



A Holiday Message from your Pastor: By Rev. Gary R. Pomrenke

Beloved, Throughout this past year, I have been reminded numerous times how great God's love is for us. Tracie's surgery and recovery has gone remarkably and we are so grateful for all the love and support that has been shown to us during this process.

As this year draws to a close, let us pause a moment and thank the Lord for all the blessings He continues to give us. May you and your families have a very blessed Christmas!

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Merry Christmas!
Pastor Gary R. Pomrenke

Thoughts from the Deacon's Den:

By Deacon Gene Bostwick

My Lighthouse

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." Philippians 1:3-5

I have looked for a church that felt like home for my entire life; a lighthouse in the stormy seas of life. I found that church at St. Paul's Lutheran. The gospel was rightly proclaimed by the three Pastors that I had the pleasure of growing in Christ with, Pastor Skurla, Pastor McNutt, and Pastor Pomrenke. The family I have developed over the years with all of you is something I will treasure forever and will carry in my heart beyond the grave. Soon I will receive the title of Vicar as I have been called to serve Peace Lutheran in King George Virginia.

I know what makes a church family function so very well because of the following people. These people have been instrumental in my life and my beloved Elizabeth and Cathy's lives. John Bowling who's care, dedication, and steadfast love from the day we met painting the old church nursery and entry way until this very day. Also John's lovely wife Brenda and daughter Melissa who molded my daughter into someone with a respect for God and a heart for giving. What year would be complete without the awesome VBS program that Meredith has been leading and Lois has been announcing and Bobby has been helping to set up. Jim "The Bishop" Shewbridge, Paul Mehrkam, Mark Lewis and Andrew Maack who's love for God is evident in their knowledge of His word. I recently had the pleasure of working with Brad Clements on painting some of the church and

I am so very proud to call him and his lovely wife Pam my friends. Gayle Gepert who I have known since I started working for CCPS over 20 years ago and has always had an energy about her that comes from loving and being loved by God. I see that same energy in the church admin Jenny Moonen, God bless you both. This list could go on and on and if I haven't mentioned you but we shared Christ's love together know that you were instrumental as well!

Finally my brother Pastor Gary Pomrenke, who's unfailing support in seeing Christ in me even when I could not, led me to share His love with others. St. Paul's I want you to know that you are truly blessed to have this man at the helm!

Giving and receiving communion over the years has taught me that we are all connected in the body and blood of our living savior Jesus Christ; so the very act of saying "goodbye" is foolishness. I would love to see you all at my future installations and know that I look forward to sharing the word with you at the proper time in the future. My friends at St. Paul's, God bless you all, and thank you all for truly being my lighthouse.



From The President:

By John Bowling

We had a great turn out for our Voter's meeting last month. Thank you all for your support! We welcome the following people who were newly elected to start serving on our Church Council in January:

- *Vice President:* Gayle Gepert
- *Secretary:* Karen Wigen
- *Christian Education Chairman:* Melissa Chew
- *Mission and Ministry Chairman:* Kelly Gray
- *Stewardship Chairman:* Felicia Bowling
- *Financial Secretary:* Mark Lewis
- *New Elders:* Rhett Calloway, Steven Haig

We want to thank those who will be stepping down in January for their service to St. Paul's for the past 4 years on the Church Council: Lois Beverage, Brenda Bowling and Steven Stowers.

The voters also passed a new budget for 2022. St. Paul's has been very blessed over the past couple of COVID years with very generous gifts to St. Paul's for the Lord's work and I ask you to please continue your financial support to St. Paul's as we go into a new year as the cost of expenses continue to rise for our church as it has in all of lives these days. I am very excited to see what plans God has for our church throughout the coming year as the restrictions of COVID slowly begin to ease up. God is good!

**In His Service,
John Bowling**



Missions and Ministries:

By Lois Beverage



Another year coming to an end in celebration of showing God's love and light to all! So many families fed, clothing shared, and sending our community support and hope. This will be my last newsletter as the Mission and Ministry Chairperson so I did want to say thank you St Paul's for all of your generous hearts and assistance in making our mission projects a success! I very much look forward to working with our new chairperson Kelly Gray! Speaking of Mission Projects here's the opportunities to serve going on now.

Missions:

Angel Tree Project... The tree is up as we are looking to grant Christmas wishes for 15 children in our community. There are angels for both clothing and toys on the tree. Please remember these are suggestions and any Christmas gift is appreciated.

We will need the Christmas Wish donations at church by December 12th.

Distribution to parents will be happening later that week. If you have any questions please let me know!

St Mary's Helping Hands Food Pantry....As we have done for the past few years contributions from our congregation are passed on to the food pantry weekly. All donations are so appreciated but we do need to be careful that the food donated is in date. At this time donations that would be helpful are items like toothpaste, toothbrushes, laundry detergent and of course non-perishable foods. Also if you have gently used children's coats we can pass them on as well.

Thank you again so much for being such a great church family!

Mission and Ministry Chairperson
Lois Beverage

Buildings & Grounds:

By Brad Clements

I would like to thank everyone for their support through their gifts and talents in maintaining and improving our Church facilities this past year.

I would like to wish everyone a
Merry Christmas and a **Happy New Year!**

Kneelers and Pew Cushions:

The altar kneeler cushions and pew cushions are finished and will be delivered to the church the first week of December.

Future Projects:

- Replace the exterior door and framing from the Pastor's office to the outside. Approximate cost \$1,000.
- Long-term project will be to repair and replace the deteriorating asphalt in the parking lot and entrance drives including repainting the striping for parking spaces. We have not received a quote for this work, but it will cost approximately \$15,000 to \$30,000.



Christian Education: By Brenda Bowling

As November draws to a close, I hope everyone has had a blessed Thanksgiving and that the spirit of being thankful for all of God's blessings remains deep in your heart throughout the coming months. The Sunday School is now focusing our hearts and minds on the town of Bethlehem and birth of God's son, Jesus, the hope of the world. Practice has begun for our annual Christmas program about the joyous, miraculous and wonderful night that our Savior was born for all of us. This year's program is called "One Night in Bethlehem" and will be presented on Sunday December 19th during the 10:30 AM worship service. We have been taking small steps to make it back to something resembling normal since COVID. This year's program will be a simple retelling of the Christmas story as only children can tell it with costumes, special music and props. Thank you Brad Clements for building the amazing new stable for our program! For the safety of all our children we will still be wearing masks for our program. Following our program, we will be having a Christmas Coffee Hour and invite everyone to share in some delicious foods, wonderful fellowship and Christmas spirit. Please bring some Christmas goodies to share if you can. Thrivent will be supplying some easily handled pick up foods to add to the menu. Our kids will be decorating the Christmas tree in the Education Building the first Sunday in Advent with a tree full of great

Christmas nativity ornaments that represent many many years of ornaments that have been given to the children as gifts at Christmas at St. Paul's.

We have not been able to resume our visits to the Veterans' home yet because of COVID but we will be collecting needed items for the residents there until Christmas. We will have a basket in the main room of the Education Building for the Sunday School children to place their gifts in when they come in for openings. Many of the kids have mentioned that they miss going over to help with the services and this will be great way to help them share God's love with our friends at the Veterans' Home and keep connected with the residents until our visits can begin once again. Their wish list includes adult coloring books, puzzles, new sweat pants, crossword puzzle books and body wash. A full list of needed items will be on the bulletin board in the narthex. A list will also be sent home with each of our Sunday School families after Thanksgiving. We pray that all of you have a blessed holiday season where the miracle of the manger brings joy and peace to all of you! Merry Christmas to all of you from the teachers and staff of St. Paul's Sunday School!



Member Spotlight: Rhett Calloway

Rhett Calloway was born in Miami Beach, Florida and lived there until he was four when his dad, Jack, took a job with the government and moved him to Bowie, Maryland. Rhett lived in Bowie until 1983.

Rhett recently retired after 28 years of working for the Sheriff's department as a police officer. During that time he volunteered to learn whatever they wanted him to and even work 12 years on the SWATT team. He also took a temporary position, which ended up being 9 years, teaching Criminal Justice at North Point High School. He was working as a welder/steel fabricator when he got laid off and was applying everywhere to get a new job when he saw that the Sheriff's department was hiring, so he thought, "What the heck... the worst that will happen is they will say no." He enjoyed his career in law enforcement and states that it was everything that he wanted it to be.

He met his beautiful bride, Lori through his job at the Sheriff's department. He was representing Charles County and Lori was representing St. Mary's county



at the Junior Police Academy when they met and he became smitten. They married in 2010. Between the two of them, they have three children, Taylor, 31, who is expecting her first baby in April, Emily, and Ben, who is married to Heather and has a 10 month old baby boy, Hunter.

For fun, Rhett likes to work in the yard and hang out with his family. He also loves history. Lori and Rhett love to travel, the most interesting place he has been was exploring the Mayan ruins in Mexico.

Rhett feels very fortunate and honored that the church has placed its trust in him to be a part of it's fraternity, as takes on the role of Elder in January.

Surviving the Holidays

By Jenny Moonen

Hello my dear friends at St. Paul's. As the end of the year is quickly approaching, I am taking some time to reflect on the past year. One of things I am most grateful for is the wonderful friends I have made through my job here at St. Paul's. You all are truly wonderful people with hearts full of love for our savior Jesus Christ!

This month we celebrate Jesus coming into the world as a tiny baby. This is a time of great celebration and joy! Although this month is a time of happiness in our church lives, the holidays are often very hard on our mental health. According to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), a study shows that 64% of people with mental illness report that the holidays make their conditions worse. It is reported that 1 in 4 Americans ages 18 and older have a diagnosable mental disorder (hopkinsmedicine.org), which I suspect may actually be higher in the past year. Below are ten tips from FleurishPsychotherapy.com to help you cope with the stress and anxiety that you may experience with the holidays.

- **Breathe** - When you are stressed and anxious, take deep breaths to calm yourself and lower your heart rate and blood pressure.
- **Eat Healthy and Exercise** - I know this is hard to do during the holidays with all that good food around, but you are worth it!
- **Contribute** - Give a gift to the Angel tree or food shelf or your favorite charity. Volunteer. Visit someone who is lonely. The act of giving back helps generate positive emotions.
- **Laugh** - Finding a way to laugh changes your body chemistry and can help change your perspective.
- **Prioritize** - You can't be everywhere and you can't do everything. Accept this and decide which events and activities are most important.
- **Treat Yourself** - Do not skip out on your self care activities - read a few minutes, take a bubble bath, put on your favorite lotion, take care of you!
- **Practice Gratitude** - Expressing gratitude won't make all your problems disappear, but it is a good reminder of what is going right in your world. Before you go to bed try writing down 5 things that you were thankful for during the day.
- **Plan an Escape Plan** - if you know of a particular event that is going to stress you, figure out a way to remove yourself from the situation - bring a heavy coat to go for a walk or have a room that is off limits to the guests where you can escape for a few minutes of peace if you need it.
- **Journal** - Often the holidays are stressful because there are so many things floating around in our heads. Take a few moments each day to write whatever comes to mind. It helps to clear your mind and therefore decreases your stress levels.
- And I would add, most importantly, **PRAY, let's not forget the real reason for the season.**

Compassion Committee News

By Jenny Moonen

What a joy the compassion committee is! What generous support we have received from the members, both those who receive and those who give. It is so fun to see the Holy Spirit moving and bring smiles to those in need.

The following is an excerpt from a thank you card we received, *"...Having surgery and unable to walk is hard - however surprises like this basket makes everything better. It's amazing how many wonderful and caring people that are in this world - God is truly amazing - blessing me with goodness and grace at every turn..."*

God is truly amazing! Let us know if you know of anyone who could use a smile or assistance. Also please find in the back of the church cards to encourage you to give back at the drive thru. If you would like to be apart of the committee, we meet the second Wednesday of every other month at 5 pm in my office. The next meeting is December 8th. I wish you all a very blessed and happy Christmas season!

LWML News

By Tracie Pomrenke

These past few months has given me some real time to think. I have realized how very blessed I am. This is not just nostalgia left over from Thanksgiving but rather a realization that even in my situation I have an awesome family and church and friends. God with their help has pulled me through what could have been a very dark time. Instead of being depressed or angry I have made a choice to find the joy in my journey. We ALL have blessings but sometimes get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life and forget to focus on the joy. The laugh of a child/grandchild or for me Enzo using my joystick on the electric wheelchair or reading a book to my grandbabies.

During this holiday season please be sure to focus on what you have and the true meaning for our celebrations.

Don't forget that we are back to having our Woman's prayer breakfast at 9am the first Sat of each month. Bring a dish to share. See you Dec 4th!!

Did you know?

In Christianity, the Christmas tree is symbolic of the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The tree's branches and shrubs are viewed as an emblem of immortality and are said to symbolize the crown of thorns worn by Christ on the cross. (google.com)

December Birthdays

Dylan Otte - 12/4
Elizabeth Bostwick - 12/5
Danielle Hoffman - 12/5
Paul Mehrkam - 12/9
Lucy Price - 12/9
Karen Wiggen - 12/9
Christopher Curtis - 12/11
Sheryl Maack - 12/15
Rhett Calloway - 12/17
John Short - 12/20
Steven Mudd, Jr - 12/24

December Anniversaries


Bruce & Jill Hayden - 12/5
Wendy & James Gates - 12/19

Kid's Corner



Have a Blessed Christmas!
December 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Mid-Week Advent Devotion On-line	2	3	4 Women's Prayer Breakfast 9 am at church
5 Worship Services: 8:00 am & 10:30 am Sunday School 9:15 am Bible Study 9:15 am	6 Venturing Crew Meeting 7-8:30 in Education Bldg Large Classroom	7	8 Compassion Meeting 5 pm Council Meeting 6:30 pm Mid-Week Advent Devotion On-line	9 Bible Study - The Chosen 7 pm at church	10	11
12 Worship Services: 8:00 am & 10:30 am Sunday School & Bible Study 9:15am Ladies Day out Play - 1pm	13 Venturing Crew Meeting 7-8:30 in Education Bldg Large Classroom	14	15 Mid-Week Advent Devotion On-line	16 Bible Study - The Chosen 7 pm at church	17	18
19 Worship Services: 8:00 am & 10:30 am Sunday School 9:15 am Bible Study 9:15 am	20 No Venturing Crew Meeting	21	22 Elder Meeting 6:30 pm Mid-Week Advent Devotion On-line	23 Bible Study - The Chosen 7 pm at church	24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00 pm & 7 pm	25  Merry Christmas!
26 Worship Services: 8:00 am & 10:30 am Sunday School 9:15 am Bible Study 9:15 am	27 No Venturing Crew Meeting	28	29 Mid-Week Advent Devotion On-line	30 Bible Study - The Chosen 7 pm at church	31	





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