

Cross Connections



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

March 2020

12:00 noon on Wednesdays (March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1)

Service of Healing & Communion

Pastor Scott will lead a brief service of communion which also includes the rite of healing anointing.

5:45 pm Wednesdays (March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1)

Lenten Suppers

We begin the evening with a Lenten Meal in Trinity Hall. Main dish menus: Mar 4: Lasagna; Mar 11: Soups and salad bar; Mar 18: Baked potato and salad bar; Mar 25: Pasta, sauces, meatballs; Apr 1: Salad Pot Luck. All meals include salad and dessert. Handbells will meet at 6:15 pm and Choir meets at 7:35 pm.

7:00 pm Wednesdays (March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1)

Lenten Worship

This year we will be worshipping with a setting called "Unfailing Light" by Marty Haugen. During worship, Vicar Anna will offer brief meditations on the Psalm for the upcoming Sunday. Before and after the evening worship, new member and artist Ellie DeVries will offer several pieces for our reflection. These photographs are from a series Ellie did on rock formations entitled Hard places.



12:00 noon Fridays (Mar 6, 13, 20, 27, and April 3)

A Lenten Journey: Biblical Stations of the Cross

Lent is a reflective time that is guided by our lectionary, liturgy, and hymns in our worship. In our personal devotions there are many options and journeying the way of the cross is a tradition that has its earliest forms observed and recorded beginning in the late 4th century. Please join Pastor Lorrel Strom-Jensen on Fridays at noon in the sanctuary to Journey through the Biblical Stations of the Cross. Through scripture, hymns and prayers we will follow the way of the cross and ponder the connections to this path that we experience daily in our own lives.



The Rev. Scott M. Anderson, Pastor

Susan Esposito, Parish Administrator & Editor

Jacqueline Nappi, Minister of Music

Amanda Stoen, Preschool Director

Anna Carter, Vicar

Jackie Fryt, Bookkeeper

The Rev. Ali Tranvik, Associate Pastor, Duke Lutherans

The Rev. Dr. Charles R. Huggins, Pastor Emeritus

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Facebook: St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, ELCA

From the Pastor...

Romans 15:13 *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Hope is something we have talked about for a while lately. We have been Planting Hope, hoping in the coming of Christ and we are now in the season of Hope for the resurrection promise.

Hope is what I have for the people of St. Paul's. Hope is what I pray you are all praying for. We have Hope because of Jesus' promises to us.

Through the Planting Hope process, we have learned that God has a purpose for us and we have a purpose for God. You will see the purpose statement more regularly and see it published in more places. Our purpose is:

"To inspire and engage one another to do what is just, show love and fulfill God's word."

We will be doing many things to foster this work. We have begun the Reconciling in Christ effort, to be a more welcoming congregation. We will begin preparation for our Centennial celebration, so watch for news of upcoming events and answer God's call to serve. We will find ways to support our thriving ministry and encourage more people to join us.

In this season of Lent, let us strive for more hope filled living and hopefully we will thrive.

In Jesus we maintain hope.

Pastor Scott

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In February I celebrated six months of sharing life with you. I love being your Vicar and am grateful that we have six more months together.

We have journeyed through Advent, Christmastide, and now Epiphany together. In many ways, I cannot believe we are already in the season of Lent. We have had the sign of the cross made on our foreheads and have been reminded that from dust we came and to dust we will return.

Whatever your Lenten practices are this year, I hope that it will include joining us for Wednesday night dinners at 5:45 pm, followed by our Wednesday evening Lenten services at 7 pm. This year we will be worshipping with a setting called *Unfailing Light* by Marty Haugen. Haugen wrote *Now the Feast and Celebration*, a setting we sang for many months last year. During worship, I will offer brief meditations on the Psalm for the upcoming Sunday. I love the Psalms

and am looking forward to spending more time in them together.

Finally, to complement our Lenten journey, new member and artist Ellie DeVries will offer several pieces for our reflection. Before and after the Wednesday evening worship services each week, there will be two different photographs displayed outside the sanctuary for us to look at and contemplate. These photographs are from a series Ellie did on rock formations entitled *Hard Places*. I invite you to spend some time with these pieces.

I am grateful we are companions on this journey.

Vicar Anna

Music Notes

THANK YOU to everyone who made a contribution to support the musicians in the two St. Paul's HIP Festival Concerts: Sounds of Sacred Italia and Capturing Caravaggio. Without your donations these concerts would not have been possible! Your support enabled these performing artists to enrich the lives of our community and congregation through music and art and gathered many new visitors into our space.

A very special thank you to all the members of St. Paul's for sponsoring the hosting the fundraiser for these two performances and for opening its doors to additional HIP performances. The music community is so blessed that this congregation continues to share its space and welcome musical events and performances into its sanctuary throughout the year.

In gratitude,

Jackie Nappi

God Moves into the Neighborhood

by Pastor Ali

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (NRSV). This translation of John 1:14 may be familiar. Or you may hear that Jesus "dwelt among us" (KJV), or "made his home among us" (NLT). But one translation puts it like this: "The Word became flesh and blood and **moved into the neighborhood...**" (MSG). Throughout the season of Epiphany, Duke Lutherans have been exploring the ways that God has moved not only into **the** neighborhood, but into **our** neighborhood – right here at Duke and in Durham. At our Sunday Evening Prayer services and in conversations at the fellowship dinner that follows, we've asked questions like: How is God showing up in

my chemistry lab? How is God alive and at work in the West Union? What does it mean that God lives in Duke's dorms? In my apartment building? In the public housing complex down the road? As we continue to ask these questions this semester, my prayer is that Duke Lutherans might experience the living God among us, right here in the places we live and study and work. May God's surprising presence be made known in your neighborhood too.

If you are interested in joining us for Evening Prayer and dinner on campus on a Sunday night this spring, let Pastor Ali know!

Help Duke Lutherans Get to Montgomery!

This spring break, Duke Lutherans is joining with our brothers and sisters at North Carolina Central for a Freedom Ride to Atlanta, GA and Montgomery, AL. Together, we will explore the complex relationship between faith and race in the U.S. by making stops



along some of the most significant sites in the Civil Rights movement. We are working

hard to raise \$3,000 to make this formative experience possible. Your gifts will allow us to provide partial and full scholarships for students in need. Can you help us get there?

To make a tax-deductible gift of any amount, please visit "Support Us" at www.dukelutherans.org. You may also write a check to: PO Box 90974 Durham, NC 27708. Thank you for your generosity!

Council Corner

by Tina Bessias

In February, the Congregation Council received the final report of the Planting Hope team. It is the culmination of a two-year process coordinated by the NC Synod. George Seiz led the St. Paul's team and did a remarkable job of keeping us focused. Please read his report in this newsletter and join me in thanking him for his leadership.

Through the Planting Hope process, we have developed a better sense of who we are as a

congregation and who we want to be. The next challenge is to act on our aspirations. Living out the "welcome statement" on our website and in our bulletins is our first focus. In that statement, we make a big claim:

In celebrating the beauty and strength created through diversity, we welcome, value, and include all of God's children regardless of race, culture, gender age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, appearance, or citizenship.

The wording is meant to speak to people looking for a safe and engaging worship community including those who identify as LGBTQIA+. One way to live this out is to formally adopt the "Reconciling in Christ" designation as discussed in the Sunday School hour on February 2. Many expressed eagerness to move forward with a vote, and we will consider doing so at the March 1 congregational meeting, which will take place at 12:15 pm. Those who have concerns about the designation are invited to share them with Pastor Anderson or any member of the Council.

The Continuing Conversations group is doing related work, most recently by bringing the Reverend Dr. James Thomas to St. Paul's to help us focus on racial diversity and inclusion. As we learn to extend our welcome as broadly as possible, we must also remember to cultivate acceptance, support, and appreciation for with those already in our midst. We strive to reflect the love of God in all directions!

Susan Esposito is assembling and printing the annual report for 2019. It gives an overview of all that goes on at St. Paul's. Whether you are a new member or a longtime one, please see how it speaks to you of God's work being done with our hands. The congregation will vote on accepting it at the March 1 meeting. A new pictorial directory is also coming out. The digital version can be downloaded to a smartphone; instructions are always available on the credenza in the atrium. This is a great help when you want to be that welcoming, supportive member but can't quite put a name with a face!

Another topic at the March 1 congregational meeting will be an update from the Congregation Council about finances and current projects, including a preview of the "Centennial Fund." Such updates were suggested at the December 2019 meeting as a way to improve communication between the Council and the congregation. Please come and participate!



Preschool Pitter Patter



by Amanda Stoen

As a preschool we share the church's mission of inclusivity and diversity. The proximity to both Duke and UNC as well as RTP, contribute to bringing families to the Triangle area.

Over the past 10 years, we've been fortunate to have families from more than 10 countries (4 continents) attend the preschool. We are very grateful for the unique benefit that this diversity brings to the preschool. This diversity introduces the staff and children to different cultures as we invite families into the classroom to share their traditions. Through our daily environment and weekly Chapel Time, we let the light of our Christian faith shine to the world through these and all of our families.

Each month we will continue to celebrate 10 years as a preschool at St. Paul's. Here is a little reflection from one of our current preschool families.

Our son, Alex, has attended St. Paul's preschool for almost two years. Alex had a wonderful time here and made some great friends from his class. The teachers at St. Paul's are all kind, patient and welcoming. I really liked the weekly detailed updates and pictures from the teachers and the director, which keep us informed of the kids' activities and school events at preschool. I also loved that the school involves conscious discipline into the classroom management, which provides a great environment for kids' social-emotional learning. The school also provides a lot of events for parents to learn about this discipline (such as lectures, workshops), which helps us better apply this discipline at home. Not only our son learns a lot at St. Paul's, but also do we.

The Wu Family

Stewardship at Tax Time

by Steven Mzyk

If you have a Traditional IRA and want to avoid withdrawal taxes, this article may interest you.

I was surprised to learn that when I reach age 70½, I can arrange for my Traditional IRA account to make contributions to St. Paul's without the distributions being called income. I'd always thought taxes on Traditional IRA withdrawals were inevitable. They're not when you arrange an IRA charitable contribution.

Tax law says at age 70½, money withdrawn from a Traditional IRA is not reported as income if it is sent

directly to a qualified charity. This means that if you use your IRA to fund your charities, your Required Minimum Distributions (those mandatory withdrawals required when you reach age 70) aren't reported as income. This not only saves you income taxes, it could potentially keep you in a lower tax bracket.

Here's an example. With a \$10,000 annual IRA donation, you escape \$1,200 in federal income taxes if you are in the 12 percent tax bracket and \$2,200 if you are in the 22 percent bracket. With NC income taxes set at 5.25 percent, you avoid sending \$525 to the State on that same \$10,000.

You may also appreciate that with this charitable giving method, you don't have to itemize or meet any itemized tax return limits.

This is something to consider if you own a Traditional IRA. I believe in giving to Caesar what is Caesar's, but since Congress passed a law that allows me to sign some papers and give more to God, I'll be signing those papers.

To learn more, do an internet search using the keywords "IRA charitable contributions." Ask your IRA fund company to guide you or let our church staff know and we will have our financial secretary get in touch with you. Thank you.

Planting Hope for the Future: Purpose and Core Values

by George Seiz

The Planting Hope Team finished its last of five training sessions on February 8, 2020 at St. Philip Lutheran in Raleigh. A good deal of work has been accomplished in the 18 months of this process. Let's re-cap what Planting Hope is all about. In January of 2018 the church council challenged itself to look at longer term needs of the church. A major council goal established was for lay leaders and the pastor of our church to participate in some type of visioning process to help better define who we are as a congregation. It was felt that with a clearly defined vision (and core values) our congregation would be better equipped to develop programs and make decisions according to its vision. Subsequently, our church decided to participate in a program called **Planting Hope**, made available by the Triangle Conference of the North Carolina Synod.

As you may recall part of the Planting Hope process involved our congregation taking a survey to help determine levels of vitality and sustainability. From the survey results we determined that as a congregation we were sustainable and with a little work could easily become both a vibrant and

sustainable congregation. This was a very promising outlook.

The Planting Hope Team then set out to develop a Purpose Statement (i.e. a statement that articulates “why” we do what we do at St. Paul’s.) This development process included reflecting on the Planting Hope Team training sessions, consideration of the Vitality Survey results and review of the congregation responses to two statements: The work of God at St. Paul’s is..., and, An important thing about St. Paul’s is... . The team identified common words/themes from the congregation responses (a broader community, fellowship, worship, witness, action for social justice) and in particular noted the concept of fulfilling what the Lord requires as noted in Micah 6:8.

The Planting Hope team also discussed the differences between purpose mission and vision statements, and subsequently took into consideration St. Paul’s current mission statement which responds well to the “how” we accomplish our purpose. So here is our newly developed purpose statement followed by our mission statement.

- ▶ **Our Purpose:** To inspire and engage one another to do what is just, show love, and fulfill God’s word.
- ▶ **Our Mission:** The Mission of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church as part of the family of God is to share God in Christ with the world by equipping one another through worship, learning, witness, service and support.

Taken together, these two statements help to better define who we are as a congregation and will help keep our ministries centered and focused. The power of purpose can be summed up in the following quote: “When a congregation knows its purpose and lives its purpose it creates a permission giving environment in the congregation.” The purpose statement was endorsed by the church council on August 20, 2019.

The next phase of the Planting Hope process was to identify core values of St. Paul’s. Core values support our mission and purpose, and reflect what’s important to us as a congregation. The congregation again responded heartily with their suggestions. The Planting Hope Team distilled these suggestions into four encompassing core values:

Our Core Values: Worship
Compassionate Service
Hospitality
Teaching and Learning

The church council unanimously adopted the recommendation for core values and the following guiding principle. “The word of God discerned in faith together” at their regular meeting on January 21, 2020.

Continuing with the Planting Hope metaphor, we are now at the point of “pollination” if you will. Perhaps implementation is a better word or as discussed at Planting Hope training, incarnation (the word became flesh). **How are we going to make our purpose statement more than just a piece of paper?** Part of the answer lies in being intentional and authentic in what we do as a congregation. A good example of our congregation being intentional was the May 2019 block party led by Vicar Megan Hoewisch. It was much more than just words on a sign; it was a sincere demonstration of open invitation, as well as an authentic display of hospitality. There will be many more opportunities if we look for them. As an example, St. Paul’s working towards being a reconciled congregation demonstrates our intention of being open and welcoming to a broader community. What others can you think of?

The future is promising. We have a purpose. Let’s live it!

St. Paul’s Planting Hope Team: Pastor Anderson, Betty Hinshaw, Ellen Lavery, Lisa Lewis, Tina Bessias, and George Seiz.

ELCA and Authentic Diversity

The Continuing Conversation Group invites you to continue to reflect on our Feb. 16 visit from Rev. Dr. James Thomas: please pick up the hand-outs on the table near the Activity bulletin board to learn more.

During our luncheon, Dr. Thomas led us through some of the reasons that the ELCA needed to issue its 2019 Apology to Persons of African Descent. We learned about interconnections between Lutheran congregations and slavery in America; we reflected on ways that that legacy operates in the church today. But the 30 members and guests attending also had an extended, hopeful conversation about building relationships as a way forward. Help us as we work together toward becoming an authentically diverse congregation of all God’s children. And, THANKS to all CCG members who made the luncheon itself so tasty and pleasant.

Breaking Bread at the Grace House

By Christina Nesslage, Duke Lutherans

A 3rd year pharmacology student, Jovita Byemerwa hopes her research will contribute to cancer research. While earning her PhD at Duke, she also serves on the Duke Lutherans Leadership Team, helping us think about how we can engage more deeply in our neighborhood. One way she invites us to do that is by sharing meals with neighbors we might not otherwise eat with.

Each month, neighbors share a meal at Grace House. Tell us more about what happens there.

The past couple of years, a few other Duke Lutherans and I started realizing that there's a significant gap between our lives at Duke and the experiences of our neighbors in Durham. It felt as if the two worlds did not mix. We wanted to create a space where we could interact with our Durham neighbors in a mutual and faithful way. We decided to start sharing meals at Grace House. This has facilitated great friendships, especially with those in the local refugee community. What draws me [to these meals] is an ever-present call, or conviction. I feel called to reach out to my neighbors, not just periodically, but continuously through genuine relationships.

What does a typical gathering at the Grace House look like?

Usually one or two people cook a meal from their home country or culture. We start the evening with a few words of welcome from Pastor Ali, and then the cook(s) share about the food they prepared and what that meal means to them. We then eat, talk, laugh, and catch up for the rest of the evening. When the weather is good, some people play games on the sidewalk. Afterwards, we all help clean up.

How have these meals shaped your understanding of what it means to be a neighbor?

I see God in the multiple cultures, languages and experiences of people who gather at Grace House. People have accepted me and loved me, and they have invited me to share my life and culture with them, and for that I am grateful. These experiences have taught me that being neighborly is not an easy thing. It is about being vulnerable and willing to receive and give love, and to continuously challenge our default self-centered nature. It is about learning to actively listen to others. You very soon learn that you need God's help to be a neighbor.

Why is taking part in your community important in your faith?

My community involvement is what helps me live out the faith that I'm taught and encouraged to live in Duke Lutherans. I get to truly experience life together with my fellow Duke Lutherans and neighbors in Durham. It is in these encounters that I learn about the meaning and the cost of life together. I get to challenge my own self-centeredness and experience the gift of God's love and mercy through others.

All are welcome to join us for these community meals. We gather on the third Saturdays of the month at 6 pm. If you have any questions, please let Pastor Ali know.

In the mailbox...

I am overwhelmed and overjoyed by St. Paul's celebration-from-afar of my ordination and installation. Your cards, prayers, messages, and even a video (wow!) Helped make the day complete. And when I start to feel daunted by the task ahead, your encouragement and excitement buoy my spirits and restore my confidence. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

*In Christ's peace,
Pastor Megan Hoewisch*

* * * * *

Thank you to everyone for all of the cards, phone calls, prayers and best wishes during my recent illness and hospitalization. I meant so much to Phyllis and I.

From Larry Jenkins

Memorials Received

We thank the following persons for their memorials given as designated.

In memory of Jim Richmond

Barbara Anderson, Durham

Bobby S. Hastings, Apex and Priscilla Long, Hillsborough

Edna R. Hensey, Raleigh

In memory of Geoffrey Summers

Mrs. Terry Bastin, Highland, IN

Ron and Marcy Brown, Durham

Steve and Karen Myzk, Hillsborough

In memory of Addie Sturgeon Felkel

Mary Sturgeon, Carrboro

In memory of Douglas E. Franzen to Duke Lutheran Campus Ministry by David and Janice Franzen

Katherine Circle Celebrates Women's History Month

The US Congress declared the month of March **National Women's History Month** in 1987. The purpose of **Women's History Month** is to increase the



Women's History Month

consciousness and knowledge of the roles that women have played, and continue to play, in the history of our country. The goals for declaring such a month are to raise awareness of the accomplishments of all women; expose and teach young children about the contributions women have made, and are continuing to make; and to celebrate those contributions of notable and ordinary women of the past and present.

This year's **Women's History Month** theme is "**Valiant Women of the Vote**," which honors those women who fought to win suffrage rights for women, and for women who continue to fight for the voting rights of others.

St. Paul's Katherine Circle will celebrate the occasion at its meeting on March 10, 2020, at 10:00 am with guest speaker, Dr. Laura C. Echols, School Psychologist for Durham Public Schools. Dr. Echols attended undergraduate school at UNC-Chapel Hill and received her Doctorate Degree in School Psychology from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. She is an active member of Dickerson Chapel AME Church in Hillsborough; is on a Committee of the Orange Congregations In Mission, serves as President of FOCUS, Inc. a community service organization, and has participated in local and statewide voter registration efforts since she became eligible to vote herself.

Dr. Echols was appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper as the School Based Professional Member of the NC Board of Occupational Therapy.

Dr. Echols will inform the Katherine Circle and guests of her role as a School Psychologist. She will share her efforts to align her faith with the myriad of challenges she faces each day in Durham Public Schools and how that faith keeps her grounded in a very special way with her work. Come out and be informed about our Public Schools. All are welcome.

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, March 1, 2020 at 12:15 pm

Reminder: Pick up your copy of the Annual Reports!

The congregation will meet to accept the annual report and receive the first of several updates through the year about finances and council matters (as requested at the last congregational meeting).

This meeting on March 1 would also be an opportunity to vote on whether to become an official Reconciling in Christ congregation. This would mean making a commitment to live as a welcoming and affirming community for LGBTQIA+ people. St. Paul's has already met all the technical requirements for this Lutheran program; a vote is the last step. For more information, see reconcilingworks.org. At the Sunday School discussion on February 2, there was a widespread desire to go forward, but it's possible that some members' perspectives were not represented. Anyone who wishes to discuss the matter or share concerns should speak or write to Pastor Anderson or any member of the council by February 23.

WCPE (89.7 FM) and theclassicalstation.org

For the past few years, FM station WCPE of Wake Forest, NC has mentioned, on the air on Sunday mornings, support given by our St. Paul's Lutheran Church together with other Triangle Area churches. This results from annual requests to our parishioners, who cumulate their contributions within the congregation and have the congregation give one collective contribution to the station in the name of the congregation. An effort is being made to collect the necessary \$1,000.00 of gifts, from interested members of our congregation, to continue the relationship with WCPE for another year. Please contact Hitch Havill if you are interested in making a gift to WCPE. He can be reached at Sunday services and at 919-929-2755 or dhavill@bellsouth.net.

To make a contribution, please make your check payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and give it to Hitch for delivery through the church to the FM station when we reach the goal.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, ELCA
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Durham, NC 27705-5731

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Adult Sunday School Class

Biblical Stories of Oppression

Sundays in Lent: March 2 - April 5

Join Alta Lindsay for this "40 Days of Prayer" curriculum, which will lead us through six Scriptural stories of slavery. We will acquaint ourselves with these accounts and wrestle with the situations in which the characters find themselves. What do they tell us? How do they guide us, even as we are so far removed from them in time? Bring your Bible, and join in lively and thoughtful discussion!

Children's Sunday School

Children's Sunday school topic for March: "The Disciples." Please consider helping with the children's Sunday school. We need one leader and one assistant, for ages 3-7 and 8-12. Contact Betty Hinshaw for details and how you can help.

The Continuing Conversations Group

invites you to a presentation on

Sunday, March 15

following the 11:00 am service

by attorney Ben Finholt,

Director of the Just Sentencing Project at

North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services.

JSP seeks to reduce long-term incarceration across the state, starting with juvenile offenders.

A light lunch will be served in Trinity Hall.

St. Paul's Readers

Join the group to discuss the book, *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison, at 3:00 pm on Thursday, March 19, in the library.

The book for April is *How Starbucks Changed My Life*, by Michael Gil.

Here – In God's Garden

by George Seiz

Mark your calendars – Outdoor workday at church on Saturday, March 28, 2020 at 9:00 am to 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, March 28, 2020. 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. Please contact George Seiz at geoseiz@aol.com or 919-824-0130 if any questions.

