. It is not magic, it is the nature of conversion – giving things over to God in prayer while making daily choices inspired by Jesus' love.

#### **Gospel: Matthew 10:40-42 NIV**

<sup>40</sup> "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. <sup>41</sup> Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. <sup>42</sup> And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."

Jesus has been talking to his apostles about the life of a disciple; this is a teaching for all followers of Jesus, especially for those who would go out in his name to spread the gospel message. Last week, he prepared them to stand firm in the face of persecution and possibly even martyrdom. He told the disciples that the greatest sin would be to give in to unbelievers by denying their relationship with him, especially if it was merely to save their physical lives. In denying God, one might preserve his life, but he will surely lose it to grief or guilt or the mistrust it would create within the community. Better to claim God and allow the presence of God to flourish in the soul of the living community, even if your testimony ends up costing you your physical life.

In a similar way this week, Jesus is preparing his followers to deal with family members who will undoubtedly not agree with their new found faith and attempt to disown them. Family was the foundational element in the Jewish societal structure. Families were generally large, consisting of the patriarch (father) and all his married sons and their families who lived in a honeycomb-like structure called an *insulae*. Privacy really did not exist in the village. To choose to leave the

security of the family, the village, and the land was tantamount to death in that culture. Someone who claimed to follow Jesus could very easily have been judged a heretic or a dissident. The reaction would be to set the person apart. Orthodox Jews would be unable to accept the followers of Jesus and families would be rent.

Jesus did not want his disciples to recant their belief in him as the one sent by God to bring about the kingdom just because their family members did not understand. Disciples had to be able to deal with different kinds of death; separation from one's family would have been a real emotional death. This is what Jesus had in mind when he referred to his followers "losing their lives for his sake." As a comfort for those who experienced separation from their blood family, Jesus created a surrogate family whose bond was in him. This was crucial for the members of Matthew's community who faced this very situation. Baptism became their public commitment to care for each other as if they were blood kin. The followers of Jesus died to their former lives when they left their families, land, and livelihood, and began a new life after baptism in the community of his followers. Like the extended Jewish families they had left, the early Christians saw themselves in opposition to all the other groups who threatened their identity or sought to weaken their attachment. For the sake of survival, they placed their trust primarily in the other members of their newfound faith family.

In contrast to the family members who refused to believe in him, Jesus points out that one who extends hospitality (or corporal acts of mercy) to one of his followers, whether prophet, righteous one, or seeker (meaning a child or someone who is totally dependent on others), will receive the reward God has prepared for the righteous one to whom the kindness is shown. This helps explain the choice of today's first reading. In the catholic Christian tradition, we often call these rewards the "fruits of the Spirit": joy, peace, love, friendship, kindness, forgiveness, the ability to maintain hope despite suffering .... These fruits become the ideal marks of the Christian community.

#### **Taking it to heart:**

**YOUTH:** as you listen to music this week, identify three songs that focus on selfishness and self-centeredness. Then identify three songs that talk about putting others first. Email me at [blumlwa@gmail.com](mailto:blumlwa@gmail.com) with your finds.

Discuss this statement: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his or her life for my (Jesus') sake will find it."

In what way is Jesus inviting you to lose yourself, to let go of selfishness?

If you were baptized as a child, have you made a more mature commitment to care for the other baptized people of your community as if they are blood kin?

List ways the Jedi or Marvel characters are like the early Christian community?

**Mindfulness** (set aside five minutes. breathe and read through three times. Which words or ideas hold energy for you? What images and feelings emerge in your imagination?)

“This is the spiritual art of detachment, which is not taught much in capitalistic worldview where clinging and possessing are not just the norm but even the goal. You see how trapped we are.

I promise you that the discovery of your True Self will feel like a thousand pounds of weight have fallen from your back. You will no longer have to build, protect, or promote any idealized self-image. Living in the True Self is quite simply a much happier existence, even though we never live there a full twenty-four hours a day. But you henceforth have it as a place to always go back to. You have finally discovered the alternative to your False Self. You are like Jacob awakening from sleep and joining the chorus of mystics in every age. “You were here all along, and I never knew it!” he says (Genesis 28:16). He anoints the stone pillow where this happened and names it Bethel, or “the house of God and gate of heaven” (28:17–18).<sup>4</sup> Jacob then carries the presence with him wherever he goes. What was first only there is soon everywhere. The gate of heaven is first of all in one concrete place, better if carried with you, and best when found everywhere. That is the progression of the spiritual life.” — **Richard Rohr, Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self**

***Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry and Eucharist***, is a declaration of the consensus achieved by Lutherans and Catholics on the topics of church, ministry and Eucharist as the result of ecumenical dialogue between the two communions between 1965 and 2015.

II. STATEMENT OF AGREEMENTS: **Preservation of the Church and Union with the Saints** (9) Catholics and Lutherans agree that the church on earth is indefectible, because it is and will be preserved by the Holy Spirit in all its aspects essential for salvation. They share the certainty of Christian hope that the church, established by Christ and led by his Spirit, will always remain in the truth fulfilling its mission to humanity for the sake of the gospel. (10) They furthermore agree that the church on earth is united with the community of the saints in glory. **Eschatology and Mission** (11) This perspective gives rise to agreement that the church on earth is an anticipatory reality, on pilgrimage and expectant of reaching its final destination in God’s ultimate gathering of his people in their entirety, when Christ returns, and when the Holy Spirit completes the work of sanctification. (12) But Catholics and Lutherans agree as well that the church on earth is mandated to carry out a mission in which it participates in God’s activity in the world by evangelization, worship, service of humanity and care for creation.

## Anamosa Community Blood Drive

Tuesday, July 7th 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
St. Paul Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall.

Sign up online at [bloodcenter.org](http://bloodcenter.org) or with Trevor Hulett at [thulett@fmbank.biz](mailto:thulett@fmbank.biz)

\*\*\*Please make an appointment.

**Walk-ins will not be allowed** to make sure that social distancing guidelines are met.

As a special THANK YOU, all donors will get a \$5 gift card of their choice!

**Forks and Friends Community Meals:** Carry-out meals will be served on June 25th at the East Door of the Anamosa United Methodist Church from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

Forks and Friends will return to its regular once-a-month schedule in July with a picnic in the park (Wapsiana, by the pool). Dinner will be served on Thursday, July 23, from 5-6:30.

### New Rules:

1. NO MASK, NO MEAL!!
2. Line will form at the east end of the pavilion.
3. 1 person will get meals for all members of your party.
4. Food will be served by volunteers. NO DINER will touch food until away from the serving line.
5. There will be limited seating in the pavilion so feel free to bring lawn chairs or blankets for use in the park or take food home.
6. Hope to see you there

If this goes well in July we will repeat it in August on our usual 4th Thursday.

In case of inclement weather, there will be carry-out only at the Methodist Church.

## St. Paul Office Hours

Lois: M-Th 9-2; F 9-12  
Nancy: M, W, Th 9-12  
Kaileen M-F 6:00-9:30 pm (summer hours)

Hours Open

## St Paul Staff Emails and Phone Numbers

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Please call us if we can be of assistance. PLEASE leave a message if we cannot answer. We will return your call ASAP. We may be separated, BUT we are not alone!