



LIVING GOD'S LOVE

YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

PASTOR BIO: DEBRA VON FISCHER SAMUELSON



The Rev. Dr. Debra Samuelson was called to St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School in 1991 where she served the congregation for four years until 1995. In the years prior, the Rev. Dr. served calls at two other parishes – Trinity Lutheran Congregation in Minneapolis, MN, from 1980 to 1987 and Waterville Lutheran Congregation in Waterville, IA, from 1987-1991.

Following her tenure at St. Paul's, Rev. Dr. Samuelson was called to Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Atlanta, GA, where she served the longest, 15 years, from 1995-2010. Once her time in Atlanta concluded, she followed a call to join the staff at Church of Good Shepherd in Minneapolis, MN. She served the parish for eight years from 2010-2018 and earned Senior Pastor Emerita status.

Rev. Dr. Samuelson obtained her Bachelor of Music degree in harp performance from St. Olaf College in 1976. She later enrolled in Luther Seminary and graduated with her Master of Divinity degree. Following her time in seminary, she received her Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in 2008. Samuelson became an Oblate, or person who lives the Rule of St. Benedict based on Gospel values, through St. Paul Monastery in 2017.

Furthermore, Samuelson was a keynote speaker for the SE Synod Women's Convention in Tuscaloosa, AL, in 2007. She once served as a worship leader for the Festival of Homiletics in Atlanta, GA, and presented at the Hope Leadership Conference in Des Moines, IA. She was a guest preacher for nearly a dozen years on both radio and television. Her television appearances include "30 Good Minutes" on WTTW TV in Chicago, IL; "America at Worship"; and "Day 1 Diner" on the Hallmark Channel.

Additionally, Rev. Dr. Samuelson is also a published contributor for several books including for "Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary: Feasting on the Word," "Word & World Mission Trips: Participate in the Family Reunion," and "Uncommon Mercy: Songs from a Dozen Lands." Samuelson received the Faithfulness in Ministry Cross from Luther Seminary in 2013 which recognizes exemplary ministry efforts.



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PASTOR BIO: EVON FLESBERG



Pastor Evon O. Flesberg joined Pastors Glen Wheeler, Dennis Dickman, and the extended ministry team at St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School in 1985. She was ordained on June 14, 1981 and served St. Peter Lutheran Church in Dubuque prior to her arrival in Waverly.

In 1990, Pastor Flesberg moved to Tennessee, enrolling in the Graduate Department of Religion at Vanderbilt University. In addition to her doctoral work, she also completed a clinical training program. Following her graduation with the Ph.D. in 1996, Dr. Flesberg was called by the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA to serve as a pastoral counselor and continues in that ministry. Dr. Flesberg is a Licensed Clinical Pastoral Therapist in the state of Tennessee.

While working as a pastoral counselor, Dr. Flesberg taught various courses at Vanderbilt Divinity School (VDS), beginning in 1995, preparing religious leaders for congregational ministry, chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, teaching, nonprofit leadership and many other vocations. She was invited to join the faculty in 2010 as an Assistant Professor of the Practice of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling, completing her work at VDS in 2019. Dr. Flesberg continues to have joy teaching in local congregations.

In reflecting upon her time at St. Paul's, Pastor Flesberg notes, "Although I was the first woman to be called to the role of pastor at St. Paul's, women have been engaged in ministry here from the beginning—all 150 years!" One of her happiest days was when the elevator was completed and the message was given to our community that all people, regardless of how we moved or were moved, could freely enter our church building.

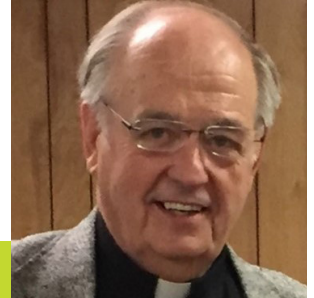
Pastor Flesberg resides in Tennessee with her husband, Norm Nelson, with whom they are grandparents of five. Norm was Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Toshiba America Consumer Products, Inc. in the Manufacturing Division. They enjoyed some international travel until the pandemic and look forward to more adventures in the future.



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PASTOR BIO: DAVID SOLBERG



Ordained September 3, 1967, Solberg was called as pastor of Sugar Creek Lutheran Church, Elkhorn, WI, where he served for 10 years. He is a 1966 graduate of Wartburg Seminary. Pastor Solberg studied and taught English at the Mission Seminary, Neuendettelsau, Germany, for the 1966-67 academic year.

In 1977, Pastor David Solberg accepted a call as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Waverly, IA, where he served until 1984 when he accepted the call to Wartburg Seminary to establish a development office. A native of northwest Wisconsin and a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, in 1962 Pastor Solberg enrolled at Wartburg Theological Seminary. He later earned a doctorate at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Pastor David was invited to return to Wartburg Theological Seminary to establish a development office.

He retired June 30, 2005 from full-time service, continuing to serve Wartburg another three years as an associate in the Mission Support office. In 2009, he served Hillcrest Family Services as Interim Vice President for Advancement and Holy Trinity as Sabbatical Pastor earlier this year. In 2004, Wartburg College, Waverly, IA awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.

Upon retirement, Wartburg Seminary recognized his service to the seminary and the church with a similar award. In 2005, the Greater Tri-States Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals recognized David with its Outstanding Professional Fundraiser Award. He is a member of the Association of Lutheran Development Executives, as well as a member of Rotary international.

He met Leslie James on the day of graduation from Wartburg Seminary and married in August 1967. They have two boys, Cary and Derek. After Leslie's passing in 1976, he met Diane Brinck, parent of two sons, Jeffrey and Michael, and they married June 3, 1978. Today, he and Diane enjoy their four sons and their spouses along with five granddaughters and one grandson.



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PASTOR BIO: GEORGE HANUSA



In 1968, Pastor George Hanusa joined St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School in Waverly, Iowa, as part of the pastoral team. Hanusa served with both Bishop Bud Buchheim and L. David Brown, along with working for Lutheran Services in Iowa.

In 1976, after eight years of ministry at St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School, Pastor Hanusa, along with his wife, Janet, and two daughters, Ellen and Julie, moved to Windsor Heights. He retired in 1997 and since then has been occupied with his professional and personal life. He and his family currently live in Scottish Rite Park in Des Moines.

"I've done a lot of writing; co-writing a sequel to the history of Lutheran Social Services of Iowa (updating the book I wrote before I retired), researching and writing *Out of the Mud—How a Rural Coal Mining Community Became the City of Windsor Heights* for the city's 75th anniversary and crafting history updates of Windsor Heights Lutheran Church, where Janet and I have been members since 1976," said Hanusa.

Pastor Hanusa has dedicated most of his time to serving the community. His experience includes supply preaching, conducting services in retirement homes including at Scottish Rite Park (SRP) and fundraising for SRP. In addition, he served on the Lutheran Social Services Refugee Advisory committee, helped coordinate World Refugee Day observances, was involved with the MICAH Corporation - a prison reform advocacy group and worked with LSS CEO Leonard Larsen in setting up multiple staff workshops.

"The best part of retirement, however, has been the opportunity to travel and enjoy other hobbies like gardening and photography, be involved in the day-to-day lives of grandchildren and watch our daughters excel in their talents and passions. Today, most of my time is occupied with caring for Janet, who has dementia with Lewy bodies. Janet and I met at Wartburg College while both of us worked in the Den," said Hanusa.



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PASTOR BIO: KATHLEEN ARMSTRONG



Pastor Kathleen Armstrong accepted the call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School in 1998 after finishing seminary. She worked alongside Pastor Joyce Sandberg and Pastor Mike Burk, who greatly contributed to her growth as a pastor through their leadership. In 1999, Armstrong married her husband, Tim, at St. Paul's.

"It was a wonderful experience for my first call. The congregation was so gracious and loving, and I have many amazing memories of my time here, including taking the youth to the ELCA Youth Gathering in St. Louis and the trips to Cabrini-Green in Chicago," said Armstrong.

After her service at St. Paul's, Armstrong moved to Frederika, IA, in 2001 to take a call at St. John's Lutheran Church. In 2006, along with her family, Armstrong moved to Thornton, CO, where she took a call to serve as the associate pastor at the Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Broomfield, CO. Her service focused on youth and family ministry. In 2018, Armstrong was called to be the lead pastor at Cross of Christ. This year, she will celebrate 23 years in rostered ministry.

Armstrong has two sons, Brune and Kaden. Brune is now 20 years old and working as a plumber for a family business in Thornton. Kaden is a senior at Stargate Charter School and wanting to major in engineering. Armstrong's husband, Tim, is an ESL teacher at a middle school in Arvada, CO, and coaches high school track at Pomona High School in Arvada. Armstrong and her family come back often to Iowa to visit her parents and brothers in West Des Moines.

"St. Paul's was such a big part of my ministry and developing who I am as a pastor today," said Armstrong. "Congratulations on 150 years and thank you for being a blessing to all the pastors that have been fortunate enough to be called to fill your pulpit."



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PASTOR BIO: GLEN GRONLUND



Pastor Glen H. Gronlund expresses his years at St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School with utmost gratitude. Gronlund completed his seminary internship at St. Paul's. He was then called to be associate pastor and later became senior pastor at St. Paul's.

Prior to his call to join St. Paul's, Gronlund studied in New York City at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, where he received a Master of Arts degree. During that time, he studied under Reinhold Niebuhr in Christian ethics.

After serving at St. Paul's, Gronlund continued his journey of service at the National Staff of the American Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. There, he served in the Division of Parish Education and the Division of Service and Mission in America. During his service, he developed an interest in organization development, fundraising and leadership training. Gronlund also served as president of the Ebenezer Foundation and the Ebenezer Center for Aging and Human Development. Gronlund was also called to serve as the president of Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services (OPRS) in Columbus, Ohio.

Upon retirement from the OPRS, Gronlund decided to fund the Development and Organizational Development with Gronlund Sayther Brunkow (GSB), a firm started by his brother Robert Gronlund.

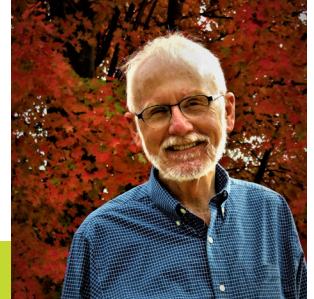
Gronlund and his wife, Shirley, currently live in Naples, FL, in Moorings Park, a life plan retirement community. They celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary in the summer of 2021, and are active at Emmanuel Lutheran Church as Stephen Ministers.



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PASTOR BIO: CURT SCHNEIDER



Pastor Curt Schneider was called in March of 2002 as lead pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School and served until his retirement on All Saints' Sunday of 2015. Ministry in a congregation as vibrant and multifaceted as St. Paul's presented constant challenges and joys, but events that specifically stood out to him were the record flood of 2008 and the SPARK Building Project completed shortly before his retirement. He shared that any pastor could not help but feel blessed to be in a church with the level of trusted and able leadership that guided St. Paul's through both events.

Schneider grew up in the Reinbeck then graduated from Wartburg College and Wartburg Seminary. From 1974 to 1975, he interned in the Evangelical Lutheran Parish in Albersdorf in Süderdithmarschen, Germany, a parish with many connections to his home community.

After his 1977 ordination at Zion Lutheran in Hudson by former St. Paul's pastor, Dr. William Weiblen, Schneider first served a two-point parish on the Iowa-Minnesota border in Chester. He then served a two-point parish in Dennison, MN, Greenfield Lutheran in Harmony, MN and Messiah Lutheran in Charles City prior to the St. Paul's call. In both Iowa and Minnesota, he served on synod committees and encouraged collegiality among the rostered on the conference level. He was also active in local service clubs and served as the volunteer fire chief for over a year at Dennison, MN. As a post-retirement project and with the help of volunteers, Schneider photographed, measured and recorded almost 60 church bells in Bremer County. A collated report of bell data and recordings is on file at the Bremer County Historical Museum.

Two years after retirement, the Schneiders moved to Wisconsin to be near their two daughters' families. They live in a semi-rural area about 25 miles northwest of the center of Milwaukee.



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PASTOR BIO: PAUL STUMME-DIERS



For Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers, St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School has contributed immensely to the growth of his professional and personal life. Stumme-Diers was baptized, confirmed, married and ordained at St. Paul's, sharing the last two celebrations with his wife, Laurie Stumme-Diers, who currently serves as the chaplain of Martha and Mary Care Center in Poulsbo, WA. At the time of Pastor Stumme-Diers's birth, his father, Herman Diers, worked as a pastor at St. Paul's and served as chaplain at Wartburg College.

Following formative years at St. Paul's Lutheran School, Pastor Stumme-Diers graduated from Waverly-Shell Rock High School in 1978, and then graduated from Pacific Lutheran University with a degree in political science. After a winter at Holden Village, he and his wife then attended Wartburg Theological Seminary.

After being ordained in 1989, Stumme-Diers took a call to serve at Resurrection/New Berlin, WI. Later in 1997, he took a call to All Saints/Wales, WI. In 2002, Stumme-Diers was elected, then re-elected for a second term to serve as Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod. His service years include being part of the Board of Directors at Wartburg College, Carthage College, Lutheran Social Services of WI/UM, Lutheran Community Services the Northwest, Portico Benefits Services and the Ixonia Elementary PTA.

Currently, Stumme-Diers serves at Bethany Lutheran Church in Bainbridge Island, WA. He has served there since 2009. He has a daughter, Maren, and a grandson, Fritz, as well as a son named Micah.



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PASTOR BIO: JOYCE SANDBERG



Pastor Joyce (Smith) Sandberg grew up and completed her entire education in St. Paul, MN. After graduating from the University of Minnesota in 1973, she married Irving L. Sandberg. Both entered the four-year Master of Divinity program at Luther Seminary that fall. They were part of a small group of students who were “clergy couples,” in the early years of the ordination of women.

She and Irving were both ordained on July 16, 1977. She served parishes in Wisconsin and Minnesota before receiving a call to St. Paul’s Lutheran Church and School in 1996. She joined Pastor Dennis Dickman and Pastor Michael Burk in a team ministry. St. Paul’s was her only call where she was not the first woman pastor to serve the congregation.

During her time on the team ministry at St. Paul’s, she worked with a variety of boards and ministries, taught confirmation and for a short period between youth directors, was responsible for senior high programs. She adapted to pastoral staff changes that led eventually to a head of staff structure. Understanding her gifts suited her best for an associate pastor role, Sandberg was also willing to serve two short periods as the sole pastor while the congregation prepared to call first Pastor Curt Schneider and later Pastor Arthur Bergren as head of staff at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church & School.

Pastor Sandberg retired in 2017. Following Irving’s retirement in 2018, they moved to Roseville, MN, near their daughter Diane and grandson Noah.

“From my first day at St. Paul’s, through the floods and the changes over two decades, I always found the people and ministries at St. Paul’s to be both challenging and rewarding. The two sabbaticals I was granted were renewing. The challenges were interesting. God was steadfast. So many people were deeply committed to making a difference for their neighbors. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve there,” said Sandberg.



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PASTOR BIO: BUD BUCHHEIM



Pastor Durwood L. “Bud” Buchheim was born on July 27, 1923 on a farm in Humboldt, South Dakota. Buchheim began his educational journey at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, then went on to enlist in the Navy. After serving as a Naval Air Cadet then a Naval Aviator, he was released from active duty in January 1946.

Buchheim then enrolled at Wartburg College and graduated in 1953. He attended Wartburg Seminary and was ordained in 1956. After being ordained, Buchheim went on to serve Trinity Lutheran Church in Waterloo as the assistant pastor. He then studied abroad at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, learning about the New Testament of the Bible. He returned from his studies to Trinity Lutheran Church, serving as the senior pastor.

Buchheim served at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church & School from 1968 to 1973. In his retirement, he continued to serve throughout numerous intra ministries and taught at the Wartburg Seminary as a professor of preaching. He also served as an assistant bishop then bishop of the Iowa District of the American Lutheran Church (ALC).



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PASTOR BIO: GLEN WHEELER



In the summer of 1975, Pastor Glen Theodore Wheeler received a call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Waverly. He joined Pastor Dave Brown, Pastor George Hanusa and Principal Dick Pinkley in a team ministry.

Pastor Wheeler is the youngest of four children born Dec. 30, 1940 in Conrad, Montana. He graduated from Cut Bank High School in 1958 and accepted a basketball scholarship to Concordia College Moorhead. He graduated from college in 1962.

His journey in worship involves being enrolled in Luther Seminary at St. Paul, MN in September of 1962. Shortly after, he began his seminary internship at Grace Lutheran in Michigan. This led to him graduating and being ordained in May, 1966.

In June 1966, Pastor Wheeler accepted a call to St. Thomas Lutheran in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He made fundamental societal changes with Father Groppi in participating with the fair house marches, which eventually led to the National Fair Housing Law.

Pastor Wheeler has three children by the names of Matt, Jon and Amy. The family grew after he married Jane Jaspers in 1982, who worked as a teacher at St. Paul's Lutheran School. They became a blended family accompanied by Jane's children who go by the name of Jack, Joe and Janelle Jaspers.

Pastor Glen Wheeler retired in 2006 after serving at Bethel Lutheran in Minneapolis, MN for 12 years. He is currently a member at Lake Nokomis, Lutheran MN at the present time.

Pastor Wheeler will serve as the first guest preacher of June specifically for the weekend of June 4 & 5.



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PASTOR BIO: RICHARD REHFELDT



In the fall of 1960, Pastor Richard Rehfeldt entered the Wartburg Seminary and served as a student minister at Yosemite National Park. This opened his avenue to doing Pastoral Clinical Training at Boston City Hospital and afterwards serving a year as an intern at Bethany Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, NY which led him to receive his Bachelor of Divinity in 1964. His educational achievements did not only start there. He graduated with a BS in education from the University of Wisconsin in 1960, where he was also born and raised.

He answered his call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in 1964 to serve as an associate pastor after his graduation where he moved with his wife, Cathy, to Waverly. This is where his son and daughter were born. He continued to engage in academia by receiving his Master of Sacred Theology from Wartburg Seminary in 1969 during his time off and later received his PhD from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland in 1975.

During his doctorate education, Pastor Rehfeldt accepted a call to serve Windsor Heights Lutheran Church in Des Moines. His involvement in the church led to him and his wife traveling to Jerusalem where he studied at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute.

His excursions include joining a professor of biblical geography at the University of Jerusalem where he and his daughter explored the "unseen Israel." He was with Windsor Heights Lutheran Church until 2005, where he also coordinated the monthly Central Iowa Pastors' Forum for 28 years.

Upon his retirement, he and his wife moved to Rochester, Minnesota. This is where he stepped up to serve as Adjunct Professor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

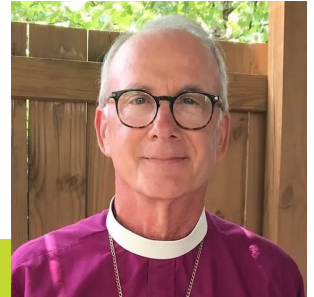
Pastor Rehfeldt has attended international gatherings of "the crib" societies in Augsburg, Germany, Pamplona and others with his wife by being members of "Friends of the Creche."



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PASTOR BIO: MICHAEL L. BURK



The Rev. Michael L. Burk is a well recognized pastor who has served on the boards of Wartburg College, Grand View University, Luther College, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Lutheran Services in Iowa, and the hospitals of UnityPoint Health - Des Moines.

His academic achievements were brought to life by being a graduate of Wartburg College, Wartburg Theological Seminary and the University of Iowa.

This led to Dr. Burk being labeled the “Albert E. Stone Distinguished Alumnus in American Studies” by the University of Iowa in 2001.

Wartburg Theological Seminary recognized and granted him an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree.

“In recognition of his evangelical leadership, reflected in the development of the worship resource, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, and in his continuing ministry on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,”

His contributions as a bishop for the ELCA do not go unnoticed as he has immensely contributed to the ELCA’S advocacy efforts on matters related to hunger and poverty. His role as the Vice Chair of ELCA Conference of Bishops has also presented him the opportunity to be a speaker on matters related to worship and the culture of the church.

Pastor Burk has retired and relocated to Edina, Minnesota with his wife, Diane, to be near their three children and their families.

As St. Paul’s Lutheran Church & School celebrates 150 years of ministry in Waverly, Iowa, former pastors will be welcomed to preach. Pastor Burk will serve as the guest preacher for March, specifically for the weekend of March 12 and 13.



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PASTOR BIO: LARRY TRACHTE



In the spring of 1970, Pastor Larry Trachte received a call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Waverly. He joined Pastor Durwood Buchheim and Pastor George Hanusa in a team ministry. During his time at St. Paul's, his area of focus was on youth and education. He also shared preaching/teaching duties. Pastor Trachte revised the confirmation program to include "service modules," such as "Adopt-a-Grandparent" program, where students regularly visited St. Paul's shut-ins and nursing home residents. Senior high youth met Sunday nights and made monthly visits to the Bremer County Home. Highlights of those years included a retreat ministry with youth and confirmands to EWALU, Luther Village, Canada and national youth conventions. He also began a "Young Couples Club" and organized a family camp retreat to Luther Village during his years at St. Paul's.

Pastor Trachte had "imported" a Phillipus Gemeinde elderly visitation program when he arrived at St. Paul's, and the pastors began to make "birthday calls" on members of the congregation on their 65th birthday (with complimentary flowers from Eckers!) and then yearly after 70.

"I'm pleased that fifty years later this contact continues as a lay ministry," Trachte said.

Pastor Trachte enjoyed his contact with St. Paul's Lutheran School, loved doing children's sermons for school worship, and was a champion "kick ball" player when he could join the school children for recess. He also began teaching German to St. Paul's third through sixth graders twice a week and worked with the ELCA's Dr. Don Vetter, with continuing theological education/dialogue with teachers of St. Paul's Lutheran School.

"Both of our children, Aaron (now a cardio-thoracic surgeon in Lawton, Oklahoma), and Joy (now a Professor of mathematics at Wartburg) benefited from a St. Paul's Lutheran School education," said Trachte. "We are blessed with six multi-talented grandchildren, and Joy and Joel's children are now the second generation to attend St. Paul's Lutheran School."

After his retirement from Wartburg in 2009, he began to serve as a "supply pastor" to the many congregations in Northeast Iowa who needed one. He remained active at St. Paul's leading a grief support group and being one of St. Paul's the "preaching pastors."

"I have enjoyed and appreciated the chance to return to the pulpit where I first began my ordained ministry," said Trachte. "The call to ministry remains strong for me, though the desire is now tempered by age and health issues (for both Lois and me). But I remain grateful to God and St. Paul's for half a century of blessings shared in this special community."