



St. Paul's

Issue 8 Volume 3

From the Pastor's Desk

Reflections on Solitude

"In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there" - Mark 1:35

There it is. In the first chapter of Mark's gospel, the biographer of Jesus shows us His prayer practice: to get up early, before everyone else is awake, and spend some time alone in God's company. In fact, it's not just in the morning, but all times of day for Jesus. Everywhere we look in the gospels, we see little notes about Jesus retreating to be by himself to pray in a quiet place. Luke uses the phrase "as was his custom" to note Jesus' retreat to the Mount of Olives to pray alone the week before his death (22:39). And the scriptures we will read in worship from Matthew's gospel for the next three weeks show Jesus retreating to pray alone moments before some of his greatest miracles, such as feeding the 5,000 (14:13-21), walking on water (14:22-33), and healing the Canaanite woman's daughter (Mt. 15:10-28).

The more I read about Jesus' life, the more I feel we can't understand his miracles and his prophetic witness without understanding his prayer practice first. The fact that Jesus spent so much time in intimate prayer with God seems to shape his ability to see clearly, act rightly, and have faith in God's power to heal and unite people. It seems His mission, His miracles, and His life of prayer can't be separated.

I think often about the language used in church leadership books and podcasts these days. One of the big conversations that has been going on for the last few years is about whether we should be leading "missional churches" or "attractional churches." Most of the writers and hosts of these books and podcasts take a stand for one or the other, advocating for their best method to get the church people outside the church's walls or to get the people outside the church's walls inside. But I'm finding that fewer and fewer resources are being shared among pastors about how to lead "praying churches."

Is Saint Paul's a praying church? Are we praying people? Perhaps this letter to you can be an invitation to breathe new life into your own prayer practice, or an invitation to our church to become a community which is grounded in prayer. One of the writers who has shaped my own spirituality over the years is Henri Nouwen, and in one book he wrote that "Solitude is the place where religious communities find their communal identity. It is the place where, as members of a religious community, we can listen to God's call and discern our common vocation."

We are called to something together in this church, friends. And I believe that each of our prayers in solitude may be a part of how we discern it. So for three weeks in worship, my hope is to lead us in reflecting on how shaping our own prayer lives as individuals might help us live more like Jesus and make a difference in the world. I hope you'll come and join us to consider how your prayer life is a part of God's mission for you, for St. Paul's, for Shawnee, and for God's Kingdom.

With Christ's Love,
Pastor Joey





LAST DAY OF PT



**Awards
Fun & Games**



PIE TIME



PROJECT TRANSFORMATION INFO...



AVERAGE OF 37 KIDS IN ATTENDANCE



87% OF CAMPER'S IMPROVED THEIR
READING LEVELS



MORE THAN A DOZEN COMMUNITY
PARTNERS (CHURCHES, GROUPS, NATIONAL
JUNIOR SOCIETY, FRIENDS) SHOWED UP TO
BE READING BUDDIES



100% FUN, MEMORIES WERE MADE



13% MAINTAINED READING LEVEL

ST. PAUL'S HAPPENINGS....

GETTING TO KNOW YOU



THE LAST FEW WEEKS, JOEY & MEGAN HAVE MET WITH SMALL GROUPS AS A TIME TO GET TO KNOW THE CHURCH....AND THE CHURCH GETTING TO KNOW THEM. THE LAST ONE WAS HELD ON SUNDAY, JULY 19TH. IT WAS ATTENDED BY ABOUT 25 PEOPLE. WHAT A GREAT TIME OF FELLOWSHIP AND DISCUSSIONS. JOEY DID A GREAT JOB THROWING OUT QUESTIONS...IT WAS GREAT TO LISTEN TO EVERYONE'S RESPONSES. THANKS TO ALL WHO ATTENDED A "MEET YOU" FELLOWSHIP. IF YOU HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO "MEET THE NEW GUY," CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE TO SET UP A TIME TO SAY HI!



COMPASSION TEAM NEEDS...

IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING, GENTLY USED, OR COULD PURCHASE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TO HELP OUT THE COMPASSION TEAM.

COOKING UTENSILS
CAKE PANS
MUFFIN PANS (NO MINI)
COOKIE SHEETS
MEASURING CUPS & SPOONS

DISHCLOTHS AND TOWELS
POTHOLDERS

TWIN BLANKETS
OR
COMFORTERS

IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP...CONTACT JERRY OR NANCY
OR CAN BE DROPPED OFF AT THE CHURCH

HEY! IF YOU WANT TO HANG WITH THE COOL KIDS... CHANCEL CHOIR WILL BE STARTING BACK UP ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19TH AT 7:15 PM. SEE SHARON REESE OR ANY CHOIR MEMBER TO GET THE SCOOP!