



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield
139 Craig's Meadow Rd.
East Stroudsburg, Pa. 18301
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Web Site: stpaulscommunitychurch.com
Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield

ST. PAUL'S CALL

February 2025

Pastor Deb Staniszewski

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



SUNDAY SERVICES 8:30AM AND 10:00AM

Sunday School 9:00 – 9:45am

LIVE STREAMING AVAILABLE

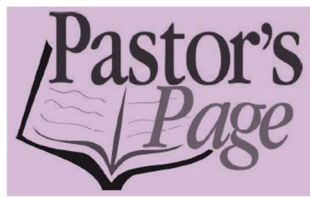
10:00AM SERVICE.

Connect to Facebook direct or go to our web site FB tab.

A PDF of the 10:00am service bulletin 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.



This month, we celebrate Valentine's Day, a holiday named after an Italian priest and physician, who became a saint. It is said that St. Valentine defied an order by Roman Emperor Claudius II Gothicus around 270CE, which forbid young people to wed, because the Emperor felt that single men made better soldiers than those who were married. Some say, Valentine performed marriage ceremonies in secret, up until his execution, even marrying in-love couples through his prison window! Love is powerful!

The bible mentions love over 500 times from beginning to end, as over and over, we hear of God's amazing abundant love for us, and God's call for us to love others. Just as God loves us, Jesus calls us to love God and one another. In Matthew chapter 22, when someone asked him, ... "which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40, NIV)

One way we can love one another is by accepting one another just as we are, and seeking to understand one another, rather than changing each other.

In her book "The Sacred Art of Listening" Kay Lindal says that one of the most important things for real conversation is to "listen to understand, not to agree with or believe" (Kay Lindal, Sacred Art of Listening, p 50) When we're in conversation, especially with someone who thinks differently or sees the world differently than we do, loving them isn't about

changing the other person, but listening to them and seeking to understand them as a person. Sometimes, we feel afraid when we don't understand, but we will never understand if we don't listen to one another. Lindhal goes on to say,

“The more we understand about one another, the less we fear. The less we fear, the more we trust. The more we trust, the more our hearts open to love one another.” (Lindhal p.52)

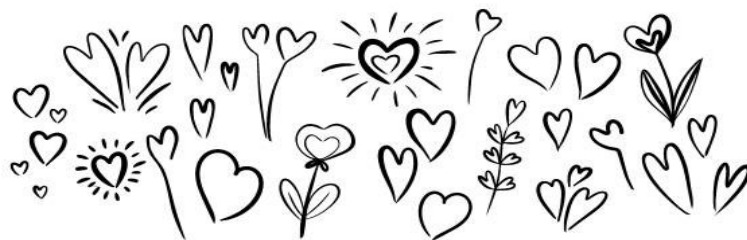
God's love is for all, and we are all made in God's image. When Jesus calls us to love, it is an all-inclusive, action word.

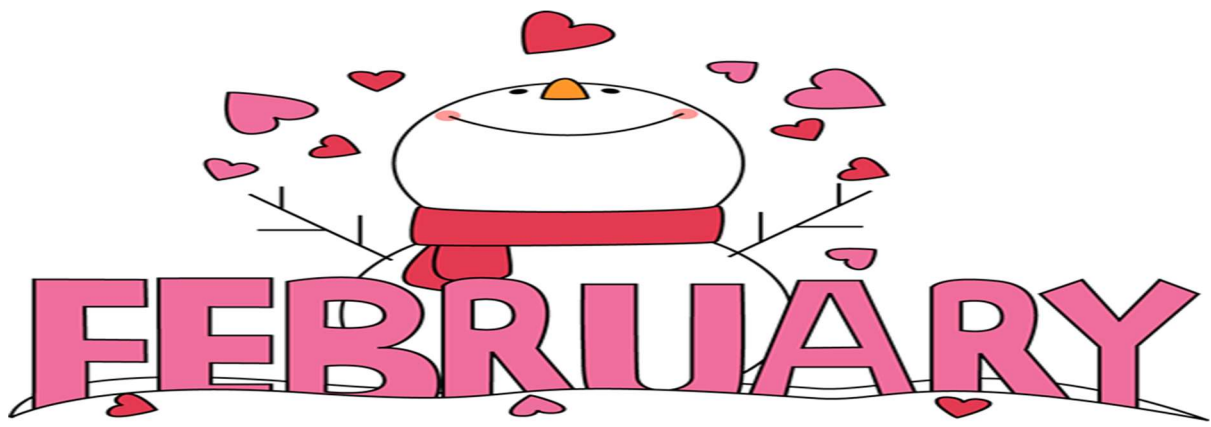
When we seek to understand, when we listen with our hearts to other's stories, it opens our hearts and minds, which makes it possible for us to love them regardless of the ways that we are different. It also becomes clear that we are the same in ways that matter. Everyone wants to love and be loved, to be heard, valued, and seen just as they are.

This year, give everyone you meet a Valentine that keeps on giving every day, the grace-filled gift of listening, loving, understanding, and valuing them for who they are, blessed children of God.

Your Sibling in Christ,

Pastor Deb





Musical Opportunities – Pocono Mountain Community Chorus 2025 Holy Week Concert – Palm Sunday April 13th 7pm at St. John’s Lutheran Church 9 North 9th St, Stroudsburg, PA 18360. If interested, contact Kathy Ertle for information.

Rehearsals:

Sunday, March 2, 9, 16 – 2:30pm-4:30pm

Sunday, March 23rd – 3:30pm-5:30pm

Sunday, March 30th – 2:30pm-4:30pm

Saturday, April 5th – 10am – noon

Save the Date!

Ash Wednesday – March 5th 5pm (Ashes available during the day after 10am)

Daylight Savings – March 9th (spring forward – more sunshine!)

Lenten Soup Suppers – Wednesdays 5pm (March 12th, 19th, 26th, April 2nd & 8th)

Palm Sunday – April 13th 8:30 & 10am

Maundy Thursday – April 17th 6pm

Good Friday – April 18th 12 noon & 6pm

Easter – April 20th 8:30 & 10am

Check the bulletin board for sponsorship opportunities!

Next meeting – Monday, March 3rd 6pm

Have a Blessed February,

Worship & Music Committee



**Come join us for Pickleball in Celebration Hall!
Beginners and more experienced players welcome.**

Download the app TeamReach and use the code STPAULS. Once in the app you can look at the calendar for times.

ANY questions text or call Laura Biddulph.
570-369-0359



**Thursday February 6th & 20th
9:30am – 12:00noon**

Contact Wanda Richardson with any questions.

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

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.



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):

February 9th

February 23rd

Sunday School and Confirmation Class will pack Touch of Home on February 16th. We send Touch of Home boxes with snacks and goodies to those in college, in the military services or just away from home – any who needs a Touch of Home! So please submit any new or change of addresses.

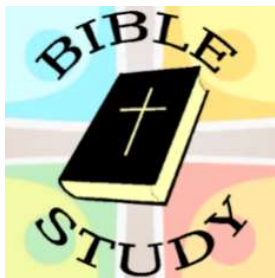
We would also very much appreciate any donations for this service project. Donations could include snack size packages of chips, cookies and crackers, microwavable oatmeal, popcorn and soups, candy, gum and also pens, pencils, notepaper, post it notes and other stationary items. Thank you!

Blessings always,

Christian Education Team

Alisa Nixon (908) 279-5242

Pastor Deb (570) 350-5115



**Every Tuesday 11:30am to 12:30pm.
JOIN US**

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.

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.

Come on Friday and join in.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED !!



Please see Nancy Fritz or leave your name in the office.

No experience necessary you will be instructed and helped as much as you need. Assistance is needed for a month at a time.

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE



Sunday Coffee Hour

Help with Funeral Luncheons



Contact Jeannette Richardson or Faye Jones if interested.



**Contact Wanda Richardson or office
If you would like help for Thursday Food Pantry or special holidays.**

SUNDAY SERVICE



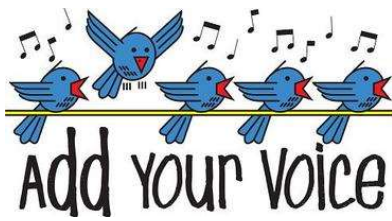
If you would like to help on a Sunday contact Barbara Edwards or office.

Ushers and Lay Readers

Contact Pastor direct.

If you are interested in leading a service on one of Pastor's Sundays when she is away.

Musical Opportunities –



CHOIR meets Thursdays at 6:30pm in the sanctuary.

If interested, contact Kathy Ertle.

THE PRAISE TEAM meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm and plays for the Contemporary service at 10am on the 4th Sunday of the month.

Please reach out to Chris Matthy if interested.

Sponsor Opportunities – Sign up sheets on Narthex Bulletin Board

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. Please find someone to share with you if you'd like to. Order forms and checks may be given to Dana Strohl or Lynne Williams.

*In case of
Inclement
Weather*



The following is the procedure for the inclement weather. The church council will make the decision if services will be delayed or cancelled due to weather. If there will be a delay or closing or Sunday School is cancelled, this information will be on Facebook. There will also be a message put on the answering machine for the church. If you are not sure if services are cancelled, please call the church at 570-223-9422 and listen for a message. **If there is not a special message... Then services are their usual times.**

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





Engaging the Stranger Within: The Northeastern PA Synod's Racial Justice Work

Growing up in the American South, much of what was taught about racism dealt with history—slavery, annexation, Jim Crow, and integration. What (and how) we were taught in school, and the ways our community and churches remained unofficially segregated were “just the way things were.” There was a disconnect between the way things were and *why*. Racism was something that had happened, and we were living in the status quo of the Civil Rights Movement. And with that history focused so heavily in the South, it was like racism was somehow localized and intensified in that region, and we were more directly impacted by its legacy.

The privilege of my seminary formation and exposure to different contexts have shown just how limited my awareness of racism’s pervasiveness extends. Racism is a part of every community, congregation, home, and heart. It isn’t localized more intensely in one place or another. Our communities, workplaces, and churches in Northeastern Pennsylvania face the same legacy and challenges of confronting racist prejudices and practices, even if they expose themselves in different ways.



Cultural isolationism, unawareness of our past and current exploitation of the Lenni Lenape and Delaware peoples, emphasis on the immigrant heritage of our congregations while dismissing immigrant communities across the street, and an apathy to acts of violence against persons of color permeates our pews. Confronting personal, local, regional, and national instances of racial prejudice

is as important now as ever. The gospel gives us the assurance that the way things are is not how God calls us to be. To get from here to there, we need help learning what we don’t know, and hearing firsthand from our neighbors how we can work together to resist racism.

Through your Mission Support generosity, our Synod has the opportunity to walk together in more intentional ways as we learn about our communities’ and congregations’ complicity in racial prejudice and work for racial justice. Loving the land we steward in Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the people who occupy it, and healing the hurt of our ancestral and contemporary practices, begins with engaging the stranger we do not wish to see in ourselves so that we can better engage the stranger we do not currently see in our neighbors.



Pastor Jennifer Hall and Pastor Samantha Drennan at the 2024 youth pre-gathering event representing the Racial Justice Team

Racial Justice Boundary Training for rostered leaders, Synod Council and Staff, and congregational lay leaders has been an invaluable resource for beginning this work in our Synod. In January, we collaborated with [Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley](#) and our own Synod's [LGBTQ Task Force](#) at the Lutheran Center for a day of worship and action called MLK Jr. Day of Prayer and Service. Partnership with [Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Pennsylvania \(LAMPa\)](#), [Liberty Lutheran's](#) MLK Day of Service, and local ecumenical and interfaith agencies committed to the course of justice in our neighborhood are but a few crucial ways we are already naming and confronting racism together as Christ's church, along with our

support of the [ELCA's Truth and Healing Movement](#). All of these endeavors are bolstered by your Mission Support giving, and reflect our shared commitment to growing together as disciples of Jesus who are gospel filled and Spirit led.

Just as the Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed (Psalm 103:6), so too does God charge the people with upholding the cause of justice for those most vulnerable (Deuteronomy 16:19-20; 24:17). To get involved in our shared work of racial justice and reconciliation, [reach out to a member of our Synod's Racial Justice Team](#), participate in local or regional educational opportunities with partnering colleges and universities, confront practices that reinforce barriers based on race and ethnicity, and have conversations with other disciples in your congregation about how your baptized community can work for justice and peace in the world.

Submitted by: The Rev. Brandon M. Heavner, Weisenberg- New Tripoli, NEPA Synod Racial Justice Team

DID YOU KNOW that your Mission Support helps fund areas of the synod like this one and many other important initiatives? Your contributions are making a significant impact and helping others grow in faith, supporting the synod's directions of Growing Young, Gaining Strength, and Going Beyond Death to Life, along with the values of Loving, Healing, and Engaging like Jesus. To learn more, visit godslove.org/missionsupport.

RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING









FEBRUARY 8

All Northeastern PA Synod rostered leaders (pastors, deacons, and synodically-authorized lay leaders) are required to have **Anti-Racism at least once every three years.**

Training will be presented by The Rev. Carla Christopher.

9:30AM TO 3:00PM

LUTHERAN CENTER

2354 GROVE ROAD, ALLENTOWN

For more information & how to register, visit godslove.org/racial-justice-training

Sunday February	Monday 2025	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 4th Epiphany 8:30 & 10:00am	3 Worship and Music 6:30pm	4 Bible Study 11:30 – 12:30pm	5 Praise Team Rehearsal 6:30pm	6 Food Pantry 9:30-12:00 Choir 6:30pm	7 Friday Ladies 9:00am - 12:00noon	8
9 5th Epiphany 8:30 & 10:00am Sunday School 9:00 – 9:45am	10	11 Bible Study 11:30 – 12:30pm Council Meeting 6:30	12	13 Choir 6:30pm	14 Friday Ladies 9:00am - 12:00noon	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
6th Epiphany 8:30 & 10:00am Sunday School Touch of Home 9:00 – 9:45am		Bible Study 11:30 – 12:30pm	Praise Team Rehearsal 6:30pm	Food Pantry 9:30-12:00 Finance Meeting 6:00pm Choir 6:30pm	Friday Ladies 9:00am - 12:00noon	
23	24	25	26	27	28	
7th Epiphany 8:30 10:00am Contemporary with Praise Team Sunday School 9:00 – 9:45am Confirmation 1-3		Bible Study 11:30 – 12:30pm		Choir 6:30pm	Friday Ladies 9:00am - 12:00noon	