

St. Paul's Lutheran Church News



MY BELOVED,

As we exit advent and enter Epiphany, we are still reminded of the journey that we are taking with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Epiphany is a day that we commemorate God's outward, tangible expression of love toward us. The journey of the magi, who were led to Bethlehem by a miraculous star, revealed Jesus came to draw all people to Himself. Epiphany is traditionally celebrated on the Sunday closest to Jan. 6, where many refer to the day the magi – or the “Three Wise Men” – visited Mary, Joseph, and the newborn baby Jesus. This is why some traditionalists never place the wise men in the nativity because they were Not there the night Jesus came into this world.

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So, the wise men have arrived and have worshipped the newborn king. So, we should do the same. We worship this tiny baby because we know that this baby was ultimately born to die ... for us and for our sins. As we contemplate this new year, we cannot predict what it will bring. But we surely can approach it with “gospel goggles.” Meaning the more time, we spend in the word, the more we act in the word. All our efforts should spring from the words that our savior speaks to us in the Bible. So, if we can approach this year with “gospel goggles,” then we can make it a better year and we can make a difference in those lives that God has placed around us ... no matter what the virus brings! Amen? A Blessed New Year for you all!

Pastor G. Pomrenke



Thank you to all who came out to hear the children of St. Paul's share their Christmas program "A Night Like No Other" with everyone. The children all did a wonderful job in spite of the many illnesses going around the county that kept us from a lot of "all together" practices. God is good! St. Paul's is blessed with a great group of children in our congregation, important for a church that wants to grow. We thank Thrivent once again for helping with the dinner and gifts for all the children. Sunday School classes will resume once again on January 8th at 9:15 AM. We welcome Lori and Rhett Calloway who will be teaching the 5th and 6th graders once we return as my husband John will be going in for surgery at the Washington Hospital Center in January. Lori and Rhett have been helping out with the class during the past month to get to know the kids. Both are amazing and will be a fun and great addition to our Sunday School staff! We are looking for some volunteers to be substitutes, please contact Melissa Chew or myself if you would be willing to serve in this way.

May God bless your 2023 with peace and happiness!

"Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His presence continually."

LWML News

As we are entering the new year I was thinking about our next day off. In my old position at the HVAC company we worked all of the holidays except New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. We worked on 4th of July, MLK Day, President's Day...well you get the idea. I was excited to know that not only did I get to have more than a week off for Christmas I will be off again soon. Soon after I was contemplating this I happen to come across a newsletter article that happened to be about Martin Luther King Jr. and our beloved Martin Luther. I have to admit I was blown away. I actually hopped on line to verify what I read and came across an article that was written in the Washington Post in 2019.

Here is the link <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/01/15/story-how-michael-king-jr-became-martin-luther-king-jr/>

I will give you the nutshell version...Michael King Senior went to several countries and one was Germany. While he was there he learned of Martin Luther's desires for change and what he did to attempt to change the church. When he returned home he was a changed man. A fire had started in his heart and he changed his name and his son's name. They had both been Michael King Senior and Junior but changed to Martin Luther King Senior and Junior. I was shocked to hear this. Can you imagine going on a trip to get closer to God and coming home so on fire that not only did you change your name (like Simon to Peter and Saul to Paul) but he really changed our world. He started a legacy that his son, his namesake, carried on to a whole new level.

As a child I used to confuse Martin Luther King Jr. and Martin Luther and now I know why. I have often been in awe of both of these figures once I figured out they were two different people. I was young but even though I had to sort out who was who I knew that I wanted to leave a legacy that people will continue to talk about. OK I know I am not famous and I am not a public figure but I know that I have touched lives as a youth leader, as a child care provider and as a friend. We cannot all be public figures but never doubt that you can make a difference in your corner of the world. As you are entering a new year there is always so much possibility and I recommend that this year you commit to loving EVERYONE like Jesus did. He was not judging their hair, skin color, or accent he was simply being present in the moment and loving them where they were. This year, let's do that too.

In His Service,
Tracie Pomrenke



President Newsletter

January 2023

Happy New Year.

Thank you for your confidence in me to serve St. Paul's as Church Council President. The Lord has blessed us in the prior year with those who have served as council members under Council President John Bowling.

I will admit that God gives us a plan that we don't understand or cannot visualize the journey. What I do see is that we need to continue to expanding St. Paul's ministry. What does that entail? Increased Active Membership; Expanded Outreach; and Building Relationship with God.

We are seeing signs that the COVID19 decimation on church attendance is wearing away. New and prior members, old and young people, and families are coming to check out St. Paul's. If you see someone new or has been out of church for a while, feel free to welcome them home and tell them how you like your church body and what's been happening.

We are seeing more activity in Bible and devotional studies thanks to Pastor's Thursday Bible study. For the past 2 years, I have been leading the Elders in a devotional study based on the book, Built Upon the Rock by Ted Kober. The main point is for us to learn from God's Word in how best to interact, follow, lead, reconcile conflict, and develop relationships.

St. Paul's ministry continues past the driveway with helping those in need at shelters, in schools, and abroad. I envision the community to see St. Paul's as a beacon of hope and place for God's message.

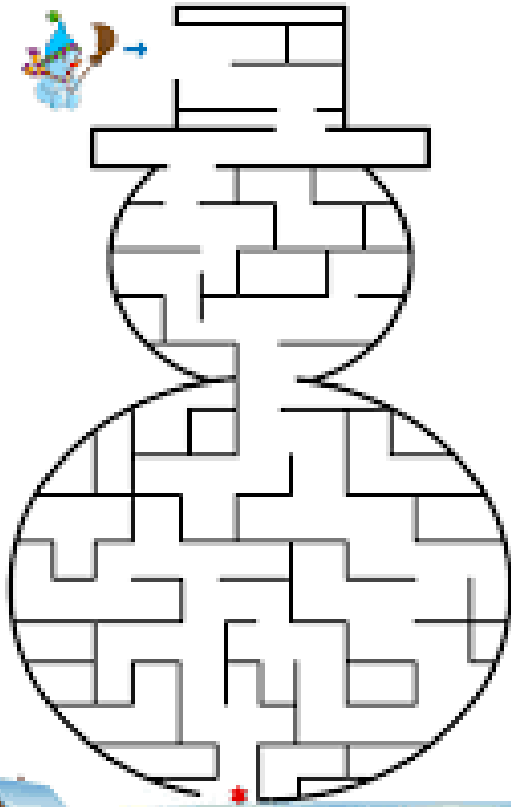
To enable this vision and have actionable data to support our decisions, I will bring back that church health metrics that I did in previous years. The metrics have four key performance indicator areas: Connecting with Jesus, Connecting with Each Other, Connecting with Southern Maryland, and Financial Enablers. I will let you know when these become available and are included in the Church Council Meeting Minutes that hang on the corkboard across from the kitchen. I plan to include one of them in my monthly newsletters and explain what the metric is and any insights the metric provides.

Closing Prayer: May the Lord bless us and guidance us in how to best serve him in worship and ministry to others. May the Lord hold us steadfast as we face challenges that threaten to weaken our spirit. Amen.

Submitted by Paul Mehrkam

St. Paul's Fun Page

Help the snowman find the sledge.



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