



St Paul's of German Lake

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Pastor Karl's Ponderings

Some random thoughts . . .

There have been very few periods of true peace and prosperity throughout human history. As I was reading the Sunday paper, it struck me that we live in a world full of worry. Every morning we wake up to a host of problems and issues that seem unresolvable. I spent a little time making a list of just some of them. I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of it all...the COVID pandemic, a major war between Russia and Ukraine, supply chain problems, inflation, and a recession that looms on the horizon. Then there are claims that climate change is causing fires, drought, and more severe weather. Issues of racial inequity have leaped to the forefront of our awareness in the wake of the police shootings of George Floyd and others. Mass shootings have become an almost daily occurrence with the associated disagreements over gun control. Extremist groups seem to be lurking everywhere. As we look to our elected leaders for solutions, all we see is political gridlock. The recent confusion following the Supreme Court decision regarding abortion rights has left many people rejoicing while many are weeping.

I sense a deep emptiness in people's hearts. There is frustration and helplessness at the overwhelming size and complexity of these problems. There is a sense of despair that we cannot have civil conversations around them because they are so emotionally charged and have become so divisive. A cloud of sadness and grief hangs over us as we mourn the loss of a sense of unified purpose. Even as Christians, we interpret the scriptures differently, sometimes leading people away from the Gospel. Many people are unsure who to trust...afraid to send their children to school, the movies, or the mall and are always on "high alert" and thankful when we make it safely through another day.

We are experiencing more skin ailments, digestive, sleep, cardiac, cancer, and mental health issues than ever before. Our spiritual health has suffered as fewer people attend church while the shelves of the bookstores are burgeoning with self-help books. A growing sense of apathy and numbness is settling over us as we try to cope with the relentless anxiety we face. As William Butler Yeats once wrote, "too long a suffering makes a stone of the heart".

So, I have been wondering, "What word does the church have to offer in the face of all this chaos, confusion, and uncertainty?"

As our Bible study group worked its way through the Revelation of John, I was reminded that the details may be somewhat different, but this is nothing new. In the Exodus story, the

Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt. Then God intervened and freed them from Pharaoh's brickyard. When they were exiles in Babylon and Assyria...under the thumb of foreign rulers who tried to convert them to their way of living and worshipping, God intervened and brought them back to the Holy Land to begin to rebuild their lives. In the book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed an edict that everyone had to bow down and worship him. Daniel and his friends refused and were fed to the lions, and thrown into the fiery furnace, yet God intervened and protected Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar ended up worshipping the God who protected his servants who would not compromise their faith and belief. The Reformation was a mess before and after Martin Luther (for a good book about that, read [A Column of Fire](#) by Ken Follett). God entered the fray there, and the church eventually grew. Emperors, kings, czars, tyrants, and other leaders have always tried to take over the world by oppression and intimidation. Yet God has always intervened.

So, what do we do in our present circumstances? We live in hope...believing and trusting that God will, once again, intervene and bring about a new world order, a new heaven, and a new earth, even in the face of all appearances to the contrary. We pray often and love deeply...even those we disagree with.

As Paul wrote in his letter to the Colossians, "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so also you must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:12-17)

May we do just that...

Blessings,
Pastor Karl



Welcome! Welcome! Welcome!

On Sunday, July 31st, St. Paul's welcomed Alden Tuthill as the newest member of our church family through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. As his "adopted" family, please keep his parents, Travis and Amanda, in your prayers as they seek to fulfill their promises to guide Alden to delight in God's will and walk in God's ways. May Alden always know the warmth of God's love and care for him through all the twists and turns of life.

Music to Our Ears



It has been suggested that we include a little article each month about a favorite hymn. If you have a favorite hymn, you would like featured in this space, please send your suggestions to stpaulsofgermanlake@gmail.com or to kerydholm@gmail.com.

This month we are highlighting an old favorite with an interesting backstory.

The words to This Is My Father's World were written in 1901 by Maltbie Babcock and set to a traditional melody. In this case, it was a traditional English folk tune. Maltie Babcock was one of those unique people who was both a brilliant scholar and an engaging personality. He was an outstanding athlete, expert swimmer, and captain of the baseball team at Syracuse University. He also directed the university orchestra, played several instruments, wrote original compositions, and entertained his fellow students with his drawings and impersonations. In his spare time, he was an avid fisherman.

He could have followed any career path, but God called him to the ministry. His first call was to a small congregation in a beautiful part of upstate New York not far from Niagara Falls. Pastor Maltbie enjoyed hiking and running in the hills outside of town. He would often tell his secretary, "I'm going out to see my Father's world," and he would run or hike a couple of miles and lose himself in the beauty of nature. These adventures led him to write a sixteen-stanza poem...each verse beginning with the words, "This is my Father's world."

As is often the case with pastors, he was called to successively larger churches. His last church was the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City. His workload was enormous, and he found taking off on his walks more challenging. When he was forty-two, his church gave him a special gift...a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He boarded a ship for the trip overseas, but on the way, he contracted a deadly bacterial illness and died in 1901.

After his death, his wife gathered his writings into a book entitled, Thoughts for Everyday Living, which included "This Is My Father's World".

"For the world and all that is in it is Mine."

Psalm 50:12b

(Excerpted from "Then Sings My Soul" p.117)



informational packet with all you might need to know to become a member. Please join us on **September 11th at 10:30 ish!**

Have you been thinking about becoming a member of St. Paul's but aren't sure what you need to do to make that happen? If you're just waiting for the right time...or you're wondering what opportunities there are for you to become involved in the ministries here, we have the perfect opportunity for you. Following our worship **Sunday, September 11th**, Pastor Karl will be having a prospective member meeting. It's a time for us to learn about you and an opportunity for you to meet our council president, hear about our ministries, ask any questions you may have about St. Paul's, and receive an

Garden Goodies

In his book, Lake Wobegon Days, Garrison Keillor says that August is the only time the folks of Lake Wobegon lock their cars because, if they don't, they might come out in the morning and find their backseats full of zucchini! Has God blessed your garden with such a bountiful harvest that you can't eat it all? Are you wondering what to do with your bounty? Would you consider sharing your goodies with others?

We will have a table set up in the entry area of the church where you can bring your extra veggies. Anyone who would like to can take what they want from the table. Anything left over will be taken to the local food shelves during the week. This is one simple way that we, as a congregation, can share the blessings we have received from God with others.



Our dream is that next summer we can create a congregational garden...perhaps with raised beds...here at the church. The harvest from that garden will also be shared with members of the congregation and the local food shelves. Stay tuned for more information about how you can help with this project.



At Alden Tuthill's baptism we, as a congregation, promised that we would teach him the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. We promised to teach him the stories of the Bible

so that he would learn to trust God and know of God's love and forgiveness. The way we fulfill those promises is through Sunday school and Confirmation.

September, and the start of the school year, will soon be upon us. We are getting ready for this year's Sunday school and confirmation classes and would like your children to join us!



Classes will be starting on September 11th. Please register by responding to St. Paul's e-mail (stpaulsofgermanlake@gmail.com) or Brianna Hoffmann at bri@waletich.com or Pastor Karl at (kerydholm@gmail.com). Please include your child's name, grade in school, your name and telephone number.



When I was young, I always wished we could have school outdoors instead of being cooped up inside on those beautiful summer days. Perhaps you've wished the same thing about worship. Why do we have to be cooped up inside the sanctuary when we could be sitting out enjoying the beauty of God's creation?

Well, bring your lawn chairs, wear your hats and sunglasses! On **Sunday, September 18th** we are going to experiment a little with an outdoor worship. Following worship, there will be ice cream, popcorn and coffee for everyone. If it goes well (and there are certain to be a few glitches at first), and people seem to enjoy it, we will consider having more services outdoors next year. Who knows, maybe we'll attract a few fisher people from the lake!

If you don't have a lawn chair...or simply forget to bring one...we will have chairs available. So, come and join us!

HEAD USHER for August – Jill Steffen

We are looking for people to help with ushering duties and reading for the service. If you are interested, please contact Patricia Petersen at psvolney@gmail.com.

