

ST. PAUL'S CALL

APRIL 2022

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield

139 Craig's Meadow Road

East Stroudsburg PA 18301

570-223-9422

E-mail: stpaulscraigsmeadow@verizon.net

Web Site: stpaulscommunitychurch.com

Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield

Rev. James Thomas
Pastor



April 3rd
5th Sunday of
Lent

April 10th
Sunday of the
Passion
Palm Sunday



April 17th
Resurrection of Our Lord
Easter Day



April 24th
2nd Sunday of Easter

PASTORS PAGE

A few Sundays ago, I preached at St. Mark's Baptist Church in Bishopville, South Carolina. As part of the 146th Anniversary of the Congregation, the pastor asked adult members to give \$146.00 each, or a dollar for each of the 146 years of the congregation's ministry. He then did something I could never get away with at St. Paul's Church. He asked the members who intended to contribute the \$146.00 to stand. It was no surprise when about 90% of the assembly stood. It'll take some in the congregation a year to pay their pledges. The pastor was very confident in his proposal. I thought about that for a while, and I wondered how St Paul's would respond to a proposal to celebrate 167 years of ministry at a dollar a year. Something to think about! Celebrating 167 years would aid in bringing down our debt, paying for Celebration Hall is something we must do.

"When was the last time you tried to do something that you knew you would not fail at?" I think of that question when I attempt a new recipe. I am calling myself to do something beyond what I usually do. In Ukraine today, ordinary citizens are called to do something extraordinary. The people of Ukraine are taking a risk that may involve losing their lives. In our DNA, there are instructive codes that disallow this type of behavior. Genetics wire human beings to err on the side of safety. One might argue that we often lose more to underestimating possibilities in our relatively civilized world. I believe that we can pay down our debt at St. Paul's, and I challenge you to think about your part in this effort.

Pastor Thomas





Greetings from Worship and Music!

This Spring's calendar is full! Our Wednesday Lenten services conclude on April 6th with BYO food at 6pm for fellowship and service at 7pm in the sanctuary.

Services for Holy Week are as follows:

Palm Sunday – Sunday, April 10th at 8:30am and 10am

Maundy Thursday – Thursday, April 14th at 7pm

Good Friday – Friday, April 15th at 7pm

Easter – Sunday, April 17th at 8:30am and 10am

Special Sunday April 24th– Come celebrate Earth Day with us on Sunday, April 24th at the 10am service. Special Music by the Praise Team and guest speaker from the Brodhead Watershed Association will be joining us and our very own Alan Pride will be sharing the joys of beekeeping! Why not wear yellow? Coffee hour will feature honey themed delectables so bring your friends and family for a bee-autiful morning!

A Night of Music: Dedication Concert – Mark your calendars. Friday, May 6th at 7pm we will be presenting a A Night of Music to dedicate the new organ. The evening will feature our very own Joanne Albertson, Tim Lasslett, Dave Libecap and Praise Team with guest artists Gary Raish, Bob Riday and Bruce Rohrbach. It will be a fun-filled night of music to be enjoyed by all! Donations of \$10 for adults and \$5 for students will be taken at the door with proceeds to benefit Lutheran World Relief.

We are looking for a few good people to sponsor the altar flowers and bulletins for Sunday services. Please sign up on the charts located on the bulletin board for the Sunday of your choice. It's a great way to celebrate a loved one. Anyone who is able to read, light candles or serve as a greeter on a Sunday or during Holy week is encouraged to sign up. A sheet is on the bulletin board.

Our next meeting is on April 4th at 6:30 pm. Please share your ideas with us for special Sundays!

Yours in Christ,

Worship and Music Committee

Our special guest speaker for the April 24th Earth Day Sunday will be Ann King-Foster, a resident of Paradise Falls in Cresco and a avid participant in environmental concerns in Monroe County, including the Brodhead Watershed Association and Trout Unlimited, as well as the stewardship of the 425 acres of Paradise Falls.

Spring Concert Series — If you're looking for some musical entertainment below is a list of some upcoming concert dates at our local churches.

Sunday, April 3rd 3pm – East Stroudsburg United Methodist Church concert
ES United Methodist Church, 83 S Courtland St, East Stroudsburg, PA

Thursday, April 7th 12pm – Music at Mid-day James Deer, organ
Stroudsburg First Presbyterian Church, 575 Main St, Stroudsburg, PA

Sunday, April 24th 2:30pm – Pocono Concert Chorale Spring Concert
Adults \$10, Seniors \$8, Students \$5
First Presbyterian Church, 575 Main St, Stroudsburg, PA

Monday, April 25th 7pm – Organ Dedication Concert
St. John's Lutheran Church, 9 N. 9th St, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Friday, May 6th 7pm – A Night of Music: Dedication Concert
Adults \$10, Students \$5 (Donations to benefit Lutheran World Relief)
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 139 Craigs Meadow Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA

Tuesday, May 10th 7pm – On tour from France Ensemble Correspondances
"Plaisirs Du Louvre"
Donation Adults \$15, Seniors \$10, Students \$5
First Presbyterian Church, 575 Main St, Stroudsburg, PA

Wednesday, May 11th 7pm – On tour from France Ensemble Correspondances
"Membra Jesu Nostri" by Dietrich Buxtehude
Donation Adults \$15, Seniors \$10, Students \$5
First Presbyterian Church, 575 Main St, Stroudsburg, PA

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO CHECK OUT THE NARTHEX
BULLETIN BOARD FOR MORE EVENTS AND
SPECIAL MESSAGES**

Do Your Part- Pray!

A message given to the congregation on March 23, 2022. By Laura Pride

The seniors that attend the senior center where my office is located are active in their comments on what is going on in the world and in their community. They are genuine in their happiness for one another and quite vocal on their thoughts about politicians on the local and national levels. On any given day when I go downstairs to the center, I will hear one lady tell another one about a medical issue she is having. I hear comments such as "You should see my doctor!", or "I'm sorry that you're sick. Then I hear Miss Earline...she says "God bless you, I'm going to pray for you!" Someone mentions the troubles her family member is experiencing, and more comments and advice come, and again, Miss Earline says, "I'm sorry, I'm going to pray for you." The war in Ukraine has been very unsettling for the seniors. I remember a couple of weeks ago, one lady was nearly in tears when she said "I heard the Russians are killing little children. The poor innocent children. I am afraid. What is the world coming to?", and then Miss Earline said, "There isn't anything you can do, but pray! Just pray! You have to turn your face to Jesus!"

Miss Earline is a mature woman (83 years young) who attends the senior center where I work. She has given me her permission for me to discuss her in my message, and I thank God for allowing me to pay attention to her because her actions quite literally wrote this message. Miss Earline is a walking and talking lesson on prayer!

I'm following Pastor Thomas' lead in that these five weeks of Lent are a journey...a walk. A walk that leads us to be more like Jesus. This week's leg on our journey focuses on prayer. The reading today from Luke has been said by many scholars to be the framework for prayer.

'Our Father who art in heaven'Recognize that you are praying to God. Whether you recognize God as male or female or just as the source, It is God that you pray to....and God is holy....'Hallowed be thy name.' God the omnipotent. Jesus...the name above all names. Give God the recognition and praise that is deserved. It is not only right, but necessary to give praise to God in all situations, especially prayer! Start all of your prayers with "God", "Father", "Jesus", "Most Holy One" ..."You are holy", "supreme", "awesome", "sovereign" ...

'Thy kingdom come', The Kingdom represents the government of the Lord, and how it gives and transforms lives. That's essentially what we are praying for, right? We want relationships mended, we want an end to hatred and injustice, and poverty, we want an end to cancer, and mental illness...and war. We want peace on Earth! Thy Kingdom of love, mercy, health, and peace. Please God, Thy Kingdom come.

'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'- A confession. I'm sorry. Forgive me. Why? Because that is what God does, forgives us if we earnestly repent. So if God can forgive us, there is no reason that we should not forgive others. We are forgiven once and for all by Jesus' death on the cross. We ask forgiveness in prayer to acknowledge that we are in need of forgiveness and we are a people that have received forgiveness.

So you can say that to pray like Jesus, you have to give God praise, and then give your petition, your request, and then ask for forgiveness for our sins because we too are forgiven.

The analysis of The Lord's Prayer is extensive and abundant!

I have to admit when I did my research, I thought that this was a bit more complex than I realized. I thought prayer was simpler than all the scholarly articles make it out to be. I was beginning to think that maybe it's possible to not be able to pray correctly, and it had me puzzled...and stuck...and so ironically I prayed.

I prayed that God would help me to find meaning in the words from Luke and how they are pertinent in my everyday life and how to make them pertinent to yours. I took a deep breath and remembered that if God brings me to it then He will bring me through it...

Sure enough, he answered my prayer yesterday morning with none other than Miss Earline!

I am teaching a workshop on Tuesday afternoons called the "Chronic Disease Self Management Program". Miss Earline is participating in the class. The workshop is full of many good ideas and suggestions for those with Chronic illness and their caregivers. I noted that whenever my colleagues teaching with me or I mentioned something of particular significance...something that rang true for Miss Earline, such as "You can't implement all the changes at once.", or "Caregivers are important!" she would audibly say "Amen!" Or "That's right! Thank you Jesus!"

We brainstorm ideas and I write them on a large notepad on an easel. One question we brainstormed was "How can you distract yourself when you are in pain or experiencing a difficult emotion?" ...and then the answer to my prayer came right out of Miss Earline's mouth!

She said and I am doing my best to get it all out..."Pray! If I have pain, I pray...'Lord help me'. If I am lonely, I say 'Lord, be with me.' If someone makes me mad, I say 'Lord forgive them, and Lord forgive me because it Ain't my business to be mad at your children. That's your job to take care of that, not mine.' 'If I don't know what to do, I just sit up and I pray, because Jesus is in my heart.'" Wow...

When Alan and I were talking about today's reading, he mentioned that while leading Sunday morning Bible Studies years ago, he mentioned talking about a "God antenna", an inner connection between us and God... present because we are of God, children of God and as such, if we tune in, so to speak, we can communicate directly to God via our antenna. I immediately thought of the God antenna when Miss Earline said that she just sits up and prays...Sit up and connect. But how does one tune in their God antenna? And is this an appropriate model for prayer?

What about when you're so upset you can't speak. Well The bible gives an example of silent prayer in Hannah's inaudible petition in 1Samuel 1:10, 13, but it does not give specific instructions on praying silently. That does not mean that silent prayer is any less valid than praying out loud-Hannah's prayer was answered, after all. God can hear our thoughts just as easily as He can hear our words.

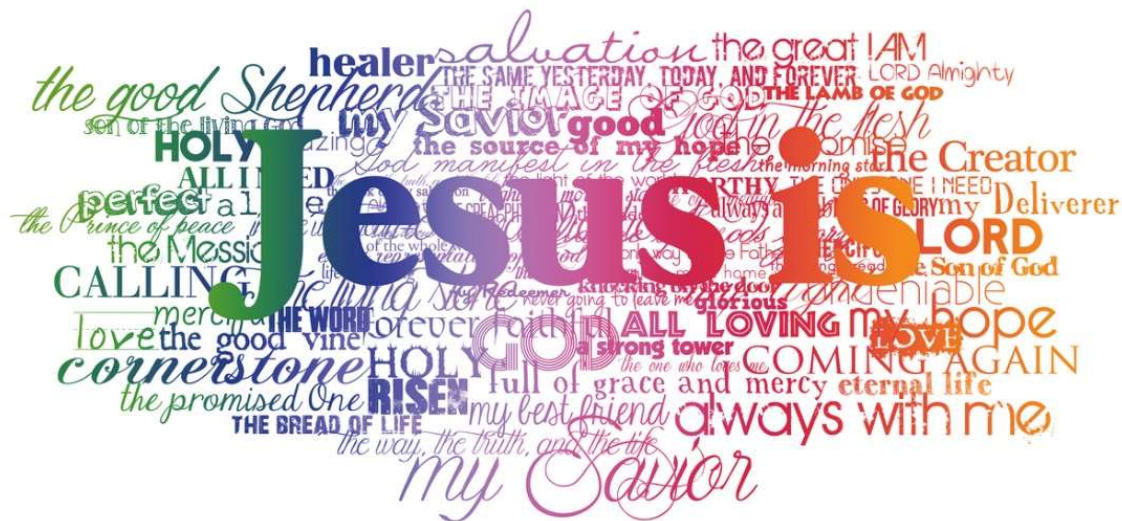
Jesus knew the evil thoughts of the Pharisees (Matthew 12:24, Luke 11:17). Nothing we do, say, or think is hidden from God, who does not need to hear our words to know our thoughts. He has access to all prayers directed to Him, whether or not they are spoken.

Perhaps the best verse to indicate the validity of unspoken prayers is 1Thessalonians 5:17: Pray without ceasing. To pray unceasingly obviously cannot mean we are praying out loud all of the time. Rather, it means we are to be in a constant state of God consciousness, where we take every thought captive to Him and bring every situation, plan fear, or concern before Him. Unceasing prayer will include prayers that are spoken, whispered, shouted, sung, and silent as we direct our thoughts of praise, petition, supplication, and thanksgiving to God.

I believe that Miss Earline lives in a state of God consciousness...Her antenna is tuned in to God every minute of everyday. I am a work in progress. I asked God to help me find the right words tonight, and I believe God tuned in my antenna so that I was able to recognize Miss Earline's frequency! Miss Earline sees every good thing she hears as something right out of God's mouth, and she is able to hone in on anything that is not of God and immediately put God's authority over it...

Part of our weekly workshop on Chronic Disease requires each participant to create an action plan...to pick something they would like to do for themselves. Something that they feel they can accomplish inside of a week. Something like walk 3 days a week, or clean out one dresser drawer or, keep a gratitude journal...Miss Earline's action plan includes doing the two balance exercises I demonstrated yesterday once per day for the next seven days. When telling me her plan she finished by saying, Lord willing, I got to do my part!

As we continue our Lenten walk together, don't forget to do your part. Pray! Tune in your God antenna, because it's in there despite all of our distractions. It just might not be on the right station! God's station says you're forgiven. God's station says you belong to me and don't you forget it! God says pray aloud, or in silence, a few times a day, or if you keep practicing like Miss Earline...without ceasing. When you're on the right station, you come in loud and clear and others will hear you and want to tune in too! Thy kingdom come...Amen!



St. Paul's Lutheran
presents



A Night of Music: Dedication Concert

Friday, May 6th
7pm

Guest Artists

Gary Raish
Bob Riday
Bruce Rohrbach

Donation Adults - \$10 Students - \$5

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Smithfield

139 Craig's Meadow Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 570-223-9422

Donation proceeds to benefit Lutheran World Relief

Dedicated to quality performances of outstanding choral music in the Poconos

**Pocono
Concert
Chorale**



James Maroney, *Artistic Director & Conductor*

• Ruth Kochera, *Accompanist*

presents its

Spring Concert

Randall Thompson - *Frostiana* (complete)

Eric Whitacre - *Five Hebrew Love Songs*

featuring

Chris Souza, violin

Johannes Brahms - *Four a cappella folk songs*

Sunday April 24 at 2:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church Stroudsburg 575 Main St.

Adults - \$10 Seniors - \$8 Students - \$5

Tickets available at the door or in advance from Pocono Concert Chorale members



pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Pocono Concert Chorale is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that receives funding support from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.



FOOD PANTRY

Thursday April 14th (Easter Pantry) and 24th.

9:30am to 12:00noon. (Easter hours will be longer)

Please let Jackie know if you plan on donating an Easter Ham for the 14th Pantry.

(Pantry needs jelly and cereal at this time, monetary donations are appreciated)

APRIL 14th is also the church give away of items of clothing and home goods during the Food Pantry hours.

Noreen and Nancy Fritz are busy sorting things out now so don't wait to long if you have things you want to drop off.

FRIDAY LADIES

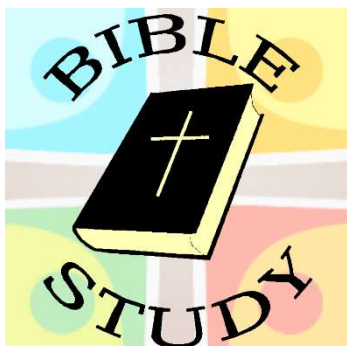
MEET EVERY FRIDAY

10:00 – 12:00

6 Lap Blankets hand made by the Friday Ladies were just sent to Pleasant Valley Nursing Home for the residents.

Plus 2 blankets were also given this year for baptisms.

Angel's Closet sent a thank you for the beautiful handmade items given to them for their baby bundles by Joan Carpenter.



Every Tuesday in the Social Hall

11:30am – 12:30pm

Study Books available

Bring your lunch if your able to stay and visit after Bible Study.

The Hospitality Committee

Committee meets quarterly to review the operation of Celebration Hall. They take care of advertising the hall as a venue, booking events and acting as on-site stewards during those events. They also oversee the care of the hall including maintenance and cleaning.

Please share with family and friends.

If you are interested in rental information please contact Ed Stephens.



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





SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA



APRIL 2022 • ISSUE 4 • VOLUME 30

Easter 2022 – No Idle Tale

"I love to tell the story..." So goes the great old hymn. But the world is filled with stories today, that are tough to tell. As Covid lingers. As the war in Ukraine breaks our heart. What's next? And will it be worse? Just as much, I worry: can we trust each other anymore? Trust enough to share any kind of news, and believe it, together? Do we still hold in common, any of the assumptions, beliefs, and causes we used to share? Or is our world now filled only with suspicions and deceptions – "fake news" from all sources, on all sides?

On that first Easter Sunday, still overshadowed by Good Friday, bleakness and distrust were also all around. Even when those energized, overjoyed women burst in, announcing the most amazing thing they had ever seen and heard – HIS TOMB IS EMPTY! JESUS IS RISEN! – even then, "all the rest" dismissed their report as nothing more than "an idle tale" (Luke 24:11).

We are the church. We are called to be different. If the prevailing winds of our world today are seeking to blow us apart, the Holy Spirit winds us back together. God calls us to come to the places of sadness and sickness and doubt and despair – where all hope is dead and buried – and be ready to be amazed. Ready to see (and say!) what was dead – is now ALIVE. What was lost – is now FOUND. What was impossible – is now POSSIBLE. Real. True. And trustworthy. Jesus is risen, and we shall arise. The Bible prophets foretold it. Jesus said it, again and again. But almost nobody could trust it. Until God made it true, and sent people out to spread the word, the good news, the gospel. God is still sending us today. This Easter Sunday is like the first: a world full of doubt and distrust. A world full of conflict and separation. In the midst of it all, Christ is standing here with us. The Holy Spirit is in us and giving us courage. And God is making all things new, even now.

Jesus is risen, and we shall arise. Let us share this good news, for ALL people, for ALL creation. Holy God, give us the power to trust it, and to share it. Rebuild in us: trust in you. And through us: rebuild trust throughout our world, with justice, with peace, with faith, hope and love.

Blessed Easter to you and yours!
Bishop Christopher deForest



TOGETHER

Our 2022 Assembly will be held online on June 10-11. Each congregation is entitled to bring two voting members. If you are interested in attending the synod assembly as a voting member please reach out to your congregation's leadership for more information.



**check out
our new
website**

godsllove.org



Join us on the 2nd
Saturday of every month!
(more information on our website)

STEWARDSHIP EXTRAVAGANZA

JUNE 18, 2022
**TRINITY LUTHERAN
CHURCH, LANSDALE**
AN EVENT ORGANIZED BY THE
SEPA AND NEPA SYNODS
(REGISTRATION FORTHCOMING)



APRIL 23 & 24, 2022, 1PM-4PM
RAIN OR SHINE, BAREBONES EVENT, BRING
YOUR OWN KNIFE, CUTTING BOARD, DRINKS,
AND SNACKS. WE'LL BE CUTTING THE SEED
POTATOES FOR PLANTING SEASON! ALL ARE
INVITED! JUST WALK-IN AND HELP!

BECKER'S ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
265 MAIDENCREEK ROAD
FLEETWOOD, PA 19522

APRIL 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					4 Friday Ladies 10:00am -	5
3 5 th Sunday of Lent w/Communion 8:30am and 10:00am	4 Church Office Closed Music and Worship 6:30	5 Bible Study 11:30am – 12:30pm Council Meeting 7:00pm	6 Evening Suffrages 7:00pm	7 Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm	8 Friday Ladies 10:00am - 12:00noon	9
10 Palm Sunday w/Communion 8:30am and 10:00am	11 Church Office closed	12 Bible Study 11:30am – 12:30pm	13 Praise Team Rehearsal 6:30pm	14 Maundy Thursday Service 7:00pm Easter Food Pantry 9:30 – 12:30 & clothing/misc give away	15 Good Friday Service 7:00pm	16
17 Easter Sunday w/Communion 8:30am and 10:00am	18 Church Office closed	19 Bible Study 11:30am – 12:30pm	20 Praise Team Rehearsal 6:30pm	21 Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm	22 Friday Ladies 10:00am - 12:00noon	23
24 8:30am Service of the Word 10:00am Special Sunday Contemporary Service - Praise Team and Celebrate Earth day with special program and speaker	25 Church Office closed	26 Bible Study 11:30am – 12:30pm	27	28 Food Pantry 9:30am – 12:00 noon Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm	29 Friday Ladies 10:00am - 12:00noon	30