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A LIFE OF FAITH

Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Mechanicsville, Maryland



FEATURED STORIES THIS MONTH:

Pentecost - What does it mean?

PENTECOST

by Jenny Moonen

"The Christian holiday of Pentecost is a moveable feast, which is celebrated on the 50th day from Easter Sunday. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles." - Wikipedia.

Pentecost was celebrated in the Old Testament too, only it wasn't called Pentecost, it was called Feast of the Harvest or the Feast of Weeks (mentioned in Exodus 23, 24 Leviticus 16, Numbers 28, and Deuteronomy 16). It celebrated the early weeks of the harvest. There were two harvests each year, an early harvest of wheat and a final harvest in the fall. The early Jews would go to the celebration of the Firstfruits and count off 50 days. Since 50 days was roughly 7 weeks, it always came a "week of weeks" later. Therefore, they either called it the Feasts of the Harvest or the Feast of Weeks.

In Acts 2, Jesus' followers were gathered to celebrate the Feast of the Harvest when the Holy Spirit "*filled the whole house where they were sitting.*" The church grew by 3,000 that day, which is why we Christians still celebrate Pentecost today. (Source Christianity.com)

Have you ever been filled by the Holy Spirit? It takes over your whole body and brings a feeling of warmth and happiness like sitting in the sun on a warm spring day. It's a feeling I can't truly describe, but you will know it when you feel it! What a gift we Christians are given. We get to let the Holy Spirit guide us every day of our life. Have you ever felt the urge to do something good that you wouldn't normally do? That's the Holy Spirit. We are called to do extraordinary things every day of our life, do we do them? Maybe it's visiting the sick or homebound, calling your mother, watching someone's kids or pets so they can have a day off, volunteering at a homeless shelter, donating to a food shelf, smiling at a stranger, the opportunities are endless. I challenge you to listen to the Holy Spirit this month and go outside your comfort zone and do something for someone else and expect nothing in return.

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Pastor Pomrenke's Message

May 2021

Beloved,

Spring is in Full Effect! I know those of you who are dealing with the heightened (me included) pollen levels are quite aware that spring is here and the world around us is blooming. As I sat and reflected on last month ... more specifically Holy Week ... I must admit that I enjoyed this past Holy Week much more than the year before ... because we were together as the Body of Christ.

Covid has indeed presented a unique challenge to us as individuals and as a church body over the past year plus. I pray that when we are challenged, we have turned to the scriptures for solace and guidance. We have experienced many different emotions over this time fear, anxiety, loneliness, and despair just to name a few. I know as I have experienced some of these same emotions, I truly have found peace in the scriptures. It is when we are facing these times that we need to understand when and where and who we can take refuge. I especially love the first five verses of Psalm 31 ...It says:

Psalm 31; 1-5 (ESV)

In you, O Lord, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me! For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

As you look through this passage, I hope you realize the truth in David's words. He (The Lord) is the only fortress that will never fail, no matter what it faces. There is peace in knowing that isn't there? So, as the temperatures are warming, I pray that your hearts follow suit. He is there, He is leading us ... we just need to be open to where He wants us to Go. Amen?

Pastor G. Pomrenke

Vacation Bible School

by Meredith Johnson

We are so excited to have kids back in VBS this year! Our VBS will be from June 28th – July 2nd from 9am -12pm. During Rocky Railway VBS, our students will learn that Jesus's Power Pulls Us Through! Each day we'll hop on the St. Paul's train and go from station to station learning about God's love! We'll start our day at Sing and Play express and move on to Imagination Station, Kid Vid Cinema, Chew Chew Snacks, Loco Motion Games, and Bible Adventures! Once our train pulls back into the station we'll gather together at Rocky Wrap Up to talk about our day!

There will be some changes this year due to our current COVID world. All participants ages three and up will be required to wear masks during VBS. Sanitation practices of wiping down surfaces and maintaining social distance guidelines will be followed. Deep cleaning of our entire facility will happen each night. Here at St. Paul's we take the safety of our staff and students seriously and although things may look a little different, we're committed to teaching that Jesus's power pulls us through!

Registration is now open for Rocky Railway VBS! Please go to our website www.stpaulssomd.com and click on the Rocky Railway picture to register! If you have any questions about VBS please contact our director, Meredith Johnson: meredith.s.johnson@gmail.com or 301-653-0792.



LWML

by Tracie Pomrenke

Thank you for the donations for the LWML conference. I know it will really help those in need. We will continue collecting until June 20th. I have made lists of the items needed and placed copies near the basket to take as a reminder of what they are looking for and if you are like me, a reminder to keep an eye out for some good deals between now and then.

I am not sure if you are all aware that our wonderful Pastor Gary is on the board for the Catherine Foundation. If you are unaware of their mission, they help young mothers to keep their babies and help those mothers once they have made that commitment. Each year for a fundraiser to help their mission, they give out baby bottles to collect change from Mother's Day to Father's Day. This year let's help them out. The Catherine Foundation even offers free sonograms to mothers, because seeing their little one helps them to feel the connection that a mother and child thrive on.

Please let me know if you have any ideas for outings and/or events that we can participate in. I would love to start returning to normal soon!! I miss our times together, building the relationships with in the church.



Buildings and Grounds

by Brad Clements

Status of Projects:

Playground Mulch Update:

I would like to thank everyone for contributing funds for the purchase of the playground mulch. The mulch is on back-order. Playground mulch is certified to be safe to be used in children's play areas.

Kneelers and Pew Cushions:

The kneelers and pew cushions were ordered several weeks ago. The fabric that matches our chairs and altar carpet in the sanctuary has been obtained. Additionally, the foam rubber for the kneelers and pews has also been obtained. At this time, all materials have been secured. The date for delivery of the kneelers and pew cushions is the third or fourth week of May.

Special Thanks:

I would like to recognize Gayle and Sandy for their work in beautifying the flowerbeds in front of the church in time for Easter week.

Thanks to Paul Piphon for his on-going efforts to obtain the playground mulch.

I would also like to recognize the Wigger's family for their support in maintaining the church grounds; especially cutting the grass. This is a huge task.

Future projects:

- Replace the floor in the main hallway/narthex of the church. Estimated cost \$2,500.
- Replace the floor in the kitchen. Estimated cost \$1,500.
- 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 \$20,000.

Member Spotlight



Gayle Gepert

Gayle has been a member of St. Paul's for approximately 23 years. During that time she has been Council Secretary, Financial Secretary, Vice President of the Church Council, choir member, choir director, organist, Vacation Bible School (VBS) teacher. For a few years, she even cut the grass! Because she is a Mainer (she actually refers to herself as a Mainiac), she has a hard time sitting still, so you might see her doing other odd and ends things around the church.



Gayle's parents were from Maine, which is where she lived until she was 10. When Gayle's sister, Cheryl, came down with spinal meningitis, causing her to become deaf, they moved to Woolrich, Pennsylvania. Maine was not able to provide the services that were necessary for Cheryl to be successful. Pennsylvania gifted them with many amenities and the school system that provided her sister with the skills that she needed to become successful and even famous! Cheryl, despite her challenges has been the director of the Center for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, written an autobiography, had lunch with Presidents at the White House, served on the Homeland Security committee and Board of Gallaudet, just to name a few things. Gayle also has two brothers, Randy, who lives in State College, PA with his wife and five daughters. Her other brother David resides in Baltimore with his wife and son.

Gayle just retired after 47 years in education as an Elementary Teacher, Title One Helping Teacher, Instructional Specialist, and New Teacher Mentor. She truly loved her years working with children. I am sure she touched many lives and made a difference.

In her spare time, her and Jimmie like to attend sporting events. They have had season tickets to the Maryland Terrapin football games for over 15 years. They also are baseball fans, really any sport. She also enjoys gardening and yardwork. She truly enjoys having a floral display each spring, summer and fall. We also enjoy the fruits of her gardening, as she joined Sandy in planting the flowers in front of the church. Her friends call her the Crazy Cat Lady, since she and Jimmie have found (or they found them) five dogs and too many cats to count.

Her favorite hobby is participating in activities with her daughters, Jessica, Shenley, and their spouses and eight grandchildren. She goes on vacation with them and often takes the grandkids on mini vacations as well. She likes to travel for sporting events or school activities, etc.

She feels truly blessed with a remarkable family. Her parents were strict but very supportive. They were committed to their God and Savior. They were good role models to Gayle and fostered her desire to grow, learn, and serve as well. She is very happy to be a member of such a special congregation of St. Paul's. She'd like to thank you all for your love and support in helping her become a better educated Christian and Servant of the Word.

Sunday School

By Brenda Bowling

Our Sunday School year will be drawing to a close on May 23rd. As we think back on all the shared experiences we have had throughout the past very difficult year we give thanks for the opportunity that we were given to come together in person to hear and study God's Word and grow in faith in spite of COVID. A special thanks to our dedicated teachers and staff; Mrs. Tracie Pomrenke (PreK, K and 1st Grade) Mrs. Karen Wigger and Victoria Drury (2nd , 3 rd and 4th Grades), Mr. Paul Mehrkam (High School), Mr. Andrew Maack (Confirmation), Mr. John Bowling (5th and 6th Grades), Mrs. Melissa Chew (Openings) and Mrs. Cathy Bostwick (Substitute) for allowing the Holy Spirit to work through them to help nurture the faith in your children. St. Paul's is very blessed to have such faith filled, dedicated, and loving teachers!!

We were blessed with beautiful weather for our Easter celebrations and want to thank everyone for coming out to participate in such a fun day to experience the joy of our riser savior!

We invite all of our families to join us on May 23rd at the 10:30 AM worship service as the Sunday School classes share the exciting story of Pentecost and its importance to all of us as we follow Jesus's command to share the good news of salvation to all people with the help of the gift of the Holy Spirit. All Sunday School children will be meeting in the Nursery room or the kitchen before the service as we will be processing in together and sitting together during the service. The first rows across the front of the church will be reserved for our kids, who will be sitting on every other chair. *Please Note: A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. Please sign if you will be attending our picnic so we can be sure to have enough food and tables, etc. for everyone.* Following the worship service, all are welcome to join us for a completely outdoor potluck picnic. Thanks to another Thrivent Action Team grant, we will be purchasing fried chicken and grilling hotdogs as well as supplying drinks for everyone. Families are asked to bring a side dish to share. Food will be served outside and tables will be set up with umbrellas and/or tents for all to eat outside. Games and other fun activities will be set up outside for the kids as well. Prayerfully, we will have another beautiful day but if not a rain date will be announced. It's been a long time, since we were able to come together like this. We will be following COVID rules and mandates during all these activities. Hope to see everyone on May 23rd! God bless you and your family over the summer months! We look forward to seeing you again at our "Rocky Railroad" vacation bible school program on June 28th through July 2nd. Watch for more information about this fun week from Meredith Johnson our Vacation Bible School program's Director. Sincerely, Brenda Bowling

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever." Is. 40:8

Birthdays and Anniversaries



May Birthdays

Tyler Johnson - May 2
Kyle Moeller - May 2
Joey Willett - May 2
Kimberly Biss - May 5
Joe Heber - May 5
Braden Smith - May 5
Brett Wigen - May 5
Matthew Chew - May 6
Joanne Piphon - May 8
Jason Beall - May 11
Margaret Orenca - May 11
Dana Nichols - May 12
James Moeller - May 16
Thomas Chew - May 18
Pam Clements - May 19
Jackson Myers - May 19
Jeanne Willett - May 20
Kayla Gates - May 24
Michael Kalnasy - May 29

May Anniversaries

Joe and Jeanne Willett - May 7
Kristina and Rick Lacey - May 10
Christopher and Megan Green - May 17
Paul and Debbie Kalnasy - May 19
Mark and Kathy Lewis - May 27
Tony and Kelly Gray - May 29



Kid's Corner

Find your way through
the maze to the apostles

