

# Cross Connections



*St. Paul's Lutheran Church*

*December 2023*

## Wednesdays: Advent Suppers, Christmas Dinner, and Advent Worship

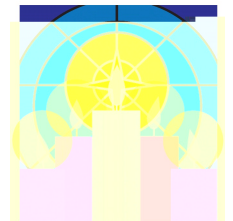
- ◆ 6:00 pm on Wed, Dec 6 & 13, come for a supper of soup, salad, and bread
- ◆ 6:00 pm on Wed, Dec 20 will be our traditional Christmas Dinner
- ◆ 7:00 pm Advent Worship will take place in the sanctuary on Wednesdays, December 6, 13, & 20

The midweek Advent Worship series invites us to pause, to prepare, and to ponder. First is the call to spiritual introspection, prayerful waiting, and pausing from the constant busyness of our normal lives. This is juxtaposed with Advent's clarion call to wake up, to rise in action, to prepare the way of the Lord, and to join in God's continued creative work of reconciliation, seeking justice, and peacemaking. Furthermore, we ponder the beginning and end of all things. We prepare for a baby, marveling that the creator of the universe was formed in a woman's womb, full of hope and potential, fragility and vulnerability. We anticipate Christ's imminent arrival here among us, as well as his arrival still to come – where pain, sorrow, injustice, warfare, and death itself are no more – in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness is at home. We pause, we prepare, and we ponder. Vimeo link: <https://vimeo.com/event/3543584>



## Sunday, December 24, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve Schedule of Services

- ◆ 10:00 am will be an Advent 4 and a Christmas Eve service with Holy Communion. It will feature a message geared to children and young families but all are invited. We will begin with a liturgy that will be the 4<sup>th</sup> Advent lessons and conclude with the Christmas Eve message.
- ◆ 7:00 pm Candlelight Service with Holy Communion.
- ◆ 10:00 pm Candlelight Service with Holy Communion



## Sunday, December 31, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas Schedule of Services

- ◆ 8:30 am and 11:00 am services will be Lessons and Carols, with Holy Communion. We welcome the Rev. Dr. David Franzen as guest pastor.

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

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

## From the Pastor...

December is such a full month. Sundays are filled with the waiting of the season. The Chrismon Tree always evokes Christmas trees, but it is truly different. The Chrismon Tree is filled with symbols of Christ's life from birth to empty tomb. It is a reminder of all we anticipate this Advent season. I love our Advent banners and the beauty of the sanctuary on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent.

This year the fourth Sunday of Advent will be Christmas Eve, so it changes the way we will do things. Normally on Christmas Eve, the color of the day is Gold and the Christmas banners are up. We normally offer a 4 pm, 7 pm, and 10 pm worship, but this year will be different.

We are combining Advent 4 and Christmas Eve in one service at 10 am. It will feature a message geared to children and young families but all are invited. We will be preparing a liturgy that allows us to tell the 4<sup>th</sup> Advent messages and the Christmas Eve message. We will even change the paraments during worship and transform from Advent 4 to Christmas Eve.

We will then have our traditional Candlelight liturgies at 7 pm and 10 pm. We hope to engage us all in the meaning of the season during these services.

Wednesday night Advent worship will begin with light suppers at 6 pm followed by worship at 7 pm. The theme this year is *Pause, Prepare and Ponder*.

Our annual meeting to approve the budget and elect council members for next year will be during the Sunday School hour on December the 10<sup>th</sup>.

We will also welcome new members on December 3 at both services, with a pastor's intro to St. Paul's during the Sunday School hour on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

I want to also take the time to thank outgoing council members: Maria Chi, Tim Hoke, and Barbara Ellertson. I also want to thank Jim Klausman for his service the past two years.

May the God of Peace guide you all this Advent and Christmas season.

*Pastor Scott*

## Greetings, friends at St. Paul's,

The youth of St. Paul's have been up to exciting things!

Just these past couple months they held their first lock-in at the church, went to an escape room, and began confirmation.

Confirmation this year is focused on the church seasons. We began in the season of Advent and learned what it means to wait for the long expected savior. Now we are working through Christmas, with

Epiphany up next. The youth are learning what these seasons mean in the warp and woof of the church's life, and how they reveal God's love to us through Jesus Christ. It's been a fun class and I've probably learned just as much as they have. In a week or two they'll go to Danville to learn about Chrismons. (I'm preaching that day and can't go, so I'm only a *little* jealous).

The youth are also preparing for the National Youth Gathering that will be hosted in New Orleans next Summer. They have been busy learning about New Orleans culture and history, and about the Gathering itself, as well as fundraising.

If you've walked outside of Trinity Hall recently you may have noticed the big yellow bulletin board with an airplane. This board is selling beds, meals, and airplane tickets for the youth. So, for example, if you buy a seat then you pay for the airfare of one youth. By buying one of these items you can help the youth have a life changing experience.

There's something special about the National Youth Gathering. For some youth, it'll be their first chance to ride a plane and for others, they'll get to try beignets for the first time. For all of the youth, it will allow them to connect to the wider church, meet other teenagers from across the country, and learn what it means to be Lutheran. Without a doubt they'll have a week they'll never forget.

If you would like to financially support the youth or get involved in another way (we're always looking for volunteers!), contact myself, Megan Cunningham, Joan Albright, or Susan. And I would also encourage you to talk to the youth! Get to know them and learn about what they're learning as they grow in their faith.

And keep an eye out for the exciting things the youth are up to!

*Vicar Gina*

## Building in Love: Duke Lutherans Year-End Appeal

God is a builder. God builds friendships and community. God builds hope and faith. And God builds us in love.

As children of God, we are also called to "build up" each other in love.

Duke Lutherans does just that, day in and day out. We build up students as we share God's gift of life together on campus, with St. Paul's and Grace, and throughout Durham.

As we worship, learn, and serve, we also grow in relationship with God, the master builder, who makes all things new.

In September, we celebrated our physical building during the grand opening of the Duke Lutherans Center. A strong sense of place makes all the difference for building a sustainable campus ministry community. We're excited for the many ways the DLC will enable us to grow and flourish.



But of course, the Duke Lutherans do not build alone. When you participate in "building up" our Duke students in love, you are helping to build God's peaceable kingdom.

Because of your generous financial support and partnership in the Gospel, we believe the building of Lutheran Campus Ministry at Duke will endure for years to come.

Please continue to build with the Duke Lutherans in love. We invite you to:

- ❖ Consider how much you can give. Are you able to increase the amount you gave last year or make a gift for the first time?
- ❖ Go online [www.gifts.duke.edu](http://www.gifts.duke.edu) and type Duke Lutherans in the search box to make a one-time gift or a recurring gift.
- ❖ Mail a check to Duke Lutherans: 1200 W Cornwallis Rd, Durham NC 27705
- ❖ Consider making a legacy gift through your QCD (Qualified Charitable Distributions), your IRA, a life insurance policy, will, trust, or estate.

We hope to raise \$80,000 before year-end to balance our budget. Your gift to our year-end appeal will make a lasting impact on the lives of our students. Please consider increasing your gift during the **Building in Love** appeal before the end of the year.

On behalf of our current students and all those we hope to build with in the future, thank you!

In Peace and Gratitude,  
*Pastor Amanda Highben*  
Duke Lutherans Pastor  
*Cindy Snyder*  
Duke Lutherans Committee Chair

### Preschool Pitter Patter

*by Amanda Stoen*

At the preschool, we enjoyed some special gathering times during the month of November. Some



of the preschool classes and their families shared meals together and enjoyed delicious food. We talked about who and what we are thankful – our family, friends, teachers, rainbows, giraffes, butterflies, pumpkins, and muddy puddles! We also celebrated several



birthdays at the preschool.

In November, our preschool collected items and made shoebox gifts for Operation Christmas Child. We also collected diapers for two Afghan refugee families that the church has been supporting. Our children have been learning about ways to help our local community and the world.



This month, we will celebrate the holiday season with a preschool wide potluck. Our older classes will sing a few Christmas songs and then we will share a meal together. We always

encourage families to bring a dish that has special meaning to them during this time of year.

In January we will begin enrollment for Fall 2024. 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 will be available on our website ([stpaulspreschooldurham.weebly.com](http://stpaulspreschooldurham.weebly.com)) and tours will begin in January. Church members receive priority registration, which will begin on January 8. If you have any questions in the meantime, please let me know.

- ▶ Information and articles are due for the January 2024 issue of Cross Connections by Monday, December 18. "Holy Folders" will meet on Friday, Dec 22 at 11 am.
- ▶ The Church Office will be closed December 25 through January 1, 2024.

## Social Ministries Committee Expand/Explore/Educate

As we continue to EXPAND current ministries (see Volunteer Opportunities below) and EXPLORE new ministry possibilities, we also seek to target our third goal of EDUCATING ourselves – both as a committee and as a congregation about the most pressing needs in our community ... needs which primarily affect the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.



Once we learn about these pressing issues, we then will be better equipped to **ACT in tangible ways** to help address specific needs within our community and also learn to **ACT as advocates** to “restore and reconcile our world.” [quote source:

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-EngagedChurch/Advocacy>]

After taking a short break for the holidays, we will resume meeting on **Monday, January 8, 2024, at 7:00 pm in Whitesell Hall.** We hope to see you there!

Until then, please be considering the question which Vicar Gina asked during her sermon on Nov. 12: **“What new ways can we reach out that we haven’t yet considered?”** Think small and think BIG! Some ideas which we’ve already received are:

- Ziplock bags filled with basics to give to homeless
- organizing a blood drive
- holding a book drive for a nearby elementary school and/or a local children’s hospital
- placing coloring/activity books and crayons in waiting rooms of local children’s hospital clinics

The Social Ministry committee members will review all these potential ministry ideas on a regular basis (EXPLORE). **Please email your ideas for potential ministries to Joan Pepper:** [irisdragonfly45@yahoo.com](mailto:irisdragonfly45@yahoo.com)

### Volunteer Opportunities with ongoing Social Ministries

**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>

**Urban Ministries Durham:** Volunteers to serve lunch at UMD on the 3rd Saturday of each month: sign-up link: [bit.ly/UMD\\_Signup](http://bit.ly/UMD_Signup)

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

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.

## December Youth Corner



Fall has been a fun and eventful season for the youth group. If you wander downstairs on a Sunday morning during the Sunday school hour, take a look in the youth room. You can find youth in there learning about the church year and doing a fun craft or talking about what to look forward to next summer in New Orleans.

We had our first youth lock-in on November 4. The activities started with an intense round of Uno and dinner before we went to the Myrtle Grove Haunted Forest and barn in Hillsborough, where Adsila and Sarah shielded Claire and Megan through the haunted forest. We came back to St. Paul’s and enjoyed a very fun and active evening, including hide and seek and an intriguing game of Pictionary, where Sarah’s artistic skills shined. The evening ended with movies and youth spread out in different areas of the top floor of the church. Sunday morning, everyone went to the 8:30 am service to end on a high note.

One of the six youth at the lock-in was Sarah Herring and she will be going to New Orleans next summer for the youth gathering. Here is a little bio about Sarah: *“I am currently an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Brogden Middle School. I heavily enjoy drawing. It is very soothing to me and allows me to illustrate myself freely. A fun fact about me is that I have been drawing for eight years. I have a large interest in aircrafts, primarily in passenger planes, so this is great as we are preparing to fly to New Orleans. I go to RDU to do plane-spotting on occasion. One thing that I am looking forward to next summer is the trip to New Orleans since it is five days of gathering and that we get to take a plane there.”*

Sarah and the other youth are in for another fun month in December. We will be continuing our preparation for the gathering by continuing to talk



about how “We Are Created to Be...” BRAVE and what to look for while in New Orleans. You will get the chance to see some of the youth on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> during the congregational meeting as they learn what goes into the discussion and voting process for the upcoming year at St. Paul’s. The youth will continue to learn more about Advent and the Christmas season during Sunday school and see a very special Chrismon Tree up in Danville, VA on December 17<sup>th</sup>. This will be a chance for all of us to enjoy a Sunday service at another church and have lunch as a group.

Continue to check out the youth corner each month in Cross Connections as more youth will be showcased and you can see what else the youth have been up to.

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## Growing thru Grief

Growing thru Grief is a coalition of area religious and civic organizations who offer support and education to those grieving the loss of a loved one. Here is the current schedule:

- ◆ Dec 6: Cello Concert with Debbie Davis
- ◆ Dec 12: "Our Triggers" with Vivian Harris
- ◆ Dec 19: "Final Thoughts" with Bill Dahl
- ◆ Dec 26: "How Are You? Authentic Conversations with People Who Understand," with Joan Eastman

We meet at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, on Tuesdays from 4 to 6 pm. First timers will need to show proof of Covid vaccination and booster(s). All are welcome.

For more information check out: [growingthrugrief.org](http://growingthrugrief.org)



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

Time to get ready for our 2024 Rise Against Hunger work day on Saturday, March 9, 2024.

The official fundraising kick-off will start after New Year’s Day. The goal is \$4,300 to cover the cost of 10,000 meals. But, it is not too early to get involved now. We will introduce the “CHANGE for a CHANGE” event to collect your loose change (or more). These collections will be turned in at the end of February to help fund this event on March 9<sup>th</sup>. The Rise against Hunger website is ready now for work day sign up or donations through RAH. Visit the website: [events.riseagainsthunger.org/STPLC](http://events.riseagainsthunger.org/STPLC)

## Memorials

We thank the following persons for donating to our Memorials Fund in memory of Seth Kitange:

Neema Kitange, Durham  
 Tim and Kim Hoke, Chapel Hill  
 Gus Holshouser, Durham  
 Rebecca Jules, Durham



*The Tongue and Thimble Quilting Ministry wants to thank everyone who participated in our recent Quilt Raffle in any way. We were able to raise enough funding to keep the group in needed supplies for a good amount of time. The winning raffle ticket was purchased by Nan Treul. Thanks again to everyone for your support of this Ministry!*

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## Get to know our Committees, Groups, and Partnerships!

Nine of our committees and/or groups, along with our Preschool/PMO, have uploaded informational videos to our Vimeo Website. They are short explanations of how the groups function and they offer opportunities for all of us to participate with them.

You can view these videos at:

<https://vimeo.com/stpaulsdurham/videos>. We can help other groups produce videos to promote our work for God at St. Paul’s. Contact Pastor Scott if you want to participate.

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## 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, and ushers. Staff will be glad to provide guidance for any of these tasks.

### ◆ Sunday morning Communion Assistants and Lock-Up

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

### ◆ Devotions –

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

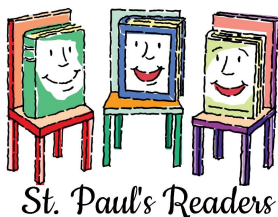
Send your devotions to Vicar Gina Schaeffer - [vicar@stpaulsdurham.org](mailto:vicar@stpaulsdurham.org)

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### St. Paul's Readers

During December, our church book club takes a holiday break. The next meeting is on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 3 pm. Katherine Trexler will lead our discussion of *Mad Honey: A*



*Novel* by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan. Our book is a riveting tale of suspense, an unforgettable love story, and a powerful exploration of the secrets we keep and the risks we take to become ourselves.

Our author event will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2024, at 12:30 pm. Rick Lischer will lead a discussion of *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery*. This memoir tells of his first try at ministry in a country church in southern Illinois.

Other book selections for next year are:

- ▶ *Death be Not Proud* by John Gunther
- ▶ *Humankind: A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman
- ▶ *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey* by Candice Millard
- ▶ *The Madness of Crowds* by Louise Penny
- ▶ *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride
- ▶ *The Engineer's Wife* by Tracey Enerson Wood

We invite all readers – men and women – to join us for a few or all our meetings. So please consider checking us out next year. Why don't you put one or more of our books on your Christmas list? 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 Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 11:30 am

Looking ahead to January, the activity for Young In Spirit is a lunch "meet and eat" at The Loop Restaurant in Eastgate Shopping Center, 1800 E. Franklin Street, Chapel Hill. The Loop has a varied menu to meet most food tastes.

The December activity is the play in Sanford on Dec 9, "A Christmas Story," which was booked in November.

### Creation Care



A December tip to care for creation: recycle your Christmas cards! The front pictures of your cards can be cut for name tags, scrapbooking or decorations for special events. You may prefer to recycle them in your home recycle bin – not the trash. The Creation Care ministry will also provide a collection container for your front covers of cards and they will be given to an organization for craft activities. Also, the stamps can be cut from the envelope and put in the collection container at church – they are sent to the Philatelic Society (stamp collectors) for their use and education purposes.

Creation Care is continuing to collect eyeglasses, pop rings and small batteries. Please NO LITHIUM BATTERIES as they are a fire hazard!

Watch for a big spring cleaning idea coming soon!

### Pasta for Parktown



Especially during the holidays and school vacations, it is more important than ever to continue to stock the "Pasta Shelf" at the Parktown Food Hub. If you could add a package – or two – of dry pasta, especially spaghetti and elbows, to your shopping cart to support this important community ministry and keep the St. Paul's Pasta Shelf well stocked, it will be greatly appreciated. Place donations in the collection box by the bulletin board. The Women's Connection Group is leading this initiative to support the Parktown Food Hub, a ministry of South Durham Connections, led by Pastor Sharon Schulze.