

Cross Connections



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

February 2022

Congregational Meeting - February 20, 2022

11:30 am In-person in Trinity Hall and Zoomed

Agenda items:

1. Accept the annual report as presented. Copies of the annual report will be emailed by February 8th, along with copies of the revised constitution and bylaws.
2. Approve the revised constitution and bylaws. The Constitution has been updated with mandatory amendments from the ELCA. In addition, bylaws for the preschool, endowment committee and one additional bylaw relating to the congregational alcohol policy have been amended.

Printed Copies of the Annual Report and the Constitution will be available from the church office and available on Sunday, February 13th.

Small Group Study

Dialogues on Race is a synod-wide Bible study organized as a partnership of the synod's Engage the Bible Task Group and the synod's Racial Justice Network. This is a seven-session series, using a printed curriculum of stories, exercises, and Bible studies.

Bee Ellertson and Alta Lindsay are recruiting five more St. Paul's members to join us for this seven-week study: once we have a group, our day and time of meeting will be set for everyone's convenience. We have ten copies of the printed curriculum: we hope you will join us in March or April.

Each week's session explores the history of racism, personal faith stories, and biblical reflections – all with an eye toward community building. We hope you'll join us as we learn skills for difficult conversations and constructive engagements. If you're interested, please send an email to Bee at bellertson@icloud.com or to Alta at bahiaus@nc.rr.com.



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

pastor@stpaulsdurham.org

admin@stpaulsdurham.org

vicar@stpaulsdurham.org

preschool@stpaulsdurham.org

bookkeeper@stpaulsdurham.org

amanda.highben@duke.edu

crhugg@charter.net

Church Office Phone: 919-489-3214 * Fax: 919-490-1088 * Website: www.stpaulsdurham.org

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

From the Pastor...

Where did January go? Well, I suppose the winter weather claimed it. We missed two Sundays of live worship because of inclement weather and that always makes our life together less connected. We did have about 40 households join us live for online worship and so for the second year in a row, we missed worship together in person for a big portion of the month. Last year it rained during our outside attempts at worship. I give thanks that we are well past the need for outdoor worship. Outdoor worship continues in one sense, however. We will continue to offer drive through Communion at 11:30 am the first Sunday of each month, so join us Feb. 6.

January did bring good news, we hired a new musician. Ted Turner will join us in the coming months as he finds a place to live, finishes his duties in Illinois and his wife, Sarah, seeks employment as a nurse. We will let everyone know as soon as we have a starting date for him.

Now on to another subject. You may remember way back in our January newsletter I asked for questions of faith to be sent to me and that I would answer them in the newsletter. Well, I am glad to report that not many of you have any questions. I only received one from Judy Schlegel and it was a doozy.

Judy asked: If God is all good and all powerful, why is there evil in the world?

Of course this is one of the great theological questions of all time. I could say, it's a mystery and one of those questions that I hope to remember to ask God when I get to heaven, but I suppose that would seem to be no answer. I could say that evil is not a "thing" like a rock or electricity. You cannot have a jar of evil. Evil does not have an existence of its own, but is the absence of the good. God created us to have the freedom to choose the good or reject the good.

But, Luther has other ideas about evil.

Luther talks about freedom of the will and also speaks some on Satan, who we have come to think of as the embodiment of evil.

Satan, for Luther, was a powerful figure, but in an interesting and subtle way. He was not a monster or a bogeyman, but an inner power, able to corrupt faith. He was no physical menace to us. The Devil rather was a tempter and a deceiver; a deluding agent who would obstruct, trick, and mystify humans into making terrible choices.

Luther felt that the Devil works by seducing us to think evil thoughts and most definitely does quote Scripture. The Devil was thus, a theologian. It was a depiction which was extremely psychologically acute and borne out of Luther's own intellectual anxieties

and paranoia.

Luther's Satan may not be very terrifying at first, but what he lacks for in grandeur, he more than makes up for in subtlety. The Devil comes to people who are serious about being good Christians, who are trying to be sincere; that's who the devil strikes. The people who are just happy to eat, drink, and be merry, the Devil already has those; he's trying to get the people who he doesn't have yet.

To counteract evil, Luther insists on the absolute governance of the world by a sovereign and providential deity. We may not know how that God is governing the world, but nonetheless we know that God is in charge. In fact, God's providential mastery over creation is so important to Luther that he's willing to ascribe a responsibility for evil, even evil, to this God.

I am not Luther and don't pretend to have all the answers, so I suppose in reality my answer to why is there evil in the world: It is a mystery. It is part of our free willed reality. I, like Luther, believe that to counteract evil, we should trust in the absolute governance of the world by a sovereign and providential deity. We may not know how that God is governing the world, but nonetheless we know that God is in charge.

So, why is there evil? There is and I don't really know why.

Have a great February,

Pastor Scott

Staff and Council Update

Ted Turner has been hired as our new musician. He is planning to be in Durham no later than May 1. However, he and his wife, Sarah, hope to be here by the end of March or early April. Sarah is a nurse and is currently seeking employment. So keep them in your prayer and if you know of a good rental property, let Pastor Scott know.

Congregation Council Election Results:

President – Tim Hoke

Vice President – Maria Chi

Secretary – Sean Slane

Keep all our council in your prayers as well.

From the Vicar...

By the end of this month, those of us who have been meeting on Wednesday evenings will finish our deep dive into Luther's Small Catechism. More than

just rehashing the same things we've always been told about the Catechism, we've spent a great deal of time asking and answering central questions about what it means to be Christian and to have a relationship with God. Because that's the heart of this entire endeavor we call faith: God wants to have a relationship with us. The Catechism highlights certain parts of that relationship: God's boundaries for life, God's work in the world, God's work in our lives, God's grace in real things. But you don't have to read or study the Catechism to grow in your relationship with God. That relationship can be nurtured by a thousand different ways of learning.

Praying a daily devotional or Daily Prayer from the hymnal engages God in conversation. Watching popular Christian thinkers on YouTube either give talks or preach engages us in the word. You can learn about God in theological books; it doesn't need to be Thomas Aquinas or Reinhold Niebuhr (though you can read them if you want!). Authors like Rob Bell, Rachel Held Evans, or even Flannery O'Connor are saints who help us to know this God who loves us. If you've wanted to *really* dig into a book of the bible, pick up a commentary as a guide to help you through the verses. The library at St. Paul's is a treasure trove of resources ranging from the academic books to mysteries to children's books. Ask a friend or even myself and Pastor Scott for recommendations. You might be surprised in the ways you encounter God. In the end, the important thing is that our relationship with God, like any other loving relationship in our lives, matters. Just as we want to know those whom we love, God wants us to know more about who God is. As we prepare for the season of Lent, take this month to spend time getting to know this God who loves you.

Peace,
Vr. Mac

Council Corner

Greetings from your Church Council for 2022. First, I would like to welcome our new members to Council: Joan Albright, Megan Cunningham, and Jim Klausman. God willing, this year will signal the end of our major concerns about the pandemic.

It will certainly be a year of change for our church building since Wildflower Cottage will finally be moving into their new building next door and vacating their classrooms in our building. We will need to take time to pray and share our thoughts about how we can best re-occupy these spaces. It will be prudent for us as a congregation to take time to make our decisions about these spaces rather than rushing to occupy.

The first matter of business placed before Council this year is an update to our Constitution and By-laws. Pastor mentioned one item in our Zoom Sunday service on January 23 concerning the use of alcohol for special occasions in our building. Events such as weddings or other celebrations would need to get approval of Council before proceeding. This would solve our problems with past requests for this possibility. There is also an update to the Endowment Committee's charges and responsibilities. As Pastor mentioned, this revised document will be sent to all members of our congregation so that we can vote on them on February 20.

Paul's message in 1 Corinthians that we heard as a second reading in church service is certainly one that I would like for all of us to be mindful of this year, in hopefully, transitioning out of the pandemic. We are many members, yet only one body. Extending Paul's metaphor for the council, we are the hands and feet of our church's body. We are ready to do the work needed to keep us healthy and spiritually nourished.

Council President,

Tim Hoke

tim1hnva@gmail.com

Preschool Pitter Patter

by Amanda Stoen



The start to 2022 has been quite a doozy! Between the inclement weather and the highly contagious omicron variant, the preschool has been pivoting and adjusting plans daily. The preschool staff, children and their families have experienced an enormous variety of emotions and feelings this past month. It has allowed for plenty of opportunities

for our teachers to practice breathing and slow things down a bit for their classes.



We are truly taking it one day at a time and our plans are always subject to change at the last minute. This is not what we are used to, yet if we slow down we can take time to reflect and remember why we do the work that we do.

Watching children play in the snow is a joyful reminder that play is a



child's work. They are learning valuable skills, how to play with each other and they conduct experiments with the snow and ice. As they use their imaginations, they learn about themselves and the world around them.

Enrollment for Fall 2022 has begun. We offer 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. I am also offering phone calls, virtual or in-person tours throughout our registration period. Registration opens to the community on February 1. If you have any questions in the meantime, please let me know.

"Just Listening"

*by Nan Treul
Stephen Ministry*

I've been fortunate to have had a mentor several times during my life. I first had a mentor while in college. I attended Valparaiso University, and when I was 18 years old, I met Dody, the Dean of Women. She was 40 years old, and had never been married. She took an interest in me. She asked questions about my family and upbringing, she gave me her perspective on current issues, she was interested in every aspect of my life. We began a deep friendship, which blossomed into a mentoring relationship after I graduated. Fast forward 62 years, and this special woman is still an important part of my life. She is now 92 years old, and we text each other every day!

Recently, Dody was trying to decide whether to give up driving and her car. She asked me what I thought she should do. I asked her some questions and listened to her while she talked about how she felt about this major life-changing decision. I did not give her advice on what to do. I simply reflected some of her feelings back to her, and agreed that it was a big decision for her to make. I gave her some questions to ask herself to determine whether she was ready for this major change. At the end of the conversation, Dody said, "Thank you; I don't yet know what is my decision, yet, but I feel so much better!"

I told another friend who is also a member of St. Paul's about this conversation. My friend said, "You did something invaluable for her: you 'just listened' to her and let her reflect on this big decision." She said

that whether I knew it or not, I was being a Stephen Minister to her.

Later, I reflected on this. Listening is probably the most important skill that a Stephen Minister uses every time they visit their care receiver. Stephen Ministers do not solve a problem for the Care Receiver, nor tell them what to do. We just listen! But listening is so powerful; it truly helps the other person to feel better about where they are, knowing that they have an empathetic friend. And sometimes it does help the Care Receiver make their decision.

During the pandemic, many of us have felt alone and even lonely. Some of us have also felt depressed. These are all natural feelings, and these feelings can all be helped by having a listening friend. If you think that you could benefit from having a listening ear, and a compassionate listener, please consider having a Stephen Minister assigned to you. If you're interested in pursuing this, you may contact Pastor Scott, Kim Hoke, or Nan Treul.

"Just listening" can be just what we all need during these crazy times!

Why Internship to become an ELCA pastor?

*by Wendy Waugh
Internship Committee Chair*

To become an ELCA pastor a person is required to study at a Seminary for 2 years, spend 1 year on internship and spend 1 more year of study at a Seminary. The ELCA has very high standards to be met before a person can be called and ordained as a pastor.

Internship is an opportunity for a seminarian to get a feel for parish ministry under the supervision of a Pastor and Internship Committee. An intern/Vicar does everything a parish pastor does except preside at communion and marry people. The Vicar is given every opportunity possible to work as a parish pastor does. The Vicar gets the opportunity to experience the demands of parish ministry from leading worship, preaching, teaching, administration and counseling individuals and couples and much more. The Vicar gets regular feedback from the supervising pastor and the internship committee through weekly meetings with the pastor and monthly meetings with the committee. The pastor and the committee members are available at any time to help and encourage the Vicar. Constructive criticism is also important. Of course, pastors in their first parish and throughout their ministry will get some feedback from parishioners, but

internship is specifically a time for the Vicar to experience their own strengths and weaknesses in a caring and supportive congregation. The internship committee in particular, is to speak honestly and lovingly with the Vicar. The pastor and committee pray for the Vicar all through the internship as do many members of the congregation.

Internship is a time of evaluation and judgment. The supervising pastor and the internship committee continuously review the Vicar's performance and at the end of an internship decide whether or not to recommend the Vicar for ordination. The internship can be the time for a Vicar to decide to continue to pursue ordination or not. So, this is a very important time for a Vicar.

St. Paul's has a reputation at Southern Seminary as one of the best places to do internship. St. Paul's has had many Vicars and we take seriously this opportunity to teach and guide a Vicar with prayer, honesty and love. So, people of St. Paul's, keep up the good work!

Aid to Refugees

by Morris Casper

I have been trying for a few weeks to get in touch with an immigrant aid service to try to help with the settlement of Afghan refugees. I have recently been in touch with Chris McClaren who is the volunteer coordinator in the regional office of Lutheran Services Carolinas. He made the following suggestions:

- A support group could take on the responsibility of helping a specific family over a period of about 6 months.
- This group could instead volunteer to be available to any local refugees for most one-off simple tasks.
- If no group can be formed, any individual person can register to become a volunteer.

Also, LSC has a great need for money. It does not have the money at either the state or local level to support all the refugees it expects to serve. Chris says money would be very appreciated, but how funds are appropriated depends on what form the donations might be in. Donations in cash or check will be sent to the state LSC head office in Salisbury. To help refugees in our local area, Chris suggests buying gift cards. Cards in the amount of \$50 would be the most useful. Cards for Target and Walmart would be the most convenient.

Any contribution you would like to make should be sent to St. Paul's and earmarked, "Aid to

Refugees." You can also send gift cards to St. Paul's earmarked in the same way. To inquire further about volunteering or donating, call me at 919-732-8564.

In the mailbag...

Dear St. Paul's Family,

Thank you so much for all the cards and calls of support and remembrance following our Mother's death in October. Knowing Lois had so many dear friends at church was uplifting for us. Many of you had specific stories or memories of times with our Mother that you chose to share and this was very meaningful. Thank you also to the wonderful choir which pulled together to share their talents at her Memorial Service. That was amazing! She was blessed to have St. Paul's as such an important part of her life.

Gratefully and In Peace,

Renee Staehle, Sean Kinzie and Families

Thanks to all who donated books for the annual Book Harvest Book Drive. We collected 28 books from the church and 138 books from the Preschool! If you didn't get a chance to donate, the organization collects children's books year-round and you can always leave them at the drop-box outside their building on University Drive in Durham. Thank you!

The Slane Family

Memorials Received

We have received memorials with the following recognitions. Our sincere thanks.

In memory of Lois Kinzie to the Music Ministry fund

- Marlene Coulter, Roxboro
- Gus Holshouser, Durham
- Meg Thompson, Durham
- Dick Clendaniel, Durham
- Audrey Busch, Durham
- Tamara Dempsey-Tanner, Chapel Hill

In memory of Lois Kinzie to Stephen Ministry Fund

- Tom and Judy Kraska, Chapel Hill
- Tim and Kim Hoke, Chapel Hill

In memory of Lois Kinzie to the Quilt Fund

- Bess Line, Durham

In memory of David Dahl

- Tony and Penni Perrotte, Durham
- Gus Holshouser, Durham
- James and Carla Dahl, Chapin SC
- Theodore and Diana Dominick, Durham

In memory of Leon Bowman to Stephen Ministry Fund

- Tim and Kim Hoke



St. Paul's Lutheran Church, ELCA
1200 West Cornwallis Road
Durham, NC 27705-5731

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Durham NC
Permit No. 600

Book Report, Author Reading, and Maybe Lunch!



by Bee Ellertson

Pastor Scott and the Continuing Conversation Group invite you to join us on **SUNDAY, FEB 27** after worship to meet and hear from Pastor Jay Augustine. If pandemic conditions permit, we'll serve a light lunch before hearing from and talking with Pastor Jay about his new book, *Called to Reconciliation*. If you haven't been able to attend Bishop Smith's Zoom study of this book, you can hear directly from the author on Feb. 27.

Why is this book getting so much attention? Your reviewer thinks that it's because Pastor Jay has taken such care to deeply explore the Gospel for guidance on our society's challenges. As I read *Called to Reconciliation*, I wished I had attended more of Pastor Scott's Bible studies on Acts and the Letters of Paul. In discussing Galatians 3, Pastor Jay observes that humans are not only reconciled to God *through* Jesus, they are also reconciled with each other *because* of Jesus. He ties these insights into a brief history of the civil rights movement in the United States, as a prelude for discussions about our current situation of deep and rancorous divisions. He calls for "radical forgiveness" and humility as we try to find ways forward. He quotes Allan Boesak: "For reconciliation to be genuine, we should allow ourselves to be subverted by the grace and mercy of God."

In the closing sections of his book, I wish that Pastor Jay had told us more about Mission Reconcile, the partnership between his New Orleans AME congregation and a white congregation. I wish his focus had been broader than the current political climate, because so many Christian faith communities across the spectrum would be strengthened by his message. Maybe he'll write another book soon? Please come join us on Feb. 27th to hear from Pastor Jay, and, if we're very lucky, to share a meal together.

Amazon Smile

If you have ordered from AmazonSmile and designated St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Durham as your recipient – thank you! This past quarter, St. Paul's received \$41.51 as a result of qualifying purchases made by their customers. Many Thanks!

St. Paul's Readers February Meeting

We invite all readers to join us for our discussion of *Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman. Our meeting is on Thursday, February 17, at 3 pm in Trinity Hall, widely spaced apart. Mary Runestad is facilitating the discussion.

Anxious People is a big-hearted novel about a failed bank robbery gone right. It is set in an apartment open house where a failed bank robber bursts in and takes a group of strangers hostage. The characters are not entirely who they appear to be; all crave some sort of rescue. This entertaining book is proof of the enduring power of friendship, forgiveness, and hope. The book has been adapted as a television series, which is currently available on Netflix.

If you want to read ahead, the March selection is *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. This Pulitzer Prize winner is a beautiful stunningly ambitious story. It explores the lives of a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France, as both try to survive the devastation of WWII.

Please consider participating in our monthly meetings (3rd Thursdays at 3 pm). We welcome all readers, male and female! Please contact Katherine Trexler (katherine.m.trexler@gmail.com) with any questions. We hope to see you soon!

Tuesday Evening Reading with our Bishop

Join Bishop Smith in a synod-wide book study of *Called to Reconciliation: How the Church Can Model Justice, Diversity, and Inclusion* by Jonathan (Jay) C. Augustine, Bishop Smith and Pastor Augustine will kick-off the study with a conversation to introduce the book on Tuesday, January 25, but three more sessions will follow:

- ◆ February 15 = Part One: Chapters 1 & 2
- ◆ February 22 = Part Two: Chapters 3 & 4
- ◆ March 8 = Part Three: Chapter 5 + Author Q&A

The book study will meet from 7:00-8:15 pm. Contact <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc26PtqajsyxMWYjBT8nKCBfpi46ICisOxliYIjJioDW2WA/viewform> to receive the Zoom link via email.