

# Cross Connections



*St. Paul's Lutheran Church*

*January 2022*

## Christmas Eve Services – Friday, December 24, 2021

4:00 pm Family Service

7:00 pm Candlelight Service with special music

10:00 pm Candlelight Service

All services will celebrate Holy Communion

## Sunday, December 26, 2021 – First Sunday of Christmas

10:00 am Services of Lessons and Carols

## Sunday, January 2, 2022 -- Second Sunday of Christmas

10:00 am Worship

## Sunday, January 9, 2022 – Celebrating Epiphany

10:00 am Worship



Since we are publishing this newsletter early, we have the opportunity to mention that Christmas is not just a one-day event! Christmastide begins on December 25 and lasts for 12 days – which we then celebrate as Epiphany. On the First Sunday of Christmas (December 26) we will gather using a service of lessons and carols which brings us words from the old testament foretelling of a Prince of Peace and continues with the story of the angel Gabriel, shepherds in Bethlehem, and wise men following a star. On Sunday, January 2 we will have a typical worship service. This year, we will be observing Epiphany on January 9 at our Sunday worship service, when we celebrate the light of Christ to the nations and to all people. We may even have wise men with us – it is quite a journey. Join us!

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

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

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**From the Pastor...**

A new calendar year is soon to dawn and even though we are producing this newsletter in the middle of December, it will be filled with thoughts of the coming year.

As I am sitting to write this, it is the Monday after the annual meeting. I want to make sure you all understand the hard work that has gone in to the preparation for that meeting. The council and finance committee had worked diligently to try and make sense of giving patterns, increased costs and incorporate cost saving measures. I think they did a great job. I want to give special shout out to John Foreman, Phil Hart, and Rod Runestad.

The vote on this past Sunday was unanimous in favor of the proposed budget and the three new council members, Joan Albright, Jim Klausman, and Megan Cunningham. They will be replacing outgoing council members, Claire Cooney, Phil Hart, and Ted Dominick. Give them a word of thanks when you see them.

Annual reports are soon due and we will have another congregational meeting in February to approve bylaws changes, so watch for those changes soon after the New Year.

The New Year brings new possibilities. We hope to regather in two services at 8:30 and 11:00 am beginning in Lent. This will depend on how our city and county are managing Covid and on continuing increase in attendance.

I would like you all to consider another new thing during 2022. My wife, Kathy, and I were talking this morning and she proposed an interesting idea for the newsletter. I am considering a question and answer format for part of my newsletter articles for 2022. Not really an advice column but more of answers to questions of faith. Things like: Why doesn't Mark have a birth narrative for Jesus? What does Luke say about marriage? What does Paul say about stewardship? Do Lutherans believe in Angels? Where can I find a text that relates to vocation?

Maybe those are not your questions, but I wonder do you have a question of faith, spirituality, life together that the pastor could answer? If you do, email them to me and I will print my responses in upcoming newsletters.

It seems to me that because we have been away from a full life together for a while, this might be a way for us to engage in Holy dialogue.

New Year, new relationships, and the rekindling of old relationships is our congregational hope. Please pray for this congregation and our life together.

Pastor Scott

**From the Vicar...**

As part of the internship, the intern is required to complete a project that engages the congregation in a new area of ministry. For my own project, I will be working with a group from the congregation to create a "creation care" master plan for St. Paul's. In the new year, you'll hear more from me as we explore what creation care means for Christians. This isn't just environmentalism, though I thought that is a part of care. Creation care is part of our calling to be stewards over all the Earth (Genesis 1:28). Caring for our common human is essential to what it means to be human. In the next weeks we'll explore what that means for St. Paul's. How can we make our property more sustainable? How can we engage our neighborhood in helping to care for the earth? What does the Bible say about taking care of creation? How can we acknowledge and celebrate creation in our worship? The goal of this project isn't to find the answers, but to chart a path to living more fully into who God calls us to be: partners in God's mission of creation.

I encourage you to read the ELCA's 1993 social statement "Creation Care: Vision, Hope, and Justice" to better understand our church's vision for caring for our world. I am excited for the possibilities this project will open up for St. Paul's, and I hope you all will join me in living more deeply into our relationship with creation and the God who creates.

Peace, Vicar Mac

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*Dear St. Paul's Congregation,*

*Despite the continued uncertainty we continued to feel this year because of Covid, I have truly enjoyed my time as Council president. I am so grateful for you and your support, and the pastors and staff at St. Paul's. You are all so faithful and committed to this church community. I spent a lot of this year praying for our church, and for the Council, and our world. I hope you will join me in praying for St. Paul's and our next Church Council, as they lead us through 2022 – a year with lots of hope and blessings to come. May you find peace and joy this Advent season.*

*Sincerely, Claire Cooney*

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**Welcome New Member**

On Sunday, December 5, 2021, we welcomed Rafael Ribeiro de Oliveira as a new member of St. Paul's. Rafael comes to us from the church in Germany. He is a member of the Duke Lutherans as well.

## Preschool Pitter Patter

by Amanda Stoen



Happy New Year! We are excited to begin a new year and look forward to what this year has in store for us. In November, our preschoolers made holiday cards for refugee and migrant families who are finding new homes here in the United States. Vicar



Mac blessed the cards during Chapel Time and talked with the children about the meaning of blessings. The children greatly enjoy their weekly Chapel Time with him as they sing songs, hear a Bible story and pray for the things that are important to them. Many thanks to Vicar Mac for providing an engaging and joyful Chapel Time each week!



This month, we begin enrollment for Fall 2022. We will be offering classes for children ages 10 months - 4 years old. If you are interested or know

of anyone who is, registration forms are available on our website, [stpaulspreschooldurham.weebly.com](http://stpaulspreschooldurham.weebly.com). I am also offering phone calls, virtual or in-person tours throughout our registration period. Church members (children and grandchildren) receive priority registration which will begin on January 5. If you have any questions in the meantime, please let me know.

## Many Thanks!

The Women's Connection wants to thank everyone who contributed Gift Cards to the Parktown Food Hub Christmas Giveaway through the Giving tree. We collected:

Visa Cards: 1 - \$25, 1 - \$50

Walmart: 2 - \$25, 1 - \$50

Target: 10 - \$25, 6 - \$50

Food Lion: 18 - \$25, 10 - \$50

**In total, we collected \$1675 in gift cards.**

Pastor Sharon Schulze was very happy to receive the cards for the Parktown Food Hub Christmas Giveaway. She said that they will bring joy to many children.

*(Editor's note -- The next day we received the following note from Pastor Sharon!)*

Wonderful people of St. Paul's, I thought that you and the St. Paul's community would like to know that shortly after I received your donations yesterday we received an emergency call that we could respond to - something that would not have been otherwise possible. The father of a family with 5 children was in a terrible accident resulting in some kind of brain injury and now the family has no income. Because of the timing of your donations and that of Peace Covenant Church of the Brethren, we will be able to help that family generously so the children will have Christmas gifts and the family can take care of basic needs. Thank you so much. These stories of real people in real need and it is a gift to be able to see how generous groups like yours can make such a difference in the lives of individuals in your own community.

Thank you!

Pastor Sharon

## In the mailbag...

*Dear St. Paul's Family,*

*Gary and I are so grateful for the outpouring of love and support through cards, notes, and calls, during this time of grief as we mourn the death of our son David. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we continue to live with this sadness and loss in our lives.*

*Thank you,*

*Gary and Sue Dahl*

## Celebrating 50 years of Ordination

On Sunday, December 12, we the people of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, along with the whole people of God, were pleased to honor Rev. Dr. Richard Lischer on the occasion of his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination. Pastor Lischer is the distinguished professor emeritus of preaching at Duke Divinity School. He has fourteen books to his credit and one more in the works. But, most of all, Rick is a beloved member of our congregation that graces us in our life together. Pastor Lischer was our guest preacher this day and we honored him with a litany of blessing after the hymn of the day.

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## Welcome to the New Year with CCG!

As we begin together this new year, the Continuing Conversation Group is excited to invite you to not one but TWO opportunities for learning and growing together:

One is a small group study that will last for seven weeks, starting in March. Called "Dialogues on Race," this study group provides a Bible-based curriculum and thoughtful exercises to equip us with tools for respectful listening to each other. Weekly readings provide context to issues of racism in our society. The NC Synod is encouraging us to use this curriculum; one of the goals is to help us develop tools we can use "to have bridge-building conversations" and to "become people who can navigate difficult conversations without tearing up relationship." Each meeting will last about 1 to 1.5 hours: dates and times will be set once a participant group has been determined. If you are interested, or would like to learn more about this program, please send a note to Bee Ellertson, [bellertson@icloud.com](mailto:bellertson@icloud.com) or to Alta Lindsay, [bahiaus@nc.rr.com](mailto:bahiaus@nc.rr.com). Please mention what times and days would be convenient for you.

On February 27, we're excited to announce that St. Paul's will have a special guest: Pastor Jonathan Augustine, of St. Joseph's AME Church in Durham, will join us for a light luncheon after worship. Pastor "Jay" will talk with us about his just-published book, *Called to Reconciliation: How the Church Can Model Justice, Diversity, and Inclusion*. Our Bishop Tim Smith has this to say about Rev. Augustine's book:

"Dr. Augustine has done the best and most comprehensive job I have yet seen not only of describing the racial divide and challenges in this country but also of giving us a hopeful way forward.... Displaying a rare ability to speak deep truth and yet to invite and encourage. Accessible and helpful for the congregational study group or for the seminary or sociology classroom. [This book] resonates ... as something that can bring us together, even in a time of such deep

division.... I couldn't put it down, and it renewed my hope that we not only must, but we can, do this. Read it."

*Called to Reconciliation* will be published on Feb. 8; it is available now for pre-order; a few copies will be in St. Paul's library on the CCG shelf. Please plan to join us on Feb. 27 whether or not you've been able to read this book: Pastor Jay is a dynamic speaker, and this is a wonderful opportunity for us all.

## St. Paul's Readers Resumes January 20



St. Paul's Readers

St. Paul's Readers invite all readers to join us in 2022. We hope that you will consider participating in one or all monthly meetings (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 3 pm). We gather in Trinity Hall, widely spaced apart. On Thursday, January

20, at 3 pm, Barb Shade leads our discussion of *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Grann.

Here is more information about our book: The people of Osage Nation in the 1920s were the richest in the world. Then, one by one, they began to be killed off. The newly created FBI was called upon to unravel the truth behind these deaths. What unfolded was a chilling conspiracy – a true-life murder mystery about one of the most monstrous crimes in American history.

If you are interested in reading ahead, our February pick is *Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman. This poignant comedy revolves around a crime that never took place, a would-be bank robber who disappears into thin air, and eight extremely anxious strangers who discover that they have more in common than they ever imagined.

Please consider checking out our book club. We are low-key and welcome all men and women. Contact Katherine Trexler ([katherine.m.trexler@gmail.com](mailto:katherine.m.trexler@gmail.com)) with any questions. We are excited about starting on our 2022 reading list!