

St. Paul's January Newsletter 2019



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
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⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

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2019
HAPPY NEW YEAR

St. Paul's Church is a community of believers in Jesus Christ committed to helping all people by actively practicing the Gospel in word and deed."

PASTOR'S LETTER

God is faithful. . . .

As we move into the New Year of 2019, we can dream about a “better life” with brave new challenges ahead, or we can dwell on the past and, perhaps, become a little disillusioned by personal defeats.

Often it is not easy to keep hopeful and optimistic in the circumstances that surround our lives. Many situations are painful and unpleasant. How often we wish that suffering would cease or temptation removed. “Why?” we may say. “Why does God permit us to experience so much sorrow?”

Someone has said that life should not be an endurance test, but it often is! Our patience is tried and tested and we may wonder “for what end?” There are no answers to many of life’s tragedies. Yet the choice is still ours either to give up and quit or prayerfully develop resistance to the pain of disappointment.

Let me share here an encouraging fact from Scripture: **We can be stronger than the disappointments and temptations that surround us.** St. Paul says it this way: **“God who is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with temptation will provide a way out so that you can stand up under it”** (1 Cor. 10:13).

The faithfulness of God in keeping this very promise is, indeed, one of the greatest of all gifts. We are now reinforced to meet and master any obstacle we may encounter. This faithfulness is nothing other than the assurance of a divine presence within us, and this assurance caused Paul, who endured a multiplicity of disappointments, to say, **“I can do everything through him who gives me strength”** (Phil. 4:13).

We would do well, therefore, to dream of a “better life” and eagerly look forward to the challenges of the New Year, for God would that we struggle with the obstacles placed before us rather than to “throw in the towel of defeat.”

We are stronger than we can ever imagine because God is in us to strengthen us each and every day. This is the confidence we have in our triune God, and this also is the truth that leads us through our disappointment to our ultimate victory in Jesus Christ.

A blessed New Year to all!

Pastor Schultz



Jan. 1 Kaibeh Makor
 Princess Makor
 Samuel Makor
 Jan. 2 Eva Ballah
 Cassandra Varfley
 Jan. 4 Evelyn Gonsalves
 Joseph Varfley
 Jan. 9 Yarkpawolo Makor
 Jan.10 James Darlington
 Elena Fenchel
 Jan.11 Danlette Norris



Jan. 14 Onu Stevens
 Dane Carthur Watson
 Jan. 15 Seaniah Ballah
 Jan. 16 Dawn Seitz
 Jan. 17 Robert J. Fruggerio
 John Mulbah
 Samantha Robinson
 Jan. 18 Nasya Watler
 Jan. 25 Claire Lamore
 Jan. 27 Grace Dauda
 Jan. 28 Ronald Rehbein
 Ralph Rehbein

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

DATE	READERS	COMM. ASSISTANTS	ALTAR GUILD	USHERS
6	Youth Jacob Mastrostefano	Bill Oehlkers Joe Norris	Mary Abbenante Hellen Miller	Leela Ballah Seaniah Ballah Solomon Paye Hardlyn Dauda
13	Kevin Riley Abiodun Adekeye		Mary Abbenante Hellen Miller	Rick Sinnigen Mack Makor Onu Stevens Andrew Mastrostefano
20	Rick Sinnigen Christopher Dauda	Joe Norris Rick Sinnigen	Mary Abbenante Hellen Miller	Kim King Bill King Dennis Kollie Helen Miller
27	Andrew Mastrostefano		Mary Abbenante Hellen Miller	Kevin Kehyei Dan- lette Norris George Dauda Grace Dau- da



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			2	3	4	5
6 <i>10:00 am</i> Worship Communion	7	8	9 GBARNGA MTG. 7:00	10	11	12
13 <i>10:00 am</i> Worship GLTC LUNCHEON	14	15 DEACONS MTG. 7:00	16	17 COUNCIL MTG. 7:00	18	19
20 <i>10:00 am</i> Worship Communion	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 <i>10:00 am</i> Worship	28	29	30	31		

MINUTES OF CHURCH COUNCIL

November 15, 2018

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Church Council was called to order at 7:04 p.m., on Thursday, Nov. 15, 2018, by President David Ballah. Present were: President Ballah, Vice President Corvah Akoiwala, Treasurer Dan Robinson, Secretary David Martin, Financial Secretary Donna Bucu, Chairperson of the Board of Finance Richard Sinnigen, and Pastor Leon Schultz. Also present was Dawn Nahlik. The meeting opened with a prayer offered by Pastor.

Approval of Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of the Oct. 18, 2018, Church Council meeting.

Treasurer's Report. Dan Robinson presented the Treasurer's Report for the period Jan. 1 through Oct. 31, 2018. Total income during this period was \$170,501.86 and total disbursements were \$160,241.67, resulting in net ordinary income of \$10,260.19. The balance of Memorial Funds as of Oct. 31, 2018, was \$248,088.25.

Pastor's Report. Pastor conducted the baptism of Nyanlor Angel Forkpa, daughter of Nyekeh Y. Forkpa and Kumba Sammy Forkpa, on Oct. 21, 2018. He also conducted a memorial service for Margarete E. Falconer on Nov. 12, 2018.

Finance. Rick Sinnigen reported that the Board of Finance met on Nov. 11, 2018, and approved the proposed church budget for 2018. Rick asked Dan to present the proposed budget to the Council, and he did so. The budget includes a 2% increase in compensation for Pastor, the church secretary, and the organist. This is in accordance with the District's recommendation. The amount budgeted for rubbish removal has been reduced from \$18,000.00 to \$7,200.00, reflecting the savings achieved due to switching from Republic Services to Rhode Island Waste Management. The cost of benefits for the secretary has increased from \$16,000.00 to \$17,310.00 due to an increase in rates. A new item in the budget is \$11,700.00 for sexton services. The Board of Trustees wish to engage J&L General Contractor, LLC ("J&L"), to provide 15 hours of sexton services weekly at an hourly rate of \$15.00 per hour (15 hours per week @ \$15 per hour x 52 weeks = \$11,700.00). These services will be in addition to the 4 hours per week of sexton services provided by Steven Nagbe who will be compensated at \$12.50 per hour (4 hours per week x @ \$12.50 per hour x 52 week = \$2,600.00).

David Martin observed that the proposed budget provided for 2% increases for Pastor, Donna, and Ron, but the amount budgeted for "Current Offerings" was not being increased from the \$165,000.00 figure in the 2018 budget. Rick responded that the figure was an estimate based on current and past offerings. David felt that by not increasing the amount budgeted for offerings the proposed budget conveyed the idea that salary increases could be given without members having to increase their offerings. **David made a motion to increase the amount budgeted for "Current Offerings" by 2% to \$168,300. The motion was seconded and passed. A motion was then made, seconded, and passed to approve the proposed 2019 Church Budget as amended by David's motion.** The Council agreed to schedule a Voters' Meeting for Sunday, Dec. 9, to present the proposed 2019 church budget.

Trustees. Chairman David Martin reported that the fence around the small parking lot has been repaired by J&L. An unknown vehicle had knocked down two sections. Gem Plumbing put a camera through the underground pipes which run from the men and ladies' rooms in the basement near the Carter Street stairs out to the street. These pipes were clear. Gem also put a camera through the pipe located beneath the school basement which carries water from the outside stairwell to the sewer connection on Carter Street. The pipe contained some debris which Gem blew out with a high pressure hose. This work is preparatory to the installation of a back flow valve to prevent flooding in the basement due to a sewer line backup. We have experienced two such floods in the last five months. On Nov. 6, 2018, someone kicked in the bottom of the parish hall door which leads to the courtyard. Nothing was taken from the church, and David and Donna made temporary repairs to the door. Because of this incident, the Trustees have decided that instead of modifying this door and also the exterior door to the left of the stage so as to make them fire code compliant, the doors will be replaced by metal doors which meet fire code standards. A down spout on the left side of the sanctuary has been replaced.

Deacons. Corvah Akoiwala reported for the Deacons. The Deacons met and discussed the status of the church directory and the feasibility of installing a projector in the sanctuary. Joe Norris is working on the directory. Pastor will be on vacation from Jan. 10 to Jan. 23, 2019. He is going to Liberia. Bill Oehlkers has agreed to conduct worship services on the two Sundays that Pastor is away.

Old Business. Alarm Charges. Dan reported that we have been notified that if we have one more false burglar alarm incident this year, the City will charge us \$150. President Ballah asked that the Trustees look into the problem of false alarms.

Nemotion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to grant the request and to waive the requirements of w Business. Our neighbor, Independence Health Services/Home Care, has asked to use the parish hall for their holiday party which will be held on either the 14th or 21st of December from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00. **Because they allow us to use their parking lot on Sundays without charge, a the parish hall rental policy.** David Ballah volunteered to secure the church when the party has concluded.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. with recitation of The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

David L. Martin, Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Nov. , 2018, Church Council meeting.

MINUTES OF
VOTERS' MEETING
Sunday, Dec. 9, 2018

A meeting of the Voters' Assembly was held on Sunday, Dec. 9, 2018, in the Sanctuary following the worship service. The meeting was called to order at 10:50 a.m. by President David Ballah, Sr.

Acceptance of Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the minutes of the Mar. 27, 2018, Voters' Meeting.

Proposed 2019 Church Budget. President Ballah asked Treasurer Dan Robinson to present the proposed 2019 church budget. Dan noted the following changes from the 2018 budget: 1) the amount budgeted for "Current Offerings" in 2019 is increased by 2% to \$168,300.00; 2) salaries for the Pastor, church secretary, and organist are increased by 2%; and 3) there are two new line items for "Sexton Services," one for \$11,700.00 to pay a contractor [J&A General Contractor, LLC ("J&A")] and one for \$2,600.00 to pay Steven Nagbe.

David Martin was recognized to speak about "Sexton Services." David explained that the Board of Trustees had requested funding for these services for three reasons: 1) litter needs to be picked up from the church grounds on a daily basis; 2) things happen during the week which require a sexton (e.g., floods in the basement, a door being kicked in); and 3) the existing Caretaker Program has not worked as well as the Trustees had hoped. Regarding the Caretaker Program, David said that while some Caretaker Team members were very conscientious about their duty Saturday, others were less so. He noted that on some Saturdays only one or two members of a team had shown up. The contract with J&A will require that J&A have a person working at the church three hours per day Monday through Friday at a cost of \$15.00 per hour. Steven Nagbe will work four hours per week at \$12.50 per hour. If the funding for both line items is approved, the church will receive a total of 19 hours per week in sexton services (15 hours from J&A and 4 hours from Steven). The Caretaker Program will be discontinued as of Dec. 31, 2018.

Erica Wallington asked if the sexton services would include insuring that the snow and ice was removed from the entrances on Sunday mornings. David responded that J&A's services would be provided only during the week but that he would ask Steven Nagbe if Steven would be willing to arrive early at church on Sundays to insure that the snow and ice is removed.

Bill Oehlkers asked Dan why there was nothing in the proposed budget for the New England District. Dan responded that this was clearly an oversight and that it should have been included. Accordingly, Dan said that the projected deficit for 2019 should be increased by \$8,500.00, the amount which should have been included in the proposed budget.

David Martin said that when the proposed 2019 budget was initially presented to the Church Council, the amount budgeted for "Current Offerings" was the same as in 2018 (\$165,000.00). At that time, David had suggested that this figure be increased by 2% (to \$168,300.00) because of the 2% raises for the Pastor, church secretary, and organist as well as the new spending for sexton services. Not to do, in David's view, would give the impression that this increased spending did not have to be paid for by an increase in offerings. The Council accepted David's suggestion and increased the projected 2019 offerings by 2% to \$168,300.00. David observed that to reach this target a member who gave \$10.00 weekly in 2018 should consider giving \$10.20 weekly in 2019; a member who gave \$20.00 weekly should consider giving \$20.40, and a member who gave \$30.00 weekly should consider giving \$30.60. To avoid dealing with cents, these amounts could be rounded upward to the nearest dollar.

Danlette Norris asked why there was nothing in the proposed budget for missions. David Martin responded that this item has not been in the budget for several years because the congregation has treated the Gbarnga Lutheran Mission (Gbarnga) as its mission and members make their contributions directly to Gbarnga.

Rick Sinnigen made a motion to accept the proposed 2019 Church Budget with the proviso that it include the \$8,500.00 for the New England District which had been inadvertently omitted. The motion was seconded and passed.

Other Business. Herb Jeschke said that David Martin should be acknowledged for the work he does at St. Paul's. Dan said that Pastor and Donna should also be acknowledged for all that they do. Danlette asked that Richleau Norris be thanked for his contributions, which include taking care of the lawn at no charge and bringing students to help take care of the grounds. The Voters voiced their agreement as to all these individuals.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m., with the recitation of The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

David L. Martin, Secretary

