



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN MESSENGER

April
2016

Volume 17 Issue 4

My wife and I have been coming down to Merced for one year as of March 15. While I have covered most of the work expected of an interim pastor, there is one area which I purposely laid aside to be addressed. It however must be addressed now as you begin the call process.

Having served as a pastor in four churches for almost 40 years at the time of my retirement, I have a sense of what pastors look for in a calling congregation as they pray and deliberate a call to a congregation. Most pastors will look at the spiritual health of the congregation in regard to their stewardship. Please don't quickly jump to the "money" issue when I mention stewardship. You see, to be a good steward means to be a "healthy" follower of Jesus Christ and that requires us to assess this multi-faceted subject far beyond our financial health. By the way, the Bible mentions possessions and finances hundreds of times. Apparently, the subject must be important for our life.

Another area a pastor will examine when considering whether a congregation is serious about their mission, is willing involvement of the lay people in the work of ministry. The Bible teaches in the letters to the Corinthians and Romans that God blesses each believer with gifts and abilities so that they may use them for God's kingdom work. Part of the responsibility of the pastor is to help individuals discern what their gifts may be and how they can be used for the work of the church.

Another area which a pastor often examines is the spiritual health of the people of the congregation. Are the people hungry for the Word? Sometimes that can be determined by how many folks are in regular Bible Study.

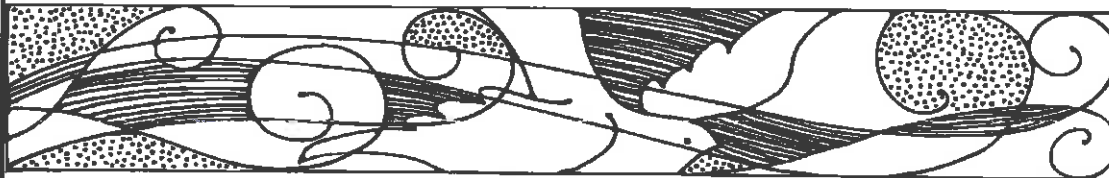
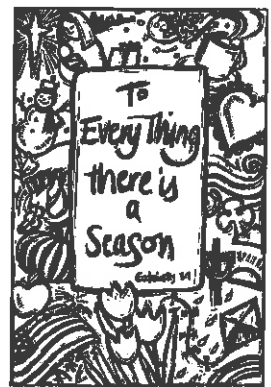
If a pastor is considering a call to a congregation, these are some of the areas affected by the stewardship of the congregation which he may likely be praying and thinking about. So, I will be addressing the topic of stewardship in the days ahead.

Finally, on a somewhat unrelated matter, I will be holding two or three open forums with a completely open agenda. The purpose of the forums are to simply let me hear your feedback and evaluation of interim work accomplished thus far and perhaps yet to be done, along with any other questions you may have of me about anything at all on your minds. Plan now to attend an open forum on Sunday, April 24 at 3:00 p.m. or Wednesday, May 4 at 7:00 p.m. If needed, another one will be scheduled.

Pastor Mick

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JOY OF HARVEST MINISTRIES

2916 N. McKee Road • Merced, CA 95340 • Cell Phone: 314-203-6582

Ch: 209-383-3301 • Fax: 209-383-3642 • dxiong@stpaulmerced.com

HMong Language School

HMong Language School has been back in session since March 5th. We have forty students registered for this season. Again, these are students ranging from 1st grade thru 12th, with a couple of Kindergarteners. Only ten of these students are Christians. Our weekly attendance, so far, is somewhere between thirty-five to thirty-eight students. Praise God that He continues to bring more students to learn HMong and Jesus as HMong Language School continues.

HMong School Outdoor Easter Service

Students, Parents, and Relatives Getting Ready to Hear Vicar Doua during Easter Service

On March 19th, we celebrated Easter here at HMong School. The students, their families, and relatives came to worship together and heard Vicar Doua proclaim the true meaning of Easter. The Non-Christian parents marveled when they learned that Easter is about Jesus' triumph over death to save sinners, and whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. They had always thought Easter was about the bunny and eggs, just like many other people. Wow! What a perfect opportunity to witness Christ to the people. We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to water them so they may grow and one day they may come to be in relationship with God through Jesus.



Also, on that same day, our HMong students had the opportunity to sing for the CNH LWML Zone 3 Rally here at St. Paul. These children continue to amaze me with their wonderful voices and how perfect their HMong is when they sing songs praising the Lord.

I ask that you please continue to be in partnership with me in prayers. Together let us continue to lift to the Holy Spirit our HMong students and their families. We pray that one day they will come to confess Jesus as their Lord and Savior and soon to be in worship with us here at St. Paul.

In Christ,

Sue Xiong
HMong Language School Director

sxiong@stpaulmerced.com

651-216-8457



HMong Students Singing for CNH LWML Zone 3 Rally at St. Paul

ST. PAUL PRESCHOOL HAPPENINGS

by Angelique Faulkner, Preschool Director

April at the Preschool

Most of the busyness of the school year is over. During the month of April we get to relax and enjoy the spring season as we continue on our Core Knowledge curriculum and refining our skills that we have learned throughout the year.

Spring will no doubt be a part of our learning this month as well. Science will be coming to life as some of our friends will be learning about how flowers and veggies grow. It is also time to start planting our preschool garden! Mr. Ramirez made us a garden box last year and we are so excited to use it this year. Growing our garden will lend itself to learning about bugs, the importance of bees and helper bugs like ladybugs. Our preschoolers love bugs!

We praise and thank God for each of our children and His blessings upon on our school.

In His Name,
Ms. Angelique

NEWS AND NOTES FROM ST. PAUL SCHOOL

April 2016

By Amy Mello, School Principal

What a blessing the teachers, families and friends of St. Paul Lutheran School are! Our 16th Annual Dinner and Auction was a huge success thanks to the efforts of our families and the generosity of our guests. It was a gala affair as we "Roared into the 20's" and the Pavilion was transformed into a beautiful ballroom with many dressing in period costumes.

We were fortunate to have some of the school's founding families in attendance: Terry Pevsner, Laura Livesay and Mary and Jerry Stillan. Jerry allowed me to share a few memories of the building period, and how it was such a dedicated group spending many hours of volunteer time to build our current building. There was such a commitment to the vision of having a Lutheran school. I am honored to keep that vision moving forward with the continued support of our church family.

Each year at the auction, we pause and remember Brenda Mognis and her dream to offer scholarships to needy families who have a desire to offer their children a Christian education. Her daughter, Courtney, who will graduate from Merced High this spring, spoke and shared Brenda's vision. Through our "fund-a-need" campaign we were able to raise over \$35,000 to go toward our scholarship program. If you were not able to attend, but feel called to donate to Brenda's Scholarship Fund please do. These contributions directly impact families wanting to have their children at St. Paul Lutheran School!

Thanks to our auction chairpersons, Meka Willis and Kristi Vincelette, and their hard working committees, we were able to raise a total of over \$140,000 to help support the school and preschool. We have big dreams but know that God's vision is even greater than ours. Thank you for those who were able to join us and support this year's auction.

PRESIDENT'S NEWS

Happy Easter St. Paul Congregation Members, Families and Friends

He has Risen Indeed!

As we have been experiencing many changes the last two years, I assure you we are still moving forward and working to connect people to Jesus. There are many updates I would like to share with you.

1. With the guidance of Joel Koerschen from CNH District office, the Mission & Ministry Board of Directors has completed its review and update of the constitution, bylaws and policy based governance of St. Paul Lutheran Ministries. We will be presenting the revised documents to you in a voters meeting coming soon.
2. Hopefully by the time you read this update, the Senior Pastor Call Task Force Team will have received a list of pastoral candidates to interview. A number of candidate names were given to the team by church members and those names were passed onto the district president. Please continue to pray for search process we are going through.
3. The 16th annual dinner auction for St. Paul Lutheran School was on March 19th at the Merced Fairgrounds Pavilion Hall. We "Roared into the 20's" and celebrated the 25th anniversary of the school and preschool at St. Paul. It was a huge success and thank you all for your help and support for our school ministry.
4. We have a new HMong pastor at St. Paul. We are blessed to have Pastor Doua Xiong leading the HMong ministry at St. Paul. He was ordained and installed on April 4th. Continue to keep the HMong ministry in your prayers as they work out in the mission field.
5. The Harvest Dinner is back. St. Paul has the opportunity to work with a local chef to cook the turkeys needed for our dinner celebration. More details about the dinner will follow. We are looking for one or more of you to take the lead of this dinner. We can use all of your help to bring back this wonderful holiday tradition to St. Paul.

God is good, God has a wonderful plan for us and God Bless you and your family.

In Christ,

Paul Cook – Mission & Ministry Board of Directors - President



Our NEXT VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION WILL BE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13th FROM 7-8 P.M. AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH LIBRARY, 2916 N. MCKEE RD. MERCED.

**SIGN UP FOR PROJECTS AT 8 P.M. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED YOUR ORIENTATION AND ARE LOOKING FOR A PROJECT.
LOOK FOR THE HABITAT SIGN IN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY**

Brush with Kindness applications are available online and we will be doing more projects as we have volunteer available. Homeowners, who aren't physically able to do small projects, should call us at 726-0850.

If you have some expertise to share and would like an application so an interview can be arranged to be considered to be a board member, please check our website hfhmerced.org or call 726-0850 and have one mailed to you. We are looking for someone interested in fundraising, computer skills and legal expertise. Each member of our board is responsible for a task, so it is a working board and together we work as a team to accomplish the goals we have agreed upon.

If you would like to visit one of our board meetings to see if this is what God has planned for you to do, please call me to add you to our agenda.

Jan Sorge, President & Church Relations Chair, 209-769-1884 or merced-hostel@juno.com



You're invited to an
Open Forum
with Pastor Mick
on
Sunday, April 24 @ 3 p.m. or
Wednesday, May 4, @ 7 p.m.



This is your opportunity to talk to Pastor Mick and ask him any questions you might have.

Meetings will be held in the parish hall and snacks will be provided.
If necessary, a third forum will be scheduled.
Plan now to attend!



Thank You to all Thrivent Choice Dollar Donors!

We would like to thank every Thrivent member who has designated St. Paul Lutheran Church as the recipient of their Choice Dollars.

Please remember to continue to support St. Paul through your Choice Dollars in 2016. So far this year we have received \$975. Contact Thrivent by calling 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted, say, "Thrivent Choice." The money that we receive through your donations, help fund a variety of projects around the church.

Church Archives



**Back in History
By Theresa Lund, Historian**

*Taken from the April 2009
newsletter*

In August 1968, Keith Lund, delegate from St. Paul attended the International Youth Gathering at Perdue University. 160 youth from the California Nevada District made a bus pilgrimage (actually four buses) to La Fayette, Indiana. In route the delegation visited Lutheran campus facilities and scenic points of interest. Four thousand youths attended business sessions, Bible studies, encounters with world problems and fellowship under the theme "Gathering With Joy". A giant birthday party was held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the youth group known as Walther League. This assembly dissolved the Walther League forming an organization known as Lutheran Youth Fellowship. This subsequently resulted in the creation of SPY (St Paul Youth) in Merced.

Confirmation was held March 30, 1969; Paula Alexander, Angie DePriest, Nona Mills, Hans Schmiedl, Kathy Steinhoff, Kent Christensen, Lori Fulton, Bobby Lund, Jeannette Sigl and Chris Weed became members of St. Paul.



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

(LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE)
also called Lutheran Women in Mission.

MISSION PROJECTS CHOSEN BY DELEGATES FOR
2014-2016

ALL PROJECTS WERE PAID – ALL THANKS TO GOD!!!

New projects will be voted on by our delegates at our Convention April 15-17 in Visalia.

KEEP SAVING YOUR COINS AND PUT THEM IN A MITE BOX – OR IN THE BIG MITE BOX IN THE NARTEX – EVERY COIN COUNTS TO COMPLETE THESE PROJECTS!

ALL WOMEN in the congregation are invited to attend our monthly meetings. The next meeting is Monday, APRIL 18, 2016.

Devotions " They Are Precious In His Sight" and the Quarterly Bible Study Topic "Saying The Right Words to our Barren Sisters in Christ" will be shared by all. We meet in the church library from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Mite box and freewill offerings are taken.

Every woman is welcome to join us and get to know your sisters in Christ.



2016 LCMS YOUTH GATHERING

In Christ Alone

Held every three years, the LCMS Youth Gathering provides thousands of youth and adults the opportunity to come together as a community of God's people to learn more about Jesus Christ, the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity. The gathering will be July 16-20 in New Orleans.

Since March 2015, the youth have been working to raise funds for the trip. We would like to give you an update on the funds related to the trip.

Youth Gathering Funds

Youth Account	\$2,500
Funds Raised & Donations	\$3,750
Potential Funds available up to	<u>\$2,300</u>
Funds Available	\$8,550
Goal for Funds needed	\$10,000

As you can see, we are closing in on our goal!

The youth has raised funds through projects like Garden/Clean-up, Parent's Night Out, Easter Breakfast, Lunches, Bake Sales

They are also planning the following upcoming fundraisers.

- Complete the Garden Car Wash
- Spring Cleaning Yard/Garage at your home.
- Mother's Day Gift
- Karaoke Night—scheduled for Friday, April 8th, 7-9 p.m. in the parish hall. Plan now to attend this fun evening.**

If you have any suggestions for other possible fundraisers, please contact Marilyn Anderson at 631-8965.

Thank you to everyone who has helped the youth raise funds for the trip to New Orleans. Your continued support will be greatly appreciated.

Elizabeth Boyer, Anya Davidenas, Josh Good, Mikayla Good, Jacob Lundin and Xufing Xiong will be attending from St. Paul. Katherine, Rebecca and Josiah Lange will be joining the group in New Orleans.



BIBLE CLASSES AND SUNDAY SCHOOL



HMong Bible Classes
10:15 a.m.

Bible Song (Sunday School)
9:15—10:15 a.m.

HMong Women's Bible Class
6:30 p.m.

Meet in the Parish Hall and walk over to the classroom in the OMC.

Bible Class
Wednesday 10:30 a.m.
Church Library

Both classes meet on Sunday in the library.

BIRTHDAYS

April 4	Gary McKenzie
April 5	Lucille Hiller Lori Harstad
April 6	Mikayla Good Scott Chastain
April 8	Grace Mello
April 9	Bob George Marion West
April 19	Gary Tessmer
April 21	Jerry Parker
April 22	Taylor Vannest
April 25	Keri Good
April 26	Kent Harstad
April 29	Mary Wallace

ANNIVERSARIES

April 5	Bill & Lucille Hiller
April 9	Syl & Sandy Braa
April 22	Gary & MaryIn Tessmer
April 27	Phil & Mary Rahn

BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

April 1	Danielle Blaylock Malissa Blaylock Noel Blaylock Samantha Blaylock
April 3	Kathy George
April 9	Gwen Keller
April 12	Carolyn Daberkow
April 15	Mary Ann Haarberg Jeff Christensen
April 21	Karen Kelleher
April 25	Ben Davidenas
April 31	Barbara Hayes

Also baptized in April: Elaine Kock, Heidi Hayes, Gary Tessmer, and Keri Good.

**February 2016 Servants****GREETERS**

April 3 (8:45) Marj Hoffmann
 April 10 (8:45) Karen Kelleher
 April 17 (8:45) Irene & Russ Pearson
 April 24 (8:45) Greg & Sandy Bishop

COMMUNION SET UP

Greg & Sandy Bishop

COMMUNION SERVERS

April 3 (8:45)
 April 3 (10:30)
 April 17 (8:45)
 April 17 (10:30)

READERS

April 3 (8:45) Jacob Lundin
 April 3 (10:30) Josh Good
 April 10 (8:45) Anya Davidenas & Elizabeth Boyer
 April 17 (8:45) Irene Broughton
 April 24 (10:30) Xufeng Xiong

**HOSTS ARE NEEDED FOR
 OUR FELLOWSHIP HOUR
 AFTER WORSHIP.**

**PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE
 CALENDAR ON THE WALL
 BY THE KITCHEN COUNTER
 OR CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE
 383-3301.**



**THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY
 TO VISIT WITH GUESTS AND ALL OUR CHURCH
 FRIENDS.**



2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Habitat Yard Sale & HMong Rummage Sale 9:00 am HMong Language School 9:00 am
3 8:45 am Worship 9:15 Bible Song 10:30 Worship 4:00 Ordination / Installation of Vicar Doua	4 Elders Meeting 6:00 p.m. Library	5	6 Bible Class 10:30 a.m.	7	8 Karaoke Night 7-9 p.m. Parish Hall	9 Young Life Yard Sale 7-12 HMong Language School 9:00 a.m. OMC
10 8:45 am Worship 9:15 Bible Song 10:15 HMong Bible Study 10:30 Worship 11:45 HMong Worship 6:30 Confirmation	11 CWU Library 9:30 a.m.	12	13 Bible Class 10:30 a.m. Habitat Orientation 7 pm Library	14	15	16
17 8:45 am Worship 9:15 am Bible Song 10:15 HMong Bible Study 10:30 am Worship 11:45 Hmong Worship 6:30 Confirmation	18 LWML 10:00 a.m. Library M&M Board Meeting 6:00 Library	19	20 Bible Class 10:30 a.m.	21	22	23 HMong Language School 9:00 a.m. OMC HMong Family Fun 12-2 Parish Hall
24 8:45 am Worship 9:15 am Bible Song 10:15 HMong Bible Study 10:30 am Worship 11:45 Hmong Wor- ship 3:00 Open Forum 6:30 Confirmation	25 Habitat 6:30 PM Library	26	27 Bible Class 10:30 a.m.	28	29	30 HMong Language School 9:00 a.m. OMC
			WORSHIP SERVICES 8:45 a.m. (Traditional) 10:30 a.m. (Contemporary) Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays 11:45 a.m. HMong Worship Service			

April 2016

St. Paul Lutheran Ministries
2916 N. McKee Rd.
Merced CA 95340



“Connecting People to Jesus”

**www.stpaul
merced.org**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

Mission: “Connecting People to Jesus”

MINISTRY STAFF

Interim Pastor
Rev. Mick Ista

HMong Ministries
Pastor Doua Xiong

School Principal
Amy Mello

Pre-School Director
Angelique Faulkner

James & Heather Nardello
Bible Song Leaders

MISSION & MINISTRY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Paul Cook
Treasurer: Marilyn Anderson
Secretary: James Nardello
Mary Rahn, Kathy George
Barbara Christensen, Dick
Homann

Elders: Kent Christensen,
David Lundin, Scott Chastain
Ed Mentz, Jeff George

How to reach us:

2916 N. McKee Rd
Merced CA 95340

Phone:
Church: 209-383-3301
Pre-School: 209-383-5672
School: 209-383-3302
FAX: 209-383-3642

E-mail:
pastormista@stpaulmerced.com
churchoffice@stpaulmerced.com
dxiong@stpaulmerced.com
amello@stpaulmerced.com
marianne@stpaulmerced.com
afaulkner@stpaulmerced.com
Website: www.stpaulmerced.org

