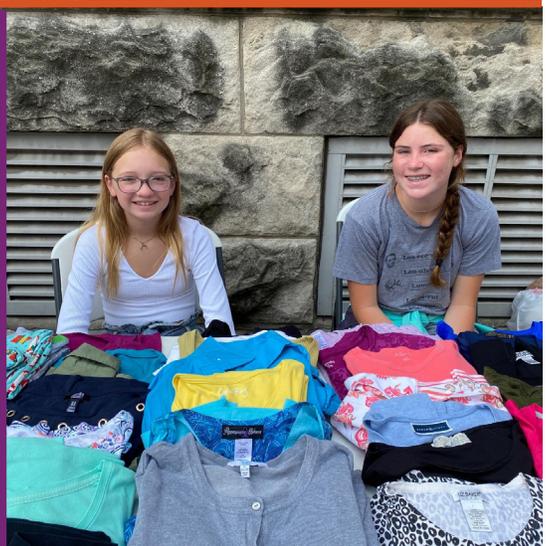




# ANNUAL REPORT

## OCTOBER 2020-SEPTEMBER 2021



# THE YEAR OF LETTING GO

When a new year begins, you never know what it will bring. 2021 began with hopes that we were turning a corner with Covid. Vaccines made so much more possible, especially in-person worship.



After a long season of observing Covid rules to keep everyone safe, we started in-person worship during Holy Week and experienced a marvelous Easter together. A week later, the cooling tower failed (or was struck by lightning). We worshiped in the gym and online returning to the sanctuary on October 31.

Reflecting on this, I realized that over two years of the five years as pastor of St. Paul, we've been out of the sanctuary. There was the summer we did the roof repair and painting, a year of Covid, and this year of waiting for a repair of the cooling tower.

2021 has been a year of letting go. Our grief and losses go beyond ministry plans to the passing of beloved church members; on All Saints Sunday, we read 28 names. 2021 also included the disruption of discovering financial misconduct by one of our staff. That experience was challenging and has required significant energy from leadership and staff to resolve. The good news is that we are nearing the end of that process. We have almost caught up on the financial work and reconciling of our accounting. We are preparing a separate Annual Report on our finances.

As fall approaches, I think about the gifts that autumn brings. The trees are about to show us how lovely it is to let things go. In the process of letting go, beauty and grace will emerge.

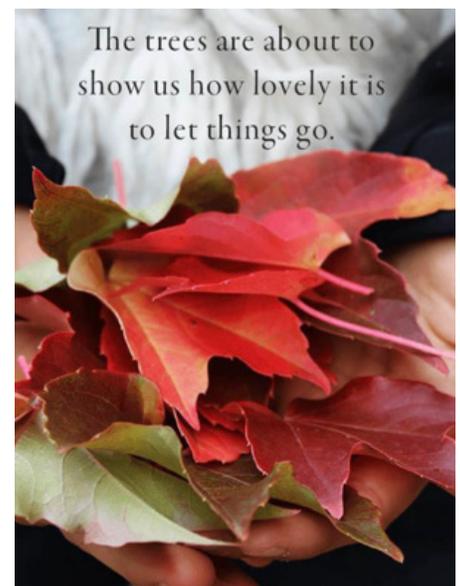
One beautiful thing is the resilience of our leadership and congregation. "Every month a mission" continues as an outreach focus, and we've not stopped being the church. We prayed together, met online, sent phone messages, put on masks, gave generously, socially distanced, and worshipped in person. Your faithfulness has continued through it all.

In the pages of this Annual Report, you'll find images and moments of celebration and glimpses of grace. God has been with us.

May you continue in your resilient faith and receive this promise, "Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." - Galatians 6:9

Grace and Peace,

Darren



# WORSHIP AND MUSIC

2020-21 was the year of forced creativity and innovation, a time to think outside the box, offering digital and outdoor ways of connecting.

## **Drive-Through Communion:**

We served dozens of people at drive-through communion.



**Children's Choir:** Our children's choirs continued to gather on Zoom for weekly interactive music time throughout the winter. This approach allowed our children to continue to connect with each other, learn Bible memory verses and songs, as well as engage in music games and activities with each other from their own homes. In late March, our children were able to come back together for choir on Wednesdays and we ended in May with our Annual Spring Children's Choir Program.

**Youth Choir:** Small groups of middle and high school youth met to record songs for virtual worship occasionally, as well as connecting through Zoom meetings until we were able to gather for rehearsals in April and May. In lieu of our usual Youth Choir Concert and Fusion Trip, the youth choir presented a mini-concert as a part of worship in late May.

**Chancel Choir:** Chancel Choir members spent countless hours making videos of anthems that were then edited together by one of our members into videos for worship. We also gathered to record in groups when safe, so that we could have virtual Lessons & Carols, and Christmas Eve services. We were thrilled to begin rehearsals again in the spring and to be back together singing in worship, beginning Easter Sunday.

**Boar's Head video:** in December of 2020 The Boar's Head Steering Committee hired a videographer to put together a virtual Boar's Head Festival. The video edited together footage from Festivals of the past with new footage of masked cast members. This was a

celebration of Boar's Head Festivals past and present, and a re-imagining of the Festival for the digital age.

We were able to joyfully return to in-person worship on Easter of 2021. We celebrated with a full Koinonia band and singers at 9:00am, as well as Brass and Timpani in the traditional service. The following week, we continued in-person worship at 10 am with alternating worship leadership between the Koinonia and Traditional teams.

Unfortunately the Sunday after Easter, the cooling tower for the air conditioning in the Sanctuary broke, so we had to move worship to the gym. We were elated to return to the Sanctuary on October 31st after 6 months of patient waiting.

## **2021 In-person Music Camp, "Moses and the Freedom Fanatics"**

Twenty-seven St. Paul children and nineteen youth were excited to be back in person for our 2021 music camp week and Sunday performances! The performances on July 11 marked our official return to two morning worship services.

**Youth Choir** rehearsals resumed in August and continues to sing in worship once per month.

Children's choirs and Wesley Night resumed on Wednesdays in September. We were also able to resurrect the Youth band on Wesley Nights with 8 youth learning instruments and having a great time. They debuted at the Fall Festival.

We continue to offer both in-person and virtual options to our congregation. The investment in and installation of new sound and video equipment has made our new live stream ministry worship possible from both worship spaces. This new ministry endeavor enables us to share worship with people in our community and around the globe.

# SPIRITUAL FORMATION

As people of faith, we know that God is always with us, as close as our breath. And yet we often feel God is distant and we long to draw nearer to the one who knows us fully and loves us unconditionally. Drawing close is really a matter of just opening our eyes and hearts, paying attention to the Christ in our midst. Spiritual growth and formation occur in those moments of awakening to God's presence. The Spiritual Formation Team seeks to provide opportunities

through retreats, book studies, worship experiences, guided meditation and prayer groups, devotional materials for Advent and Lent, and hands-on ministries such as prayer beading for people to create some quiet space to draw close to God and to each other as we grow in love and wisdom. These practices equip us to reach out in service to God's Kingdom in our world.

## Windsong Room refreshed with some new books and new carpet

*"I had a lovely quiet 15 minutes sitting in the Windsong room yesterday. It is an oasis of peace."* - Windsong room visitor

## Response to the virtual retreat Practicing Resurrection with Joe Grant:

"Thank you for the workshop on Saturday. This was the healing balm I needed."



## Longest Night Service offered via FB live

2 Guided Meditation groups in their 8th year continue by Zoom and conference call.

About 100 sets of prayer beads made and distributed to people in nursing homes, new members, confirmands, and others.



250 Star Words distributed



## Lenten book study on Zoom: 15 participants

Easter mini retreat on Zoom: Practicing Resurrection with Joe Grant - 17 attendees

Lenten Prayer Walk with Children's Ministry



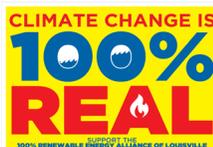
# CHRISTIAN ACTION

## Human Sexuality

In 2021, Christian Action worked closely with St. Paul's Strategic Renovation Team to conduct a survey of the attitudes of St. Paul members related to the sexuality issues being debated by the worldwide United Methodist Church. That survey will be the basis of a series of church-wide conversations at St. Paul.

## Organizing for Clean Energy

Christian Action's environmental focus took the form of being one of the key sponsors of a series of quarterly Zoom events,



titled "REAL Good News," to help encourage implementation of a Louisville Metro Council resolution for the city to get 100% of its energy from renewable resources by 2040.

## Support for Racial Justice

In 2021 Christian Action supported St. Paul's Spiritual Formation Team in a series of conversations with Coke Memorial United Methodist Church about racial justice.



To find out more about the Christian Action group or to become a part of it, contact church staff or Paul Wesslund at [paulwesslund@gmail.com](mailto:paulwesslund@gmail.com). Or you can visit the Christian Action page of the St. Paul website.

# DISCIPLESHIP

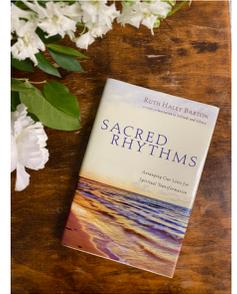
Many of our classes, small groups, and Sunday School classes have resumed meeting either by Zoom or in person.

Wesley Night began on September 15th. On average, about 40 people have been attending and enjoying socially-distanced, single-serve meals. Some 18 adults have consistently been attending the Bible Study offering, ***Ephesians: Who We Are and How We Live in Christ***, led by Pastor Dustin.

A Discipleship Committee was formed this year and has worked to identify areas where discipleship offerings are needed. The work of this group has led to the formation of 2 new groups. One is a Young Adults groups which meets every month or so for fellowship. This group has had about 8 people consistently attend. Another is a Men's Group which meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of every month. This group involves fellowship and devotional elements and has had anywhere from 7-10 individuals attend.

The Barnabas Program is also revamping this year. Wilma Couch has agreed to lead this program and is working with the youth ministry team to get accurate addresses for all our college students to send them expressions of support.

The Sacred Rhythms book study and sermon series went very well. A small but dedicated group attended the weekly Zoom meetings, and many have expressed receiving inspiration and peace from the focus on spiritual disciplines.



Ministry Architects hosted a Discipleship Summit for St. Paul, and several discipleship goals, metrics, and benchmarks were set. These will begin to be implemented over the coming year.

Wesley Night meal: 40 regular attendees



Wesley Night Ephesians study: 18 attendees

- 2 new groups:
- Young Adults - averaging 8 people gathering for fellowship
  - Men's Groups - averaging 7-10 men gathering for devotion and fellowship



Sacred Rhythms Book study on Zoom - 7 participants



St. Paul's new Baking Ministry offered a tasty new addition to the Wesley Night schedule.

# CHILDREN

At St. Paul we treasure children and offer lots of opportunities for children and their families to deepen their spiritual connections with God and each other! The children's ministry offers tons of activities for kids that are fun and give children the chance to experience the love of God and explore what it means to be a Christian! This still remains true even during the continued pandemic. We may have had to change how things look, but the children's ministry remained resilient, and we've had a successful year filled with spiritual growth, deepened connection, and of course fun!

At St. Paul We believe...

- Children are innately spiritual beings (as we all are).
- Children are capable of having relationships with God
- Children were important to Jesus, not as those to be taught, but as spiritual leaders for adults to learn from and grow as children are part of their lives.



Over 200 children attended our drive-through trunk-or-treat in October 2020.

We had 46 children attend VBS this year! OUR GOD CAN MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE! He does marvelous things! A science lab conducted experiments that explain how things are possible. In Jesus' ministry, He did things that are impossible. His greatest miracle of all was dying on the cross and rising from the dead for our salvation. At God's Wonder Lab, discover that Jesus does the impossible for us.



We celebrated our Sunday School Open House Celebration with the completion of the 3rd floor renovations!

**Summer Family Movie Nights!**  
2nd and 4th Sundays, beginning June 13 6:30pm in McAdams Hall

St. Paul Children's Ministry offered over 24 in person events!



54,534 eyes were on St. Paul's Children's ministry for the Fat Tuesday Celebration!



Project Serve saw 12-14 young people engaging in acts of service and a foot washing.

# YOUTH

In the world of COVID-19 our programming has been adjusted for safety. Thanks to the work of Sunday Night volunteers and the Youth Ministry Team we are able to persevere. Youth Group still consists of a shared meal, a game that tends to devolve into chaos (as all good Youth Group games should), worship and lesson time. On Sunday nights the youth also enjoy a deep dive discussion with each other in their small groups where they don't shy away from tough topics. Our students are always looking for ways to better themselves and the world around them by exploring their faith and living into the teachings of Jesus.

Sunday Morning Service Projects (Sunday School) allow for different short service projects every week.

Due to COVID, the Youth Fusion and Belize trips were canceled once again for 2021. We plan to do FUSION in June of 2022!

Luckily, the 2021 Youth Retreat went on as planned with additional precautions in place. It was a great weekend of worship, campfires, and Loucon adventure activities.



10 youth confirmed



10 high school graduates



## Average student attendance Fall 2021

- Youth Group - 21
- Sunday School - 6

## Retreat 2021

- 18 students + 4 adults

## Service Projects

- Portland Promise Center + The Table
- Burrito Riders - rolled approx. 80 burritos
- Prayer Beading for St. Paul
- Various projects for Resource Center

## Youth Choir

Rehearsals resumed in August. This vibrant and talented group continues in their dedication to the Lord and blesses our congregation with their music in worship once per month.



# MISSIONS & OUTREACH

Despite the continuing pandemic, the St. Paul congregation has continued to support the outreach efforts of the church, supporting our "Every Month a Mission" outreach focuses.



**Waller-Williams School:**  
130 Thanksgiving boxes for students' families and 121 Christmas stockings for students



**Faith Quilters** - 83 quilts for Project Linus were blessed in March 2021.



**Highlands Community Ministry:**  
59 backpacks and dozens of canned meats to Highlands Community Ministries for their Food Pantry and Back to School drive



**Esther's House:**  
A carload of household items and gift cards

**Fourth Ave UMC's Open Door Community Ministry:** \$1,000 plus donations of pantry food



**Blanket Louisville Drive:** We collected 45 blankets for Blanket Louisville, an organization that distributes blankets to the unsheltered in Louisville. They received many requests for blankets in 2020, even through the summer months as members of the unsheltered community avoided the communal living of shelters during the pandemic.



**Christian Care Communities:**  
A carload of arts and crafts supplies, activities, games, and snacks.

**MIHOW diaper drive, hosted by the SPAMS:**  
We sent a check for \$1,917.00 to MIHOW at Henderson Settlement. They will order approximately 12,000 diapers from Amazon to be used for children in the Frakes area.

**Blood drives:** 100 units of blood were collected at the Highlands Community Blood Drives, hosted at St. Paul UMC between October 2020 and September 2021.

**Smoketown Family Wellness Center:** \$6,000 donation from St. Paul during Give for Good Day fundraiser.

## MOBILE RESOURCE CENTER

In June of 2021, the Beyond the Walls team launched a new outreach initiative when the Mobile Resource Center was born. On the second Saturday of the month, a team of volunteers loads the St. Paul bus with clothes, shoes, new socks and underwear, hygiene items, and seasonal items, such as coats and hats. Then we head over to Fourth Ave United



Methodist Church and set up a sidewalk Resource Center for guests arriving for the Fourth Ave UMC Open Door Community Ministry's lunch service. On average, we have served

approximately 70-90 people each month. And that number is growing, as guests have begun asking when the next Resource Center will take place so

they can share the information with others in need.

The St. Paul congregation is supporting this ministry with donations of gently-used clothing and shoes, as well as the purchase of new items through our Amazon and Dollar Days wish lists. In addition, volunteers help at the event, loading and unloading the bus and distributing resources to guests.



To learn more or to sign up to join us on the second Saturday, visit the St. Paul website:

[www.stpaulchurchky.org/mobile-resource-center/](http://www.stpaulchurchky.org/mobile-resource-center/)



# RESILIENCE

A Sunday school gathering that developed from a short-term class organized by the Resilience team in 2019 has continued to meet. We completed a study of *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right* by Lisa Sharon Harper.

The Resilience team participated in the health fair at Coke Memorial UMC in May of 2021. Team members were prepared with pre-made stress balls with materials available to make them on-site.

The team has also provided weekly Resilience Sparks that provide ideas for intentional ways families can build resilience; these ideas are included in Ms. Tori's emails to families as well as posted on St. Paul's website: <https://www.stpaulchurchky.org/resilience-sparks/>



## SMOKETOWN PARTNERSHIPS

The prayer focus on racial justice, which led us to reach out to other ministry teams and initiate partnerships with Coke Memorial UMC and Smoketown Family Wellness Center, has continued this year with many opportunities online to connect with our brothers and sisters in Smoketown. Webinars, movie discussions, and small group conversations provided opportunities throughout the year for getting acquainted and learning from members of Coke Memorial. The collaboration of the two UMC churches and the Wellness Center to offer a community Health Fair on the grounds of Coke Memorial was a highlight of the year. Plans are underway for the second annual Health and Wellness Fair in May of 2022.

Partnership with Smoketown Family Wellness Center has continued to grow. Members of St. Paul volunteered with NTI help last school year. We have a regular St. Paul volunteer with our homework help this fall who has also introduced students to tai chi. St. Paul as a whole as well as individual members shared their love and generosity during this year's Give for Good.



Comment from a participant at the Health and Wellness Fair with Coke Memorial UMC, May 15, 2021

*"It was a beautiful day, and lent itself well for healthy activity and conversation. It was an experience of love through heart, mind, body, and spirit. Still makes me smile."*



# TRUSTEES

Several building projects have been undertaken due to the continued generosity of bequests and others. These include:

**Air Conditioners:** 3 aging air conditioning units were replaced in the church. Units in the Mary Martha Room, Room 310, and Room 207 were replaced.

**Smoke Detectors:** A bid has been accepted to replace 19 smoke detectors. This will replace units that were installed in the 1980s and will reduce the number of false alarms while also heightening safety for all our members, visitors, and friends.

**Electrical Work:** The trustees had Midland Electric do several needed electrical jobs around the church including replacing emergency lights, replacing failing lighting ballasts, installing LED lights, and repairing the external light in the parking lot.

**Floors Refinished:** The tile floors were refinished on the 1st floor of the church building and in the gymnasium.



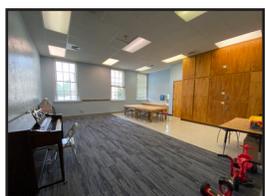
**Cooling Tower:** Shortly after Easter, the cooling tower serving the sanctuary and social hall broke down. A new one has been ordered and is planned to be installed in the coming weeks. Worship services resumed in the sanctuary on October 31st.



**White House:** The porch on the white house has been repaired and painted. The doors on the 2nd floor which originally led out to the landing have been replaced with windows for safety reasons.



**Church Carpeting:** New carpet has been installed throughout the church building in the 2nd floor offices and halls, 3rd floor children's area, chapel, Windsong Room, Bell Room, and Music Director's office. In the Family Life Center new carpet was installed in the lobby area and the hallway outside the youth room.





# FINANCIAL REPORT

In the pages of this Annual Report, you'll find images of the difference that your generosity is making here at St. Paul and beyond. What is not included in this report are the financial updates. We are awaiting the reconciliation of our accounts from our CPA firm. Once we receive these reports, we will share a financial update, which includes all of the projects we have been working to resolve.



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