



Proclamation

December - 2017

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From the desk of the Congregational President

Paul Mehrkam



President Newsletter December 2017

Happy new church year. Can you believe that it is almost Christmas? Even though it is winter time, this newsletter will focus on preparing the playground for spring.

Thank you for everyone who came and participated in the voter's meeting. We had lots of good discussion. One of the topics was redoing the playground using either engineered wood or rubber mulch. Whether we like it or not the, the playground surface doesn't provide much of a cushion against kids falling down. Plus the mulch has degrade into a peat moss like material which is perfect for the uncontrollable growth of weeds that just will not die.

With winter upon us, the church council will be solicitating feedback from the congregation for the preference of using rubber mulch versus engineered wooden mulch. Both materials are recommended for playground surfaces to prevent injuries from falling off play equipment. The one advantage that rubber mulch has over engineered wood is that only half of the material needs to be used. Over 6 inches of the engineered wood mulch would be needed across the playground vice 3 inches for rubber mulch. Double thickness for both materials would be used around the play equipment.

Regardless of which mulch is used, we are going to need help from the congregation to tear up the old mulch and place a new liner down. We will also need to raise up the perimeter boards to accommodate the additional thickness and contain the mulch. Containment of the mulch with the perimeter and liner is especially important for the rubber mulch to prevent the leaching of heavy metals such as zinc.

From my point of view, there is little difference between the cost of rubber versus engineer wooed mulches. Playground certified rubber mulch can be purchased from a local store such as Lowes and comes in bags on pallets which will make it easy to handle.

Playground certified engineered wooden mulch comes from a supplier up by Baltimore and will be in one of those long tractor trailer dump trucks. As you can imagine, the ground is too soft for the truck and which means that the truck would have to dump a wooden mulch mountain on the on the grass next to the paved parking lot.

Tell us what you think, because the council will decide towards the end of winter based on the feedback from the congregation on which is the best route to go.

Dear Lord Jesus, Thank You for coming to us in the flesh by Your miraculous virgin birth over 2000 years ago. Help us to turn our focus away from the hustle and bustle and the commercialization of Christmas and Santa Claus. Continue to remind us that we are Your children and that You bring the greatest gift of all, Your everlasting eternal salvation. Amen.

A View from the Pew

Some thoughts on sharing the Good News---“whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.---”

God has graciously granted me endurance, stamina and strength even in my advanced years. Quite often I share that I wish to continue having the strength of Caleb who at 84 had the endurance and stamina of his youth and thus remained God's mighty warrior.

Several weeks ago, listening to wise council from my bride, we went to the Emergency Room to see why I was not feeling well. The problem was a racing heart rate and an out of rhythm beat. A temporary solution was enacted rather quickly and remedial action was taken to help stabilize the heart- although it did not take care of the problem.

I was admitted for two days and as I lay in the bed that night my thoughts were centered on all the **“things”** that I had not taken care of for my wife and family and more importantly for God. I was reminded of D James Kennedy's standard salvation question ***“If you die tonight, where would you go- heaven or hell?”*** Google Rev Kennedy and you will learn of the salvation question that pervaded his life. Well, I have the assurance of my heavenly home through Jesus and that question was answered in the affirmative. However, I also remembered *James 4:14* **whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.** Was this my time to depart from life? Am I so concerned with my needs that I neglect others? I have always believed others before me- as testament I selected my e>mail address as James 1-1a “James a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ,” That keeps me grounded as long as I remember it is not about me! Do you have **“things”** in your life that need to be resolved? Based upon our world today surely you do and thus grounded in faith of the one true God may you set **“things”** in order according to God's will.

Since I am writing this message it is by God's Grace that I remain here. By the way, my heart problem was corrected via an electrical shock- who knew? Thus, all the remaining days of my life, God has work for me here at St. Paul's and beyond. Remember, there is no retirement plan in doing God's work! Thus, with Christmas and all the celebrations make sure you take time to share the Good News of a Savior born for our redemption- comfort the sick and needy and **extend yourself beyond your reach** to others always. Above all,

SHARE

Cleansed in Christ's Blood, daily by words and deeds tell the story of Jesus' salvation.

PRAY

Pray for the people that they may receive the gift of living water to purify their lives.

LOVE

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” ESV John 13:34

Amen & Amen



Why should a person join a congregation?

It's all about the church, the church united in God's sole purpose to do the work he has set before us. In this celebration of the Reformation, let us concentrate on the tasks our Lord has set before St. Paul's now. We the members are called to worship, praise, proclaim the gospel and share our talents and treasures in all we do in Christ's name.

The Elders are in the process of exploring our listing of church members vs. friends as our church roster does not distinguish between listings.

Our purpose is to identify non-members and offer the hand of fellowship to join in St. Paul's work. Please consider the following from the LCMS website.

Q: Could you please tell me why a person should join a congregation? Couldn't they just go to the church, give a little here and there, and do the things a member does without joining? What benefits would I have by joining a church?

A: Joining a church says to the public you are a Christian, that you are a member of God's own people, who are called "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9), and that you believe and act thus and thus as a witness to the Christian faith and as an example to others. It means that you are doing what the very first Christians did in joining together to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42). It means that you will be able to receive the encouragement, strength, prayers, baptism, the Lord's Supper and the application of God's Word from fellow Christians and a pastor, which you may not have the privilege of receiving as a non-member. It will tell other Christians and the world that you have considered it a serious matter to be able to join together with Christians to support the work of the church of calling a pastor, providing instruction in the Christian faith for the youth, adults, the older set, doing evangelism and mission work at home and abroad.

It would not only witness to other people who you are and what you are about, but it would show God that what He wants of His groups of His chosen, His own people, that you are not just talking about and maybe doing half-heartedly, but are involved whole-heartedly in doing what He expects. Joining is a serious declaration that you intend-with His help-to participate fully in doing the things of God. In most congregations, only members who have joined receive the Lord's Supper, the privilege of voting, recognition by the government for tax purposes, full use of the church and other amenities. What would happen to God's church if everyone decided not to join with other Christians to BE His own people?

Please let an Elder (listed in the bulletin) aware of your decision and a pastor will be available for further discussion.

Amen



Sunday School News

The Little Children and Jesus – Matthew 19:13-15

The little children were brought to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Greetings from the Sunday School! We continue to come together each Sunday and learn more about the amazing love God has for us!

The Sunday school is looking towards Bethlehem this month to help us keep our hearts and minds focused on the true meaning of Christmas. As part of that focus on God's gift to all mankind, we have already begun working on our Christmas program that the children will share with the congregation on December 17th during the 10:30AM service. Following the service, we invite everyone to join us in our annual Christmas potluck lunch. We thank Thrivent Financial for once again generously supporting our "Christmas Day of Sharing". Thrivent will be helping to purchase gifts for every child as well as purchasing the main dish for our lunch. Everyone is asked to bring a side dish and/or a dessert to share.

This year's program is called "A Special Christmas Baby" written and directed once again by Lois Beverage. Parts were given out to the children on November 26th. Some students will have narrator parts which will be read from the altar and others will have parts that may or may not require speaking lines. Please help your child practice reading their lines at home so they feel comfortable with their parts. Costumes will be provided by the Sunday School. We will be having a Saturday practice on December 16th from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM. The Sunday School will be providing a pizza lunch for the kids following the practice. If your child will not be here on the 17th or you have questions about your child's part, please contact Mrs. Beverage, Mrs. Chew or Mrs. Bowling so that we can make sure their part in the program is reassigned.

Please note that there will be no Sunday School classes on Sunday, December 24th.

We pray that you have a blessed holiday season where the miracle of the manger brings joy and peace to all of you!

In His Service, Brenda Bowling and Melissa Chew

VENTURING CREW

Venturing Crew 1785 Firsts

For those in the congregation who haven't yet heard, the church received the charter from Boy Scouts of America for its Venturing crew in August. Since then, the youth have been busy getting organized and having fun with the help and support of the adult advisors and crew committee.

In addition to regular weekly meetings on Mondays at 7PM in the education building, we've had monthly "off-site" meetings for ice cream, bowling, a movie and swimming.

We had our first campout in September at Cedarville State Forest in Brandywine. In addition to learning new outdoor skills like cooking and fire building, the crew hit some of the available trails on their mountain bikes. A variety of surprisingly competitive games around the quiet hiss of the lantern filled the evenings until lights out. And it wouldn't be camping without S'mores around a campfire.

In October, the crew headed to Front Royal, VA for its first backpacking-style campout and hiking in Shenandoah NP. The autumn color change was in full swing and an eight mile hike to the Big Devil's Stairs overlook put us deep into it.

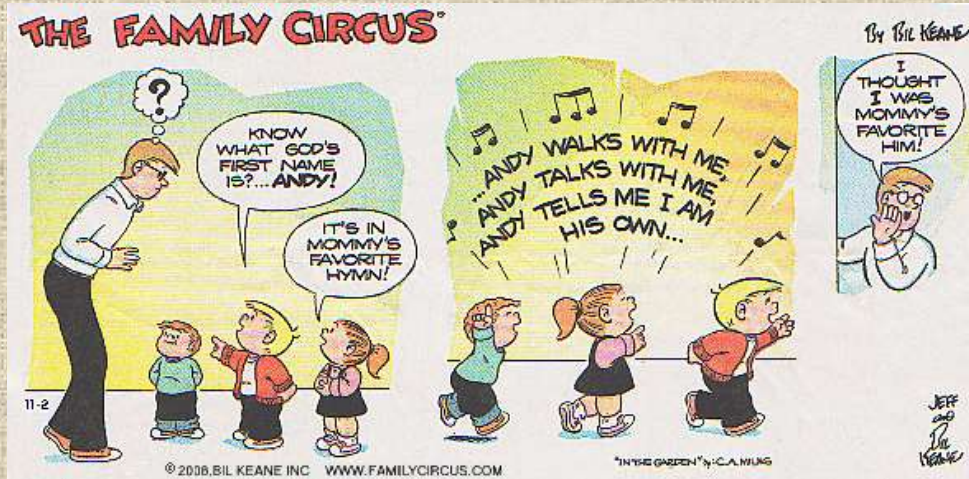
November found the crew spelunking nearby Franklin, WV with the help of an experienced guide. Everyone had a fantastic time getting dirty and a little muddy exploring the cave and learning about caves and spelunking. The crew elected to return early Saturday evening due to the high winds forecast overnight into Sunday but enjoyed making their Thanksgiving dinner together in the church kitchen upon our return before heading back home to warm beds.

If you're a young adult 14 (or 13 and finished the 8th grade) to 20 or an older adult who'd like to learn more about Venturing or join the fun and adventure, please contact Dave Nelsen – 301.884.4631 or danelson@alum.rpi.edu.



St. Paul's Funnies

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. Proverbs 17:22



Pastor Shep





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St. Paul's Lutheran Church

37707 New Market Turner Road

Mechanicsville, MD 20659-3075

Sunday Services:

Traditional - 8:00 and 10:30 am

Sunday School: 9:00 am

Adult Bible Study: 9:10 am –

Office Hours Mon.-Thurs. 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Phone: 301.884.5184 Fax: 301-884-2063

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Facebook: [St. Paul's Lutheran](https://www.facebook.com/St.PaulsLutheran)

Connecting with Jesus, each other, & Southern Maryland