

July 2025

Issue 131

Volume 2

Sharing Good News

St. Paul's UCC Delano, Minnesota



Birthdays

07/04 Judy Crosby
07/13 Chuck Rieder
07/23 Shala Holm



Dates to be Noted

07/01 Book Study (see page 3)
07/04 Fourth of July
07/06 Communion
07/20 Council Meeting
(following fellowship)
07/26 Wright/Sherburne Pride Festival
(see page 3)



Fellowship Hosts

07/06 Worley
07/13 Specht
07/20 Bailey
07/24 Open



Pastor's Note: July 2025



"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord

- Psalm 33:12

This month, we celebrate the birth of our nation. I've seen many pre-printed bulletin covers for Independence Day bulletins use the above passage, to remind us of the religious roots of the American Experiment. It is a time when we are all called to renew our patriotism and show our love of America. Yet, showing this love of country seems to have become increasingly difficult for those to the Left of both the religious and the political spectrums. There is a reason for this, going back to the 1960's.

For those of you who remember that tumultuous era, the nation was badly divided over the Viet Nam War. Those who supported the war invoked patriotism as the reason to support US involvement. They argued that to oppose US war efforts were inherently unpatriotic, in a spirit dating back to the First World War (and sharpened further by World War II). Many (but not all!) religious conservatives supported that war and argued that the passage in Romans 13 on respecting the authority of the civil government required Christians to support the war and young men to sign up for the draft. These Christians also saw that war as being part of an America crusade against "godless Communism" – the same spirit that saw the words "under God" added to the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1950's. The quotation, "My country, right or wrong" became the slogan of this side.

Those in opposition to the war came from several different groups. Some were opposed to war in general for philosophical reasons, embracing the "Make love, not war" popular beliefs of the time. Some saw the Viet Nam War itself as yet another case of American imperialism and openly supported some form of socialism (though few *approved* of the Soviet Union or Mao's China!). Some simply saw no point in fighting for another nation and giving up the joys of life in America. Some appealed to their Christian faith to oppose the war. This group was made up of both more traditional pacifist churches and more liberal Christians. "Conscientious objectors" became a controversial status.

During this time, Christian liberals and political liberals pretty much abandoned "patriotism" to the Right. In many liberal circles, saying anything positive about America triggered a barrage of examples of American wrong doing. In throwing out "my country, right or wrong" thinking, they threw our love of country too! At best, loving one's country was considered *passe*. At worst, it got one accused of being a closet fascist!

This was a poor and short-sighted decision on the part of liberals. We are experiencing the consequences of this decision today. In more liberal denominations, such as our own, military chaplains are often treated as second-class clergy (I've seen it!). Pacifism is considered *de rigueur*, except when it came to armed liberation movements. And the Far Right has been beating liberals over the head with being "un-American" ever since!

I think those of us who consider ourselves to the liberal side need to reclaim patriotism; not as a blind approval of whatever a particular US government does, but in an embracing and a standing up for the principles on which the American Republic was founded. Has our nation always lived up to those principles – of course not! But it is precisely those principles that allow us to critique our nation's actions! The idea of the 'inherent worth of the individual' is itself the product of the combination of Christian values and Enlightenment Rationalism that guided the Founders of this country.

From the point of view of Christian faith, "patriotism" is a non-issue. The Bible is silent on it (I made the point in my June 29th sermon that, in the Old Testament, love of nation was based on Israel's covenant with God; in the New Testament, Christians never expected to have their own nation before Jesus returned, and then *God* would run it!). But to the extent that the founding principles of the Republic are compatible with Christian values, there is no problem with loving our country! Heaven knows, Christian values helped give shape to American values (mixed with a healthy dose of rationalist tolerance!).

So this July 4th, I encourage you to remember the principles on which the American Republic was founded. Let us openly embrace them and using them as we work to make "love of neighbor" an ever-greater reality in our country.

God's Peace,

Pastor Kent

**Wright-Sherburne Pride Festival
Saturday, July 26 - 11am to 4pm
Ellison Park, 913 E. River St.
Monticello, Minnesota**

At this difficult time, our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters need our support. We will have a booth again this year at the Festival where we will be representing our church as Open and Affirming with an Extravagant welcome to all.

We need help with the following:

- Early set-up
- Help with close down
- Booth volunteers from 11 AM to 4 PM

A general meeting will be held prior to event.

No amount of help is too little.

Please contact either Karen or Mike.

(Karen Deitering 612.639.7945, karen.deitering@gmail.com; Mike Hagerty 952.270.3500, mvhagerty@charter.net)

August Cultural Dinner

On Saturday, August 16th St. Paul's will host a Cultural Responsive Dinner celebrating the country and people of **Bangladesh**. Bangladesh is located to the east of India on the Bay of Bengal, and is a South Asian country marked by lush greenery and many waterways. Its Padma (Ganges), Meghna and Jamuna rivers create fertile plains, and travel by boat is common. On the southern coast, the Sundarbans, an enormous mangrove forest shared with Eastern India, is home to the royal Bengal tiger.

Lani and Shawne's and Geralyn and Peter's neighbor, Jerry Costa, has ancestors who came from Bangladesh. Jerry and his family have agreed to come and share stories and information about the country. A fascinating country with a population of 172 million people with land the size of Iowa (U.S. population is 340 million). If our polar ice caps continue to melt along with the Netherlands, Bangladesh will be totally submerged.

For Your Information

"Gospel of Grace" Book Study One More Time!

Our final meeting will be on July 1st, 1:30 to 3pm. Thank you to everyone who participated!
Our next book study will take place next fall.

Pastor Kent Away: July 8th-11th

Pastor Kent and Deb will be out of town Tuesday through Friday of the first full week in July, revisiting Chicago's Hyde Park area, where they first met.

Pastor Kent's Office Hours for July

Pastor Kent will be in the office on Tuesdays, 11am – 6pm, except for the week of July 7th, when he will be in the office on Monday.

Financial Report for June 1–30, 2025

Income/Offerings: \$2,709
Expenses: \$9,543
Net Income/Loss: (\$6,834)



St Paul's UCC Council Minutes June 15, 2025

Attendance: Lani Brown Worley, Jim Holm, Judy Crosby , Meg Conrard, Mike Hagerty, Gretchen Stewart and Karen Dietering

Mike called meeting to order 10:21.

1. Pride July 26 – We have a red tent, need a grouping of chairs, a table, sign, Mike has a Pride flag, water to give away, pens to give away, buy cookies, give away Rainbow bookmark, card with our service times, expenses not to exceed \$500. Lani will make labels with our information to stick on Rainbow bookmarks. Volunteers are needed for set up, booth coverage (maybe 2 shifts), and take down. July 26 11:00-4:00.
2. Gretchen reported on UCC Conference held on June 14. Somber mood because of the announcement of the assassination of DFL House members. The shout out went well with the yellow cards on all tables with information about our need for a pastor.
3. Approved minutes of May. Judy motion, Meg second. In the future we will not put minutes in newsletter because Council has not approved them until the following meeting.
4. Jim 's financial report included paying one year of property insurance \$3543, payment of gutter repair, website security, and workers' compensation. Green Wealth Investment Acct. was up \$18, 865 but the market is in fluctuation daily. Judy made motion to approve, second Meg. Passed.
5. Motion to approve spending up to \$500 on Pride Event, Judy motion, second Meg. Passed.
6. Teamwork Africa – Jim reported a shift from building wells to sponsoring young girls' education (building a school). We 25% spent on world missions, 25% local missions. Focus on renewing girls we sponsored last year so they continue to have their tuition paid for. Talk to Peggy and revisit next month.
7. Lani will send Mike list of things immigrants need for support while they are in hiding. Revisit next month.
8. Ask people to report to church council any necessary cleaning needs that they notice, so we can attend to it. Dishwasher is working better since we switched to liquid soap. Check on who is tending to the water softener salt.
9. Justice Day went very well. Little girls added to the service with their bubbles, song, and help. So many people contributed in various ways to make it a success.
10. Church music in neighborhood – Neil turned volume down 20% so it was not so loud for their little ones. Neighbor reported volume was noticeably reduced. We will reduce number of songs to two. We will train Meg and others to modulate volume/number of songs as we wait for more feedback from neighbors. We appreciate all that Neil has done with our system. We will keep running time to 2 minutes.
11. Schedule Cultural Response dinner of Saturday, August 16 with a Bangladesh family.
12. Jim suggested buying a quality sound system with wireless microphone cost \$3,800. Not on our five year plan at now. Visit future.
13. Judy needs to order supplies for communion. She wants to switch away from wafers and move to white bread because few people take a wafer which get old when they last so long. Pastor asked for a lip on pulpit so papers do not slide off. David will add one. Six branches need trimming at cemetery. Need rock sign rather than wood. Need a greeter and recruit a few others and set a schedule for people to sign up.
14. Jim will gather numbers for a sound system.
15. Meg motion to adjourn 11:27.
16. Next meeting July 20th.

Respectfully submitted by Lani, Secretary



Pics of our Speakers at the Social Justice Memorial Garden Held on June 1, 2025



Gretchen Stewart



Lani Brown-Worley



Pastor Kent Meyer



Karen Dietering

Sharing Good News

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July 2025



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Pastor Phone: (507)-458-0757

Interim Rev. Kent Meyer's Hours:

Tuesday 11:00 pm—7:00 pm

All are welcome at our in-person services, Sundays at 9:15 AM . Sunday sermons are available via our YouTube channel on our website.

www.delanoucc.org



Email: delanoucc@gmail.com
