



Forks and Friends group will be providing packaged meals EVERY THURSDAY EVENING between 5 and 6 PM until further notice. Meals may be picked up at the East door (parking lot) of the Anamosa United Methodist Church.

Jones County Food Bank: To donate money, checks should be written to Jones County Community Food Bank and mailed to 105 Broadway Place, Anamosa IA 52205. Checks written to HACAP cannot be donated to the food bank! Julie Finn at HACAP is the only one working at this time. **They are in need of peanut butter, cereal or canned soup at this time.**

Wayne Zion has a page with Jones County Food Banks. <https://waynezion.org/>

Apostolic Assembly Church, food pickup times: Every 2nd and 4th Saturday 10AM-12PM Drive in, tell them number in your household, they will put bag in your vehicle.

Camperships are still available. Please email CYFM if you have any further questions or to inquire about a Campership for your child.



The 2020 Census data touches everything, impacting funds for education, health care, food programs, our representation in Congress and more.

- It's quick and easy. The 2020 Census questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete.
- It's safe, secure, and confidential. Your information and privacy are protected.
- If you need help filling out your census online please contact a family member with a computer to guide you through it.
- <https://my2020census.gov/> or call 884-330-2020. #2020Census

If you have any questions you can call me and I will help direct you to the information you need. Lois O

Prayer Concerns: For all facing issues from the corona virus: sickness or social isolation. (send prayer requests to stpaulanamosa@gmail.com; include your name, prayer recipient name, and family relationship)

St Paul Staff Emails and Phone Numbers

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

If you have computer or electronic access but are not sure how to find the St. Paul services, communications or Zoom meetings, please call Lois who will help guide you to the proper locations or help you find the assistance you need.

Introduction: Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world.

First Reading: Acts 17:22-31 NIV

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.

²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

²⁹ "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

By chapter 10 of Acts, Luke has moved the Christian proclamation from Peter's role in Jewish Jerusalem to Paul's role in the wider Gentile world. As Paul makes his way to Rome, he stops in Athens to preach the good news. This Areopagus (hill of Ares) was near the Parthenon, the city's primary temple to Athena, and to the temples of other Greco-Roman deities including Ares. Paul's speech follows several Sabbath debates with the Jews of the city but is now framed to convince several of the Gentile groups including polytheists, Stoics, Epicureans, and admirers of classical poetry about the truth of Christ's resurrection. Paul is clever, drawing in the Athenians by first complimenting their religiousness before challenging the object of their belief by revealing some of the aspects of the God who raised Jesus from the dead. Unlike their fickle gods who demand sacrifice and play with humans like puppets, the one God of all people originated in the one ancestor seeks their repentance so He can more fully love them. God is not found in buildings, rituals or idols made of metals, but is found in the cycles of nature, the loving hearts of humans, and is as close as breath. God is acting on their behalves, not judging their ignorance but seeking their loyalty in righteous knowledge. All people are united in their groping for surety and security, and God wants to be found. They can come to know God through Jesus the Christ but they need to listen to the witnesses, like Paul. The resurrection is for all people; the Gentiles are included too! Paul

wants the Greeks to be free from the frustrating laws under which they are living in order to receive the gospel freedom offered through Christ.

Psalm 66; 8-20 NIV

⁸ Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard;
⁹ he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping.
¹⁰ For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver.
¹¹ You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs.
¹² You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.
¹³ I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to you—
¹⁴ vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble.
¹⁵ I will sacrifice fat animals to you and an offering of rams; I will offer bulls and goats. ¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.
¹⁷ I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue.
¹⁸ If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;
¹⁹ but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer.
²⁰ Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!

Second Reading: The First letter of St. Peter 3:13-22 NIV

¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷ For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. ¹⁹ After being made alive, [C] he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— ²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in

all, were saved through water,²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God.^[d] *It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,²² who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*

The author is writing to Christians who live in a primarily pagan culture in an attempt to lift their spirits and support them in their daily struggles. Perhaps you have heard stories from people who: live in marriages where one spouse is not a faith-filled person and makes it difficult when the other tries to live his or her faith; exist in workplaces where others are openly hostile about faith and religion; belong to a group of “friends” who continuously mock their beliefs. So it was for the Christians living as “resident aliens” in Asia Minor in the middle of the first century after Christ.

In today's reading, Peter encourages them to be examples of the living Christ by responding with gentleness and reverence to those who mock, insult, defame, or malign them. Rarely is the gospel promoted when Christians lash out in defense against those who question or ridicule. By the year 60, Peter had seen enough that he knew what helped and harmed the spreading of the Kingdom. His encouragement was to respond out of love, just as the Lord did consistently during his trials and hardships. By doing this, people will not only hear Christians speak about the source of their extraordinary hope, but they will come to know it intuitively by watching the way Christians behave. Peter believed that people will come to know Christ by being around loving Christians.

Gospel: John 14:15-21 NIV

*[Jesus said to the disciples:]*¹⁵ “If you love me, keep my commands.¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

There are two levels on which we can grapple with this gospel reading for further insight. The first is at the level of Jesus and his followers. This “Farewell Discourse” is being delivered at what we call the Last Supper, Jesus final meal with his family of faith. Jesus has already told his disciples that he will be killed, and they are bewildered. In typical Jewish literary fashion, John puts Jesus' words in about six different combinations, all basically saying the same thing to calm the disciples' fears and misgivings about the future: I will not abandon you; I will be with you through Holy Spirit (RUAH); you have this memorial meal around which to gather in my name; you will see me in other believers.

The second level of understanding has to do with the author, John. He was writing to an audience of Christians in about 90 CE. Historians tell us that the Jews had permanently barred from the meetings at the synagogues those who followed Jesus the Nazorean because they were considered a heretical group. Of course, this infuriated the Christians who still saw themselves as intimately connected with the Jewish tradition. Many of them were members of devout Jewish families. Now what were they to do? Some had to choose between their blood families and their newfound family who believed in Jesus as Messiah. This situation was the impetus for John's gospel. John was angry at the Jewish leaders and it comes through in his teachings about Jesus. In John's gospel, Jesus replaces the old Jewish cultic rituals, the high priests, the Temple, and the Law. Christians (John's community) become the new Israel and the Temple built of living stones. These ideas were borne out in one phrase contained in today's gospel reading. According to John, Jesus was the first Advocate who promised to ask his Father to send another Advocate when he was gone, the “Spirit of Truth” whom the world cannot accept.... While this was true, John was implying that all those who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah are lacking the fullness of truth. The unbelievers will not be able to accept the activity of Holy Spirit because they do not see it, just as they did not recognize Jesus whom they crucified. According to John, Jesus went on to say that those who live in the Spirit will keep his commandments. The implication is that Jesus' commandments carry great authority and will meld the 10 commandments from Mt. Sinai, the Jewish Law and the Jewish leadership tradition into God's will.

Taking it home:

Jesus' commandment was to “love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus loved us by giving himself completely away in sacrificial love. In what ways have you fulfilled his commandment to love?

Can you recall a time you were maligned for following your faith only to have the person who maligned you put to shame at a later time for their disbelief?

Listen carefully: what is the Spirit of Truth telling you about the world we live in and your participation in it?

Recall the last time you cited Holy Spirit as the reason for your hope or ability to trust.

Have you ever been the reason someone changed her or his life for good? What was stronger: what you said or the way you acted around that person? Perhaps it was a combination of both.

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?)

“If you look at the history of heretics who are condemned, their transgression is normally about issues of authority, priesthood, administration of sacraments, and “Who’s got the power?” I cannot think of anyone who was ever burned at the stake for not taking care of the widows and orphans, or for any issues of orthopraxy.” – [Richard Rohr, Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi](#)

“One of the great surprises is that humans come to full consciousness precisely by shadowboxing, facing their own contradictions, and making friends with their own mistakes and failings {and addictions}. People who have had no inner struggles are invariably both superficial and uninteresting. We tend to endure them more than communicate with them, because they have little to communicate.” – [Richard Rohr, Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life](#)

And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. Acts 17:25

Something worth Pondering:

Five basic reasons for the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* from Edward Gibbon’s book by the same title, published in 1788:

The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis for human society;

Higher and higher taxes: the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace;

The mad craze for pleasure, with sports and plays becoming more exciting, more brutal, and more immoral;

The building of great armaments when the real enemy was within – decay of individual



If you want to be a little more intentional and traditional about the bread you use when breaking bread in your domestic church (home), try this recipe for unleavened bread.

COMMUNION BREAD RECIPE

1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour

1/2 cup white flour

1/4 tsp salt

3/4 tsp baking soda

MIX THESE TOGETHER...THEN ADD:

2 heaping tsp oil and MIX...THEN ADD:

3/4 cup cold water

3 Tbs molasses/honey (I use 1 1/2 Tbs of each)

KNEAD 2 minutes on a floured surface

DIVIDE into 3 or 4 equal parts

ROLL into 6-7" rounds (thin)

MARK with a cross

BAKE at 350* for 10-12 minutes on ungreased cookie sheet (let cool, place in baggie, freezes well)