



St. Paul's-The Springs United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Congregation having
Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

Our Church News

Sometimes in life, the extraordinary is right in front of us the whole time. For example, consider a simple poem written by a German pastor, Father Mohr, inspired by taking his regular walk in the snow-covered woods. Father Mohr liked the poem so much he showed it to his church choir director, Franz Xaver Gruber, who also fell in love with it and set it to music.



And so, on Christmas Eve 1818, the people in the tiny village of Oberndorf, Austria watched as Fr. Mohr played his guitar and sang this new carol. One day a visiting organ builder, Karl Mauracher, who was passing through Oberndorf heard the song and was so inspired that he asked for permission to take copy of the song with him.

This simple carol made its way into the hands of the Rainer singers who in 1839 performed "Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!" in New York City translating the title for the American audience as "Silent Night, Holy Night." This simple little carol began in a tiny little town and its powerful message of heavenly peace has crossed all borders and language barriers, having been translated into over 300 languages. The fact that "Silent Night, Holy Night" is such a popular carol is a reflection of the powerful and inspirational message of hope that the birth of Jesus in another ordinary little town represents to our very fragile world.

This continues to be a tough year as we continue to live with this pandemic where so many people are dealing with anxiety and uncertainty as they worry about housing, food, finances and their health. This has been a challenging year, but Christmas comes to remind us we are not alone. Jesus took on our flesh, walked in our shoes, lived with our struggles, fears, and heartaches but he didn't leave us there. The joy of this season is that Jesus gives us the strength and hope to walk through our struggles to the other side. More than that, as we are filled we find the strength and hear our call to expand this light as disciples of Christ such as:

- Fixing a dish or meal for someone in our community who is sick, disabled or needy; or, inviting them to share a meal with you.
- Taking a few minutes each day to envision a world of peace and reflect on what we could do to help make that happen in our homes and neighborhoods.
- Volunteering at the Interfaith Food Pantry on the 2nd or 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:00 p.m., or considering being a companion for One Big Tent.
- Taking an inventory of our possessions and thinking about what we could donate to Goodwill, the church rummage sale or give to someone in need.
- Making a commitment to grow as disciples as we increase our time in prayer and Bible study reflecting on and opening ourselves up to be used as instruments of Christ's hope and peace in even greater ways in the coming year.

My prayer is that we don't miss the extraordinary right in front of us. May we see that in an ordinary humble manger that so many people would have overlooked was born a great gift for all of us. An extraordinary gift that offers us new perspectives, changed attitudes, and a faithful way of living and moving through our world. May this Christmas season be a holy time as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Word made flesh, who is the promise of love fulfilled in Bethlehem, the gift of peace, and the future of hope for us all.

In God's Love
Pastor Tim



WORSHIP TIME

We are holding in-person worship on Sundays at 8:30 am and 10:30 am.

Due to Portage County's mask advisory: we recommend you wear a mask, whether you are vaccinated or not, to protect those who cannot be vaccinated due to age or other reasons while you are in our church building.

We will continue to live-stream our worship services on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/StPaulsUMC.Point or through our website stevenspointumc.org on Sundays at 10:30 am. Scroll down until you see the current live stream.

If you are not able to watch the service live on Sunday morning, there are several ways you can watch it later:

- All of our worship services are saved and posted on our Facebook page - www.facebook.com/StPaulsUMC.Point.
- Our worship services are also on Youtube. Just go to our church website – www.stevenspointumc.org and click on "Worship" from the drop-down menu of the "About" tab on the top of the home page. It will take you to our YouTube channel that has a collection of our worship services.



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE: A Service of Healing and Wholeness Sunday, December 19 at 3:00 p.m.

Christmas is a season filled with images of happy families and joyful people. However, not everyone feels this way. For some people, this season is a real struggle and they need the reassurance and comfort that our faith provides.

Perhaps you are grieving the loss of a loved one, struggling with an illness, or just needing some encouragement in this current time. Maybe you are wondering how you will get through the holidays. In this time, I will be offering a Blue Christmas Service to provide this comfort through reflection and meaningful music. I would invite you to please send me (tobrien@stevenspointumc.org) the names of those you are grieving, a brief description of a situation you are struggling with, or a prayer that you have and I will lift them up during the service.

We will be offering this service in-person in our sanctuary as well as streaming it live on our public Facebook page. I encourage you to come for this time of hope and renewal through this worship of healing and wholeness. Let us come to share in the good news of this season, "God with us: Immanuel!"



CHRISTMAS EVE

The following will be our Christmas Eve worship services:

- 4:00 pm Intergenerational/Family-Friendly Worship
(*"ABC's of Christmas"*)
- 6:00 pm Traditional Candlelight Worship with Chancel Choir and other special music



CHRISTMAS DAY FAMILY MEAL

December 25, 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

At "Memories" in Plover

2811 Plover Springs Drive

RSVP by December 20 @ 715/544-0336

Dine-In Serving: Turkey, Ham, Dressing, Potatoes/gravy, corn, desserts and beverage

Take-out Serving: Turkey, Ham, Dressing, Potatoes/gravy, corn - 1 meal per person (must be present to get a meal)

No charge for the meal/No deliveries



CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

Children's Faith Formation for children in 4K through 6th grade is offered on Sunday mornings during our 10:30 am Worship Service.

We will follow the Stevens Point Area Public School District's recommendations for face-coverings during children's faith formation time. Teachers and children are asked to wear masks during our Children's Chapel activities.

We will not be offering Children's Chapel activities on **December 26**.

If you have any questions about our Children's Faith Formation, contact Laura Courtright at lauracourtright@gmail.com or 715/340-4523.



YOUTH GROUP CLOSSES 2021 WITH FUN, FELLOWSHIP, SERVICE, AND WORSHIP

December has been a great month for our Youth Group! The Youth helped make 20 fleece scarves for the Warming Center and Kids Closet; missions of Evergreen Community Initiatives. Some friendly competition followed with a fun Gingerbread House Contest--the Youth are so creative and put together amazing houses, then happily shared some treats and fellowship with the Chancel Choir at the end of

the evening. Our last get-together of 2021 included a time of prayerful reflection on the Nativity and some Christmas party fun!

Youth Group will not meet on December 22 and 29. We look forward to our return on Wednesday, January 5, and welcome ALL Youth in grades 7-12.

Find us on Instagram at [stpaulsumcyouth.point](https://www.instagram.com/stpaulsumcyouth.point).



TAKE NOTE

The Church Office will be closed on the following dates:

December 27

December 31



YEAR-END CONTRIBUTIONS

All 2021 contributions or prepaid 2022 contributions should be turned in by Sunday, **December 26**, in order to count toward this year's giving.

FINANCE CORNER

Greetings!

Thank you all so very much for all your earned contributions towards the debt - the HVAC system, parking lot & the roof. We have just paid those off in full!!! This is such a wonderful feeling to be able to do this & it is with your help. Thank you so much! I will be stopping your ACH draw for the 1st of January for those. Again, I can't say thank you enough!

Please remember your pledge cards. This is very important to help keep our church running.

I hope you all have a blessed Christmas & New Year!

May God Bless your day~

Joy Pennell
Dir of Finance

If you have any questions, please send me an email at jpennell@stevenspointumc.org.

	Nov 2021	Year-to-Date	To-Date	Avail To Us **
General Fund -	\$ 21,304.50	\$ 357,530.51		
Building Fund -	\$ 188.00	\$ 2,196.00		
Capital				
Campaign/Debt -	\$ 2,284.25	\$ 90,930.25	\$ 171,328.06	\$ 97,528.06
Loose Coin -	\$ 163.11	\$ 1,450.88		
Expenses -	\$ 29,640.65	\$ 351,954.84		
Net =	\$ (8,148.15)	\$ 7,771.67		

**This means that this difference of \$73,800 is locked down by the bank until the last 18 months of the loan; to be used at that time for the loan payments for the last 18 months.

November's Loose Coin was for Holiday Baskets - if you'd like to still contribute, mark your envelope accordingly
December Loose Coin is for MMDC



PLEASE REMEMBER TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR MINISTRIES

You can give by one of the following:

1. You can mail your check to the church office at 600 Wilshire Blvd., Stevens Point, WI 54481
2. You can use ACH. If you don't have that set up & would like to, please contact Joy Pennell and she will help you with that.
3. You can use Bill Pay through your bank. This is a free service through your bank. They draw the money from your bank account and send the church a check as you direct them to, whether that be weekly or monthly. This way would save you on postage.
4. You can go to our website www.stevenspointumc.org and there is a button that says "Donate". That will take you through the steps to use your credit or debit card. If you continue down on that page, you can also text on your phone to give.
5. Giving App - It's very easy! Using your phone, download GivePlus+. It's free. Then look up the church by entering our zip code & follow the instructions from there.

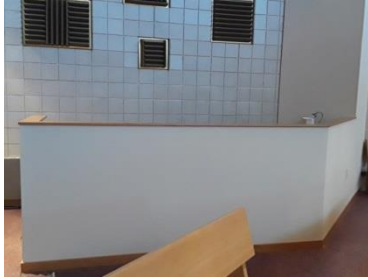
If you have any questions or problems, please let Joy Pennell know.
jpennell@stevenspointumc.org or 715/340-5991.

COINS OF COMPASSION



The Coins of Compassion for December will be in support of *Midwest Mission Distribution Center*. The money collected will support this center that provides relief supplies to people throughout the United States and the world. Be sure to label your envelope so your coins/currency will be deposited into the correct account. If you are

submitting a check, please write "MMDC" in the memo portion of the check. Thank you for supporting this important ministry.



Our New Audio/Visual Booth is Ready! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you have been in the sanctuary lately then you have seen our brand new audio/visual booth that was skillfully built by Jim Martin. This new booth will allow us to better monitor the sound and visuals for worship. Also, with our streaming equipment that was just installed, we will be able to stream the service to Facebook with better visual and sound quality. A huge thank you to Jim Martin,

Kent Laabs, Ernie Taylor and Wilfred Fang for all their help in installing this equipment.

Now that our Audio/Visual booth is done, we could use more volunteers to help run it. You don't need to have a detailed understanding of technology and we will provide all the training you need. The equipment is actually very easy to operate. Also, there will be another person to work with you so you will not be in the booth alone. If you are interested in helping out with our worship services in this way, please talk with Yvonne or Pastor Tim.



SENIOR TIME BY SENIORS

Senior Time by Seniors will meet again on 12/21/21 in room J in the Discovery Zone. Any senior is welcome, you don't need to be a member of the church. We meet from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Coffee and water are provided. During the 1st hour, we'll be sharing holiday traditions from our childhood or our immediate family. We then eat a sack lunch, with fruit provided. After lunch we'll play Mexican train dominoes. Masks are encouraged. Come, join us and have fun. Please be aware that if the public schools are cancelled, our activity is also cancelled.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:
Barb Munson 715-340-2368 barbm72446@gmail.com
Janet Carter 715-252-6875 wisconsinjanet@yahoo.com



GOING AWAY THIS WINTER?

If you will be gone for a time this winter please let the office know when you will be gone. If you would like any communication sent to you, please give us the address of where you will be staying. We can also send any communication via email.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. This will help the church to not have to pay for return postage on items sent while you are away.

Any questions, contact the church office (715/344-3557).



GROWTH GROUP STUDIES

Tuesdays

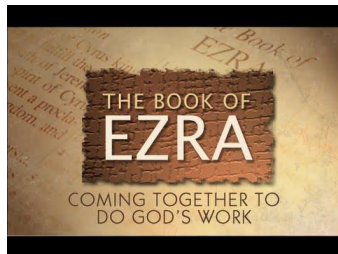
7:00 pm - Women's Bible Study - Ezra (via ZOOM & In-Person) (Contact Audra audraobrien931@gmail.com if you would like to join)

Wednesdays

6:00 pm – Watch for more information on upcoming studies.

Fridays

12:00 pm - Fly High - "*Revelation: Extravagant Hope*" by Margaret Feinberg (via ZOOM & In-Person) (Contact Yvonne ychojnacki@stevenspointumc.org if you would like to join)



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Women's Bible Study is meeting on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm. We plan to meet in a hybrid manner each week by using Zoom (room information is below) and in-person (Thomas Coke Room) at the church to give as many as possible the opportunity to join our class.

We continue studying the book of Ezra. As always, girls and women of all ages are welcome - as with experiences bring perspectives.

See you all on Tuesday at 7:00 pm at the church or on Zoom.

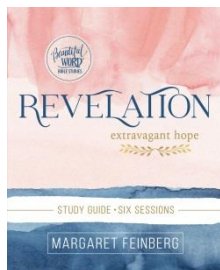
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9273218018?pwd=NHh3Uzc0RHBRWmk2NG9qWGZlZFJkdz09>

Meeting ID: 927 321 8018

Passcode: 5986234

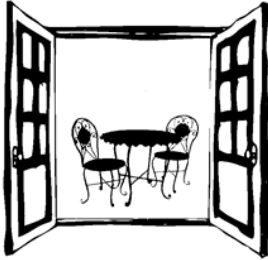
FLY HIGH BIBLE STUDY



Fly High is studying "*Revelation: Extravagant Hope*" by Margaret Feinberg. During this study, we will dig into Revelation, which reminds us of God's power and promises during times of suffering and persecution. In this final book of the Bible, God indeed saved the best for last, and in its pages, he gives us the one thing we all long for--hope, extravagant hope.

Fly High meets on Fridays at 12:00 noon. The cost for this study is \$11.50 and you can pick up a book in the church office.

If you have any questions, contact Yvonne Chojnacki (715/344-3557) or ychojnacki@stevenspointumc.org.



OPEN DOOR BISTRO

The Open Door Bistro ministry is up and running with some changes. The meal service period was extended by 15 minutes and the schedule is changing from a weekly service to twice a month on Wednesdays throughout the school year. The Bistro ministry will serve a meal in Fellowship Hall from **5:15 – 6:00 pm** on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. A brochure listing service dates and other program details is available at the connection center.

Mark your calendars and come with your family or friends to enjoy the fellowship and simple meals together. Masks recommendations will be in accordance with church guidelines but wearing of masks is highly recommended for unvaccinated individuals except while eating. Hand sanitizer will be available for all diners to use as they approach the self-service food line.

Next Open Door Bistro: January 5 Meal: Casserole Night

Although we have an initial service team roster, additional volunteers are always welcome and needed to help fill vacancies that may occur, provide relief coverage as a substitute worker or to lighten the workload as an extra volunteer. Please consider if you could help with dish washing, storing clean dishware, general clean-up, offering the blessing, providing a casserole, or helping with food prep. If you would like to serve in any of these ways or need further information, please contact one of the Bistro team leaders listed below.

We look forward to seeing you at the Open Door Bistro.

Sandy Shave (715) 592-4346; sandra.shave@gmail.com
Barb Munson (715) 341-1208; barbm72446@gmail.com
Judy Hill (715) 341-2323; len.hill@uwsp.edu
Stephanie White (715) 347-0367; stephsdesknp@gmail.com
Wendy Miller (715) 239-5088; millers3110@gmail.com
Anette Bernsteen (715) 343-1462; lbernsteen@charter.net



ONE BIG TENT

**“Connecting the church to the community through
the love of God”**

For the past couple of months our joint ministry of reaching out to our neighbors in need known as One Big Tent has been operating out of our offices in downtown Stevens Point. This ministry which we are doing cooperatively with other congregations in Stevens Point and Plover has helped over 40+ individuals. Here are just a few numbers to describe our ministry.

- Since September 1st
- o We have distributed 52 gas cards and 25 grocery cards
- o We have helped 15 families with rent assistance totaling over \$3,700 who were at risk of being evicted

- o We have referred 6 people to the Rent-Ready program helping them fill out the application to be included in this program that helps move people from homelessness to finding a stable home
- o We have referred 5 people to the Portage County Financial Wellness Program as we continue to work with them on budgeting
- o We have referred dozens of people to local non-profit agencies such as Salvation Army, CAP services, ADRC, Emergency Services, and Operation Bootstrap helping them fill out applications and following up when they run into roadblocks.

Behind each of these numbers is a relationship we have built as we have taken the time to listen to their stories and done what we can to walk with them in their need. Our main goal is always to connect them with our local non-profit agencies and community resources that exist to support people when they are struggling. However, when no one can help then we are the safety net to keep people from crisis situations like homelessness.

I would like to ask for your support of this important ministry in our community in the following ways.

- 1) Please pray for those in need as we work with them and for the companions and clergy who give their time to help find solutions.
- 2) Consider if you would like to be a companion talking with and working with people to help them. We offer training and only ask people to volunteer for a 3-4 hour shift once a week. Also, we pair you with a clergy person who is there to support you. For example, I (Pastor Tim) volunteer every Wednesday with a member from Beloved Community from 8:00 a.m. to Noon. If you are interested, please talk with Pastor Tim
- 3) When it is appropriate, we do provide financial support to help with rent assistance, car repair, buying medicines, etc. We work with people to identify what they can contribute and we make up the difference with what they owe. We could use your financial support to help us meet these needs. If you would like to make a financial contribution, please make the check out to our church and put, "One Big Tent" in the memo line.

Thank you for your prayerful and generous support of this important ministry to make God's love real to all our neighbors.

Pastor Tim



SCRIP FUNDRAISER

NOTE: We will be discontinuing our scrip fundraiser after the beginning of the year.

However, we will continue to offer our Kwik Trip cards as a fundraiser.

If you have any questions, please let me know. You can contact me by email at jpennell@stevenspointumc.org or

at 715/344-3557.

Thank you!



HELP WANTED

We are looking for a few people who might be interested in helping on occasion to do a couple of tasks when Dave, our custodian, is away. Some of these tasks can be done during the day, while others can be done during the evening. We would like to put a list together of those interested and then when the need arises contact you to see if you are available to help.

If you are interested in helping with this opportunity, please contact the church office (715/344-3557) and your name will be put on the list.



MEET & GREET

We have begun meeting after our worship services for a time of fellowship. We are opening the opportunity to bring treats to the congregation. There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board outside Hazel Calkins Hall for anyone who wishes to provide a simple treat after either the 8:30 am or the 10:30 am Sunday service. You would also be responsible for set up (snacks & drinks) and clean up as needed. Dave makes the coffee, but you would need to wash up and put away the coffee pots, clean up the snacks and drinks area and wipe down areas and tables as needed. We are cutting down on the amount of food that

is being served as this is intended to be a light snack.



LAY SERVANTS NEEDED

Do you want to grow as a follower of Jesus and better understand how to use your gifts in ministry. We're all called to proclaim God's wonder and works. Answering the spiritual nudges to put faith in action and represent Christ in our daily lives present unique opportunities to serve God and neighbor. As unique as you and your spiritual gifts. The Basic Course for Lay Servant Ministries guides you to discover your gifts of caring, leading and communicating and put them to use. "We can all find a calling in one or more of these areas of ministry," write the authors. "The church depends upon its laity to carry out its mission and purpose. ...Many journeys of deepening faith and service in ministry have begun with this [book and] class." Sessions take you through thoughtful reflection on what it takes to make a congregation an outpost for mission and transformation and the role you can play - even if public speaking isn't your gift.

Please prayerfully consider being part of this ministry. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Pastor Tim at 715/344-3557 or tobrien@stevenspointumc.org.



BROWN PAPER BAGS

Operation Bootstrap is in need of brown paper bags. If you have any you would like to donate, please bring them to the church and place in the south coatroom. If you have any questions, please call the church office (715/344-3557).



FAIR TRADE COFFEE SALE

The following Fair Trade product is on sale:

French Vanilla - 12 oz. ground - \$3.00 ea.

All other Fair Trade products will be at regular price.

You can find these items in the church office. Call the church office (715/344-3557) if you would like any of these items pulled for you and placed in the church exchange box outside of the church building for you to pick up.

WAYS TO HELP

We are all looking for ways to share God's love in this anxious time. Here are some samples of things you can do during this time:

Interfaith Food Pantry – We have the grocery cart in between the entrance doors on the south side (school side), Tuesday through Thursday, 9am-3pm. Here is a list of their urgent needs: Canned Fruit, Canned Vegetables, Cereal, Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Peanut Butter and Jelly. You can also send a check to the office with "Interfaith Food Pantry" in the memo portion and we will make sure the funds go for this cause.

Call church people or neighbors – Just a friendly phone call can make someone's day.



TAKE NOTE

If you or a loved one are in the hospital and would like a visit from Pastor Tim or a lay person, please contact the church office at 715/344-3557. If this happens on a weekend, please contact Pastor Tim (262/388-4635).

OUR TWO CAMPUSES

St. Paul's-The Springs UMC
600 Wilshire Blvd
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715/344-3557

Campus Ministry - UWSP
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715/340-4523