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St. Paul's Members Attend Large Church Initiative (LCI) Conference

By Clarence Burton

Ten individuals (one pastor and nine lay persons) from St. Paul's Church attended the Large Church Initiative (LCI) Conference, "IMAGINE!" in suburban Houston, Texas, April 20 – 22. The conference, hosted by The Woodlands United Methodist Church, was designed to equip the team in ways of reaching out to those seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ and to be relevant to the upcoming generations. Team members were Pastor Sherrie Ilg, Brice and Nancy Anton-Jensen, Ron Bunch, Heather Moore, Jeremy Moon, Kathy Neighbors, Jennifer Petersen, Jim Steggall and myself.

The conference included an excellent balance of worship services and workshops. Worship services included an "awesome" traditional service on opening night, morning devotional services, as well as daily contemporary services meeting in a newly-opened contemporary worship setting.

Workshop topics included Administration, Discipleship, Missions, Outreach and Worship. Each team member chose five sessions to attend, from approximately thirty-eight sessions offered, according to their individual interests. Since there was little duplication of the sessions attended, the team was able to gather a wide variety of valuable information to strengthen the ministries of St. Paul's.

Following are several comments team members have expressed concerning their attendance at the conference:

Heather Moore -

"I was privileged to attend the LCI 2015 Conference in Houston, Texas this year. This opportunity allowed me and the others on our team to delve into worship, relationships, and learning. We reconnected spiritually, filling ourselves with the glory of God. We connected with one another, learning more about each other, our ministries, and our dreams for St. Paul's.

We also learned in workshops we chose based on our interests and ministries. I personally felt I'd been blessed with knowledge to bring back and share with other leaders in the youth and children's spiritual formation teams/ programs. So many new ideas had each of us overflowing with excitement to come back and share! Thanks to the Foundation for this great opportunity!"

Jennifer Petersen -

"I went to The Woodlands UMC with nine other St. Paul's members. I left here



St. Paul's team members attending the LCI in Texas were:

Front row (l to r) Jennifer Petersen, Rev. Sherrie Ilg, Kathy Neighbors, Heather Moore, Jim Steggall
Back row (l to r) Nancy Anton-Jensen, Brice Anton-Jensen, Jeremy Moon, Clarence Burton, Ron Bunch



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Mission Statement

Foster a vibrant spirit of Christian Stewardship and generosity to create a perpetual source of earnings, which strengthens the financial capabilities of St. Paul's UMC and assists the church in fulfilling its stated mission "To know and follow Christ and to help others know and follow Christ."

Meet the Foundation Board Members



Dean Beer

Dean Beer - Dean is serving on the Foundation Board for the first time. The Beer family became members of St. Paul's in 1977, because of the strong children's programs, plus many of their friends were members. Dean has served on the Board of Trustees and the Finance Committees and has helped with various projects over the years. He and his wife, Gale, continue to serve in a leadership role for the Chapel Service on Sunday mornings.

While in the work force, Dean headed the Commercial Loan Department at AEGON Insurance Company. Following 12 years at AEGON, he and a friend launched a Jiffy Lube Oil Change franchise in Cedar Rapids, which grew to 9 stores. After selling the Jiffy Lube franchise, he owned and managed a hotel in Battle Creek, Michigan for 10 years before retiring.

Dean and Gale have four children, 9 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild. They enjoy getting together with family and feel fortunate that they have been able to attend many of the grandchildren's activities, as they are all located in the Midwest.

Dean says, "I looking forward to serving on the Foundation Board. The Foundation's financial aspect provides the necessary stability and flexibility to allow our church to better serve our mission and ministries. The approval by our members to move forward with the building program will provide us with a new incentive and enthusiasm to work toward an exciting new goal which will benefit our church now and in the future."



Dave Mahlke

Dave Mahlke - Dave is serving on the Foundation Board for the first time. Ten years ago, while volunteering to paint houses through "Paint Thy Neighbor" and other programs, Dave was often assigned to a team from St Paul's. Through this ministry, he got to know and respect many of the St. Paul's members. In late 2007, he began looking for a Methodist Church that he had been away from since his late teens. Dave says, "The first and only church I needed to visit was St Paul's." He became a member in 2008.

Dave has served on the past two intergenerational mission trips to Joplin, Missouri and Moore, Oklahoma. He has also helped with the Sunday coffee service, Compass breakfasts, Family Promise and the Christmas dinner. He is involved with the Iowa State Master Gardener program, East Iowa Ski Club (snow skiing), Iowa Quality Center, and the American Society for Quality. He has been a quality management consultant the past 25 years and is "mostly retired," but still provides services for some local companies.

Dave's family includes a brother in New York and sister in Dallas, who has two daughters living with their families in New York and Dallas.

Dave became interested in church foundations through his father, who established the foundation at one church and chaired the foundation at another (St Paul's United Methodist Church, Kerrville, Texas). Dave has been involved with the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation since 2009. He says, "I hope to use the skills I learned from my father, my MBA, business experience, and investment experience to further the St. Paul's foundation. I am excited about the new building plans and the future of St Paul's."

Grace Noonan - Grace is new to the Board this year and is serving the remaining term of Kevin Sanor. Grace is a long time member of UMW and is currently serving as Secretary of Program Resources. She is also a member and past chair of Mary-Naomi Circle, serves on Memorials Committee, and tutors African Nationals. You will also find Grace volunteering in the church office, singing in the Sanctuary Choir, and attending the Kum Disciple Class.

In 2012, Grace moved to the Meth-Wick Community. She enjoys reading, computer solitaire, and playing bridge. She also enjoys visits from four children and seven grandchildren.

Grace and her husband, Bob, grew up in Methodist churches in Iowa and joined St. Paul's in 1988 when they were both teachers in the Cedar Rapids Community Schools. When Bob died in 2010, Grace and their children formed the R.J. and Grace Noonan Scholarship Fund through the Foundation. Grace says, "I am honored to now serve on the Foundation Board and the Scholarship Committee. The Foundation is vital to St. Paul's for all it has accomplished and will continue to accomplish."

Jim Steggall - Jim is returning for a second consecutive term on the Foundation Board and is serving as Chair of the Board. Jim joined St. Paul's in 1982, has been the Reaching & Receiving Committee Chair for the past five years, and is also serving on the Building Committee. He is also a past member of the Finance Committee and served as Chair.

Jim and his wife, Barb, are active in the Compass Class. They enjoy family time with their two children and four grandchildren. He recently retired from Rockwell Collins after 39 1/2 years in contract management.

Jim says, "I enjoy seeing the earnings from the thoughtful gifts make such a positive contribution to the life of the Church,

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Mission Team Takes St. Paul's To The Precario

By Karla Twedt-Ball

As I sat a scrumptious-smelling bowl of rice, beans and vegetables in front of the pre-teen boy, he smiled and said, "¡Gracias!" I smiled in return, but my limited Spanish vocabulary didn't include "You are welcome." A Strong Mission staff person whispered "Mucho Gusto" in my ear. Translated as "my pleasure," this is the Costa Rican response to "Gracias." Armed with my new Spanish phrase, his neighbor smiled broadly as I gave him his bowl of food ... and a bit of Spanish.

This exchange took place at a daily lunch program in the precario (literally, precarious place), a densely populated squatter community made up of corrugated metal shacks and mostly dirt roads. The United Methodist church situated in the precario serves a daily lunch to local children. About 40 children, ranging in age from



Methodist ministers serve Costa Ricans at the Strong Mission.

around 3 to around 14, waited patiently and politely while they are served youngest to oldest. This healthy daily meal was a tangible symbol of God's love for these children, offered by kind and generous church members who had developed an on-going relationship with the kids.

After lunch, the boys and the girls held a dance-off and pulled us into the fun. (I'm sure we girls won...) Then I lay on the floor coloring with the little girls, while they talked a constant stream to me. In the eyes of these 6-year-olds, I was a bit dumb and slow because I couldn't speak Spanish, but likeable nevertheless.



This densely populated Costa Rican precario (precarious place) is home to the children served by the St. Paul's mission team.

The experience was heartwarming and memorable... in the words of a Sandi Patty song from my childhood, "Love in any language, perfectly spoken here."

Our presence was not necessary to the serving of the meal, but our funding was. The existence of the church in this place, the help that the church provided the children in terms of school shoes, uniforms, and adequate food, is supported in part through Strong Mission's Loaves and Fishes program, which the St. Paul's Foundation contributed to through the church's Easter offering. The church at work is global! To have a direct connection between the St. Paul's congregation and the Costa Rican United Methodist church adds context and meaning to our global missions. As a member of the mission team, also supported in part through the generosity of the St. Paul's Foundation, ¡Gracias!



Catherine McAuley and John Wesley Compared by Mount Mercy President

The seventh annual John Wesley Heritage Society luncheon was held June 17, 2015 at the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library. Over 40 members attended the event, which is held to commemorate the St. Paul's UMC Foundation and its importance to the legacy and future of the Church. The event was coordinated by Connie Richardson and Clarence Burton of the Foundation Executive Administration. Foundation Chair Jim Steggall was the Master of Ceremonies. Lead Pastor Sherrie Ilg provided the welcome and invocation.

Board member Gary Speicher, on behalf of the Gary and Susan Speicher Fund for Youth, announced another exciting challenge to members of St. Paul's UMC. The Speichers will again match, dollar for dollar, up to \$10,000, all gifts made by October 1 to the St. Paul's UMC Youth Fund at the Greater Cedar

Rapids Community Foundation (GRCRF). The Speicher Fund for Youth was established by Gary and Sue four years ago to provide permanent funding for youth programs at St. Paul's. This year the fund distributed \$4,931 to youth ministry at St. Paul's. Distributions since inception of the fund total nearly \$10,000. Youth Director Keith Pitts provided an update of the renovations taking place in the Youth space using the Speicher Fund.

Clarence Burton provided a financial overview of the Foundation and how a combination of gifts and faithfully following of our investment policies over 40 years has grown the fund to \$6 million.

Jim Steggall announced new JWHS members Marie Peeters, Connie and Rick Richardson, and Kevin and Rebecca Sanor, as well as members who have died in the past year, Doris L. Cammack, Shirley Hollingshead, and Sherri Justice.



Gary Speicher issues \$10,000 challenge to members of the JWHS

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one person and came back understanding the body of Christ. We are all such different people in looks, dispositions, temperaments and passions, and yet we were totally filled with the Holy Spirit and worked together as a marvelous team for four days. We attended many different workshops and worship services. We fired each other up after each one we attended; there was nothing left unsaid. We ate meals together, carpooled together, navigated together, attended really loud music concerts together, did both contemporary and traditional worship together – we were the hands and feet of Christ. And we now come to you, St. Paul’s, to share what we have learned from other disciples of Jesus Christ. Thank you to those saints who have gone before us and to St. Paul’s Foundation for giving us this opportunity to further God’s kingdom at St. Paul’s in Cedar Rapids and in the world.”

Nancy Anton-Jensen -

“I had been in a burnout mode at church. With all the transition that our church has been going through in the last couple of years, it has been wearying. I didn’t realize how needed and helpful this time away would be! Not only was I sent with a passionate and gifted team, but the speakers and session leaders had real suggestions for how important spiritual formation is in developing people to go out and spread God’s love in the world. Two sessions in particular talked about how their churches have developed ways to help people connect to each other in support and in ways to grow closer to God, and then reach out in the world with that strength and

help others grow closer to God. One was a church with a strong Sunday School program and a similar history to ours, but they had hit a wall in how to get younger and newer people connected to the spiritual formation of the church. They launched (in a small way) a new small group program that enhanced the growth of members. But, they have seen growth in discipleship in their church as never before. Another church found that members in their church didn’t feel comfortable facilitating small groups or mentoring youth, and the pastors found that their people were yearning for spiritual growth, but weren’t finding a way to do it, so they just “went through the motions” of small group studies without feeling a deepening of connection to God or others. The church started a “listening” ministry to help people find a direction to start growing in their faith—again they started very small. The spirit and hope in these churches is encouraging, and as we work to build a 21st century building for the future generations, I hope we can build our faith and grow so we can see the spark in the hearts and actions of the future generations too.”

Without exception, every team member came away with new ideas about how St. Paul’s ministries may be enhanced. That “new knowledge” will be shared with the Church Council, various committees and the congregation in the months ahead. By providing funding to make their experiences possible, the Foundation continues to fulfill its sole mission: to serve St. Paul’s UMC.



Laurie Hamen, president of Mount Mercy University, draws parallels between John Wesley and Catherine McAuley

Guest Speaker Laurie Hamen, president of Mt. Mercy University explained the importance of endowments, and how they can change people’s lives. She drew a parallel between John Wesley and Catherine McAuley, who founded the Sisters of Mercy 85 years ago. As early as 1827, Catherine McAuley, a wealthy heiress in Dublin, Ireland, began caring for women and children in need. She provided safe housing, taught the uneducated and visited the ill. By 1831, she officially dedicated her life and her inheritance to this

mission by establishing the Sisters of Mercy. John Wesley stressed the life of Christian holiness: to love God with all one’s heart, mind, soul and strength and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. The John Wesley teaching of “earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can” provides a direction for us to provide for those who come after us in the faith.

The Rev. Lloyd Brockmeyer adjourned the meeting by sending us forth in prayer.

the community, and the world. The Foundation is a living legacy that supports many new ministry initiatives, capital improvements, and missions worldwide.”

Karla Twedt-Ball - Karla is serving on the Foundation Board for the first time. Karla is married to Clint Twedt-Ball and they have two children, Isaac in 8th grade and Annika in 5th grade - - plus two dogs! They joined St. Paul’s after Clint left the associate pastor position at Lovely Lane to start Matthew 25. They chose St. Paul’s because of the music program and the active children and youth ministries.

Karla has served as one of the Children’s Chapel leaders, on the Finance Committee, helped with youth programs, and sings in the choir.

At work, Karla leads the program work at the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, which includes grants, community leadership initiatives, and the Nonprofit Network. In her spare time, she loves to spend time with her family, read, and be outdoors in both winter and summer - - especially tent camping during the summer.

Karla is looking forward to helping support the ministries and mission of St. Paul’s. She says, “Involvement in a church allows one to experience God in the context of community, so I find the relationships that develop within a church to be very important. I’m really looking forward to the hospitality possibilities in Phase 1 of the capital campaign. As a parent, I’m enjoying my kids’ involvement in the youth programs and see that as a vital part of their development into young adults.”