



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
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The Rev. Gregory W. Frey, Pastor

DECEMBER, 2019

I have little doubt that Christmas Eve is the most populous attended service of the year at St. Paul's even more than Easter which is, by far, a more significant holiday liturgically and theologically. This is probably true generally in western Christianity. So, the scripture most widely heard in Western Christianity is from the Gospel of Luke the second chapter which describes the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus. In that lesson Luke names the Roman emperor at the time, Augustus and the legate (governor) of Syria Quirinius.

It is kind of astounding that Quirinius gets a mention every year in church and in front of our largest crowds. If I were sitting out in the congregation a question like, is Quirinius central to the story of Jesus' birth and if so why doesn't he come as a figure in my nativity set might occur to me.

Luke mentions Quirinius by name to provide historical context to the story of Jesus' birth. But I would argue Luke is also giving us an important clue into the identity and mission of Jesus by mentioning two Roman imperial officials in connection with his birth. Quirinius was a Roman aristocrat who followed the normal route Roman aristocrats followed to public honor and office. He served as a Roman consul in 12 BC under Augustus. Not much personal information about Quirinius is known except an inscription from 12 BC was discovered in Antioch Pisidia known as *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* ('The Deeds of the Divine Augustus'), which states: "A great crowd of people came together from all over Italy to my election, ... when Publius Sulpicius (Quirinius) and Gaius Valgius were consuls." So, we know he was a political leader who cared a lot about crowd sizes.

The other thing, the most important thing we know about Quirinius, is that he was the official tasked with carrying out the census which brought the Holy Family to Bethlehem.

Even though Israel was a territory of the Roman Empire ruled by the emperor Augustus, Rome allowed a local king (*ethnarch*) to rule as a *client-king*. At first this client king was Herod the Great. But when Herod the Great died his kingdom was divided among his three sons. Herod Archelaus got a double share and Herod Philip and Herod Antipas split the rest. Herod Antipas ruled the region around Galilee and will appear as the Herod of the Gospels. Herod Archelaus's misrule and cruelty led to his removal by Rome in 6 AD and his replacement by a Roman Prefect (eventually Pontus Pilate). He was overseen by the regional governor of Syria...Quirinius.

Quirinius was tasked with the responsibility of carrying out an accounting of the former territory of Archelaus. This has variously been described as a census or a tax event. We might see it as an audit of value which would allow the Romans to more effectively tax the people of Judea. Why families were ordered back to their ancestral/tribal lands is confusing, but such an inconvenient order is not outside the realm of possibility for Roman imperialism and its resultant bureaucracy.

The effect was that people like Mary and Joseph had to travel, by foot, more than 80 miles to carry out the order of Quirinius to be counted and subsequently more effectively taxed. That this would be an undue hardship on people, particularly a woman "great with child," did not matter to someone like Quirinius. Such considerations never do matter to people like Quirinius.

Our image of the Holy Family holed up in a stable usually depicts the scene as idyllic. This is misleading and unfortunate because the whole point of the story is that Jesus was born under the worst of conditions, in an empire where life was cheap and the displacement and possible deaths of people irrelevant to the interests of their betters; aristocrats like Quirinius.

So, this year like every year, we will read Quirinius's name at Christmas eve services. And most folks will nary give him a thought. This is, of course, because the infant Jesus is the point of the story. But we would

do well to give a thought to Quirinius. I think Luke wants us to. It was people like Quirinius who constructed a world so ill-suited to people like Jesus and his family. A world where wealth and power were consolidated and used as an instrument of control against little people like Mary and Joseph and Jesus.

The birth of Jesus is plainly set up by Luke as God's offensive against the likes of Quirinius (and Augustus). Jesus' birth while a refugee under imperial edict is a central part of the story too often lost on we *merry* Christmas eve worshippers. Matthew's gospel will go even farther in depicting the horrors the holy family faced at the hands of the rich and powerful. While I wouldn't want to intrude on the merriness, to be true to the spirit of Luke's story we need to recognize the horrible conditions under which Jesus was born and that these conditions prevail around the world. The birth of Jesus into the condition of desperation is God's response to a world crying out for a savior. God responded to God's people's desperate cry for a savior.

So, when we read about Quirinius this Christmas Eve perhaps a pause to consider all the damage done by his ilk through the generations would be in order. Perhaps we might then give a thought to all the people who still find themselves suffering under powerful people who care very little (if at all) about the hardship their policies inflict upon families today, refugees in a world that takes little account of them. Perhaps at the mention of his name we might make a sincere prayer that God be born again in such a world.

--Pastor Frey

Longest Night Service: December 21, 2019 at 6:00 PM. This service is a pre-Christmas service especially designed for those who are grieving or struggling with illness or any distress. The Christmas "season of joy" can be a difficult time for many and this service is meant to address our longing for the encouragement signaled by Christ's birth and pray for the healing and hope promised through him. The liturgy includes candle lighting in memory of loved ones, a healing service, Holy Communion, and scripture readings and prayers emphasizing God's promise of comfort and grace.

Adult Study

Adult Study in December Monday December 16th we will discuss the story of the patriarch Joseph and see connections with Joseph in Matthew's story of Jesus' birth. Dinner is at 6:00 PM and the study begins about 6:30 PM.

--Worship In December --

Dec. 1 8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M. – Holy Communion

Dec. 7 6:00 P.M. – Holy Communion

Dec. 8 8:00 & 10:30 A.M. – Worship
9:15 AM. – Sunday School

Dec. 14 6:00 P.M. – Holy Communion

Dec. 15 8:00 & 10:30 A.M. – Holy Communion
9:15 A.M. – Sunday School

Dec. 21 6:00 P.M. – Longest Night Service

Dec. 22 8:00 & 10:30 A.M. – Worship
9:15 A.M. – Sunday School

Christmas Eve

Dec. 24 2:00, 7:00, & 10:00 P.M. – Holy Communion

Dec. 28 6:00 P.M. – Holy Communion

Dec. 29 8:00 & 10:30 A.M. – Worship
9:15 A.M. – Sunday School

FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

Funeral: 10/28/19 – Gary L. Leister

Wedding: 11/2/19 -- Aaron Guldin & Amanda Childs

Memorial Fund contributions:

In memory of **Gary Leister** given by—

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Nuss

Charles & Nancy Everhart

Stauffer Kutz

Marie Hausman

Frank & Kathy Jablonski

Donald & Mary Kay Heimbach

William & Carole Nester

Gregory & Sharon Zook

Oley Valley Middle School

Guy & Marianne Graefe

Karen Hartranft

Gerald & Pat Levengood

Lynwood & Joan Weil

Memorial Fund contributions:

In memory of **Tom Vroman** given by Greg & Norma Godon

In memory of **Laura Schmale** given by Betty High

In memory of **Laura Schmale** given by Robin Rohrbach

Sign fund contributions:

In memory of **Gary Leister** given by Rob & Sandi Levensgood

In memory of **Laura Schmale** given by Mary Graefe

Renovations fund contributions:

In memory of **Gary Leister** given by Sally Rhoads

In memory of **Laura Schmale** given by Dorothy Brown

In memory of **Tom Vroman** given by Dorothy Brown

Agape fund contributions:

In memory of **Gary Leister** given by Anna Brown

In memory of **Millard Watson** given by Anna Brown

In memory of **Laura Schmale** given by Anna Brown

In memory of her parents, **Rev. George & Alice Deisher**, given by Alice Sprague

Memorial Fund contributions in memory of **Terry Weiler** given by –
Rick & Judy Weiler Gerald & Pat Levensgood

--YTD Giving thru October, 2019--				
	Jan-Oct-2018	Jan-Oct-2019	Variance	% chg.
Offerings	\$ 291,793	\$ 297,377	5,584	-1.87
Renovation Contr.	<u>57,865</u>	<u>47,129</u>	-10,736	-18.55
Total Giving	\$ 349,658	\$ 344,506	-5,152	-3.96

THANKS TO ALL OUR OLEY FAIR VOLUNTEERS.....We have received a check in the amount of \$650 from the Oley Valley Community Fair Association for your efforts. We hope to have many enthusiastic volunteers again next year to continue to support this community event.

THOUGHTS ON ADVENT AND HOPE by Joy Gerhart

I recently attended a women’s retreat at another church where I led a “door toppers craft”—the same kind we had at our women’s retreat in April. Many women chose to “do” the word HOPE.

Advent is the season of HOPE as represented by the BLUE color of the candles. (I like to think that the pink candle that we sometimes see suggests that there was an instant that they thought the Messiah might be a girl, but, nope, back to blue! I HOPE you know the pink candle was intended to be a break from the seriousness and penitential tone represented by the purple candles. Actually, the pink candle was my favorite because it signaled the 3rd Sunday in Advent which was the rejoicing or JOY candle...but I digress.) HOPE. We still live in HOPE. We HOPE for The Messiah who has come and will come again. We HOPE for peace; we HOPE for health; we hope to someday be reunited with our lost loved ones in the resurrection. We HOPE for God’s kingdom to come in its fullness.



I personally love the Old Testament lessons in Advent –the peaceable kingdom (the lamb lying down with the lion or wolf, even if the lamb is nervous) (Isaiah 11), making straight the highway for our God (Isaiah 40),beating swords into plows and spears into pruning hooks (Isaiah 2), and the wilderness blossoming with flowers (Isaiah 35). In one Christmas play we actually had kids dress as different animals and hold hands, dancing around together (my son was a snake!); and in another scene, we had kids in hard hats constructing a straight smooth road for the approach of the Messiah. At one of my previous churches we had a progressive banner which showed a branch growing from a stump and growing into a beautiful flower. What images do these passages conjure up in your mind?

God has kept the promises spoken by the prophets. The promised Messiah has come. Jesus has offered peace in our hearts. As we enter this season of Advent, lets rejoice in the fact that God is with us— Emmanuel—and gives us hope—some which has been realized and some things yet to come. Rejoice in the fulfillment of HOPE who lies in the manger and grows to be our Savior and Redeemer.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS.....

Sunday School Christmas Program

This year the SCS Christmas program will be shared with the congregation on December 22 at the 10:30 am worship service. Our theme this year is "Christmas Around the World" and American children will be explaining the birth of Jesus and Christmas customs in Germany, France and Mexico to a visitor from outer space. (We did just go to Mars and beyond at VBS!) All children are welcome to participate and rehearsals will take place on Dec. 8, 15, and 22 during the Sunday School hour. Permission slips have gone out to parents to inquire who is interested in participating and who will be coming to the rehearsals. We do need to find some sombreros and serapes that we can borrow to costume our 1st and 2nd graders participating in the Mexican "Posada." If you have a hat or wrap that we can borrow, please contact Joy Gerhart.

Sunday School for Children Age 2-3

Did you know that we offer a Sunday School class for children ages 2-3 years old? We have special books and teaching guides geared specifically for toddler and preschool aged children. Our volunteer Sunday school teacher is a certified Kindergarten teacher and would love to work with your child. This class will also be involved as little animals in our Christmas program which is lots of fun for the children. Let us extend God's love to you and your child through our Sunday School class which meets at 9:15 am in the Child Development Center classroom #134. A parent or other adult needs to come along too.

Welcome to the Lord's Table

We welcome these new communicants to the table of Holy Communion: Adam DiSandro, Myla Eisenhard, Kevin Forster, Jenna Hendricks, and Mya Saylor. They attended a first Communion workshop on November 23 and received their First communion on November 24. Please remember them in your prayers as they enter this new stretch of their Christian journey.



Check Out the new Books in the Library

We just purchased a few new books for children to put in the library for you to borrow. They all have great messages for children AND adults. "There's No Wrong Way to Pray" by Rebecca Ninke and Kate E. H.

Watson is a great book which describes a little girl praying for others and herself in all different situations. It is very down to earth and also very inspiring. It teaches children that they can pray anywhere and everywhere about everything.

"Maybe I Can Love my Neighbor Too" is about a little girl who learns that all people are her neighbors and there are many ways to help each other and show love for one another. It tries to address the needs and displays of neighborly affection with all kinds of ages, races, and religious faiths.

"Maybe God Is Like That Too" is about a young boy who lives with his grandmother in the city and learns that we can learn about God through the kindness, caring and gentleness of others. This is also written by the author/artist team of Grant and Shipper as is the above "Maybe" book.

"You Are with Me" is a board book which shares short little prayers and short quotes from the psalms about all sorts of situations children experience during the day. This can help children learn to talk to God throughout the day. Very accessible (short narration, beautiful pictures) for all ages.

Look for these books in the children's area of the library or ask Joy Gerhart for help.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ...The Child Development Center is looking for Assistant Teachers

The CDC is currently hiring Assistant Teachers to work with Infant and Preschool children in a safe and nurturing environment. A CDA or Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education is preferred. The position requires two years of experience.

Things you may not know about the Child Development Center (CDC) Did you know:

1. There are currently 24 people on the CDC staff?

2. There are 100 children enrolled in the CDC and 41 children currently attending our preschool programs (28 four-year-olds and 13 three-year-olds)?
3. We offer care from age 6 weeks to end of 5th grade?
4. The CDC is open from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm which is 11 ½ hours each weekday?
5. In addition to an infant class, toddler 1, Toddler 2, Pre-Kindergarten 1 and Pre-Kindergarten 2 class year round, we also offer Kindergarten Enrichment classes for children who attend a half day of Kindergarten. We also have before school and after school care for School Age children as well as summer camp.
6. The CDC is not just babysitting but uses curriculum and considers education very important for the development and nurture of the children in our care.
7. The CDC is an important ministry of St. Paul's and endeavors to share the unconditional love of Jesus with each child and family. It has a mission of outreach and evangelism to the community with the goal to care for and teach children in a Christian environment.
8. Many new members of St. Paul's are day care families.
9. Pastor Frey has chapel time once a week with the day care classes and once a month with Preschool. Miss Kitty also shares time with the children, and Joy Gerhart visits the classes in the summer with VBS Bible stories.
10. A committee of St. Paul's members oversees the operations of the CDC and reports to the church council.
11. The CDC is subject to state inspection and is ranked as a STARS 2 child care facility.
12. The CDC contributes \$48,000 to the church each year (as well as paying utilities, snow plowing, and cleaning service fees)?

CHRISTMAS EVE PRELUDES.....

Any person, young or old, who would like to play a prelude on Christmas Eve is invited to do so at the 2:00 or 7:00 service. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for you to give your information. Please sign up on or before December 15.



CONNECTIONS TEAM

A new group has been assembled to help improve communications among various ministries of the congregation. Our first goal is to come up with a biblically based foundational statement for the function and mission of the CDC. Then we plan to continue as an ongoing group, hoping to keep ALL committees in communication with each other especially about activities in the church and use of rooms/facilities. We currently have representatives from Finance, Property, Christian Education, and the CDC Board. We would love to welcome others interested in helping improve communications. Please see Joy Gerhart if you are interested.

CHRISTMAS BASKETS FOR NEEDY FAMILIES IN DANIEL BOONE SCHOOL DISTRICT.....



We will be assembling 5 food baskets for families in the Daniel Boone School District. The sign-up sheet for items needed will be in the narthex. Donations to purchase hams will be appreciated.

The Social Ministry Committee would like to thank everyone that donated items for the Thanksgiving baskets.



BLOOD DRIVE.....

You can save a life of someone in your community today! Sign up for the **Community Blood Drive** right here at St. Paul's on **Monday, December 9 from 2 pm to 7 pm**. Online registration is available at www.GIVEaPINT.org. Use sponsor code 2050 or contact Rhonda Maloney at 610-213-3085.

COMMUNITY TREE LIGHTING—SAT., DEC. 7, 2018, 5:00—7:00 PM

Amity Park (Next to the Playground)

Tree Lighting 6:15 pm

Refreshments and Carolers

Sponsored by Daniel Boone Optimist Club



COLUMBARIUM GREENS SPONSORSHIP.....Once again, the Columbarium Committee is going to decorate our columbarium and labyrinth for Christmas. The Christmas Bazaar's Greens Committee is creating five lovely greens boxes which will be placed around the columbarium in commemoration and celebration. If you'd like to sponsor one of the boxes in memory of loved ones, please contact the church office. The cost to sponsor one box is \$30.

DANIEL BOONE INTERACT CLUB ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON FOR SENIOR CITIZENS—Thursday, Dec. 5, at DBHS, Chestnut St., Birdsboro.

The High School Choir will present Christmas carols at noon followed by the luncheon at 1 P.M. RSVP to nicole.muhleisen@dboone.org or call 610-582-6100, ext. 2213 or 2219.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING – FRI., DECEMBER 13 AT AMITY PLACE



Join Us for Caroling

We usually advertise this as a youth event and get more adults, but this has become so enjoyable for me and Amity Place invited us to return, that I want to be sure adults see this as well as youth.

Please join us at 6:30 on December 13 to sing Christmas carols with the residents at Amity Place. Rebecca Miller will accompany the carols on the piano and all other accompaniment and percussion is welcome (bring your jingle bells!). We can meet at 6:15 to car pool for those who are interested. Please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex so we know how many to expect. It's always a joyful way to welcome in the Christmas season, sharing the good news with others.

YOUTH NEWS:

SPLAT Christmas Party -- Dec. 8

All youth in grades 7-12 and friends are invited to join us for the annual Christmas party on Sunday, December 8 starting after the 10:30 service (approximately 11:30 am) starting with lunch. We will then exchange gifts and make goodie bags for shut-ins including cookies and a Christmas card. Please bring a wrapped gift to exchange (something suitable for a boy or girl worth \$10), a side dish or a dessert to share, and a batch of cookie dough, if possible. Please sign up on the youth board if you can come and what food you are bringing. If you bring a friend, be sure they bring a gift to exchange too!

SPYY and SPLAT Christmas Caroling – Dec. 13

Everyone is invited to come Christmas caroling on Friday, December 13 at 6:30 pm at Amity Place. All adults, youth and children are welcome to participate! Please sign up in the narthex.

WE 'RE AGAIN DECORATING WITH POINSETTIAS ON CHRISTMAS EVE...

Use the form printed below if you would like to order a poinsettia. Orders must be placed early to ensure availability. **Try to place your order by Sunday, December 8, but final deadline to order is Sunday, Dec. 15.**

The plants may be taken with you following the 10:00 P.M. Christmas Eve service.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Please order _____poinsettias (5 blooms +) at \$8.75 per plant.

Amount enclosed \$ _____.

Information for the bulletin: Given to the Glory of God:

_____In memory of _____

by _____

_____In honor of _____

by _____

_____As a gift by _____

Name _____



CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER HAPPENINGS.....

We welcome the month of December and look forward to the annual Christmas Bazaar. This year in conjunction with the Bazaar, we will also be hosting the Scholastic Holiday Book Fair. A wonderful selection of books will be available for purchase December 2nd through December 6th. Books make great gifts. Be sure to stop by and see what's new. The display tables will be set up in main hallway of the CDC.

The children and staff have been busy practicing their musical selections for the annual Christmas Program. All of the students in the CDC and Preschool classrooms will be invited to present their program to family and friends in the Church.

Come join our Team! The CDC is hiring for full and part time positions. If you or someone you know is interested, please stop by the CDC office for an application or email the office at CDC@stpaulsdouglassville.com

As a reminder, the CDC will be closed December 24th through January 1, 2020. On behalf of the CDC, I would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year. As always, we appreciate your support and recent donations.

Thank You,
Sherry Gardner, Director



DINING CLUB – January through June: We would be so pleased to have you join our group of merry diners and get to know your fellow congregants better. We will soon be assigning groupings for January through June 2020 and would love to have you in the mix. A signup sheet will be in the narthex through December and we will notify everyone of their new groups in early January. Existing members need not sign up; you will be automatically included.

The basics - "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" Since the current format for the Dining Club seems to be working well, we aren't planning any changes:

- Target group size – 6 – small groups seem to be working well

- We welcome couples and individuals (not necessary to be a congregation member)
- Gather four times over six months
- Schedule dates and times to suit your group
- Venue based on group preference: restaurant, home, festival, carnival, fair, food truck, church dinner...; breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner...
- Bring a friend to share the fun

Don't delay, sign up in the narthex, call Mary and Fred Hoffert at 610-689-0500, or email to arhoffert@aol.com. If you have questions, contact Mary or Fred.

Cheers!

A MESSAGE CONCERNING WORLD HUNGER.....

Christmas season is nearly here with the joys of friendship and family time. May we all have good health and happy times this holiday season. But please let us not forget the less fortunate who live in poverty with a great need for food. Some will be fortunate to get food baskets and free dinners, but this, however, does not last.

With the help of ELCA World Hunger people in this country and countries around the world get help all year round. They get food and training so they can provide for their families in the future.

Please think about including a donation to ELCA World Hunger during the holidays. Donations can be included in your envelopes marked WH. Thank you for past donations.

--Mary Graefe

SNOW EMERGENCY

In the event that we need to cancel Sunday Church School or Worship due to severe weather, it will be announced on Channel 69 as early as possible. The cancellation will also be on the church's answering machine (610-385-6616), website—www.stpaulsdouglassville.com, and Facebook.



Weekly Prayer Service -- Wednesdays--9:00 AM

We pray for every member of the congregation on Wednesday mornings at 9 am. If you see your name here it is not because we think you have a specific need for prayer, but to let you know you are in our prayers whatever your need may be. On Wednesday mornings we also pray for churches around the world, leaders in the ELCA, our staff and council members, our political leaders, those in the military, special requests, and many more. If you are free a Wednesday morning, stop in and join us. We are always finished before 9:30 AM. Included this month in our prayers will be: Blake Grim, Kiara Ray, Lilian Reber, Paul Reber, Kay Reber, Connor Reed, Garret Reinhardt, Darrell Reitmeyer, Margaret Reitmeyer, David Renninger, Carole Renninger, George Rhoades, Courtney Rhoads. If you have anyone to add to the prayer list, please fill out a Prayer Request Card found in the pew racks or call the church office. Please pray for those with special concerns: Cynthia Adam, Makayla Becker, Ben Blevins, Jena Charlton, Noah Charlton, Mary Beth Confici, Elena Demos, John Gehret, Helen Guss, Gwen, Larry Herbst, Connie Hunter, Sue Keay, Ruth Kresge, Gerald Levensgood, JoAnne Merkel, Margaret, Richard Randolph, George Rhoades, James Rhoads, Ellen Sheeler, Jeanie Templin, Guy Weidner, Jane Williams, family and friends of Joey Koehler, Terry Weiler, Duane Dominick, Gary Leister, Carlos San clemente; and all others listed below or those we name in our hearts: Bill, Jake Campbell, Courtney, Jeannie Crass, Karin DiSanto, Ron Glaser, Norma Godon, Diana Gower, Simon H., Charles Heffner, Arlene Hildebeitel, Bobby Hubert, Robin Hynes, Linda Loshnowsky, Karen McGavin, Edith Moyer, Jerry Muller, Ron Mutter, Carol Pearson, Richard Pool, June Rhoads, Lenore Robinson, Gabriel Schulze, Sr., John Shaner, Vernet Spence-Brown; homebound -- Peggy Burns, Jennie Clouser, Carol DeLong, Jan Haas, Alma Shirey, Patsy Smale, Pauline Trout, Richard Wise.



Happy Birthday!

12/1	Barbara DePrefontaine	12/15	Shamyro Roman
	Luke Yambor	12/16	Lauri Barr
12/2	Colton Kupp		Maddalena Crichton
	Karen Merkel		William Dollhopf
12/3	Robin James		Judy Morrow
	Patrick Moore		Audrey Polonsky
	Raymond Oxenford		Aubrie Weidner
12/4	Kathy Rhoads	12/17	Adrianna DePrefontaine
	Taylor Rotelli		Kaitlyn Hilberg
12/5	Alexander Moorman	12/19	Pat Leister
	Henry Smith	12/20	Erin Money
12/6	Ralph Rohrbach		Nan Tindall
12/7	Jennifer Beers	12/21	Laurie Muschick
	Margaret Burns		Carole Renninger
	David Leahy	12/22	Brody Klink
	Elizabeth Moore		Alexis Roman
	Nathan Tindall	12/23	Greg Godon
	Dave Walt	12/24	Cale Weidner
12/8	Christopher Weidner	12/25	Gloria Rhoads
12/9	Russ Lander	12/27	Faith Casciano
12/10	Deb Kasdras		Bob Fisher
	Ada Marchewski	12/28	Kathy Szajek
12/11	Ryan Bennis	12/29	Gerald Levensgood
	Nancy Centrella		Dominic Stoudt
12/12	Kevin Shaffer	12/30	Connor Duffy
12/14	Fern Brown	12/31	Daryl McCleary
	Rick Centrella		Harry Schweikert

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO –

Ken & Elisabeth Yoder	12/4	26 yrs.
Ron & Karen Glaser	12/7	34 yrs.
Ronald & Nan Tindall	12/11	20 yrs.
James & Stephanie Vernon	12/18	9 yrs.
Paul & Kay Reber	12/23	36 yrs.
Rory & Peggy Emery	12/26	33 yrs.
Lee & Susanne Walley	12/28	62 yrs.

2019 ANNUAL REPORTS were not mailed in order to save money on postage. If you would like a copy, they are available for pick-up at the church.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2019

Contributions to the church for the year 2019 must be received before December 31 in order to be credited to your statement for 2019.

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

We Love... 2019 A Day of Learning



We Love...because God first loves us. We Love...others because each person is a child of God. We Love...by expanding our understanding of others and allowing people to be truly who God made them to be. We Love...because God is love.

These were just a few of the takeaways from We Love... 2019, a day of learning to help congregations be more opening and welcoming to LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families. For many participants this was uncharted territory, as they are learning what all those letters actually do mean (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/ Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic plus many more).

For others, there was still plenty to learn as we explored the intersection between sexuality/gender identity and faith and discussed how the church can be a place where people do not feel they have to hide their sexuality or gender identity in order to feel the love of God and others.



The keynote speaker was Jamie Bruesehoff, a writer and advocate in New Jersey. She is married to an ELCA pastor and is the mother of three children, the oldest of whom is transgender. Workshops included safety basics, welcoming language in worship, what scripture has to say about homosexuality, bisexuality visibility, and parents sharing stories of when their children came out and how the church was both helpful and hurtful.

We Love... is being planned again for the fall of 2020.



Bern, Leesport Supports World Hunger

Bern gets in the Farming Spirit to Raise Funds for ELCA World Hunger



Ministry often surprises us. Our congregations work hard to meet many needs across the United States and around the globe. Feeding the hungry is one of those needs. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" Matthew 25:35. When we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty and welcome the stranger, we are encountering and caring for Jesus.

This past September Bern Lutheran Church in Leesport set out to raise enough money to buy one farm from ELCA World Hunger (ELCA Good Gifts). Over the course of four weeks, hundreds of dollars began pouring in. The spirit of the project was

evident throughout. Jane Battaglieri, Bern's Music Director, even enjoyed adding some special music in the spirit of the project. During one service, the song sung before announcing the total was "The Farmer in the Dell" and the postlude was "Old MacDonald." The people of Bern came together during their God's Global Barnyard project and their generosity was overwhelming! By the end of the project in October, a total of \$3,000 was raised!

The Rev. Phyllis Wolkenhauer was especially overjoyed at the success of the whole project. She wrote, "I think \$3,000.00 was a complete surprise to all of us. The day the final total was calculated, we received a letter encouraging us to participate in the ELCA World Hunger appeal and take advantage of the matching funds currently available. In the blink of an eye, the Lord increased our offerings to total \$6,000. What a gift!"



**Never underestimate the power of prayerful giving
and of a congregation coming together
to make an impact upon a world in need!**

Learning Ministries Day 2020

Saturday, January 25, 2020 (snow date Saturday, February 1)
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. @ Union Lutheran Church, Schnecksville

Theme: Vision 2020

Keynote Speaker: The Rev. Brenda Smith,
Program Director, ELCA Faith and Book of Faith
(Visit nepasynod.org for more information)

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ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15 —Sunday School	2 7 PM—Christian Ed.	3 Quilting 9:30—Bazaar crafts 2—TOPS 6:15—Child Dev.	4	5 6 PM—T3 Comm. 7 PM--Choir	6 4:00—8:00— Christmas Bazaar	7 8:00—12:00-Christmas Bazaar 6 PM—Holy Comm.
-----Bazaar preparation-----						
8 8 & 10:30—Worship 9:15—Sunday School 9:30—Finance SPLAT Christmas Party after 10:30	9 2—7 PM—Blood Dr. 6 PM—Vision 2020 7 —Pastoral Care	10 Quilting 9:30—Bazaar crafts 2--TOPS	11 9 —Prayer Group 9:30—Bible Study 6:15 —Executive Com. 7:00--Council	12 1:30—Connections team 7 PM—Choir 7 PM—Prayer Shawl	13 Noon—Friendship Circle Christmas party 5:30—Crime Watch Christmas Party 6:30—Caroling @ Amity Place	14 6 PM—Holy Comm.
--Pre-School Christmas Programs---						
15 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15 —Sunday School 9:15—Social Min. 9:15--Fellowship	16 6 PM—Bible Study	17 Quilting 9:30—Bazaar crafts 2—TOPS CDC Christmas Program	18 9 —Prayer Group 9:30—Bible Study 1:00—Prayer Shawl	19 7 PM--Choir	20	21 7:30 AM--Property 6 PM—Longest Night
22 8 & 10:30—Worship 9:15—Sunday School	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 2,7 & 10 —Holy Communion	25 	26	27	28 6 PM—Holy Comm.
29 8 & 10:30—Worship 9:15—Sunday School	30	31 Quilting 9:30—Bazaar crafts 2--TOPS	Money Counters 8:00 Jeane Serrian Rich Saylor Gary Weidner		10:30 Tim Oister Brooke Eidell Cindy Matosky	
Council persons in charge of services—						