

Cross Connections



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

July 2021

Is it Time to Reopen the Church Building?

That seems to be the question on everyone's mind. I get asked almost every day if we are open for groups outside the congregation to meet in our facility and can our own groups meet in person.

The answer for our own committees and groups is yes. For our own committees and groups, the church building is open for meetings and we can offer training on how to use equipment to do live and zoom meetings so people can be here and at home participating.

The answer for outside groups is on a limited basis. The Durham Jazz Orchestra will be rehearsing in Trinity Hall on Monday evenings beginning June 21. Growing thru Grief will begin meeting in person on Tuesdays in September. Other groups should check in with the church office for availability of space.

We are beginning to encourage in person worship and meetings. As more of us are fully vaccinated we desire to return to being in fellowship and in personal connection. I am convinced this is especially important in worship. Zoom and Vimeo are fine but communal worship is the mainstay of our faith life.

Soon we will have our new cameras up and running for worship. This will offer a better streamed service and a quality recording. As I have said already, I hope we begin to be with one another in person, and I hope we will be able to remove masks in worship in the next 30 days.

We will continue one worship service at 10am until Rally Day, September 12. On Rally Day we will go back to an 8:30 and 11:00 worship service schedule. We will have a re-organizational Time and Talent Fair during the Sunday School Hour that morning.

Remember, we have invested in air purifying systems and are doing everything we are able to offer a safe environment at St. Paul's. – *Pastor Scott Anderson*



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From the Pastor...

St. Paul's and St. Paul's Preschool and PMO are the focus of my reflections this month.

The Preschool is now over 10 years old and continues to be a caring ministry of St. Paul's and the Durham community, an outgrowth of the church's mission to share God in Christ with the world. Several years ago, Amanda Stoen and I committed to each other that we would update the congregation on our continued ministry together.

Throughout the past 18 months we have worked together to clarify how to better integrate this ministry within the broader ministry of our congregation.

With the help of Kim Hoke (chairman of the Preschool board), Linda Foreman (council representative on the Preschool board), Amanda Stoen and myself, we have clarified space use, updated the bylaws to reflect how the Preschool currently operates, provided additional resources for the Preschool (from outside their budget), all with the goal of enhancing the life of the students that attend our Preschool.

A space usage agreement was especially important this past year because of the need to share space with Wildflower Cottage and other groups, and to address pandemic realities. The Preschool has been able to expand space utilization in the education wing downstairs as well as outside space at the rear of the parking lot. The Preschool operated mostly outside this past school year due to Covid and would like to continue utilizing outdoor spaces once we are beyond Covid.

Finally, we have established a director performance review to include the preschool board and pastor, and renewed the Preschool's commitment to support the work of St. Paul's.

We realize that the Preschool is sometimes perceived as being more an independent agency than a part of the whole ministry of the congregation and we are continuing to work to change this perception and firmly establish the preschool as a shared ministry, to further move the ministry of the Preschool forward, encourage diversity in both the Preschool and the congregation, and provide adequate resources for the congregation and the Preschool, we pledged to continue to strive for our mutual ministry.

To that end, this spring we offered the congregation and the preschool families an opportunity to support the Preschool with fundraising support for financial scholarships and outside equipment and materials. We were able to fundraise close to the dollars that would normally have been raised in the annual spaghetti dinner.

Please pray for the continued work of the

Preschool, its teachers and staff.

Please continue to pray for St. Paul's as we move into new phases of fellowship.

Pastor Scott and Amanda Stoen

Summer Life Together with the Duke Lutherans

We hosted an outdoor wedding shower for graduate student Anya Varanko and her fiancé Bradley Barth, complete with



cupcakes, games, and a blessing circle where everyone shared their prayers and hopes for the couple. Anya and Brad will marry October 10 in New York. Our first in-person event in a *very long* time was a joyful occasion indeed!



Graduate students Eric Juarez, Jovita Byemerwa, and Ardath Dixon met with Pastor Amanda recently at Cloche Café on

East Campus for iced coffee, cookies, and good conversation (all three essentials in the life of a student. Because several of our (fully vaccinated) students are in town this summer, we're happy to come together once again for fun informal gatherings!

Jovita Byemerwa, Pastor Amanda, Katie Elkin, and NC Synod member Sylvia Black at the Racial Reconciliation Service of Remembrance



at St. Joseph AME on June 17. Together with six other students and four members from St. Paul's and Grace, Jovita and Katie participated in the Duke Lutherans' year-long reconciliation ministry with students from

St. Joseph. Katie also spoke at the service, reflecting on what it was like for her to grow in relationships of peace and grace with our Black siblings in Christ. She said in part, “We asked together, what does reconciliation really look like? We shared painful, joyful, formative, and transformative events in our own lives. We looked honestly at broken systems and wondered how we might be involved in repairing them. We began to form a group identity as we prepare for future action together. We prayed for and supported one another.” Thank you to everyone who attended the service and for your ongoing commitment to the Christ-like work of reconciliation and justice.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Amanda

Council Corner

*by Claire Cooney
President, Congregational Council*

Be the light! I had the opportunity to attend the NC Synod Assembly in early June. Along with Pastor Scott, Pastor Amanda, Tracey, and Bee – we logged into our computers in Trinity Hall and had at least some in-person time together. Slowly getting back to masked in-person events and gatherings has been so welcomed after months of zoom meetings. I will miss wearing comfy clothes all the time, though!

As I have mentioned the past couple months, and as Pastor Scott mentions, Council is working on re-inventing our Committees and are planning a Summit in August, along with the Committee Fair on Rally Day, September 12. Please prayerfully consider joining a committee and using your gifts to better the life of St. Paul’s and each other.

A few other updates . . . Wildflower Cottage is working to finalize their pre-construction plans and complete the necessary permit approvals with the City of Durham. They are hoping to begin construction by mid-July.

Lastly, we have a new Musician Search Committee comprised of: Tina Bessias, Rachel Harter, George Seiz, and Curtis Chi. Bee Ellertson will be the Council’s representative on the Committee.

What a June!

by Bee Ellertson

Our month began with the centennial of the **Tulsa Race Massacre** on June 1, 1921. The wide-spread media coverage – while difficult to watch – gave us a chance to reflect on our history, and on why remembering and confronting our past matters to us

all. I was born in Oklahoma, not far from Tulsa, and yet had not known that the Greenwood residents and business owners have never been paid for their losses, not even by insurance companies who had been collecting their premium payments for years. The reverberations of that violence are still with us, still affecting families, and still calling for justice.

June 17th brought the service of **Commemoration**



for the Emanuel 9: we gathered at St. Joseph’s AME church to remember those nine parishioners who lost their

lives in Charleston six years ago. Bishop Tim Smith joined Rev. Dr. Jonathan Augustine and our own Pastor Scott in making remarks. We heard from two members of the Duke Lutherans’ reconciliation project, as well as from Sister Wilhelmenia Jordan, who lost her cousin on that terrible night. While it was a serious service, there was grace and hope in the room and in the music; the offering was donated to the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School.

At this point, we’re only halfway through the month, but, wait: there’s more! June 18th brought us the first-ever Federal holiday for **Juneteenth**. Since my family is from Texas, I’d long known about this celebration of the end of enslavement for Black citizens. The momentum to make this a nation-wide holiday has been building for years: maybe its recognition *this year* indicates that we as a country are finally moving conversations about racial justice to our “front burner.” May this be another chance for us to learn from each other, to reckon with our past, and to move into the hard work of building a future of equity for all God’s children.

What on earth will July bring? Whatever it is, may we all continue to uphold, support, console, and learn from each other.

New Baby

We are pleased to announce the birth of Katherine (Kate) Tranvik, newborn of Ali and Isak Tranvik. Kate was born on June 11, 2021, weighing 6 lb. 3 oz, and was 18 ½ inches long. All are doing well.



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Update on Wildflower Cottage

by Pastor Scott Anderson

As you may be aware, since the pandemic, zoning and permitting with the City of Durham has slowed to a crawl. Wildflower has received their special use permit as we previously reported. They are still working diligently to get their building permit to start construction.

The following is the most recent update on how permitting is proceeding. If this moves through the city as expected, Wildflower is hopeful to be out of our building by the end of the year.

Wildflower and our Preschool have worked well together through the pandemic and are making plans for the fall.

June 1:

- City Planning has approved our slightly larger building footprint and the relocation of the deck.

Week of July 16-19:

- Receive permit plans for pricing
- Submit plans for permit

Week of July 26:

- Site visits with subcontractors

Week of August 13:

- Final pricing from Contractor to Wildflower

Week of August 23

- Mobilize to start construction

On Vacation

The St. Paul's Readers will be back in September with their book selections.

The Thursday morning Bible Study will also return in September.

Croasdaile Worship

Pastor Scott Anderson will lead Croasdaile Worship on the fourth Thursday of the month at 2:00 pm. Next date is July 22.

Saturday, July 24 VBS Day at St. Paul's

Begins at 9:00 am, Lunch at noon

We will have a fun time learning about Noah and the Ark, animals, rainbows, and God's promises.

Plans for our VBS Day are shaping up and here is how you can be involved:

- ☐ **Volunteer** your time and talents to help that day or some set-up time previous to the 24th.
- ☐ **Register** your children **NOW** so we can be sure to include them in this wonderful day.

We hope to be mostly outside on our grounds for singing, crafting, puppetry, play acting, learning about nature, hearing stories, and having a good time.

Everyone is invited to the picnic lunch – church members, friends, neighbors – served outside. After lunch, there will be a special event inside Trinity Hall – everyone is invited to enjoy the magic and laughter of **Happy Dan: The Magic Man**.

Let us know if you can help, or attend, or help set up or clean up the event. Contact Susan Esposito (admin@stpaulsdurham.org) ASAP!!!



Region 9 ELCA Archivist at St. Paul's

Former Vicar Anna Carter made arrangements for the Archivist from the Region 9 ELCA Archives to come to St. Paul's and do a workshop. So, Shannon Smith will join us on **Saturday morning, July 17 at 9:00 am until noon**. We will talk about the kinds of material that we should be saving, the best ways to save our recorded history and review our current Archives files. All are welcome to attend. Even if you want to learn how to preserve your family history, this is a great opportunity to learn. Please let Pastor Scott know if you plan to attend.