

# Cross Connections



*St. Paul's Lutheran Church*

*May 2024*

*You're Invited*

to the dedication of  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

## Luther Woods

Sunday, May 5th @ 10am

We will gather to dedicate this space and thank our many volunteers who helped create this space. The outdoor classroom supports our sense of belonging, and children need regular interaction with nature to thrive and care for our world.



*"Please note that this outdoor classroom follows an uneven path into the woods."*

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

[pastor@stpaulsdurham.org](mailto:pastor@stpaulsdurham.org)  
[amanda.highben@duke.edu](mailto:amanda.highben@duke.edu)  
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Facebook: St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, ELCA

## From the Pastor...

As I sat to write this article, I have been reflecting on all of the activity at St. Paul's and all of the work that goes on behind the scenes of worship and the visible work of Sundays. Your congregation council has been talking about how to better communicate this information while maintaining confidences, not sharing too much that spammers or hackers could use to spoof the congregation. One of the reasons we have changed passwords for the online directory is that spammers call the church pretending to be relatives of members or actual new members that need the directory and then they get everyone's emails and phone numbers. We are trying to be very protective of your information.

It is also why we don't post piles of directories of annual reports in prominent places in the lobby. We do have copies of the annual report available. We can offer copies of the monthly financial statements, copies of the constitution and any other documents of the church to all. All you need to do is ask one of the staff and we can provide this information to you.

Council is working toward once again putting a brief summary of council actions in the monthly newsletter. I am going to do a little of that now. Council has recently approved revisions to the constitution based on required changes made by the ELCA and other changes necessary to bring us into compliance with the Synod. Copies of the constitution will be available soon along with copies of the old constitution for comparison. One of the major changes is that bylaws provisions are now included in the main body of the document rather than a separate bylaws section. Thanks to Maria Chi, Megan Cunningham, former Vicar Amanda Spangler, and Steve Mzyk for doing this hard work.

Other actions of the council have led to some budgetary refinement and the requirement for the preschool to begin contributing to the cost of running the congregation. The preschool has had many years where we did not charge for any expense from the congregation but now as we continue to run deficit budgets we are requiring the preschool to help with the overall operations cost of the congregation. Next year the preschool will contribute \$500 per month toward the operations budget and they will continue to cover their workers compensation cost, the cost of payroll expense and fees for the electronic payments to the preschool.

Council is reviewing the need to remove one of the large oak trees because it is dying and this is a significant extra budget expense. Council approved \$1,000 to pay a student to work in the library this

summer. Council is working to clean up the clutter and remove unneeded material from the church plant.

The work goes on and on.

Please keep council in your prayers.

Pastor Scott

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## Dear Friends at St. Paul's,

The end of May will mark the ninth month of my internship at St. Paul's. It's hard to believe how time has flown. It feels like August was only yesterday and I was just getting started. This past year has taught me so much about myself, about God, and ministry. I have been incredibly grateful to this congregation for all the help, grace, and energy they have invested into my development. Unfortunately, since internship lasts a year, that means I only have three months left at this congregation!

So, I thought I'd take the chance to talk a little bit about what my departure will look like!

First, what comes after. I have already finished my seminary education. This means that once I'm finished with internship, I'm done! I will be up for approval with the NC Synod in August. Pending my approval, I will begin the first call process and upon first call, finally be ordained. To say it's an exciting time would be an understatement. I've been working to reach this point since I was seventeen. Truth be told, I'm not nervous at all. I know my education and my internship has done an excellent job of preparing me for the transition into ministry.

Second, there will be another intern after me. Ashley Bowman will be your new Vicar starting in August. I got the chance to meet her in April and thought she would be a wonderful fit for St. Paul's. When she arrives, please be sure to introduce yourself, invite her to lunch or dinner, get to know her, and love her just as you have loved me. I doubt you need me to tell you that, though, you guys are pros when it comes to interns.

Finally, if we haven't gotten a chance to sit down and talk, or just have a meal together, now is the time! Feel free to call me or shoot me an email so we can get a chance to spend some time together before I leave. I may be near the end, but the end isn't quite yet. I hope the last three months of my internship will be just as good as the first nine.

Peace and Blessings,  
Vicar Gina

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## *Empathy for Special People in Your Life*

### **Stephen Ministry**

In the previous piece on empathy, we discussed empathy for friends, acquaintances, and strangers, but what about those special people in your life – spouses, parents, and children?

With time we often take our spouse/significant other for granted. We think we know exactly what they are thinking, we even complete each other's sentences. But are we really listening to them?

Are we thinking about how to fix the problem or console rather than really listening? When a spouse or significant other is experiencing a struggle in life, we too often don't put in enough effort to understand. We react with our own thoughts and feelings on the subject, or what our loved one should be thinking and feeling. As a result, they end up feeling frustrated or even angry rather than understood.

Empathy is a tool that helps a couple come to understand one another and grow closer. Empathy is actively listening to and understanding the feelings your partner is experiencing and expressing your understanding of those feelings to that person. For example:

*I was prepped and about to go in for serious surgery. I was trying to put on a brave face, but my wife could sense my fear. She said, "don't worry, you are in a world renown hospital with the best surgeon in the country." I responded, "I appreciate your optimism, but I'm terrified. What I need now is for you to let me be scared." With that, she teared up and said, "I'm glad you said that because I'm scared, too." Sharing that fear brought us closer than ever and helped me feel less alone.*

Offering suggestions as to how to fix the problem or relating a similar experience you had is not empathy and is often not helpful. Just listen, understand your spouse's feelings and emotions, and show that you understand.

What about our children? To quote a children's social worker. "When you argue with your child about a strong feeling or minimize their feelings, you are putting yourself in a losing situation." When a difficult situation arises, our first instinct as a parent is to instruct, discipline or encourage. Empathy isn't always at the top of the list, but it may be what is needed most at the time. For example:

*Your daughter is starting a new school because you moved to start a new job. She has been sick almost every morning during the first week of school. You could insist she go to school anyway, or punish her for faking an illness, or you could ask why she is feeling*

*sick. If you ask she might respond that she is "lonely-sick" from being a new kid at school without any friends. Being the empathetic Dad you respond, "I thought being the new guy at work would be tough, but being a new kid at school must be ten times harder. Tell me what it's like" and listen. Suddenly, the mysterious illness is cured.*

Empathizing doesn't mean you have to agree with and condone an action. You can listen and express your understanding while still holding firm to what you've decided. Seeing things from a child's perspective and showing your understanding can take some of the sting out of the "no."

The respect and understanding you show by hearing them out will build a stronger relationship with your child.

Finally, what about our parents? Growing up we usually didn't think about our parents' feelings – it was all about us. After all they were the parents, and we were the kids. They were supposed to make us feel better. As we become adults, especially if we become parents ourselves, our perspective changes – we begin to see our parents as people with their own struggles, emotions, and needs.

At that point it is easier to be empathetic. The same empathy skills mentioned earlier with spouses and children can be used in our relationship.

To wrap up, empathy is simply listening and discerning other's feelings and emotions, and expressing back to them that understanding. Give it a try!

If you would like to learn more about Stephen Ministry or know someone who might benefit from a Stephen Minister, contact John Foreman, Kim Hoke, Nan Treul or Pastor.

*–Excerpts from The Gift of Empathy from Stephen Ministry, St. Louis*

## **Quarterly Finance Report**

### **Expenses**



So far this year our expenses (\$160,957) are just slightly above the budgeted expenses (\$157,436). So far this year, contributions and other sources of operating income have exceeded our expenses by \$38,387. We also carried over \$11,866 from 2023, giving an operating balance of \$50,243 as of March 31. In addition, the congregation gave over \$14,000 to cover an unexpected \$13,815 expense to the HVAC system. Any questions about expenses can be directed to John Foreman or Angela Maine.

### Contributions

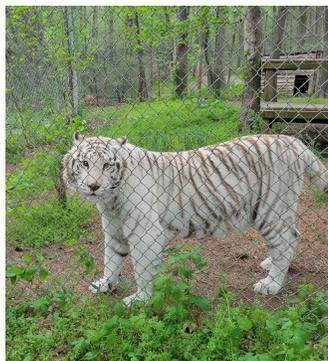
In the first quarter of 2024, contributions for offerings and to offset operating expenses totaled \$199,344. This is 36% of the expected annual contributions to offerings and to offset operating expenses. An additional \$28,299 was given for specific St. Paul’s programs. There were also additional gifts to support St. Paul’s Preschool, Duke Lutherans, and Growing Thru Grief from both St. Paul’s members and others. Any questions about contributions can be directed to Phil Hart or Rod Runestad.

### Online Giving

Increasingly many members prefer to give to St. Paul’s using online giving. Contributions can be one-time contributions to set up for weekly or monthly recurring payments and can be changed at any time. This method can be a convenience to members who no longer need to write checks to St. Paul’s and place them in the offering. Online giving also benefits St. Paul’s as the recurring contributions are ongoing.

Online donations to St. Paul’s may be made by credit/debit card or a direct draft from a checking or savings account. To contribute online, click on the giving button on the St. Paul’s website which will take you to a secure website hosted by Vanco Services, LLC: St. Paul’s pays Vanco fees to process these transactions. Fees for credit/debit card transactions recently increased so if you prefer to use this method of payment, please consider checking the box to give an additional 3% to help offset the processing fee.

Please don’t hesitate to contact one of the Co-Financial Secretaries: Phil Hart or Rod Runstead, if you have questions or need assistance.



### Working Adults Adventure

April was a fun month for the Working Adult group, as we got the chance to get within 4 feet of some amazing, beautiful big cats when we visited Carolina Tiger Rescue on Friday, April

12, for the twilight tour. You will find here just some of the pictures from that night, as a group we took 125+ pictures and got to learn about these majestic creatures. After our tour we went to dinner at Mi Cancun in Pittsboro where we had great laughs and a



very yummy dinner.

The group is having a wonderful time getting to know each other and you can see pictures from each event and information about upcoming events on the bulletin boards on the wall by Whitesell Hall. We have some more fun events coming up and we want to remind our brothers and

sisters in Christ and St. Paul’s, anyone is welcome to join us on adventures throughout the rest of the year.

Our next event will be on **Saturday, June 8, 2024** for a Durham Bulls game with first pitch to be at 6:35 pm. This particular game has a theme that shows off the pride of Bull City by highlighting the greatest movie of all time – “Bull Durham.” Check out the movie if you have not already. Also we will get to enjoy some post game fireworks and Ripkin the Bat Dog.

If you ever want to know more about our group or would like to join us, please feel free to reach out to Megan Cunningham at [mcunni16@gmail.com](mailto:mcunni16@gmail.com).

### Prayer Shawl Ministry

In recent months, handmade prayer shawls from St. Paul’s “Dropped Stitch” group have been given to the following people:

- ◆ a member undergoing cancer treatment
- ◆ a member’s sister who is undergoing dialysis
- ◆ a Duke Lutheran who lost his father
- ◆ the pastor of a member’s daughter who is starting chemotherapy

If you know of someone who could use the comfort of a prayer shawl, please take one. They are free and available from a rack outside the sanctuary.

If you are interested in becoming an honorable St. Paul’s Bus Driver, please contact Larry Hawley at 919-972-9344 to arrange a training session!

**Christ has no body now on earth but yours;  
no hands but yours;  
no feet but yours.**

**Yours are the eyes through which the  
compassion of Christ must look out on the  
world.**

**Yours are the feet with which He is to go  
about doing good.**

**Yours are the hands with which He is to  
bless His people.**

**– St. Teresa of Avila**

**Social Ministries Committee –  
EXPAND/EXPLORE/EDUCATE**

**WE WANT YOU!**

We want you... if you have a passion for or experience with:

- Voter Registration and Education (our new focus area for 2024)
- Juneteenth (June 19<sup>th</sup>) event/s

We are actively recruiting shared leadership teams to begin planning for these two areas. You DO NOT have to be a member of the Social Ministry Committee to be on one of these leadership teams!

We value your passion and energy regardless of your interest/disinterest in serving on a committee!

And we are NOT asking for a long term commitment from you... once the work of the leadership team is completed, you are “free to go your own way”!

[\*Note: We call them “Cords of Three,” see Ecclesiastes 4:9-12]

**Next Meeting:** The next Social Ministry committee meeting will be held **Tuesday, May 14 at 7:00 pm** in Whitesell Hall. All church members and regularly attending visitors are always welcome to join us; hope to see you there!

**NOTE: There will NOT be a Social Ministry Committee meeting in June** – but look for information about Juneteenth!

**Volunteer Opportunities with ongoing Social Ministries:**

**Urban Ministries:** Volunteers to serve lunch at UMD’s “Community Café” on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month: sign-up link: [bit.ly/UMD Signup](https://bit.ly/UMD_Signup)

**Creation Care:** New CC team members to assist with the increasing number of CC projects

**The Refugee Support Team:** Additional female drivers

**Camp Destiny & Burton Magnet Elementary (BME) Community:**

**BME -** Volunteers to read 1:1 with 1<sup>st</sup> graders\* - weekly commitment on your choice of weekday/s

**BME -** Volunteers to assist students with homework during afterschool program\* - weekly commitment on your choice of weekday/s

**NOTE:** Prospective volunteers for the BME -in-school activities must first complete a volunteer application through Durham Public Schools; application available at: <https://www.dpsnc.net/domain/133>

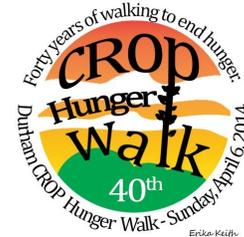
If you are interested in volunteering in any of these capacities, please contact either Joan Pepper or Pastor Scott; they will connect you with the contact person for that area of ministry.

**2024 Durham CROP Walk - Final Update**

Thanks to all those who participated in the 2024 Durham CROP Walk! Eight walkers registered (6 through St. Paul’s), 4 folks walked on Palm Sunday... and a total of \$1,558 was raised!!

We appreciate your continued support of the Durham CROP Hunger Walk... as we work and walk together to help end hunger, both here in Durham and around the world.

SAVE THE DATE... for Durham CROP Walk 2025  
April 13, 2025!



**Youth Corner**

Spring has been in full force for the youth group and that includes a lot of busy teenagers.



We continue preparing for our time in New Orleans, by talking about what it means “To Be Created” to be Disruptive. While talking about being disruptive we are taking a look at our inner selves and how we handle different injustices within our lives. We have also been actively working on our covenant and how we will hold each other accountable while being ambassadors of St. Paul’s while in New Orleans. We started to talk about how we will demonstrate to everyone in New Orleans what it means to be part of the St. Paul’s family. Also as ambassadors of St. Paul’s we will be showing off our amazing stained

glass with our personalized t-shirts. We have chosen 5 different shirts of 5 different colors all with our Stained Glass being the focus on our backs and our inspirational cross on the front. Shirts have been ordered and will be arriving in the next month, we can't wait to show off how some of your donations will be on display in New Orleans.

While we have been busy preparing for New Orleans, we have also been talking during Sunday School about after Easter season and what Pentecost Sunday means in the Lutheran church. On Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, we made Pentecost spirit sticks to help us show off what Pentecost symbolizes. We will continue our lessons on the church calendar with our next Sunday School class on April 28<sup>th</sup>. We recommend you stop by to see what we are up to.

One of the youth you will see on a regular basis during our Sunday School sessions and so many other youth activities is James Albright. Here is a little biography about James written by James so you can get to know him better. "My name is James Henry Albright, I'm 14, I was born and raised here in Durham. I go to Durham Academy Middle School and I'm in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I love the outdoors and spending time at camp with my brother. My main sports are skiing, mountain biking, lacrosse, and cross country. I have 2 dogs and one brother. I love the mountains and the beach."



Along with James' picture here, we recommend you take a walk down the hallway by Whitesell Hall to see more pictures of the youth so you can continue to get to know them. You will also start to see more pictures of our different outings as we continue to have fun and adventures. Just like the fun we will be having on Friday, April 26, while we have dinner and watch some movies in the atrium. We continue to say THANK YOU to our St. Paul's family as you support the growth and activity of our group, both now and in the future.

**We Welcome by Holy Baptism**

On Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024, we welcomed by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism: Josefina Bluschke, Etta Bluschke, and August Bluschke, children of Erin and Gert Bluschke. Sponsors are Kelly McKernan (aunt) and Klaus Bluschke (uncle) for

Josefine; Annegret Bluschke (aunt) and Kevin McKernan (uncle); for Etta Bluschke; and Karl-Heinz Bluschke (grandfather) and Megan Witt (aunt) for August.

Dear St. Paul's Family,  
 Thank you so very much for the love and support you've shared with me, Zeb, Ceci, and my Dad since my Mom's death. Grieving a Mother is far from easy, but your cards, meals, kind words, and sincere prayers have all been a source of great comfort. I am so grateful.

Grace and Peace,  
 Pastor Amanda

**Memorials Received**

We thank the following persons who have given memorials to St. Paul's in memory to those designated.

***In memory of Ida Elliott to the Memorials Committee***

- John and Linda Foreman, Durham
- Dean and Marcia Redman, Chapel Hill
- Katherine Trexler, Durham
- Theresa Norris Yoder, North Wilkesboro, NC
- Phil and Sharon Curley, North Wilkesboro, NC
- Andre and Katherine Mazzoleni, Raleigh
- Rachel Harter, Chapel Hill
- Wayne and Sandra Woodall, West Carrollton, OH
- Terry and Jane Andersen, Asheville, NC
- Mary Spannbroek and Doug and Angela Schuster, Cary, NC
- Marlene Coulter, Roxboro, NC
- Phil and Sally Hart, Durham
- Edward and Michelle Jaselskis, Durham
- Jayne Baum, Durham
- Gus Holshouser, Durham
- Gary and Susan Norris, Concord, NC
- Ralph and Phyllis Steele II, Creedmoor, NC
- William and Margaret McLaurin, Kernersville, NC

***In memory of Ida Elliott to the Operating Fund of St. Paul's***

- John and Jane Hurlburt, Durham

***In memory of Ida Elliott to the HVAC Repairs***

- Lois Boynton, Chapel Hill, NC

***In memory of Linda Hellman (mother of Pastor Amanda Highben)***

- John and Linda Foreman, Durham
- Frederick and Kay Fritz, East Lansing, MI

Dear St. Paul's Family,

Many thanks to everyone who has sent me notes, cards, texts, and emails, along with phone calls and flowers, all containing healing prayers, thoughts and wishes. I appreciate and welcome all in this time of needed encouragement. Blessings to you all!

Susan Esposito



If you would like to make a recognition through a request for Altar Flowers, please stop by the credenza under the TV monitor in the atrium. Sign up for the day(s) you would like to request,

pick up an envelope and form in the lower box and turn in your request form(s) which should indicate your announcement for the bulletin, and payment (\$40) at least one week in advance. If you have any questions, speak with a staff person.

### Nursery care

We are presently without a nursery caregiver on Sunday mornings. If you would like to volunteer at either the 8:30 or 11:00 am service, please contact Pastor Scott.



The **Dropped Stitch Prayer Shawl Ministry** meets on the last Friday of the month at 1:00 pm in the sofa area of the atrium. This group creates prayer shawls by knitting or crochet.

The **Tongue and Thimble** group creates small quilts which are distributed to nurseries at local hospitals for their critical patients. They meet downstairs in the Fiber Arts/Music room off of the Genesis Hall on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am-12:00 noon.

### Reach out and touch someone:

- Did I offer peace today?*
- Did I bring a smile to someone's face?*
- Did I say words of healing?*
- Did I let go of my anger or resentment?*
- Did I forgive?*
- Did I love?*

Henri Nouwen

Nurturing Committee Ministry

### PASTA for PARKTOWN!! Help Stock the St. Paul's Shelf at Parktown Food Hub!

Keep it coming! THANKS to your generosity the "St. Paul's Dry Boxed Pasta Shelf" stays stocked and ready to help hungry families. Please continue to add dry pasta to your shopping list to share with the St. Paul's shelf. The Women's Connection Group is leading this initiative to support the Parktown Food Hub, led by Pastor Sharon Schulze.

### Sign-Up Genius Links

Please visit the Sign-Up Genius links which we use to enable volunteers to fill in where needed, for both services. Click on the link and fill in your name on the date(s).

#### ◆ Sunday Worship –

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0944a4a72fa5f58-sunday1>

Sign up for: lector, worship assistant, altar guild, communion assistants, and ushers. Staff will be glad to provide guidance for any of these tasks.

#### ◆ Devotions –

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044eabad28a3fd0-daily1>

Send your devotions to Vicar Gina Schaefer - [vicar@stpaulsdurham.org](mailto:vicar@stpaulsdurham.org)

### Creation Care

Thank you to all who brought items to be recycled by "Anything With A Plug" from Raleigh. The caring For Creation ministry acknowledged Earth Day and focused on recycling of household items that we cannot place in local recycling containers. A variety of items, including electronics, plastics, and metals were collected – including a bicycle.



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Durham, NC 27705-5731

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### Growing Thru Grief

Growing thru Grief is continuing to offer grief support to those grieving the loss of a loved one. Here is our schedule for May.

- May 7 "Yoga and Healing," by Anne Rea
  - May 14 "Practices and Rituals in Times of Grief: Considering What Supports Your Journey," by Jim Lewis
  - May 21 To be Determined
  - May 28 "The Grief Wheel" by Lindsay Gallo
- We meet at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, from 4 to 6 pm. All are welcome.

### St. Paul's Readers, May 16 at 3 pm

Please join us on Thursday, May 16, at 3 pm in Trinity Hall as Kim Hoke leads our discussion of *The Madness of Crowds* by Louise Penny. This mystery is about many things – the effects of a pandemic on society, for one – but mostly it is about family. How to find it in the most unexpected of places. The secrets that we keep from each other. And how far we would go to protect those we love.



St. Paul's Readers

Chief Inspector Gamache and the village of Three Pines, Quebec, emerge from the pandemic to confront something even more monstrous. The chancellor of the local university is hosting a lecture on statistics. The community considers this a dry topic until they realize that the number crunching concerns the benefits that would accrue from mercy killing. The subject matter polarizes audiences violently with angry crowds gathering on both sides. The lecturer approaches a tipping point, with endorsements from politicians and others who make her radical ideas appear more reasonable, even tenable. The inevitable murder that follows on the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve strikes painful chords in everyone. No one balances tight plotting, compassion for her flawed characters,

and a broader vision of humanity like the author Louise Penny.

St. Paul's Readers meets at 3 pm on the third Thursday of the month in Trinity Hall. Please consider taking part even if you have not read the book – check us out! We welcome all readers – men and women. This May meeting is the last before our summer pause. Contact Katherine Trexler ([katherine.m.trexler@gmail.com](mailto:katherine.m.trexler@gmail.com)) with any questions. We hope to see you soon!

### Young In Spirit Wed, May 8 at 11:30 am



Come travel with us as Tim and Kim Hoke share their travels to the southeast Asia countries of Vietnam and Cambodia. Bring your own lunch – there will be dessert to share.

This will be our last gathering for now – we will resume meeting in September.

### Adult Sunday School Schedule



Classes will meet in Trinity Hall at 9:45-10:45 am. Coffee available!

- ▶ May 5 – Dedication of Lutherwoods: St. Paul's Preschool Outdoor Education space (*see front cover of this newsletter!*)
- ▶ May 12 – David Franzen: Mental Health and Faith
- ▶ May 19 – St. Paul's Constitution Review/Updates Question and Answer Session #1
- ▶ May 26 – St. Paul's Constitution Review/Updates Question & Answer Session 2

Regular summer Sunday School classes have not been scheduled but there may be some Sunday events taking place – watch for our schedules and events listings.