

The Caller

September 2014



First Christian Church
of St. Paul
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

The Newsletter of
First Christian
Church-St. Paul



Life @FCCStPaul
Summer 2014



Open.

Words from the Pastor

By Dennis L. Sanders



There's an episode

of the animated series *The Simpsons*, that shows the First Church of Springfield. The church sign usually has some witty saying on it in keeping with the series. But this time, it only had one word on it: "Open."

The joke is that the church is to be many things, but simply saying it's open doesn't convey anything other than...being open.

At the time of this writing, I am only a few days from a Saturday meeting of the church, where we learn our past and gear up for the future. I'm curious to find out the oral history of the congregation and I'm

wondering what the future holds.

But I also want to talk about how we can be open in our own lives and as a community.

One of the things we here at First Christian-St. Paul are doing is trying to make ourselves better known in the surrounding communities of Mahtomedi, White Bear Lake and Maplewood. We've done a lot over the past year. We've joined a coalition of churches that volunteer at Hope for the Journey, a family shelter in Oakdale. We even hosted a fundraiser for the shelter this past summer, where over 60 people came to hear wonderful music provided by Luke Swanger and Zach Peterson. We've raised money for our local food shelf, the Mahtomedi Area Food shelf. We participated with our sister Disciple congregations sharing a booth at the Twin Cities Gay Pride Festival. We have worked to be a witness here in the East Metro and this is only the beginning.

But I'm also hoping we can be more open in our own lives. There is a lot of talk about the number one reason people join a church is because someone invited them. At the end of the day, what matters, what makes people join a faith community and follow Jesus is a personal invitation.

This is where I would urge you all to invite people to church. I could do that, but I won't. What I am asking is that you all pray to God to be open, open to where God leads.

I'm getting ready to preach this Sunday about the call of Abraham. Here was this 75-year old man who heard God's voice and left everything he knew on faith. Jacqueline E. Lapsley, an Old Testament professor at Princeton Seminary, wrote in a commentary on this text in Genesis, that Abraham is remembered not because of what he did, but because he was open to God.

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Happenings

Life together at First-St. Paul

Lectionary Bible Study

Lectionary Bible Study is back! We meet on Wednesdays at 7PM. Join us as we take a look at the passage that will be preached on that coming Sunday.

Monthly Potluck

It's a Potluck! Join us September 14 after worship in the North Basement.

Long Range Planning

What does First Christian-St. Paul want to be when it grows up? Join us as we take the first steps in discerning and dreaming what our congregation will look like for the next 130-plus years. Come and take part, Saturday, September 13 from 10:00AM-3:00PM.

Tell Me A Story

During the month of September, we will be using the Narrative Lectionary for preaching. This lectionary tries to tell the whole story of the Bible in a four year cycle. Let us know

what you think of it. You can learn more about the Narrative Lectionary by going to narrativelectionary.org.

Church Board Meeting

The September meeting of the board of First Christian will meet on Tuesday, September 16 at 5:30. All are welcome to attend.

First Read

One result of the Fall Planning Session on September 7 is a desire to have a book study. We will start having a book study in October. Called First Read, we will have a one-time meeting talking about a specific book. We will start sometime in October with the book, Making Sense of the Bible by Adam Hamilton. You can purchase the book on Amazon or a local book store. Check back in the October issue of the Caller for the date and time.

THE CALLER

The Newsletter of First Christian Church of St. Paul, Minnesota

650 Wildwood Road
 Mahtomedi, MN 55115
 (651) 779-3033
fccstpaul.com

Staff

Dennis Sanders: Supply Pastor.
 Chris Wogaman: Interim Musician.
 Luke Swanger: Interim Musician.

First Christian Church-St. Paul is a Christian community centered in faith, mission and fellowship.

Happenings

Life together at First-St. Paul

Trunk or Treat!

First Christian will host a Trunk or Treat event in the parking lot of the church on October 31. First Christian people will decorate their cars, filled with candy to give to local children. More information will be in next month's Caller.

Support Music at First!

Everyone enjoys having live music again. We are thankful for the gifts that Chris Wogaman and Luke Swanger have brought to our community. Please consider donating to our Music Fund to allow for this ministry to grow. If want to donate by check, please write "Music Fund" in the memo line.



On September 13, members of First Christian-St. Paul gathered for a Long-Range Planning retreat. Tabitha Isner, an ordained Disciples of Christ minister, facilitated the discussion.

Several exercises helped members look at the past history of the church, where the church is at present and what the church might look like in 2019, five years from now.

The day began with Morning Prayer led by Pastor Dennis Sanders. The service gave people time for quiet and reflection in preparation for the day ahead. The event closed with communion and prayer by Tammy Rottschaefter, the Associate Regional Partner

The Road to 2019

Minister for Minnesota and North Dakota in the Christian Church in the Upper Midwest.

Maybe the most important exercise was the time spent in groups thinking about what the congregation would look like in 2019. While there was some concern about the viability of the congregation, no one said the church would no longer exist at that time. On the contrary, people expected the church would grow in many ways.

There will be another retreat in a few months time to put together a solid vision for the congregation.

While the future is uncertain, people left feeling hopeful that God was not done working through "the little church on the hill."

Open...and Affirming

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First-St. Paul will discern become and Open and Affirming Congregation to LGBT persons

Sometime in July, I got a call from Mark Johnston who is the Executive Director of Gay and Lesbian Affirming Disciples (GLAD) the L G B T advocacy

group in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). He had noticed that the congregation participated along with First Christian-Minneapolis and Spirit of Joy Christian in Lakeville in a booth at the 2014 Twin Cities Gay Pride Festival. He wondered if the First-St. Paul would be willing to see if it wanted to be Open and Affirming, something that First-Minneapolis and Spirit of Joy already are. Being Open and Affirming means that as a church you are publicly welcoming LGBT persons into the life of your local congregation. I told Mark I would bring this to the board of the congregation. The board was interested, in fact they were so interested, they just wanted to become Open and Affirming at that moment. However, there needed to be space for everyone in the congregation to speak on this issue before an

official designation could be made. In further talks with Mark, he sent documents that would be of help to the congregation which I would pass along to a church member who in turn would lead the process.



As pastor and especially as a gay pastor, it isn't ethical for me to lead this process. I have to be the pastor of all the congregation, not just those who agree with me. Sue Rengstorf has graciously accepted to lead the process and I placed her in touch with Mark.

I pray that God will give us ears to hear and eyes to see as we discern this very important issue. Know that I am praying for all of the church at this important time.

-Dennis Sanders, Pastor

Prayer Requests September 2014

In Our Prayers

- Jeff Halseth’s mom, Barbara, has moved to hospice care.
- Vern Stenback has a chronic lung condition, cards to: Johanna Shores, 3220 Lake Johanna Blvd., Room 336, Arden Hills, MN 55112, Phone 697-2314.
- Charles Moore’s nephew, Charlie, treated for cancer.
- Prayers for Michael, Marlys Larson’s son as he deals with throat cancer.
- John Paulson’s dad.
- Dorothy Cordes and Edna Lundgren other homebound members.
- Dave Peightal, Tom Knobel, and all driving trucks.

- Missy Stone’s great nephew, Carter.
- For Jeff Halseth’s Sister-In-Law who is being treated for cancer.
- Those seeking work.
- Prayers for David Neilsen, a friend of Charles and Linda Moore who is dealing with total kidney failure.

If you have a prayer concern to share leave a message by phone at (651) 779-3033 or by email at fccmahtomedi@gmail.com.

If you have something you would like to have in the newsletter, please contact Pastor Dennis. Submissions can be sent to fccmahtomedi@gmail.com. Please send your items by the 20th of the month.

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“Blessing did not come from what Abraham did; he became a blessing to others because he was open to the on-going relationship God offered him. In accepting that blessing, he could become a blessing to others,” she writes.

So, as we contemplate and discern the future of this church, let us be open to where God is leading us. Because sometimes being just open is sometimes the best thing we could be.



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First Christian-St. Paul Calendar

September 2014

Wednesday, Sept 3

1:00PM Pastor's Hours until 5:30PM
7:00PM Bible Study

Sunday, Sept 7

9:30 AM Worship
9:45AM Children's Bible Study
10:30AM Fall Planning

Wednesday, Sept 10

1:00PM Pastor's Hours to 5PM
7:00PM Bible Study

Saturday, Sept 13

10:00AM Long Range Planning Retreat

Sunday, Sept 14

9:30 AM Worship
9:45AM Children's Bible Study
10:30AM Potluck

Tuesday, Sept 16

5:30PM FCC Board Meeting

Wednesday, Sept 17

7:00PM Bible Study

Sunday, Sept 21

9:30 AM Worship
9:45AM Children's Bible Study

Wednesday, Sept 24

1:00PM Pastor's Hours to 5PM
7:00PM Lectionary Bible Study

Sunday, Sept 28

9:30 AM Worship
9:45AM Children's Bible Study

Did you know you can support First with your offerings by giving online? Online giving allows for a specific dollar amount to be deducted automatically from a checking or savings account. You can set up online giving either as a one-time donation or a recurring gift. Online giving is not only easy, it's also safe and secure. This option helps individuals and families remain faithful in their giving even when they are out of town or unable to attend a weekend service.

Try it out! To give online go to www.fccstpaul.com/give.

THE CALLER September 2014

First Christian Church of St. Paul

Faith. Mission. Community.

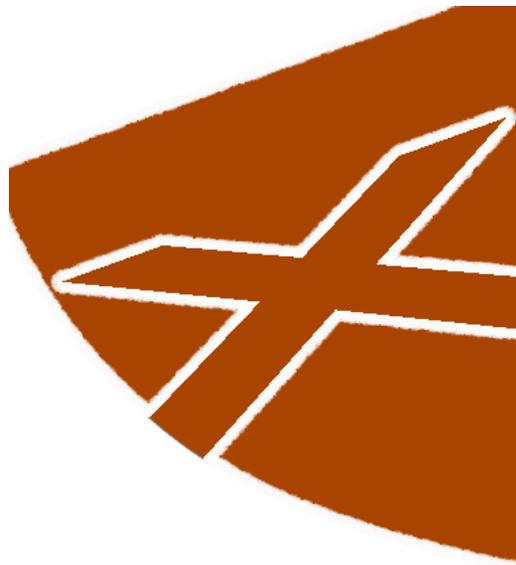
Dennis Sanders- Stated Supply Pastor

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Web: fccstpaul.com

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Join us for worship
Sunday at 9:30am.



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