

St. Paul's Call January 2022

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield
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Sunday Worship
Rev. James Thomas Pastor
Services at 8:30 and 10:00am



Happy
New Year



Greetings in the Name of Our Triune God,

I am grateful for the six months I have been your pastor. We have covered a lot of ground in a very short time. The Worship Committee has helped us transition from the Lutheran Book of Worship to the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Book). Because we are not using hard covered bound worship books, few noticed the change. For some time now, we have also worshipped with a new bulletin format. Thank you, Lynne Williams, for your hard work and leadership.

We are now making the transition from Holy Communion once a month to Holy Communion every Sunday. For the time being we'll celebrate the Eucharist three Sundays a month. We'll move to weekly Eucharist down the road in keep with the practice of a growing number of congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Church Council has approved a stewardship education program for 2022 titled, "*New Consecration Sunday – Stewardship Program.*" A committee is in process to lead this important work. New consecration Sunday approaches financing congregation ministries by teaching stewardship from a spiritual perspective rather than a fundraising perspective. It focuses on the question, "What is God calling me to do?" rather than, "What does the church need in order to pay its bills?" If you would like to serve on this committee, please see Pastor Thomas.

Going forward, a concern I have relates to the indebtedness of St. Paul's Church. We have a mortgage of over \$100,000. The mortgage hamstrings just about any plans we have for ministry, renovation, or creativity. We simply must address debt reduction. I believe we can.

Thank you for all you do. Thank you for your faithfulness to the mission and ministry of God in this place. We are on the way.

James Thomas, Pastor



Happy New Year from Worship & Music

January Scripture Lessons

January 2nd

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalms 147:12-20

Ephesians 1:3-14

John 1:[1-9] 10-18

January 9th

Isaiah 43:1-7

Psalms 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17,21

January 16th

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalms 36:5-10

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2:1-11

January 23rd

Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6,8-10

Psalms 19

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21

January 30th

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalms 71:1-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

Your Worship and Music committee would like to take a moment to thank all those who contributed to worship services in 2021. From the altar guild who changed the paraments and kept the candles burning to all those who served in some capacity as acolyte, greeter or lay reader over the course of the year. Special thanks to our council for their leadership and decision making that has seen us move from zoom services to in person while navigating challenging and changing guidelines to keep our members safe. We've seen a number of changes this year. A newly formatted bulletin in place thanks to the hard work of Lynne Williams our secretary. Thanks to Dave Libecap for helping acclimate us to the new ELW services. A debt of gratitude to Pastor Thomas and his lovely wife Nancy for coming to our church and providing spiritual leadership and rousing sermons while leading the call to raise funds for our new organ that debuted this Christmas. Thanks to Chris Matthy for his work with the Praise Team and putting together our carols and lessons services during Christmas along with a beautiful rendition of Silent Night on guitar with Dave Libecap that brought such meaning to our final service of the year. We are reminded of how lucky we are to be part of a caring congregation that helps each other in times of need, provides for the community and celebrates life's joyous moments together!

Beginning in January we will be offering communion on the first three Sundays of the month. Communion cups will be available to pickup with a bulletin and disposed of after the service in the back of the church.

Our next meeting is on February 7th at 6:30 pm. Please share your ideas with us for making the services more meaningful for you, your friends and family.

*May God bless you and your family in the New Year,
Your Worship and Music Committee*

THANK YOU, KATHY ERTLE, FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK WITH THE WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE AND AS ST. PAUL'S CHOIR DIRECTOR.



CHURCH LOOKS BEAUTIFUL THANKS TO EVERYONE THAT HELPED.





St. Paul's
Beautiful New Allen
Organ



A little history about Allen Organ Company copied from their web site

Due to overwhelming product demand, the Allen Factory experienced rapid growth since the early 1950s. In 1953, an air-conditioned silk mill was purchased in Macungie, Pennsylvania, and the Company's manufacturing was relocated. This facility became the first air-conditioned commercial woodshop in Pennsylvania. Today, with significant expansions to the original site, and more than 250,000 square feet of state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, Allen is the largest vertically integrated church organ builder in the world!

THE ORGAN PIPES GOT A NEW HOME AND ST. PAUL'S HAS A NEW LOOK.





SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA

JANUARY 2022 • ISSUE 1 • VOLUME 30

Covid-19 Update & Guidelines

The Latest Situation: The Covid-19 pandemic continues to generate fear, concern, confusion and division across the country and within our own Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. The most recent developments – some troubling, some hopeful – include:

- The rise of new variants, especially “omicron”;
- The ongoing and in many cases, increasing numbers of new cases;
- The continued reluctance and refusal of some to get vaccinated, or to wear masks;
- On the good side: the increased opportunities for testing, for boosters, and for vaccines for all ages.

Here in our Synod, I now encourage us to use another trustworthy source of information to help guide our decisions concerning the pandemic: the “Covid Act Now Coalition.” This non-profit, web-based resource brings together non-partisan experts in medicine, law, and public policy, to provide objective data and analysis. Their website is being consulted as a reliable source by synods and congregations across the ELCA. From their site, we can see clearly that things are still very threatening here in NE Penn: all 14 of our counties have threat levels of “VERY HIGH” or “SEVERE” – Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton, and Schuylkill all are in that worst category. Additionally, the vaccination rate is at or below 60% for 7 of those 14 counties. Most of these numbers are worse than the data for many of our neighboring synods, including the Southeastern Penn Synod, whose leaders have nonetheless chosen to put in place stricter guidelines than we have. I believe we can become safer and return to “normal” sooner if we follow their lead.

Dr. Luther Shows The Way:

Almost exactly 500 years ago – in November 1520 – Martin Luther published one of his most ground-breaking treatises: “On the Freedom of a Christian.” He begins the document with this famous declaration: “A Christian is the most free lord of all, subject to none. And a Christian is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone.”

He goes on to describe how God, through Christ’s sacrificial love for us on the cross, has granted us the grace and the freedom to make our own decisions; but this freedom does not release us to disregard the truth, or our call to care and concern for our neighbor. Luther writes: “Therefore [Christians] should be guided in all [their] works by this thought and contemplate this one thing alone, that [they] may serve and benefit others in all that [they do], considering nothing except the need and the advantage of [the] neighbor.”

So “what does this mean?” The inconvenience of mask wearing; and even the threat of temporary cold-and-flu reactions to vaccinations – these are simply the sacrifices we are called to make, as “the dutiful servants of all, subject to everyone.” It is within this traditionally and theologically Lutheran framing that we maintain our vigilance; and update our guidelines here.

Covid-19 Continued...

Latest Synod Recommendations:

As we prepare for the larger crowds of Christmas Eve – and with Lent, Holy Week and Easter not far away – I am recommending the starting, the continuation, or the resumption, of any and all common-sense and good-neighbor precautions, including:

- Proof of vaccination or a negative test for all indoor events
 - Indoor masking
- Good air circulation, including open windows where feasible
- Social distancing, frequent washing and other effective protocols

Furthermore – at their January 15 meeting, I am encouraging our Synod Council to discuss and decide upon further appropriate actions, which may include mandates that all Synod-sponsored indoor events require masking, proof of vaccination, and/or proof of a negative test. As the duly elected governing body of this Synod, your Synod Council has the right and responsibility to make these decisions for Synod gatherings. When it comes to our individual worshipping communities, our authority is more limited; Synod Council (and myself) can only make clear and strong recommendations – based on the best science, on good conscience and on our common love for our neighbors, especially those who are most vulnerable. In other words, all congregations have the “freedom of a Christian” to decide for themselves how they will choose to act – or refuse to act. I invite us all to follow our baptismal call and Lutheran heritage, to follow God’s will and God’s love for all.

In God’s Love,
Bishop Christopher deForest

MISSION SUPPORT 2022



Send in your mission support commitments for 2022. You can find the form on the synod website, under the resources tab.

boundless
god beyond measure

JULY 24-28, 2022
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
REGISTER NOW AT ELCA.ORG

Save the date **SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2022**

June 10-11
Reading

JANUARY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Bible Study will resume on zoom details to be announced.				1
2 2 nd Christmas Service w/Communion 8:30am and 10:00am	3	4	5 Praise Team Rehearsal 6:30pm	6	7 Friday Ladies 10:00am - 12:00noon	8
9 Baptism of our Lord Service w/Communion 8:30am and 10:00am	10	11 Bible Study (to be announced) Council Meeting 7:00pm on Zoom	12	13 Food Pantry 9:30am - 12:00 noon	14 Friday Ladies 10:00am - 12:00noon	15
16 2 nd Epiphany Service w/Communion 8:30am and 10:00am Congregation Meeting after 2nd Service	17	18 Bible Study (to be announced)	19 Praise Team Rehearsal 6:30pm	20	21 Friday Ladies 10:00am - 12:00noon	22
23 3 rd Epiphany Contemporary Service with Praise Team Jazz Sunday	24	25 Bible Study (to be announced)	26	27 Food Pantry 9:30am - 12:00 noon	28 Friday Ladies 10:00am - 12:00noon	29
30 4 th Epiphany Healing Service	31					