

Cross Connections



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

January 2024

*Get Ready
to Cook!*



Plan now to participate in the Chili & Cornbread Cook-Off!!!

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024

sign up on bulletin board – have food here by 5:45 pm



Chili can be brought in crock-pots, cornbread any way. No need to bring serving utensils.

You will be labeling your chili and/or cornbread as to main ingredients or style.

Condiments (sour cream, cheese, crackers, etc.) are provided as well as salad, desserts, and beverages for the full meal.

Come eat, enjoy, and have a great fellowship time!

The Rev. Scott M. Anderson, Pastor

The Rev. Amanda Highben, Associate Pastor, Duke Lutherans

Gina Schaefer, Vicar

Susan Esposito, Parish Administrator & Editor

Dr. Ted Turner, Minister of Music

Alan Rigsbee, Bookkeeper

Amanda Stoen, Preschool Director

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

From the Pastor...

I'm going to keep this article short. We are in the middle of preparing for Christmas Eve and then a few days off. The calendar year is wrapping up as we begin the new church year.

PLEASE BEGIN TO PREPARE YOUR ANNUAL REPORTS AND SEND THEM TO SUSAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN THE NEW YEAR. We always seem to wait until February or even March to get them done. It would help us all to have the reports done as soon as possible.



At year end there are always so many to thank for all the hard work during the year. I do want to make a special recognition of our outgoing council members: Jim Klausman, Maria Chi, Tim Hoke, and Bee

Ellertson. I also give thanks for our new council members elect: Michelle Meadors, Ken Knudsen, and Steven Myzk.

I want to thank the staff: our bookkeeper, music minister, parish administrator, Pastor Amanda, Vicar Gina, and the preschool staff for their hard work in 2023. We also thank our Janitorial Service led by Mr. James Jefferson. Post Covid has not been easy.

May the God of Hope, guide us in the new year.
Pastor Scott

Greeting, friends at St. Paul's,



As we enter this new year, I would like to turn your attention to St. Paul's Facebook page.

This page has been a topic of focus for me since my arrival. We have worked hard to revitalize it as a way to help build an online community for St. Paul's and revolutionize how this congregation uses social media. This has definitely been a learning process and I thank all of you for your

patience as we figure out the snags.

I'm of the opinion that social media is too good of a resource to not use it and to not use it *well*. Not only is it free but it is also omnipresent. Social Media cannot only advertise St. Paul's but also help us

proclaim the gospel. In addition, it connects us to one another even when we're not physically together. But it's like any other gift given by God: a resource and one that we are called to be good stewards of. Because of this we should not only use social media *well* but also *safely*.

This leads me to the topic of my internship project.

For those who may not know, interns have to attempt some sort of project during their year at a church to help develop the congregation they serve at. This can include any number of ideas but it should enlist the help of the congregation and stretch the leadership ability of the intern. For my project, I plan to do two things: one, develop a social media policy for St. Paul's and two, to put together a team that is responsible for St. Paul's social media.

The importance of a social media policy cannot be understated for an organization. A policy can help keep best practices, provide guidance in an emergency, and most importantly, keep the church and its members safe while online. Finally, it will help the incoming team maintain St. Paul's social media as a safe, fun place where its members can connect as a community without worry of predatory behavior or misuse.

No doubt this project will have many challenges and encounter many bumps in the road, but I'm also confident that its outcome will be well worth the effort and will benefit the congregation for years to come.

If you'd like to learn more about this project or to help out in any way, feel free to give me an email or a call. I know social media can be intimidating or seemingly complex but allow me to encourage you. Even if you're a complete novice these sites are intuitive and designed to be easily learned, and we'll be happy to help train you.

But, if you find that you're not in a position to get hands on, there's still something you can do: engage with the Facebook page. Like the page, give it a follow, comment and like posts, or just engage with the online community at St. Paul's. This can also include tuning into the live stream and commenting there.

We have a whole community outside of our physical building that is just waiting for us to meet them. Church can be so much more than a building and social media is a unique way to share the gospel.

We would be remiss to skip on it!

Vicar Gina

Preschool Pitter Patter

by Amanda Stoen



Happy New Year! The teachers and I look forward to an exciting new year with our preschool children. We are just about halfway through our



school year and we love spending lots of time outside. We have been hard at work expanding and improving our outdoor classroom in the woods. Our classes spend a hour or more there at a time. In addition to being immersed in nature, our classes have circle time and snack in the woods as well as art activities and reading.



So much intellectual growth happens during nature-based play. Children have the opportunity to develop their language, literacy, math and science skills. Children’s natural curiosity leads to asking questions while exploring – a critical science practice.

When children play, they regularly test their ideas by conducting investigations.

This month, we begin enrollment for Fall 2024. Priority enrollment is given to St. Paul’s members (children and grandchildren) beginning January 3. We offer classes for children ages 10 months - 4 years old. If you are interested or know of anyone who is, registration forms and tours are available on our

website, stpaulspreschooldurham.weebly.com If you have any questions in the meantime, please reach out to me at the church or email: preschool@stpaulsdurham.org. Thank you for your support and prayers for this flourishing ministry at St. Paul’s!

Dear St. Paul’s Family,

My name is Pastor Jan Huntley. While I have been at St. Paul’s, I have experienced an overwhelming outpouring of welcome and warmth. Thank you for your many kindnesses, excellent preaching, wonderful community, and the opportunities you have provided me to work with Vicar Gina and Growing Thru Grief.

In grateful response to all I have been given at St. Paul’s, I would like to give back. Currently, I am training in a Spiritual Direction certificate program at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. It has been a wonderful adventure in faith – one I want to share with the St. Paul’s family.

So what is spiritual direction? It involves holy conversation, i.e., listening for the work of God in one’s life. God is the director. The spiritual director is there so hopefully a person can hear more clearly what God is saying in and through his/her life. Spiritual Direction is not therapy, coaching, or counseling. It is a practice of discernment. In this process, all sacred conversations are confidential. Directees meet one-on-one with a spiritual director in a quiet place where sharing cannot be overheard.

As part of my preparation to become a spiritual director, I am expected to use what I have learned and offer spiritual direction to others. So as I practice spiritual direction with some of you, I will be actively learning. Generally, we will meet for one hour, once a month, for six months with an option to continue beyond that time. At any point, if either of us feels it is necessary to withdraw from such a relationship, we have freedom to do so. There is no charge for this experience. It is a free gift from God.

If you are interested in a Spiritual Direction opportunity, please contact the church office or me at 828-434-0846. I look forward to working with whomever God might be inviting into this process.

God’s blessings and my love,
Pastor Jan Huntley

Good Listening A Stephen Minister Trait



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

by John Foreman

It's a new year and a time for resolutions. Perhaps, becoming a better listener could be one of them, especially to those who are special to you.

To be a better listener is to be an effective listener. An

effective listener has presence, empathy, and composure. Effective listeners are fully present with their speaker. Their mind is engaged with and focused on what the speaker is communicating – not drifting to what needs to be done later and what you plan to say next. This is critical because it affects many of the other aspects of listening. When you are mentally present, you are able to process what the speaker is saying and respond in a meaningful way. Checking your phone indicates that you are not fully present, even if the winning touchdown is about to be scored.

Another aspect of presence in listening is being emotionally present. Emotional presence is closely related to being mentally present, since in both you put aside your thoughts and feelings to focus on the speaker. It invites the speaker to go deeper and speak more frankly.

Effective listeners possess and express empathy for their speaker. Empathy is “feeling another person’s problems as if they were your own without actually taking them on.” Empathic listener seeks to understand what the speaker is thinking and feeling.

Being an effective listener also involves the ability to maintain your composure during difficult conversations. Remaining calm and not overreacting is not easy at times, but it again encourages the speaker to share. It is one of the foundations of a strong and lasting friendship.

An effective listener is an active listener. An active listener shows the speaker that he is focused on what the speaker is saying. This doesn't mean grabbing the speaker by the lapels and staring into his/her face. Active listening means making eye contact from time to time with the speaker and showing through body language, like nodding, that you are hearing what she/he has to say.

Active listeners also practice reflective listening. Reflective listening means repeating in your own words what the speaker has said. It shows that you heard and processed what the speaker said. An active listener also validates what the speaker has said. Validating means understanding and accepting what

the speaker has shared. It doesn't mean you have to agree with what is said, but you are validating that what the speaker has said matters.

Finally, active listeners pay attention to the speaker's body language. Sometimes, body language conveys more than words.

Effective listening isn't a skill that most of us are born with but can be learned. This is an important part of Stephen Ministry training and a cornerstone of Stephen Ministry. Not every aspect is necessary for talking to the check-out person at the supermarket but will improve your interactions with the people special to you.

If you would like to learn more about Stephen Ministry because you or someone you know may need one or you would like to become a Stephen Minister, contact John Foreman, Kim Hoke, Nan Treul, or Pastor Scott.

Book of Devotions

The Anniversary Committee is continuing to celebrate 100 Years of our Ministry by attempting to compile a keepsake **Book of Devotions**, composed of the wonderful and inspiring devotions/poems/photos that we began sharing during covid and still continue to do so. As we end this special season of Advent and prepare for the Birth of our Lord, on into the New Year and Epiphany, please reflect on your past devotions, create new ones, and submit them by the **end of January** to maria.taylor.chi@gmail.com.

Burton Elementary/Camp Destiny December

by Tim Hoke

Early in November we were contacted by Tameko Piggee, the social worker at Burton. She was asking about the Angel Tree program at Burton which we



supported last year with gifts to some of our children in Camp Destiny in 2022. Burton was also having a coat and toy drive but the deadline was much too quick for us to organize support. I saw the results of the coat and toy drive while visiting Ms. Piggee, it was pitiful, barely filling three shopping bags.

When she and I talked, they already had more than 40 children signed up for this year's Angel Tree, with more to come. The deadline for their project was December 1.

After talking with volunteer members of Camp

Destiny and the Women’s Group at the church, the decision was made to list gift card opportunities for Burton on our own sharing Christmas tree at St. Paul’s. In addition to the gift card “stocking requests,” members of our Camp Destiny volunteer staff decided to also support some of the Angel Tree children as well.

I am pleased and deeply touched to report that the support shared with Burton Elementary was wonderful. We took nine children from Burton’s angel tree list. I took all of the presents and numerous family gift cards to Ms. Piggee on Wednesday, November 29th. I had to laugh because the bags and presents almost filled up the walk space in her office.

On Thursday, December 7th, after returning home from a trip, I went to the church for Bible study and picked up the gift cards given as part of the churches Christmas gift tree. There was \$600 in cards to Walmart and Target. I took them to Burton that afternoon.

After the congregational meeting, I checked my council mailbox and found a card from Burton. It was a Christmas card thanking us for all of our wonderful support for the school and its families. I pinned it to the bulletin board for everyone to read.

Many thanks to those who supported the nine children and for the many gift cards donated from the congregation.

Giving Tree Project Thanks

by Ellen Lavery



The Women’s Connection group would like to thank everyone who participated in the “Giving Tree Project” this holiday season. As a congregation we collected for Parktown Food Hub we collected 18 gift cards for a total of \$625 and for Burton

Elementary School we collected 17 gift cards for a total of \$650.

There may also have been folks who contributed to Parktown via the other two options we were given. We did not get a report on those donations, but thank you also for them.

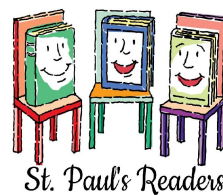
St. Paul’s Reader’s Program for 2024

by Katherine Trexler

St. Paul’s Readers invite all readers to join us in 2024 as we explore and discuss our wonderful reading list. There is a wide variety in our selections with our

goal of having at least one book pique the interest of most readers. Our meetings are held in Trinity Hall at 3 pm on the third Thursday of most months. On Thursday, January 18, at 3 pm, Katherine Trexler leads our discussion of *Mad Honey* by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan.

Here is more information about our January read: Olivia McAfee knows what it feels like to start over. Her picture-perfect life – living in Boston, married to a brilliant cardiothoracic surgeon, raising their beautiful son, Asher – was upended when her husband revealed a darker side. She never imagined that she would end up back in her sleepy New Hampshire hometown, living in the house she grew up in and taking over her father’s beekeeping business. Lily Campanello is familiar with do-overs, too. when she and her mom move to Adams, New Hampshire, for her final year of high school, they both hope it will be a fresh start. And for just a short while, these new beginnings are exactly what Olivia and Lily need. Their paths cross when Asher falls for the new girl in school, and Lily can’t help but fall for him, too. With Ash, she feels happy for the first time. Yet she wonders if she can trust him completely ... *Mad Honey* is a riveting novel of suspense, an unforgettable love story, and a moving and powerful exploration of the secrets we keep and the risks we take in order to become ourselves.



Mark your calendars for our author event on Sunday, February 25, at 12:30 pm, when our own Rick Lischer discusses his memoir *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery* (Doubleday).

Here is a description of this book: Richard Lischer’s memoir of his first try at ministry in a country church in southern Illinois. Fresh from a Ph.D. in theology and bursting with ideas and ambition, Lischer finds himself assigned to New Cana Lutheran Church, an American gothic congregation “as tightly sealed as a jar of home-canned pickles.” For Lischer and his wife, Tracy, the ministry’s first lesson is a lesson in loneliness. Eventually, he learns (the hard way) that farming, loss, storytelling, and gossip possess their own wisdom and can *be* ministry themselves. In this book the cultural revolutions of the 1970s, from Vietnam to Watergate, are viewed from the front porch of a white-framed parsonage in the middle of a cornfield. With charm, openness, and humor, Lischer brings to life the clash of cultures and personalities that mark the beginning of a vocation. About this book, *Publisher’s Weekly* wrote, “[Lischer’s] portraits are masterfully drawn. Not only does he write beautifully, but he also tells the

unvarnished truth about both tragedy and redemption in a Christian community.”

Remaining books for the year are:

- ▶ March 21 – *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride
- ▶ April 18 - *Death be Not Proud* by John Gunther
- ▶ May 16 - *The Madness of Crowds* by Louise Penny
- ▶ Sept 19 - *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey* by Candice Millard
- ▶ Oct 17 - *Humankind: A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman
- ▶ Nov 21 - *The Engineer's Wife* by Tracey Enerson Wood

We would love for you to check us out. We are low-key and welcome all men and women. We would love for you to join us at our next meeting, even if you have not read the book. Please contact Katherine Trexler (katherine.m.trexler@gmail.com) with any questions. We are excited to get started on our 2024 reading list!

New Class in January



**ADULT
SUNDAY
SCHOOL**

by Megan Cunningham

The 2024 spring adult Sunday school season will begin with Rich Lischer, as he will teach the four Sundays in January. The title of his course is “The Very First Story of Jesus – the Gospel of Mark.” The class will meet in Trinity Hall on January 7, 14, 21, and 28 at 9:45-10:45 am. If you would like to take notes, bringing your personal bible is recommended, but there will be bibles available. Coffee will also be available.

Future classes are:

- Feb 4 – Stephen Ministers with John Foreman, Kim Hoke, and Nan Treul
- Beginning February 11 through March 24, Vicar Gina will be leading a 7-part session about Ash Wednesday to Holy Week, each week we will prepare for the Wednesday evening Worship Services through Holy Week.

Young In Spirit

The activity for Young In Spirit is a lunch “meet and eat” at 11:30 am on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. The Loop Restaurant in Eastgate Shopping Center, 1800 E Franklin Street, Chapel Hill. The Loop has a varied menu to meet most food tastes.

New Members received Dec 3, 2023

Alannah Garcia and David Brenes, daughter Ayla Mora

701 Sleepy Creek Dr
Durham, NC 27713

Alannah Garcia

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Email: garcia.m.alannah@gmail.com

David Brenes

Cell: 919-201-8781

Email: jo.da206@gmail.com

Ayla Mora, born 08/21/2021

Luther Gates

2407 Charlie Tew Ct
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Cell: 919-265-7192 Email: lcgates0512@gmail.com

Jessie Grinnell

2701 Homestead Rd, #1105

Chapel Hill NC 27516

Email: grinnellje@yahoo.com

Jonathan and Sarah Hodges, son Benjamin Hodges

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Home Phone 919-844-5106

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Sarah: email: shodges@uwalumni.com

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Benjamin: email: benjamin.hodges545@gmail.com

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Kyleia Rhodes

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Sally C. and David A. Sloop

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Pam and Steve Taylor

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Durham NC 27713

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Email: stevet@gmail.com

Pam: cell: 803-608-6529

Email: ptaylor006@gmail.com

Youth Corner January 2024

The youth, along with Joan Albright and Megan Cunningham, would like to say a huge THANK YOU for all the donations that have started to come in for support to the youth group and for our group going in July to New Orleans for the ELCA National Youth Gathering. It is because of the community of St. Paul's that our youth group is growing and having the chance to do a variety of things at the church, with the church,



and even down in New Orleans. The youth are jumping feet first into the end of 2023 and beginning of 2024. One of the fun ways you can see the youth is during the December 24, 2023, 10 am service as they will be participating in different roles.

Our next lock-in for the school year will be January 19, 2024 – we are going to play laser tag before coming back to St. Paul's for the night and see where it takes us in fun and laughter. We continue to prepare for the Gathering by meeting together that night to talk about more ways we are "Created to be." We will learn about the amazing city of New Orleans and what we plan to do, try, and see. The topic of food has been both mouth watering and eye opening as the list of food everyone wants to try grows the more we learn.

We will also be making personalized Mardi Gras masks and learning about King Cake. You will have the chance to see these masks and enjoy the dinner made by the youth at the 2024 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. The youth will be cooking, serving, and getting to share fellowship with the congregation.

One of our youth is Ben Hodges and if you have not met Ben yet, here is a short biography. "I am currently a 10th grader at Riverside High School. I enjoy cooking because I really enjoy trying to make good food outside of a restaurant setting. I am colorblind to red and green which has always led to some funny and confusing moments. Next summer at the Gathering, I am most excited to listen to all of the music and eat all of the good food in New Orleans."

Now that you have gotten to know Sarah Herring and Ben Hodges, we recommend you continue to check out the YOUTH CORNER each month in Cross Connections to learn about more of our youth.

A Glimpse into St. Paul's "Young" Adult Ministry

Though we are often referred to as "young" adults, we are all just working adults who range in age from mid-20s to mid-40s that have a common bond of faith and community at St. Paul's. We come together once a month for fun and fellowship, while we continue to get to know each other and our personal faith journeys. You are probably wondering what exactly we do for our fun and fellowship time. Let me tell you about some recent and upcoming events.

In early 2023 we came together to watch the Super Bowl and have a potluck dinner. The food was amazing and so

was the conversation, but some of us were more devoted to watching the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Philadelphia



Eagles at the very end. We tried to have a firepit and chocolate evening on Dec 1, but rain caused us to change to Boxcar Durham for drinks and conversation.

Looking forward to 2024, we are going to be exploring the Triangle in some very fun and adventurous ways.

- ◆ January 12 at 7 pm begins with a potluck and conversation to get to know each other better
- ◆ February 24 we are heading to the PNC Arena in Raleigh to cheer on the Carolina Hurricanes
- ◆ March 16 we are kicking things into a spirit filled time by going on a tour and tasting at the Durham Distillery where we will try different spirits created in Durham.
- ◆ April 26 we are then taking a true walk on the wild side by heading out to Pittsboro for the twilight tour at Carolina Tiger Rescue. We will get the chance to see a variety of big cats which have been rescued from private owners, mom and pop zoos, traveling circuses, and sadly, other facilities that are not healthy or safe places for these beautiful big cats.

If you would like more information about joining the group at an activity, please reach out to Megan Cunningham to be included in the information emails. As 2024 continues, be on the lookout for more adventures from this group of working adults.

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

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Annual Reports

It is time again for our annual reports to be submitted to Susan Esposito by **January 15, 2024**. They should come from each committee and active group at St. Paul's. Content should include membership and what has been accomplished in 2023. They can be left in Susan's mailbox or emailed to admin@stpaulsdurham.org. You are welcome to refer to the 2023 calendar on Susan's door to refresh your memory of activities. Contact the staff if you have any questions.



Growing thru Grief

Here is the current schedule for January:

- ▶ Jan 2 - "Looking Back, Looking Ahead" with Lynn Heath
- ▶ Jan 9 - "Self-Care in Grief" with Bailey Brislin
- ▶ Jan 16 - "How to Start: Creating a New Identity" with Scott Anderson
- ▶ Jan 23 - "Your Mandala" with Lindsay Gallo
- ▶ Jan 30 - "Walking Each Other Home" with Terry Allebaugh



We meet at St. Paul's Lutheran Church from 4 - 6 pm. All are welcome.



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Saturday, March 9th
9 AM - 12 PM

January begins the official kickoff for our 2024 Rise Against Hunger work day on March 9, 2024. The financial goal is \$4,300 to cover the cost of 10,000 meals. And, we need commitments for 60 workers between 9:00 am and Noon on March 9th.

Register to work at:
Events.Riseagainsthunger.org/STPLC

There is a small table display in the foyer for the "CHANGE for a CHANGE" event to collect your loose change (or more). These collections will be turned in at the end of February to help fund the event on March 9th. We have already received financial commitments to cover over half of the cost of this event. We will have special envelopes in the pews and at the usher table for your donations. Let's work to get full funding completed before next month's newsletter. Any extra we receive will be held over for another event.

For questions/suggestions contact: Dean Redman, Marilyn Hawley, Bee Ellertson, or Mary Runestad.

Sunday, December 24, 2023 – Advent 4 and Christmas Eve

- ▶ 10:00 am – Combined Advent 4 and Christmas Eve Service (Children will be invited to participate in a telling of the Christmas Story)
- ▶ 7:00 pm – Christmas Eve service with Candlelight (link for live streaming: <https://vimeo.com/event/3944187> It will also be recorded for viewing after the service: <https://vimeo.com/stpaulsdurham/videos>)
- ▶ 10:00 pm – Christmas Eve service with Candlelight
- ▶ **The Church Office will be closed December 25, 2023 through January 1, 2024.**

Sunday, December 31 - Christmas 1

- ▶ 8:30 am and 11:00 am Service of Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion, The Rev. David Franzen, presiding

Sunday, January 7, 2024

Celebrating Epiphany

- ▶ 8:30 and 11:00 am Worship Services (8:30 is in person, 11:00 is in person and live streamed link: <https://vimeo.com/event/1478223> as well as recorded for Vimeo site: <https://vimeo.com/stpaulsdurham/videos>)