

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield  
139 Craig's Meadow Rd.  
East Stroudsburg, Pa. 18301  
Phone: 570-223-9422

E-mail: [stpaulscraigsmeadow@verizon.net](mailto:stpaulscraigsmeadow@verizon.net)  
Web Site: [stpaulscommunitychurch.com](http://stpaulscommunitychurch.com)  
Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield



# ST. PAUL'S CALL

## DECEMBER 2024

**Pastor Deb Staniszewski**

***WE WELCOME EVERYONE TO JOIN US FOR  
PRAYER, WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP***



**SUNDAY SERVICES**  
**8:30AM AND 10:00AM**  
**Sunday School 9:00 – 9:45am**



**Candlelight Services** will be held on Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm and 7pm. Join us to celebrate the humble birth of our Savior, Jesus.

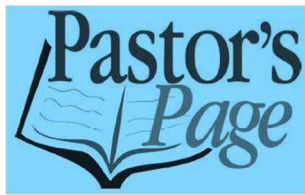
**LIVE STREAMING AVAILABLE ON FACEBOOK FOR THE  
10:00AM SUNDAY SERVICE.**

**You can connect to FB direct or go to our web site FB tab.**

**A PDF of the 10:00am service is on the web site.**

### **St. Paul's Mission Statement**

**We are a community of faith called to share the good news of Jesus as our model of life. We seek spiritual maturity through worship, learning and serving. We invite and welcome all who desire to share this journey of faith active in love.**



Greetings Friends!

Here we are in the season of Advent, heading toward the manger, in hopeful anticipation, waiting for Jesus, the light, to come into the world! Each week of Advent has a theme to remind us to keep Christ's Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in our hearts as we wait for both his coming, and his return.

The Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love got me thinking of Mary and her cousin Elizabeth. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would be carrying God's son, he also told her that her cousin Elizabeth who was in her 80's was already six months pregnant. Mary took off immediately to visit Elizabeth, and when they greeted one another Elizabeth and her unborn child John were both filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

Luke writes, <sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." (Luke 1:39-45, NRSVUE)

Mary stayed with Elizabeth until John was born, and we can only imagine that the two cousins spent their three months together grateful for the gift of the lives they were carrying, two women with the miraculous bond of impossible pregnancies. Although they were on opposite sides of the age range, who better to understand, to give comfort, to share their hopes, dreams, and concerns with? Mary an unwed mother, and Elizabeth an old woman, sharing the wonder of their pregnancies, and their hopes and dreams for the future. As women of faith, they lived in hope not only for their own families, they also trusted that God was bringing light and change into the world through their sons.

This Advent season, may we all share the pregnant Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy, of Mary and Elizabeth as we wait in expectant anticipation for the light of the world. Come Jesus! May you have a Blessed Advent and Christmas filled with light and love!

Your Sibling in Christ,

Pastor Deb

# Worship & Music!



**Advent** – Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> we will be celebrating the first Sunday of Advent. The word advent means “arrival” or “coming”

and is symbolized with a wreath whose circular shape represents the eternal nature of God. Each Sunday a candle is lit. The first represents Hope, the second peace, the third which comes on Gaudete Sunday is of Joy emphasizing rejoicing. The fourth is also representative of Peace. Finally the Christ Candle is lit on Christmas to symbolize the birth of Jesus. Join us in celebrating the season of Advent!



**Holden Evening Prayer** – Join us for an intimate service of song in the chapel on **Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 6pm** (date has changed) featuring the choir and local talent. Cookies and cocoa to follow. Bring a friend along to get into the spirit of the Season! If you're able to place or post flyers for the event on Facebook, please see Lynne in the office.



**Candlelight Services** - Candlelight Services will be held on Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm and 7pm. Join us to celebrate the humble birth of our Savior, Jesus.

**Lessons & Carols** – Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup> we will have a combined service at 10am. Celebrating with a service of Lessons and Carols. Bring your family and friends and join us in singing all your favorite carols.

**Christmas Musical Events** – Look at the flyer for musical Christmas events happening around our area.

**Be A Worship Sponsor!** – For \$22.00, or split with another, you can sponsor a worship service. The money goes towards expenses for web sites used in bulletin preparation, copyright for songs and supplies like paper and toner. Checks can be given to Dana Strohl or Secretary Lynne Williams.

**Flowers** – The flower sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. Celebrate a loved one with a fresh flower arrangement from Floral Boutique. Order forms and checks may be given to Dana Strohl or Lynne Williams.

**Volunteers-** Barbara Edwards is coordinating people to serve as service assistants. Please check the board and let her know if you can help on a Sunday with an opening. Your help as an acolyte, greeter, lay reader and communion assistant is so important and most appreciated. If you have interest in leading a service on one of Pastor's Sundays when she is away, please contact Pastor.

**Altar Guild** – The altar guild is looking for members to help. Assistance is needed for a month at a time. If you want to learn more, please see Nancy Fritz

**Next Meeting** – TBA

Christmas Blessings,

Worship & Music Committee

# **JOIN US!**

**MONDAY THE 9th 6:30 -8pm  
in the Chapel.**

**Have fun making an  
Advent wreath  
and enjoy some pizza.  
Bring a friend !**

(If able call or e-mail church to let us know  
your coming, if you forget don't worry you can  
still come and join us. )

570-223-9422

stpaulscraigsmeadow@verizon.net

If you have a Christmas craft supplies, or a platter, plate, or bowl that you would like to use for the centerpiece that will hold 4 candles, please feel free to bring them...

Otherwise, craft supplies, decorations, and greens, will be provided!



**St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield**  
**Income and Expense Statement (UNAUDITED)**

**Operating Funds**

	October <u>2024</u>	Year to <u>Date</u>	Year to Date <u>Budget</u>
<b>CHURCH INCOME</b>			
GENERAL INCOME	\$11,509.29	\$110,147.28	\$95,125.10
BENEVOLENCE INCOME	189.00	1,822.00	2,833.30
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	2,048.95	15,519.90	13,583.30
INTEREST INCOME	6.90	51.45	15.00
INVESTED FUNDS INT. & DIV.	<u>0.00</u>	<u>4,053.46</u>	<u>5,000.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$13,754.14</u>	<u>\$131,594.09</u>	<u>\$116,556.70</u>
<b>CHURCH EXPENSES</b>			
STAFF	\$8,665.51	\$89,713.37	\$93,964.00
BENEVOLENCE EXPENSE			
Benevolence (Synod)	583.33	5,833.33	5,833.30
Seminary Support & Miscellaneous	0.00	255.00	150.00
PARISH ADMINISTRATION	538.07	5,281.63	5,350.00
WORSHIP	650.56	3,385.85	4,716.50
LEARNING	48.81	822.64	2,250.00
PROPERTY	1,829.44	31,303.71	37,937.50
DEBT PAYMENTS	1,116.00	11,160.00	11,160.00
STEWARDSHIP	0.00	289.53	645.80
OUTREACH	0.00	0.00	625.00
WITNESS	0.00	0.00	650.00
SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP	<u>86.42</u>	<u>1,365.58</u>	<u>1,116.70</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$13,518.13</u>	<u>\$149,410.64</u>	<u>\$164,398.80</u>
EXCESS INCOME/(EXPENSES)	<u>\$236.01</u>	<u>(\$17,816.55)</u>	<u>(\$47,842.10)</u>

**Current Cash Accounts**

CHECKING ACCOUNTS & PETTY CASH	\$15,107.35	
THRIVENT FINANCIAL	<u>93,749.34</u>	
TOTAL CASH ACCOUNTS		<u>\$108,856.69</u>

**Special Funds**

<b>SPECIAL FUNDS INCOME</b>			
<b>BENEVOLENCE</b>			
Pantry/Good Samaritan	\$290.00	\$3,959.00	\$0.00
Miscellaneous Benevolence	0.00	900.00	0.00
INVESTED FUNDS INT. & DIV.	0.00	234.92	0.00
PLAYGROUND FUND	<u>0.00</u>	<u>25.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL SPECIAL FUNDS INCOME	<u>\$290.00</u>	<u>\$4,828.92</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
<b>SPECIAL FUNDS DISBURSEMENTS</b>			
<b>BENEVOLENCE</b>			
Pantry/Good Samaritan	\$0.00	\$2,599.72	\$0.00
Miscellaneous Benevolence	0.00	400.00	0.00
YOUTH	0.00	1,988.02	0.00
PRAISE BAND EQUIPMENT	0.00	1,907.54	0.00
MUSIC	<u>0.00</u>	<u>377.39</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL SPECIAL FUNDS DISBURSEMENTS	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$7,272.67</u>	<u>0.00</u>

**Special Funds Cash Accounts**

CHECKING ACCOUNTS & PETTY CASH	\$13,550.05	
THRIVENT FINANCIAL	<u>5,443.29</u>	
TOTAL CASH ACCOUNTS		<u>\$18,993.34</u>



## Disney's Beauty and the Beast, The Broadway Musical

Friday, Dec 6 at 7pm

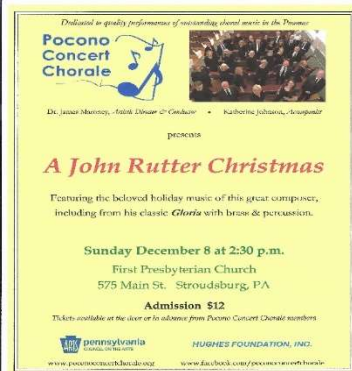
Saturday, Dec 7 at 2pm and 7pm

Sunday, Dec 8 at 3pm

Notre Dame High School

60 Spangenburg Ave, E Stroudsburg, PA 18301

Tickets go online to RebelStages.com



Dr. James Maroney, *Artistic Director & Conductor* • Katherine Johnson, *Accompanist*

### **A John Rutter Christmas**

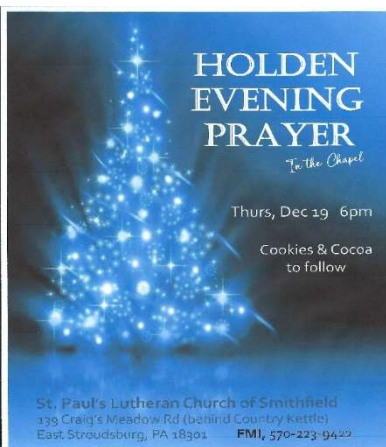
Featuring the beloved holiday music of this great composer, including from his classic **Gloria** with brass & percussion.

**Sunday, December 8 at 2:30 p.m.**

First Presbyterian Church

575 Main St. Stroudsburg, PA

**Admission \$12**



### **Holden Evening Prayer**

A Musical Service in the Chapel

Thurs, Dec 19 at 6pm

Cookies & Cocoa to follow

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield

139 Craig's Meadow Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301



### **The Longest Night: Peace Amidst Storms**

The 2024 worship experience will encourage those going through the storms of life during the holidays. Inspired by the winter solstice, winter's longest night, this service of music, scripture and prayer brings peace and offers hope to those in deepest need.

Bob Riday, Director; Gary Raish, Accompanist

**Saturday, Dec 21 at 7pm**

St. John's Lutheran Church

9 N 9<sup>th</sup> St, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Donations collected at the service will benefit hurricane relief funds

## Some of the great things that happened at St. Paul's this November.



We Celebrated 2024 All Saints Day

We welcomed a wonderful couple to our church family.  
Megan and Gerard Stephenson.



**THANKSGIVING FOOD PANTRY AND GIVE AWAY.**  
**THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED TO MAKE IT A SUCCESSFUL DAY.**







**THANK YOU EAST STROUDSBURG FIRE COMPANY FOR HAVING ANOTHER FOOD DRIVE FOR OUR FOOD PANTRY THIS YEAR, AND EVERY ONE WHO HELPED.**







**Thursday December 5,  
9:30am – 12:00noon**

**Contact Wanda Richardson with any questions.**

**The food pantry needs:** Boxed macaroni & cheese, cereal, jelly and canned Tuna.

**Looking for help, contact Wanda or office.**

**Anything else you would like to donate is appreciated** - It must be non-perishable in can, box or bag. Please check the "best by" and expiration dates, we cannot accept anything past the best by or expiration date.

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## Hello Church Youth Families,

Sunday School class is held on Sunday mornings from 9-9:45 am. All children from preschool and up are welcome! We meet in the room to the left of the sanctuary.

Confirmation Class for this month (1-3pm):

December 8<sup>th</sup>

December 22<sup>nd</sup>

Wishing you a wonderful Advent and Christmas season!

Blessings always,

Christian Education Team

Alisa Nixon (908) 279-5242

Pastor Deb (570) 350-5115



**Beautiful Baby set made and being donated to Angel's Closet.**

**By Dana Strohl**



# FRIDAY LADIES

**Friday's 9:00 – 12:00 noon**

**The ladies make lovely lap robes that they share with hospitals, nursing & retirement homes plus our newly baptized babies go home with one. They are always appreciated and if you know of someone that might need one, please let Edie know.**

**Always looking for new people  
Come on Friday and join in.**



**Donations always welcome of clean cotton fabric printed or solid. Large pieces of fabric for backing, quilting thread or just ask the ladies if you have something they might use.**

**HANDMADE  
QUILT  
RAFFLE.  
\$5.00  
TICKET  
DRAWING  
DEC. 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Quilt Top  
Donated by  
Bonnie Hasker  
and put  
together and  
quilted by the  
Friday Ladies.**



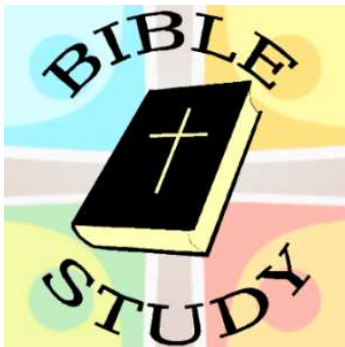




**The Altar Guild is looking  
for a few new volunteers.**

**Please see Nancy Fritz or leave you  
name in the office. No experience  
necessary you will be instructed and  
helped as much as you need.**

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**Every Tuesday  
11:30am to 12:30pm.  
EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN**

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**COFFEE HOUR**  
**Looking for people to host  
(helpers available)**  
**SIGN UP SHEET ON BULLETIN BOARD**  
**Contact Madeline or Faye with any  
questions**

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# CELEBRATION HALL RENTALS

Please share with friends. For information contact  
**SONJI PATRICK** (CALL OFFICE FOR PHONE #.)



Celebrate Your Event

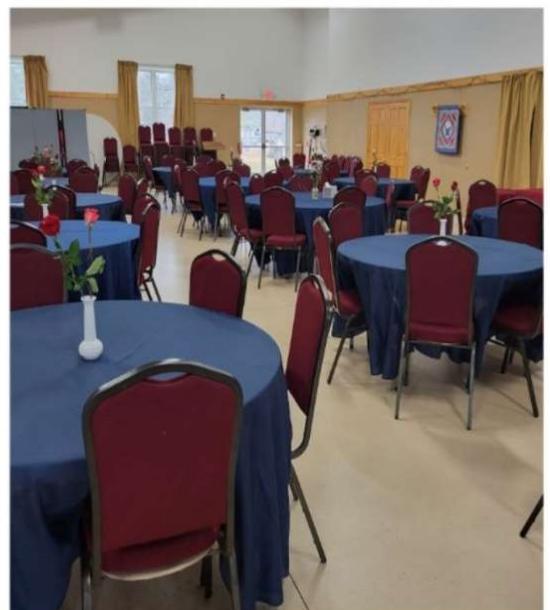


- Full Commercial Kitchen
- Seating: 160 Banquet Style  
180 Assembly
- Parking: Up to 75 Vehicles
- Handicap Accessible
- Wi-Fi Ready

- Weddings
- Birthday Parties
- Anniversary Parties
- Banquets
- Meetings
- Workshops



**Sweet 16 Party**





## A Call to Serve: Bishop deForest on Living Faithfully in Today's World

*"I may be saved for all eternity, just like all of you [in worship this morning]. But I want my first moments in eternity to be surrounded more by people I helped than by people I hurt; by more celebration than condemnation; and by a Jesus more glad at me than mad at me."*

This excerpt from Bishop Christopher deForest's sermon, preached during a service at Maiden creek in Blandon on November 10, captures the heart of his message.

The Gospel lectionary for November 10 was Mark 12:38-44, where Jesus observes people putting money into the temple treasury, noticing a poor widow contributing two small copper coins—all she had to live on. Jesus explains to his disciples that the widow has put in more than all the others, as she gave out of her poverty, while they gave out of their wealth.

Bishop deForest focused his sermon on Lutheranism, particularly since that Sunday was also Martin Luther's birthday. "Martin Luther himself would likely say that this story from the Gospel of Mark is a great example of the kind of things that got Luther all worked up in the first place," said Bishop deForest. He argued that Jesus would not want us just to "be like the widow" or celebrate "sacrificial giving" or "cheerful givers" as illustrated by the widow. Rather, he pointed out that Jesus was expressing strong anger at a system that ignored the plight of the poor and those harmed by economic inequalities and injustice. Bishop deForest compared Jesus' angry response in the Gospel of Mark to the time when Jesus overturned the tables in the temple.



*Bishop Christopher deForest preaching and worshipping at Maiden creek, Blandon on Nov 10, 2024*



He also paralleled the recent election with Jesus' reaction to the widow's offering. "Lots of people voted, in similar anger. They - or someone they love, care about, feel concern for - are being forgotten," he noted. He reminded us that regardless of political affiliations, Christ died and came to save all of us. Quoting John 3:16, he said, "God so loved the world, that God gave God's only son, that everyone who believes in him, may not perish but may have eternal life." He emphasized, "Eternal life. Forever. Which I will spend, with these same folks. On all sides." That includes the widows and the scribes. The elites and the forgotten. The celebrities and the nobodies.



Bishop deForest concluded his sermon with a call to action: "While we're still here, and we can still offer love like Jesus, healing like Jesus, and side-by-side engagement like Jesus - with our friends and enemies, strangers and neighbors - well then, Jesus calls us out, the same as all his disciples - to get to work, while we can."

To read Bishop Christopher deForest's full sermon in his recent "On The Way" blog visit [godsllove.org/onthewaynov11](https://godsllove.org/onthewaynov11)

*Submitted by: Stacey Burke, NEPA Synod Communications & Growing Young Coordinator*

**Learning Ministries' Day**

January 25, 2025  
8:30am-3:30pm

Sponsored by the NEPS Faith Formation Resource Ministry Team

Jordan Lutheran Church, Orefield [godsllove.org/LMD](https://godsllove.org/LMD)

*"What does it mean to be a Christian in a culture that challenges our faith?"*

Registration information available soon

Sunday December	Monday 2024	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> <b>1 Advent</b> 8:30 & 10:00am 9:00 – 9:45am	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Bible Study 11:30 – 12:30pm	<b>4</b> Praise Team Rehearsal 6:30pm	<b>5</b> Choir 6:30pm	<b>6</b> Friday Ladies 9:00am - 12:00noon	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> <b>2 Advent</b> 8:30 & 10:00am Sunday School 9:00 – 9:45am Confirmation 1-3	<b>9</b> Advent Wreath Making  6:30 – 8:00pm	<b>10</b> Bible Study 11:30 – 12:30pm	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Choir 6:30pm	<b>13</b> Friday Ladies 9:00am - 12:00noon	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> <b>3 Advent</b> 8:30 & 10:00am Sunday School 9:00 – 9:45am	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Bible Study 11:30 – 12:30pm	<b>18</b> Praise Team Rehearsal 6:30pm	<b>19</b> Finance Meeting 6:00pm  Holden Evening Prayer 6:00pm	<b>20</b> Friday Ladies 9:00am - 12:00noon	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>4 Advent</b> 8:30 & 10:00am Sunday School 9:00 – 9:45am Confirmation 1-3		<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> Candlelight Service 3:30pm & 7:00pm	<b>MERRY CHRISTMAS</b>	Choir 6:30pm	Friday Ladies 9:00am - 12:00noon	
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				
<b>Lessons &amp; Carols</b> Combined Service 10:00am		<b>New Years Eve</b>  Bible Study 11:30 – 12:30pm				