

Cross Connections



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

March 2022

Ash Wednesday is March 2



We will worship at noon with a brief service of Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes. We will offer drive thru communion and imposition of ashes in the parking lot from 1 pm until 1:30 pm. We will have a service of Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes at 7 pm in the sanctuary and this will also be broadcast live over our Vimeo account and recorded to be viewed at your convenience.

Lent Midweek Worship will be on Wednesdays, March 9, 16, 23, 30, and April 6 at 7:00 pm. The theme this year will be "Christ in the Psalms," with focus on how the selected psalm points us towards Christ this Lenten season. The services will be live-streamed and recorded to be viewed at your convenience.



- The Live stream link for Ash Wednesday and Midweek Lent Wednesday worship services is: <https://vimeo.com/event/1859599>
- To view recorded events, go to: <https://vimeo.com/stpaulsdurham> and select the service you wish to view.

The Rev. Scott M. Anderson, Pastor
Susan Esposito, Parish Administrator & Editor
Kathleen Stanford, Interim Organist
Mac Mullins, Vicar
Amanda Stoen, Preschool Director
Alan Rigsbee, Bookkeeper

The Rev. Amanda Highben, Associate Pastor, Duke Lutherans
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From the Pastor...

Aside from reminding you about Ash Wednesday and Lenten worship, I have one more question to answer this month. I really appreciate these questions of faith. They make me think and I pray they make you think as well.



So, first – Ash Wednesday We will worship at noon with a brief service of Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes. We will offer drive thru communion and imposition of ashes in the parking lot from 1 pm until 1:30 pm. We will have a service of Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes at 7 pm and this will also be broadcast over our Vimeo account and recorded to be watched at your convenience.

Secondly – this month's question.

We believe in God in three persons, so why don't we call God they or them?

Well, I suppose we could but God is one. Deuteronomy 6:4 says: *Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.* We believe in one God. I personally do not like to use pronouns for God as God is God and there is no other God but God and no other being like God.

In Scripture, God is sometimes referred to as He. Again, my opinion is that Jesus is He as He was born of Mary and became human. But assigning a pronoun to God is problematic for me.

I also found this explanation from an Arabic scholar, Aadil Abdul-Qadir. He wrote:

"I'd like to offer an answer other than 'patriarchy,' which seems to be the only answer people give, but is too simplistic and ignorant of semitic languages. The Bible (and Qur'aan) were revealed in semitic languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. In the semitic languages, there are no words for "they," "them," or "it," which are gender-neutral. In these languages, every object has a gender. For example, if I were referring to your hand in Arabic, instead of telling you "it's looking swollen today," I'd say, "she's looking swollen today." If I were referring to your nose, I'd say, "he's looking swollen today."

If you aren't specifying a gender (such as for an unknown person, or for a group of people of mixed gender), the male pronoun is used. If you're specifying that the person/group is female, the female form is used. In other words, the male pronoun doesn't necessarily specify a gender, but the female pronoun does.

In the Abrahamic faiths, God is above having a gender, so the gender-non-specific pronoun is used,

which, in the semitic languages, is a "He".

Some aspects of God are described in the feminine in Arabic. Interestingly enough, when talking about the essence of God, or the "Divine Essence" (dthaat in Arabic), it's a "She," or a female pronoun.

Again, this isn't because God is female – it's a peculiarity of semitic languages.

Moreover, two of the most prominent names of God in Islam are "Rahman" and "Raheem" – both are derived from the root word for womb and both refer to the love a mother has for her unborn or newborn child, which are distinctly feminine qualities.

I know we believe in the Triune God, but this God is one in three persons, not three separate gods. I don't know how helpful this answer is, but it's what I can offer. – Pastor Scott

Pastor Nikkeya Berryhill

Christ the King and the Triangle Conference of the NC Synod ELCA are pleased to announce the arrival of a new staff member. Pastor Nikkeya Berryhill, who was called by Christ the King, Cary during a December 5, 2021 special meeting, begins her ministry with CTK on Monday, February 7. Pastor Nikkeya (pronounced NekEEya) will participate in worship on February 13 and preach her first sermon on Transfiguration Sunday, February 27, which is also Bold Women's Sunday at CTK.

Since her ordination in Spring 2021, Pastor Nikkeya has been serving as a mission developer in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA. She is a 2020 graduate of the Pacific Lutheran Theologian Seminary in Berkeley, California. At CTK, she will be serving half-time on the pastoral staff, preaching, teaching, and participating in all pastoral ministries; her focus will be on social ministry, advocacy, evangelism, and ecumenical and community relationships.

Pastor Nikkeya will be officially installed, by conference Dean, Pastor Scott Anderson, on Sunday, March 6, at 3:30 pm. Pastor Nikkeya will also serve the Triangle Conference in the areas of advocacy, evangelism and community relations. When she works from Durham, she will be working primarily with us at St. Paul's. We look forward to her serving the Triangle Lutherans.



From the Vicar...

The season of Lent starts this month and many of us might have heard friends or family discussing what they're planning to "give up" until Easter. Typical options in the modern era include giving up chocolate, soda, coffee, usually indulgences that we might rely a little too heavily on. This "giving something up" actually has a long historical tradition in the Church through a spiritual practice called fasting. Simply put, fasting is choosing to give up food, either certain types or all together, in order to create spiritual discipline within oneself. Fasting has a biblical precedent, especially in Matthew 6:16-18 where Jesus discusses fasting. Historically, Christians would fast on Sundays prior to receiving Holy Communion, a practice that even my family practiced growing up. Fasting began to be particularly emphasized during Lent as the season was seen as a time of repentance, preparing for the Resurrection of Easter. Rules for fasting grew to be a detailed, and sometimes burdensome, practice throughout the centuries. In the Eastern Orthodox church, there are still many rules related to Lenten fasting: alcohol, meat, cheese, eggs, and most fish ought to be avoided, particularly on Wednesday and Friday. The Roman Catholic church's practices are perhaps a bit more familiar to us, but still have rules: No meat, except fish, on Fridays and only one large meal and two smaller meals, not quite a full meal but bigger than a snack. We can already start to see why Luther became wary of the practice, especially as the Western Church began to place emphasis on works (such as fasting) being necessary for salvation. Though Luther encouraged fasting as a spiritual discipline, the practice has largely disappeared among us Protestants.

But this year, I encourage you to consider fasting this Lent. You certainly don't need to give up eating all together or even give up the long list of things other Christian traditions do. You can choose to give up one thing, especially something you like, as a daily reminder of God's generosity. Another practice is to start a spiritual practice, such as praying a daily devotion or reading a book of the Bible. If repentance is about turning our lives toward God, and not about punishing ourselves, then let Lent be a season where you begin a new practice that makes God more present in your life. Fasting is not something any of us must do in order to be saved. But it is another way of living out our baptismal life of daily depending on the God who loves us.

Peace,
Vr. Mac

Duke Lutherans

Alternative "Spring" Break Trip and Other News!

After two years of Covid preventing us from taking a spring break trip, the Duke Lutherans are at last making our travel plans ... only this trip will take place in May instead of March (thereby giving us more time to prepare since we just received approval in January from Duke to travel, and in the hope that infection rates will be even lower semester's end.)

Scheduled for May 19-22, our trip *Exploring Race and Faith in America*, will take us to Atlanta and Montgomery, as we explore the complex history and present realities of the relationships between race and faith in our country. Together with fellow students and young adults from St. Joseph AME Church, we will visit such places as the SNCC headquarters in Atlanta and the National memorial for Peace and Justice and Legacy Museum in Montgomery. We'll be eager to share more details with you in April's "Cross Connections." Stay posted and please hold our students in prayer as we prepare for this formative pilgrimage.

And here are just a few other things the Duke Lutherans are up to this semester...

- ▶ **Sunday Evening Prayer and Fellowship Dinner**
We gather every Sunday night to be fed physically in the fellowship dinner and spiritually in a contemplative service of Word + Sacrament (Holy Communion)
- ▶ **Jeremiah Bible Study**
Thursdays, 11:30-12:30 pm. A deep dive into this fascinating prophet and how his words still speak into our lives today.
- ▶ **Weekly Campus Fellowship Lunches**
Thursdays, 12:30-1:30 pm. Always a crowd-pleaser at the Brodhead Center! Duke Lutherans pick-up the tab every other week.



The Duke Lutherans and St. Joseph AME Racial Reconciliation Partnership

- ▶ **Racial Reconciliation Collaboration: Part II**
 Feb 17, March 3, 10, 24, at 7:00-8:15 pm
 Generously funded through the NC (ELCA) Synod’s Peeler-Casey grant, this is the second year of our partnership with students and young adults from St. Joseph AME (Durham). This year, we’re reading Called to Reconciliation: How the Church Can Model Justice, Diversity, and Inclusion by Rev. Dr. Jonathan Augustine. Pastor Jay is St. Joseph’s senior pastor and a Duke Div alum! Four students (two Duke Lutherans and two from St. Joseph) have each received \$1K scholarships to lead our continuing partnership in ministry.
 Rev. Amanda L. Highben
 Duke Lutherans Pastor

Council Corner

Greetings from the Church Council. Spring bulbs in our yards are showing new life and the warmer weather is announcing the promise for the coming season. Our council has had our first organizational retreat and are anticipating our first real meeting just before this Cross Connections goes out.

Personally, I would like to thank God for the life that he has blessed me with. My family and my health are such precious gifts. I also thank the many wonderful people in our congregation who step up to do the work of the Lord and St. Paul’s. On many Saturday mornings you will see George Seiz and a group of workers clipping, blowing, planting and cleaning our church’s property. Our Stephen Ministers are providing support for those who have hit a rough patch in their life. They are not only here to help members of our congregation but people in need in the Durham/Chapel Hill area at large. On Tuesday mornings the Tuesday Men’s group will be working through the maintenance items on the list that Susan has compiled. They are not the only ones helping with the maintenance of our building. Jim Shoaf makes sure our fire extinguishers are always up to date and working. Larry Grovenstein is constantly improving and maintaining our electrical system. The Altar committee is always preparing our sanctuary for service and communion. Curtis Chi is often at the church on Saturdays making sure that all of our computers and technology are working well. These folks and many others I haven’t mentioned are the underpinnings of the working of our church community. I am thankful for all that they do.

Starting March 13 we will begin a new chapter in

the sacred music of our church. We welcome Ted Turner and his wife into our congregation and look forward to reawakening our music worship. Our deepest thanks goes to Kathleen for helping us with our worship music during the interim. She has done a wonderful job of learning our liturgy. We couldn’t have asked for a better substitute while we were searching for a new music director. Many thanks to Kathleen (and her husband for sharing her).

Members of your church council are here to help. If you have any concerns that we might be able to help with, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Tim Hoke
tim1hnva@gmail.com

an afterward:

I finished my council notes and dutifully turned them in to Susan on Friday. I persuaded her to allow me this addendum.

I am thankful to the congregation that stayed or logged on to our meeting after church on Sunday. I know that the items were a lot to consider, but I gratefully acknowledge your support in approving both the revised constitution and annual report. Our council members from last year as well as this year and the preschool and memorial committees all put in a lot of hard, thoughtful work in the documents. They have my sincere gratitude. We had at least sixty voting members in attendance yesterday, which was wonderful. Our vote to accept was unanimous for the annual report and only one dissenting vote for the revised constitution. Thank you all.

Preschool Pitter Patter

by Amanda Stoen



The preschool board again **invites you** to participate in an **“Un-fundraiser”** – nothing to buy, no event to attend – simply the opportunity to **join us in making a contribution** to the mission and continuing work of St. Paul’s Preschool & PMO.

Our teachers and staff continue to offer creative learning experiences and use play to encourage our preschoolers to grow and adapt. And adapt they have. Our young children are thriving as teachers have largely moved the classrooms outdoors. This past school year, the teachers improved our outdoor learning spaces and created innovative curricula to support the children in our outdoor classrooms.

We need to raise funds to offer financial scholarships and improve and maintain all of our

outdoor learning spaces which have been used heavily through last year and this year. Funds raised will:

- ▶ Create an outdoor music “room,” unfortunately music this year has been severely curtailed
- ▶ Acquire additional outdoor equipment
- ▶ Support a garden space
- ▶ Provide financial scholarships for children and families who need them

If you would like to make a contribution of any size, please drop off/mail your gift to the church at 1200 W Cornwallis Rd, Durham NC 27705-5731 or give via the church website (stpaulsdurham.org) (choose Pre-School Fundraising).

THANK YOU for you ongoing support and for considering a financial gift to support our preschool children.

What does a Vicar have to do?

by Wendy Waugh

While a Vicar is here at St. Paul’s there are tasks that we assign them. Lent begins soon and the Vicar is responsible for creating the mid-week services. This is no small task. There is an evening service in our ELW hymnal, and the Vicar may use and/or adapt that, or the Vicar may create the whole service. If the Vicar chooses to create the whole service, there is a lot to be done. The Vicar must create the liturgy, choose all the music, choose the scripture lessons to be used, recruit all the preachers/speakers, compose the prayers and choose an overall theme that brings all these parts of the service together. Lent is a specific season of the church year and that sets the tone of the mid-week services. But, there is a lot of freedom for the Vicar to work with within the parameters of Lent. Creating the mid-week services for Lent is a big and very important task. So, when you attend or zoom the services, remember that the Vicar has created and shaped your worship experience.

Stewardship Team

Are you interested in joining the Stewardship team this year? If so, let Claire Cooney know by sending an email to her at ClaireRCooney@gmail.com.

Stephen Ministers: The After People

by Nan Treul

People often ask, “What exactly is a Stephen Minister?” One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the *After People*.

Stephen Ministers are there:

...after the phone call you hoped you’d never get.
...after the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life.
...after the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you’ve held at bay come crashing in on you.
...after the doctor says, “I’m sorry, but there’s nothing more we can do.”
...after the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, “Welcome to your new home.”
...after the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away – and the house suddenly seems empty.
...after the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
...after the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
...after you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
...after your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the “After People.” We are men and women, ready to come alongside you – or your friends, neighbors, co-workers, or relatives – and provide comfort and support for as long *after* as needed. If you are interested in learning more about Stephen Ministry, you may contact Pastor Scott, Kim Hoke, or Nan Treul.

Book Review for Continuing Conversation Group

by Audrey Busch

I have just finished reading a “**Must Read**” book by Michael Eric Dyson, [Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America](#). I must share a bit of it to encourage you to read all of it. Rather than chapters, it is arranged as parts of the order of church worship.

“I offer this sermon to you, my dear white friends, my beloved comrades of faith and country. I adopt the voices of the worship and prayer leader, the choir director, the reading of the scripture, the giving of testimony, the preacher of the homily, the bestower of benediction, and the exhorter to service and the collector of the offering. I do so in the interest of healing our nation through honest, often blunt talk. It may make you squirm in your seat with discomfort before, hopefully, pointing a way to relief. . . . this is written to you my friends because I feel led by the Spirit . . . I simply want to bear witness to the truth I see and the reality I know.”

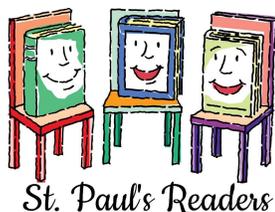
The book is on the CCG Library Shelves, located opposite the Check-out desk in the church library (adjacent to the restroom door there).

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St. Paul's Readers Meeting March 17th at 3 pm

We encourage all readers to join us to discuss *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. The novel tells the story of a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. This epic work of historical fiction is the winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize. This meeting will be held on Thursday, March 17, at 3 pm in Trinity Hall, widely spaced apart. Phil Strom-Jensen is the facilitator.



All the Light We Cannot See explores several themes including: the tragedy of war, the common bonds of shared humanity, and how much control human beings have to choose their own destinies. This powerful book, filled with memorable characters and beautiful writing, is currently being adapted as a film by Netflix.

Please consider participating in our monthly meetings (3rd Thursdays at 3 pm). We welcome all readers! Please contact Katherine Trexler (katherine.m.trexler@gmail.com) with any questions. We hope to see you soon!

Outdoor Workday



by George Seiz
Mark your calendars – There will be an Outdoor workday at church on Saturday, April 2, 2022, 9:00 am - 11:30 am. Lunch provided.

You are invited to be a good steward of the earth

by working in “God’s Garden” for a few hours on Saturday, April 2, 2022. Come for the entire period or whenever you can make it. This is a great chance to build community, do something with a friend or family, get some exercise, improve the church campus, and have some fun.

Work projects will include such fun activities as leaf removal, spreading of mulch, removal of weeds and scrub trees. Bring work gloves, leaf and garden rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, and a good work ethic. Open to all members, family, and friends.

Look for a sign-up sheet at church in early March or sign-up by emailing George Seiz at geoseiz@aol.com. Call or text George with any questions - 919-824-0130.

Stations of the Cross

by Lorrel Strom-Jensen



Lent will begin the first week of March and after two years of no in-person gathering during Lent, Stations of the Cross will again be offered on Fridays at 12:00 noon in the Sanctuary. I hope that long time members are looking forward

to seeing St. Paul’s beautiful collection of the Stations as they will be back up on the side walls of the Sanctuary for the Lenten season. For those who are new, the Stations follow Jesus from Gethsemane to the tomb with visual depictions of his journey. On Fridays, you can join me to follow Jesus on this path with scripture and prayers that tell the Holy Week story. Following Jesus on this path offers pause to contemplate our here and now. Please join me on any of these Fridays at noon during Lent: March 4, 11, 18, 25; April 1, 8.