

Cross Connections



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

November 2023

Empathy – a Part of Stephen Ministry



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

What is empathy?
Empathy is listening with your heart instead of your head. It is experiencing the other person's feelings and expressing your understanding of those feelings. Consider this

situation: A father is holding a crying baby on a crowded airplane. He is getting angry glares from the other passengers. You could say to him "Does he need a diaper change?" or "Try rocking him." Or worse, "Can't you stop him from crying?" None of those would be hearing and feeling the father's stress. An empathetic response would be "Don't worry, I'm a Dad and Granddad. I've been in this spot many times. I know it's not easy."

Another example of empathy occurs in this scenario. You are an hour into a 3-hour car ride to Richmond. Your three year old daughter remembers she forgot her constant companion – Dora the teddy bear – and begins crying uncontrollably. You start calculating how long it would take to return home to pick up the bear and restart the trip. Your wife is thinking of who to call to get Dora and FedEx it to your hotel. Your ten year old son tells his sister that she needs to grow up and stop dragging a teddy bear around, but your six year old son shows empathy by saying "it's really sad not having Dora." Still in tears, your daughter nods. He then says, "I'm sad with you" and holds her hand. That is what empathy looks like.

Empathy is not trying to fix the problem and

certainly not blaming or shaming. While some people are better than others at sensing and expressing empathy, it can be learned. Like most things, practice makes perfect.

Empathy has two parts. First is experiencing another person's feelings. Second, empathy is expressing your understanding of those feelings. Just understanding another person's feelings, but not letting that person know that you "get it" is not helpful.

There is a danger of carrying empathy too far and over identifying with a person's feelings and becoming overwhelmed. With over identification, you become so wrapped up in the other person's problems, that you cannot help. It is like going to help someone struggling in deep water and becoming caught up in his struggles such that both of you are now in danger. As psychologist Carl Rogers said, "empathy is the ability to experience another person's world AS IF it were your own." The key is remembering the AS IF quality.

Sympathy and empathy are not the same. Sympathy is sensing someone's concern but not getting personally involved. It is the opposite of over identification.

Stephen Ministry is about displaying empathy for our care receivers. If you would like to learn more about empathy by becoming a Stephen Minister or need an empathetic ear from a Stephen Minister, contact John Foreman, Kim Hoke, Nan Treul or Pastor Scott.

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From the Pastor...

The leaves are beginning to turn and will soon fall. This opens the woods in the back of the church and opens a whole new vista from my back window. It lets me see some of the animals more clearly and sometimes catch a glimpse of our preschool children playing between the trees.

It reminds me that November is a month of transition. We celebrate those members who have died during the year on the first Sunday of the month and we wind up the church year on the last Sunday of the month. It is also the season of anticipation as we prepare for Advent and the hope of Christ's coming again.

November is a time that we can use some help around the church. I am sure George Seiz and the outside crew will be busy in the yard. We will be doing some fall cleaning and removal of unwanted things sometime in the middle of the month, so watch for days that you can help.

Mostly this month, I would ask you to pray for St. Paul's. We are in the midst of budget planning and preparation for our annual meeting. If you haven't turned in your pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. If you aren't attending in person and would like to make your contribution online, you can make a recurring contribution in the giving section of the website: stpaulsdurham.org or use the qr code to get you there directly.



Pastor Scott

Greetings, friends at St. Paul's,

There's a chill in the air!

I don't know about you, but I've already pulled out my Winter coat and started holiday plans. I'm sure, like me, you and your loved ones have many traditions for this time of year. My family, for example, hosts our Thanksgiving on the beach and we always have our turkey dinner with the ocean in the background. Of course, we aren't the only ones getting ready for the season: the stores are already playing festive music and putting out Christmas displays. This time of year is always one of anticipation, fun, and good food.

But it's a little different for the church as we wind down from the Time after Pentecost and hit the last few big feast days of the church year: Reformation, all Saints, and Christ the King. In this way we end the

church year by celebrating who we are as Lutherans, saints, and people of God's kingdom. But then, we hit the brakes, come to a crawl, and enter the long contemplative season of Advent.

It seems odd to exhort the coming Jesus at the same time we hustle through Christmas shopping and attend parties. However, I wonder if maybe that's some of God's wisdom at work. That in our most bustling, overwhelming, and busy time of the year, we are asked to slow down, to wait, and to contemplate.

In fact, it may be *hard* to slow down when we're planning Christmas cookie baking, family visits, and when to take the turkey out of the freezer. Hitting the brakes is the last thing we want to do. We worry there won't be enough time to get everything done, The holiday season is hardly the time to contemplate and reflect.

Whether or not you add such a discipline to your life, is up to you. But I do exhort you to remember that God is the one who encourages us to rest. Because now is the time to spend quality time with not just our loved ones but the one who loves us. To remember who sustains, keeps, and loves us, even when we're fussing over gingerbread.

This year I encourage you to find time to slow down, or even stop, if you can manage it. Take time to not just pray and give thanksgiving for the blessings (and struggles!) of this year, but also to rest in God's peace. The shopping will get done, the house will get clean, and the celebrations will be joyous. Everything we are doing will still be there when we get back. Remember what God has promised you: life, and life abundantly, in the gift of Jesus Christ.

And that is something worth waiting for.

Vicar Gina

Preschool Pitter Patter

by Amanda Stoen



In October, the preschool staff spent a day learning more about outdoor education with teachers from the NC Museum of Natural

Sciences. It was a very hands-on morning where we



spent time observing and identifying small creatures, learning so many different ways we can use sticks,



stones, and pinecones to teach math and science concepts and we spent time in the woods identifying trees. At the end of the day, we planted some native plants in the outdoor wooded classroom. We planted Christmas ferns, spicebush, wood aster and green and gold plants. We have many volunteers in the Fours Class to help water the plants so that

they will thrive and grow! The teachers are excited about all of the new material we received from our workshop and the many new ideas and activities we can do with all of our classes.

Chapel Time with Vicar Gina has begun! Each Wednesday, she meets with our threes and fours classes in the downstairs lobby. Vicar Gina has spent time getting to know each child while she sings, reads a Bible story and prays with them. The children have lots of people and important things to pray for. In October, the fire truck visited the preschool to discuss fire safety with our three and four year old classes. Our threes and fours classes also went on a field trip to the Piedmont Wildlife Center and interacted with several small animals including owls, hawks and turtles.

Lastly, if you haven't had a chance to link your Harris Teeter VIC card to the preschool, there's still time. When you link your card to St. Paul's Preschool & PMO, we will receive a portion of your purchases from Harris Teeter. The Harris Teeter account number is **3049**. You can link in any store or online and you do not need to be a preschool parent to link your card. Thank you for your support of the preschool!

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

Oktoberfest Thanks!

by Martha Dahl

Oktoberfest was a huge success! Hopefully you were able to participate. It was so wonderful to see Trinity Hall filled with people enjoying themselves. Thanks to everyone for making it happen, both attendees and helpers. In answer to one question asked, yes, we do prepare and cook the dinner ourselves. It takes a crowd to please the larger crowd! Without complaint, help was needed for planning, set-up, decorating, kitchen prep work, cooking at home,

cooking at church, kitchen help, serving and clean-up. It was great, and necessary, that so many people stepped up to help, and many of our new and newly retired members were included! Don't misunderstand, we need attendees too! And we're aware not everyone can help. But if you have some time, want to have some fun, meet and get to know others – think about offering to serve once in a while. We are more than happy to teach you the ropes. But in the meantime, continue to come and enjoy!

We are happy to list the names of those who participated. We hope we did not miss anyone but if it happens, please know that all are greatly appreciated!

Set up: Bill Dahl, Dick Clendaniel, Mark Petersen, Connor Davis, Jim Shoaf, Rod Runestad

Cooking: Katherine Trexler, George Seiz, Mary Rundstadt, Michelle Meadors, Tim and Kim Hoke, Margaret Simis, Phil and Soren Strom-Jensen, Jennifer Bowling, Kevin Lavery, Mike Mauriello, Betty Hinshaw, Sue Dahl, Megan Cunningham, Shelly McGee, John Foreman, Bill and Barbara Dahl, Marcia Redman, Joan Albright

Decorate: Penni Perrotte, Ellen Lavery, Robin Winfree, Ted and Diana Dominick, Sue Dahl, Jennifer Bowling

Clean Up: Dean Redman, Karen & Steve Mzyk, Joan Albright, Ken and Stephanie Knudsen, Marilyn Bell Hawley, Maria and Curtis Chi, Emily Pauline, Morris Casper, Sally Hart, Susan Esposito, Pastor Scott Anderson



Fall is now upon us which means we are into the school year. With the new school year came a chance to amplify St. Paul's group of middle and high school students back up.

Joan Albright and Megan Cunningham, along with Vicar Gina, have come

up with lots of different activities for the youth to grow both in their faith and friendships. We currently have eight active middle and high school kids who you will get to know better over the coming year.

Three Sundays a month during the Sunday School hour you can find some of them downstairs in the youth room either learning about the church year or prepping for the National Youth Gathering next summer. They are also showing their creativity as they personalize their room space.

The National Youth Gathering takes place next July in New Orleans and we have a total of six youths and two adult leaders which are registered. We have already started to talk about this amazing experience. Just imagine New Orleans taken over by 30,000+

youth and adult leaders from around the world to learn and grow in their faith, each other, and themselves. Be on the lookout each month for more information from the youth about what they are looking forward to.

Each month we will have a lock-in and offsite fun activity. Our first one is right around the corner on November 4. All youth in grades 6-12 are welcome. We will begin the night by going to Myrtle Grove Haunted Hall. Gather at the church by 6:00 pm. Bring overnight needs, a snack to share, and \$10 to help offset costs. We will be coming back to St. Paul's for the night to play hide and seek around the church and to watch movies in the atrium, to name just a few things.

This will be an exciting and fun year for St. Paul's Youth Group. Contact Joan Albright, Megan Cunningham, or Vicar Gina if you have any questions. Get to know our amazing youth and all the gifts they have to offer to St. Paul's.

In the mailbag...

Dear St. Paul's Congregation,

I have so missed making music at St. Paul's. I think of you all often and wanted to take a moment to share with you two life updates. First, this past May, I graduated from the Yale School of Music, with a Master of Music degree in Organ Performance, an accomplishment I'm very proud of. Second, I'm excited to announce that I am the newly appointed Director of Music at Christ Church Episcopal in New Bern, North Carolina, soon-to-be home to a new Taylor & Boody tracker organ! I begin this position in November and hope that it means I'll be able to come visit St. Paul's from time to time as I have family in Raleigh. There will likely be an Organ Dedication Concert at Christ Church sometime next Fall and I'll be sure to send information to St. Paul's in case anyone is interested in making a trip out to New Bern. Please have a wonderful Fall season, with Reformation Sunday and Trunk or Treat and all the other goings-ons about church!

With hugs, Jackie Nappi

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I'd like to thank the many friends of St. Paul's who sent cards, texts, and meals while I was recovering from my knee replacement surgery. Your empathy and support encouraged me to push on! I hope to be there for you in the same way!

Gratefully, Nan Treul

Social Ministries Committee

Expand/Explore/Educate

Our re-organization process, the “Re-Formation,” is well underway! We’ve been busy – both during and between meetings – focusing mainly upon the first two of our three initial three goals: EXPAND and EXPLORE. Specifically, we have been:

- 1) learning the current status of St. Paul’s on-going social ministries then asking these groups to do self-evaluations in order to identify their *specific* needs – with the result that we now have a much better understanding about the specific ways to **expand** support to them [see **SPECIFIC NEEDS** below]; and
- 2) exploring options for reviving previous social ministry outreaches and also reviewing the list of topics/issues – generated at the July 16th Social Ministries Summit in addition to new ideas for future social ministry opportunities – with the result that two of St. Paul’s previous social ministries groups are once again up and running ... and that a third group has requested and received authorization from Church Council to proceed with the active planning for this ministry event.

While we’ll continue work on the first two goals, **we now will add in the third goal: EDUCATION** of ourselves as a congregation about the most pressing issues/needs faced by our neighbors – our brothers and sisters – within the Durham community. Our purpose is the identification of specific and concrete actions in which we can engage, both individually and as a congregation, in order to have a positive impact for the persons affected by these issues.

To that end, our next meeting will be on Mon, Nov 13 at 7 pm in Whitesell Hall and will be an informational session on the issue of Food Insecurity. We invite you to join us for this learning opportunity!

Specific Needs of ongoing Social Ministries:

The Refugee Support Team:

- ◆ additional female drivers

Camp Destiny & Burton Magnet Elementary (BME) Community

- ◆ BME – Volunteers to read 1:1 with 1st graders* – weekly commitment on your choice of weekday/s
- ◆ BME – Volunteers to assist students with homework during after school 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, available at <https://www.dpsnc.net/domain/133>

Urban Ministries

Volunteers to serve lunch at UMD on the 3rd Saturday of each month: sign-up link: bit.ly/UMD_Signup

Creation Care:

New CC team members to assist with the increasing number of CC projects

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

St. Paul’s Readers Meeting Thursday, November 16 at 3 pm

We invite all readers to join us for our discussion of *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks. Our final meeting for this year is on Thursday, Nov 16 at 3 pm in Trinity Hall. Mary Runestad is facilitating the discussion.

Based on the remarkable true story of the record-breaking thoroughbred Lexington, *Horse* is a novel of art and science, love and obsession, and our unfinished reckoning with racism. A Pulitzer Prize winning author weaves together a discarded painting in a junk pile, a skeleton in an attic, and the greatest racehorse in American history into a sweeping story of spirit, obsession, and injustice across American history. Brooks shows the primal power that an author can wield; imaginative and impeccably researched historical fiction, wonderfully written and skillfully structured, with memorable characters set within a compelling story. This book has received several awards and will be made into a movie.

We are making selections for our 2024 reading list. The book club strives to choose books from different genres, both fiction and nonfiction. We ask that all those interested please send suggestions via email to Katherine Trexler. We will finalize our list of eight books at our November meeting.

Please consider taking part in our monthly meetings (3rd Thursdays at 3 pm). We welcome all readers – men and women! You are invited to check us out, and you certainly do not need to read the book to come to a meeting. Please contact Katherine Trexler (katherine.m.trexler@gmail.com) with any questions. We hope to see you soon!

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Drivers Needed

Nurturing Committee Ministry is in need of volunteer drivers that can help transport people to medical appointments, chemo appointments, pharmacy. It can be a drop off and come back later to transport home, or a short wait for the appointment. If you have time to help, please contact dmredman251@gmail.com.

Young In Spirit

BZZZZZZZ is the word for the Wednesday, November 8, Young In Spirit meeting. Bill Gresham will be presenting the program of St. Paul's bee keeping and we will visit the bee hives – maybe even get to taste the honey! The 11:30 am lunch will be sandwich making and cup 'o' soup.



The December Young In Spirit meeting will be Saturday, December 9, at 2:00 pm for a travel adventure to Temple Theater in Sanford to see "A Christmas Story." Tickets are \$35.00 each and **reservations deadline is November 9!** Please sign up on the bulletin board in the atrium.

Prayer Shawl Ministry ("The Dropped Stitch" Group)

by Penni Perrotte

I was born in Vermont where it began getting cold in September and could even snow from November to April! So ... when the leaves turned colors and we had to put on jackets before going outside, it was time for crafters to break out their knitting needles or crochet hooks to entertain themselves inside the house after dark! Well, it's now that time of year here in Durham! I have an idea:

Would you like to join our Prayer Shawl Ministry to learn how to knit? There are two of us who have the skills to teach you. We have been

knitting for longer than we care to admit!!!

The prayer shawl pattern we generally use is for beginners. You can start practicing by making 4"x4" "pocket" prayer shawls! We have yarn, needles and patterns in case you need them.

As for you skills crafters out there, you need to know that most of our work is done at home. This is helpful for those of you still in the workforce.

The group only gathers once on the last Friday of the month from 1:00-3:00 pm. We sit in the comfy chairs/loveseats in the church foyer to work on our projects and get to know one another.

The prayer shawls are free to those church members or their family members/friends in need of comfort during extended periods of being shut-in, hospitalized, in grief, etc. **You only need to contact Penni Perrotte at 925-323-8649 or Mary Runestad at 203-912-1979 to donate your shawls or to choose one to gift a person in need.**

Adult Sunday School Class Schedule

The adults meet in Trinity Hall, complete with coffee available, Sundays, 9:45-10:45 am.

- 11/5 All Saints Sunday – Growing thru Grief, by Pastor Jan Huntley
- 11/12 Duke Lutherans, by Pastor Amanda and Cindy Snyder
- 11/19 Camp Destiny by Tim and Kim Hoke
- 11/26 Music of Advent (information provided by Tom Kraska) by Megan Cunningham



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

Put this date on your calendar now – plan to be part of this wonderful event!

Camp Destiny Creates New Experiences – 2023

St. Paul's organized and hosted another successful Camp Destiny this year in August. And what a joy it was to be with the children and see how their eyes lit up with all of the new experiences.



We had eight campers from Burton Elementary School whose age ranged from rising first to rising sixth grader.

We were also blessed to have 15 volunteers from St. Paul's who help shepherd the children at various times during the week.

This year our major excursions were to the Museum of Life and Science, to Hillsborough for the Occaneechee Indian Village and River Walk, to Greensboro by train to visit the Miriam Brenner Children's Museum, and to Spring Haven Farm in Chapel Hill. Most of these activities occurred

during the mornings of our camp except the trip to Greensboro, which lasted all day.

Each morning we picked the children up at Burton in our church bus and then usually drove them back to the church. Marcia Redman, Diana Dominick, and Alta Lindsay prepared breakfast each day.



Transportation volunteers were Dean Redman and Larry Hawley. Other volunteers were Robert Fogel and Katherine Trexler, Karen Mzyk, Marilyn Hawley, Megan Cunningham, Bee Ellertson, Bill Gresham, Nan Treul, and Kim and Tim Hoke.

We then usually went to our activity of the day and had lunch out at various restaurants. After lunch we would come back to the church for reading sessions, craft opportunities, and outdoor play. Although this schedule seems straightforward, it was always a whirlwind of activities.

Our service to Burton Elementary is now integrated into the renewed social ministry of St. Paul's.

We are planning to hold camp again next year, for which we will need donations from our congregation. These first two years were funded by a grant applied for and received from the Synod. Those funds have been exhausted. We are also exploring other ways that we can support Burton Elementary and the McDougald Terrace community located adjacent to Burton, arguably the most fragile area in our city.

During the camp excursions, we fielded questions from others who observed our group. They inquired about who we were and where we were from. St. Paul's ministry reached out beyond the children to people in communities we visited.

To see more photographs and hear about the camp in detail, plan on coming to Adult Sunday School on November 19th at 9:45-10:45 am in Trinity Hall.

