



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
548 OLD SWEDE ROAD
DOUGLASSVILLE PA 19518
Telephone (610) 385-6616
Fax (610) 385-6690
www.stpaulsdouglassville.com
info@stpaulsdouglassville.com
The Rev. Gregory W. Frey, Pastor

DECEMBER, 2020

If you read first person accounts of World War Two you inevitably read about soldiers describing how dangerous the war was as it drew to a close. They describe the heightened danger as soldiers, anticipating the war nearing its end, let their guard down, becoming complacent and sometimes careless.

The coronavirus pandemic has felt something like a war. Not like recent wars where only a very few in the armed forces and their families bore the brunt of the suffering and sacrifice, but more like World War Two where everyone had a role to play and all were required to make sacrifices. Those sacrifices sometimes seemed onerous and some struggled against them but they were a shared burden which saved lives and protected communities.

We are beginning to get a sense of an ending to this pandemic. Therapies and vaccines are proving effective and, in a few months, will become widely available. We can see the end, but we are not there yet. In fact, before the end we will have the most difficult terrain to get through. The trajectory of the virus is exactly what medical experts have been telling us it would be like for months. Infection rates, hospitalizations and deaths are climbing steeply. This will continue through the winter. We must take these next few months and do what we can to minimize the infection rates or our medical systems will not be able to handle the needs of the sick.

This is going to require sacrifice and these sacrifices are going to be harder than in the spring because then they were novel and now, we

are heartedly sick of them. But we must remember that the virus does not tire of its function of infecting and just keeps doing what it does. Our resolve, especially now, must get us through these next few months and into a new beginning of moving out of our COVID-19 existence.

That brings me to Christmas Eve. As I am writing this, at the end of November, the health department for the state of Pennsylvania has begun issuing gathering restrictions and guidelines aimed at reducing the incidence of widespread infection. Churches in Pennsylvania are exempt from the penalties associated with violating the restrictions, but this exemption has nothing to do with science and it would be irresponsible and careless to believe that our sanctuaries are miraculously immune from virus spread. Large religious gatherings at which worshippers believed they were under divine protection became super spreaders and proved reckless with the lives of their congregants.

Through much precaution and care we have been able to worship in-person safely at St. Paul's since the beginning of July without having to restrict (turn away) any worshippers. Conditions are changing, as we have been forecasting they would, and the time of unrestricted worship is coming to an end.

Following state guidelines we are limited to 10% of our sanctuary occupancy which is 300. This means we will be limited to 25 worshippers plus worship assistants per worship service. This limit will be observed. Practically, this is not that big an issue for our services other than the 8:00 AM service which has averaged 30-35 participants each week. I anticipate this could be a big issue for Christmas Eve.

The fact is, even if it is still reasonably safe to hold in-person worship services on Christmas Eve we will not have very much space available at these services. Please be aware of this. We are presently planning these in-person services to occur at their regular times on Christmas Eve 2PM, 7PM and 10PM and an additional in-person service on Christmas Day at 10:30 AM. We will take reservations for these services December 21, 22, 23 between 8AM and 3PM. Please limit in-person worship to active congregation members and only one (immediate) family per reservation. If there is interest, an additional service could potentially be added Christmas Eve day morning.

I cannot describe how counter this runs to my pastoral experience where Christmas is the time we joyously welcome our whole community home to worship, but our care for every member of our congregation and concern for public health and wellbeing requires sacrifice and creativity.

In anticipation of the potential problems with in-person Christmas Eve services we are planning two services in the church parking lot on Christmas Eve at 4PM and 8:30PM. These will be "Drive-In" services which you can tune in to, in the parking lot, on your car's FM radio. The service will be conducted outside or "close to outside" but somewhere where most in the lot will be able to see. Think about it, it could be fun. This should be (hopefully will be) your only opportunity to attend a drive-in Christmas eve service at St Paul's, have fun with it!

We are also delivering, to your home, a bag of Christmas materials containing everything you will need to celebrate Christmas via live stream at home or in the parking lot including bulletins and communion supplies.

Our Christmas will be different this year, but that does not have to mean we will simply skip it. Defying pandemic is not pretending it is not there. Our defiance is born in our courageous creativity to celebrate the season with the imaginative resources God has given us.

The birth of Jesus has been celebrated in all kinds of challenging conditions through the centuries. Many of these challenging conditions were much more dire than our present situation but this is our challenge before us right now. Rather than fret over what we may miss out on this one Christmas, let us consider the miraculous gift God gave to the world in the birth of Jesus and allow this miracle to give us the strength and resolve to face this challenge with courage, patience and perseverance.

Christ the Savior is born, the ultimate new beginning and we will offer him our worship and praise! Our whole church community will pray for God's guidance and protection during this holiday season. And may God unite us all in the common cause of protecting one another and supporting one another as we move to overcome this global challenge and welcome a new year and a new beginning.

Pastor Frey

--WORSHIP IN DECEMBER--

December 5	6:00 P.M. – Holy Communion
December 6	8:00 & 10:30 A.M. – Holy Communion
December 12	6:00 P.M. – Holy Communion
December 13	8:00 & 10:30 A.M. – Holy Communion
December 19	6:00 P.M. – Holy Communion
December 20	8:00 & 10:30 A.M. – Holy Communion

Christmas Worship Schedule: (sanctuary limit 25 worshippers)

December 21 at 7:00 PM Longest night worship service (live streamed)

Christmas Eve In-Person Worship

(11:00 AM TBD)

2:00 PM (live streamed)

7:00 PM

10:00 PM (live streamed)

Christmas Eve Parking Lot Worship (rain or shine!)

4:00 PM

8:30 PM

Christmas Day In-Person Worship

10:30 AM (live streamed)

All worshippers must make reservations. Reservations will be accepted only by phone on December 21, 22 and 23 between 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM. One (immediate) family per call. In-person worship is subject to cancellation at any time if local coronavirus conditions change

If you do not have internet access for the Sunday livestream service (8:00 A.M.), you may use a phone-in option. If you are on the mailing list for our weekly bulletin, the number to call will be included. If you would like the phone number (it is different each week), please call the church office.

There will also be a phone number to call for the Christmas services. This will be sent to those who get the Sunday notifications and also included in the weekly eblast.

FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

Baptism: 11/8 – **Lux Everlyn Topakbashian**, daughter of Michael & Kaitlyn (Ploppert) Topakbashian

11/15 -- **-Isabelle Lynn Yetter**, daughter of Kenneth Yetter, Jr. & Melissa (Peters) Yetter

Wedding: 11/27/20 – **William Neafcy & Rebecca Mickletz**

Memorial Fund contributions in memory of **Dorothy Brown** given by:

Deb & Laine Kasdras

Howard & Connie Hunter

John & Kay Bonslaver

Memorial Fund contribution in memory of **Gerald Levengood** given by:

John & Kay Bonslaver

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE LORD’S PRAYER AND GOD’S KINGDOM.....

By Joy Gerhart

You may know that I teach the 10th grade confirmation class in the fall. We study all the major topics in the Small Catechism including the Lord’s Prayer. At my former church we used a skit called “If God Should Speak” that involved God asking a person praying the Lord’s Prayer if they knew what they were praying. God asks, “Do you really mean that?” about one of the petitions, probably “thy will be done.” We say the Lord’s Prayer so often without thinking—yes, it’s nice we can say it by heart—but do we ever reflect on what the words mean?

I often think about the line(s) “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” I remember reading a C.S. Lewis book entitled *Out from the Silent Planet* where a man (Ransom) is sent to Mars and encounters creatures who wouldn’t think of going against the will of their creator. There was no sin there. WOW! What a concept! That’s so different from what we experience.

When I teach, I like to compare “Thy Kingdom come” and Thy will be done.” I believe God’s kingdom comes when God’s will is done, which begs the question, “What is God’s kingdom?” “Kingdom” in our language usually suggests a geographical place, but that’s not what it really means here. Kingdom is a dominion, a reign, a state of being, a kingSHIP where God is in charge. God wants to rule our hearts, our will. God’s kingdom is not a future thing, but present now, in part in the world, present in us. I have recently come across the word “kin-dom” in some devotional readings from Luther Seminary and wondered what that was all about. Seminaries are often at the forefront of refining language about God. I attended seminary before a person was graded down or failed if one used the male pronoun for God. When you make a possessive for God, it has to be God’s, not “his” because God isn’t male or female. (Christ is a guy so it’s okay to say “he.”) Now I see this term “kin-dom” which seems to reduce the maleness of the word “kingdom.” I did a little research, and it seems to be a little more than this. Some who compare “kin-dom” with “kingdom” say “kingdom” embodies the notion of imperialism, colonialism, sexism, and racism, whereas “kin-dom” connects with the liberation of God and being an inclusive community. (Of course, that’s just scratching the surface of the comparison.) I’m not sure I’m ready to use “kin-dom” yet in my writing, but it is interesting and we may see it more and more. It does make us think about our words and what they connote. We do know the term “king” has not been a popular notion for governing in America, and even in Israel and other countries, kings don’t always have the best track record.

“Thy kingdom come. . .” Does God’s will rule in your heart? Is God your king? These are important questions as we start the new church year this Advent.

Special Event for Advent.....A Guest at Our Table

Advent is almost here. Advent is a time of preparing, but we have been preparing for Advent! We found a program that sounds like a lot of fun that can enliven our weeks counting down to and through Christmas.



Starting on Nov. 29, the First Sunday in Advent, we plan to share some Bible reading, music and devotion time taped to be shared online for you to enjoy as a family, of one or many, each week for 6 weeks. The theme is "A Guest at Our Table," and each week a different saint or saints will be lifted up. This also carries an international theme because each saint represents a different region of the world.

Nov. 29 is the celebration of St. Andrew, brother of the disciple Peter, and especially honored in Scotland. A suggested meal to prepare to enjoy AT HOME is Shepherd's Pie along with Wassail and Shortbread Cookies. The activity will be the making of an Advent banner out of felt which will have felt flames that can be attached each week of Advent, then a manger for Jesus' birth, and a star for Epiphany.

Dec. 6 will feature St. Nicholas—Holland—with a St. Nicholas puppet craft.

Dec. 13 will highlight Santa Lucia—Sweden—with a Faith poem and woven heart basket activity

Dec. 20 will focus on Mary and Joseph—and take us to Mexico for the custom of Las Posadas procession, including a craft of luminaries.

Dec. 27—Jesus and Christmas

Jan. 3—Wisemen for Epiphany.

We have created activity bags with all the craft materials for you, but we need to know if you are interested! Each interested family of one or many will receive a kit to make an Advent family banner and multiple kits for children to make the other crafts. Please email Joy Gerhart if you are interested (jgerhart@stpaulsdouglassville.com). We can email you the materials including recipes, stories and prayers. We will have bags ready for pick up any time after November 20! Devotional programs will be available online each Sunday. Please respond quickly! (Sunday school curriculum can be picked up with them.)



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 7 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.

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

At this time we are planning on having in-person worship on Christmas Eve, but even if this changes, our sanctuary will be decorated for our virtual service.

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 6, but final deadline to order is Sunday, Dec. 13.**

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 _____



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS.....

Online Sunday School and Confirmation

We are very happy that so many children and teens have been attending Sunday school and confirmation classes via Zoom. Thanks to Faith Casciano, Deb Smith, Jared Miller, Meridith Gaskins and Kathy Jablonski for all their hard work. On line lessons will continue through Advent and into the new year. Please feel free to join us. If you have not received Sunday school curriculum, we have new packs that will be used starting Nov. 29. Please call Joy Gerhart at the church if you need materials. We still have SPARK Story Bibles available too.

Remember the links are:

For SCS and Confirmation 2

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86723392636?pwd=T05rYnp0VIRzRnlmWFsQ1Z4dmZPQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 2339 2636

Passcode: 665304



For **Confirmation 1 (Grades 7-9)**, use this link and passcode:

Link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/7013435262?pwd=cnJDa1lEakRlY1hpaEJZMVZhQU93UT09>

Meeting ID: 701 343 5262

Passcode: 4VsL1Q

SCS CHRISTMAS PROGRAM.....

In this busy season we are working on piecing all the pictures you have shared with us to create a nostalgic Sunday School Christmas Program. Thank you for the pictures you have sent and if you have more, please send them. We have a long way to go until we are finished, but we hope to have the program ready to view on the day that we would have performed our program, Sunday, December 20. More details will be available on our Eblast and website or Facebook page closer to December 20.

YOUTH



Congratulations to Katie Esenwein and the Daniel Boone Girls High School Girls Varsity Soccer Team for winning 11 games in their regular season and 12 games overall. They won in their Berks Division II and won a County Playoff game beating Governor Mifflin. The team had not made the County or District playoffs since 2016! A great accomplishment!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY CONFIRMED YOUNG PEOPLE!.....

Eleven of our youth confirmed their faith on Nov. 1. Perhaps you saw the worship service on Facebook or would like to see it. Our tenth grade confirmation class, now all eleventh graders, were confirmed in an afternoon worship service on All Saints Day. Who were these young people all in white? They were our largest class here at St. Paul's: Kathryn Berger, Kaitlyn Esenwein, Keith Forster, Emma Hackett, Jansen Loscig, Cory Miller, Jared Miller, Ryan Pardusky, Katherine Sarro, Emma Serrian, and Luke Yambor. This is a great class of youth that we hope we will see at church a lot once the pandemic is beyond us. Please remember them in your prayers.

SOCIAL MINISTRY NEWS.....

Thank you to the members of the congregation and our friends who have so generously supported our efforts to provide support for local agencies/groups.

Listed below is a recap of what Social Ministry was able to accomplish this year in spite of COVID19.

- Easter Baskets- items were being collecting for 5 baskets but we were unable to complete the project. With a Thrivent Grant we were able to purchase a large ham and the additional food that wasn't already collected to give to a family of our congregation. We were able to purchase more food and donate to Hopewell Love.
- \$1200 was collected on Blanket Sunday.
- Three boxes of school supplies were delivered to D.B. Middle School.
- Safe Berks – From June to December, 2020 (except July) meals were sponsored by Anna Brown and Barbara Kunkel. Pastoral Care Committee will provide/sponsor a meal in January 2021, and there is \$1,910.00 to help defray costs of meals for 2021.
- Boxes were regularly taken to Safe Berks by Barbara Kunkel and Jane Kinder with items donated by the congregation. Special thanks to Cory Miller and the Key Club in D.B.H.S who are also collecting needed items for Safe Berks. Two Thrivent members requested a \$250.00 grant each and that money will be used to purchase Christmas gifts for residents at Safe Berks.
- We were able to provide Thanksgiving meals for two families of St. Paul's from a Thrivent Grant. Instead of collecting items for Thanksgiving and Christmas Baskets, \$800.00 worth of Redners Gifts cards were collected and ten families in D.B Middle school district will each receive \$75.00 worth of gift cards (5 families each holiday). The extra \$50.00 will be used at the discretion of the School Nurse. We will continue to collect cards until Christmas in hopes more families can be blessed with gift cards.
- 190 plus gifts were donated for the Angel Giving Tree. Thank you to Barbara Kunkel and Jane Kinder for all of their hard work organizing the event and everyone else who made phone calls and helped put gifts in bags. See Barbara's January 2021 Newsletter article for further information.

Again, the Social Ministry Committee thanks the members of the congregation and friends who so generously donated funds and items for our projects. It has been an extremely difficult year for so many people and we hope that we brought some cheer to people. Thank you again and God bless each and every one of you.

WEEKLY PRAYER SERVICE—Wednesdays—9:00 A.M.

Our Wednesday morning prayer group will resume when the pandemic restrictions are lifted. 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. Please include in your prayers this month: Elizabeth Moore, Patrick Moore, Alexander Moorman, Thomas Morrow, Judy Morrow, Bonnie Moser, Grant Moser, Charlotte Moser, Todd Mosteller, Elizabeth Mosteller, Kristopher Moyer, Jennifer Moyer, Hayden Moyer, Maggie Moyer, Hunter Moyer. 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: Makayla Becker, Avery Boorse, Charles Brown, Michael Burd, Charles Burns, Carole, Barbara DePrefontaine, Dan Drust, Emily, David Friedman, Gary G., Lee Hart, Betty High, Arlene Hildebeitel, Angie Hudick, Connie Hunter, Terry Johnson, Sharon Jones, Sue Keay, Garry Kopp, Jean Korf, Kim Koury, Jerry Kupp, Ralson Kutz, Mark Link, Wendy Magargal, Ray Mattis, Cadie Muldoon, Richard Pool, Henry Rhoads, Joan Riegner, Pat Roland, Matthew S., Audrey Serrian, Ellen Sheeler, Patsy Smale, John Smith, Carrie Sorber, Becky Weary, Joan Weil, Judi Weiler, Bob Wendel, Dennis Wilson, Beth Yoder, Sandi Zelinski, family & friends of Walter Shoffstall, and all others listed below or those we name in our hearts: Jake Campbell, Karin DiSanto, Ron Glaser, Diana Gower, Charles Heffner, Larry Herbst, Bobby Hubert, Linda Loshnowsky, Karen McGavin, Edith Moyer, Jerry Muller, Ron Mutter, Richard Randolph, Lenore Robinson, John Shaner, Vernet Spence-Brown, Jason Stalneck, Craig Williams, Jane Williams; homebound -- Peggy Burns, Jennie Clouser, Carol DeLong, Betty High, Arlene Hildebeitel, Ellen Sheeler, Alma Shirey, Dale Szajek, Richard Wise.



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

HAPPY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY TO –

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|
| Ken & Elisabeth Yoder | Dec. 4 | 27 yrs. |
| Ron & Karen Glaser | Dec. 7 | 35 yrs. |
| Ronald & Nan Tindall | Dec. 11 | 21 yrs. |
| Tim Schell & Cindy Manning | Dec. 14 | 1 yr. |
| Paul & Kay Reber | Dec. 23 | 37 yrs. |
| Rory & Peggy Emery | Dec. 26 | 34 yrs. |
| Lee & Susanne Walley | Dec. 28 | 63 yrs. |

--YTD Giving thru October 2020--

	<u>Jan- Oct,2019</u>	<u>Jan-Oct,2020</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>% chg.</u>
Offerings	\$ 297,377	\$ 291,233	-6,144.	-2.07
Vision 2020 Contr.	3,530	49,067	45,537	1,290.01
Total Giving	\$ 300,907	\$ 340,300	39,393	11.57

thank you!

Thanks to all who have been faithfully mailing their contributions to the church office and to those who signed up for electronic giving through Simply Giving.

2020 ANNUAL REPORTS were sent out electronically to those on our eblast list. If you would like a hard copy, they are available for pick-up at the church.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2020

Contributions to the church for the year 2020 must be received before December 31 in order to be credited to your statement for 2020.

SNOW EMERGENCY

In the event that we need to cancel in-building 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.



SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Moving Forward as Church Together

A Farewell from Bishop Zeiser



I want to say thank you to all who served the assembly as voting members. Your patience, your willingness to accompany this synod in a new direction, and your faithful participation to the end of the assembly are important components of this synod's strength, and sure signs that "We Are Church Together".

During Assembly 2020, it was especially encouraging to see such a gifted slate of nominees and candidates for the office of bishop. Thank you to all who were open to the stirring of the Holy Spirit by allowing their names to go forward in the balloting.

I have known Bishop-elect deForest for ten years, and I have worked with him as he helped envision, plan, and produce our last six synod assemblies. Now, he and I have been, and will be, working together to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. I know that God has given Christopher substantial gifts to serve in this office and to work with the Rostered Ministers and congregations of the Northeastern PA Synod. Just as I look forward to his retirement, I also look forward to Christopher's leadership as Bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

A Greeting from Bishop Elect deForest

These are challenging times. I don't need to tell all of you what that means. But these are also times to give deep thanks. And to hold tight to the promise that Jesus is here, and Christ is coming. Advent. Christmas. Epiphany. Ash Wednesday. Lent. Holy Week. Easter. They are all coming. They will be here, soon. Not to bring us more anxiety and more things to do. But to bring us love, joy, peace, and hope.

This is also a time of opportunity: to heal, to grow, to dream, and to act. Working alongside Bishop Zeiser, I hope to hear from many different voices to seek their wisdom, guidance, expertise and involvement going forward. I'll be hearing from our Synod staff. From congregational leaders.

From other synods and their leaders. From other faith communities. And from the others who were nominated to this office of Bishop at last month's Online Assembly. And I can promise you that I will be praying, listening, and learning, in these days to come, to help us all discern how to be, and to act, and to remain: Christ-centered, Spirit-Led, and God-Reliant.

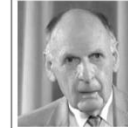
And so, I am here to commit to you that when I take office on January 1st, 2021, I will begin my tenure as your Bishop by taking a sabbath rest. I will not come into the Synod offices or do any work until Monday, January 11. No email. No social media. Only time for rest, with my family, and with our God. I want to start my time working with you as the most sabbath-rested servant-leader I can possibly be.

And then, after resting, let us return - refreshed, and ready to go where the Spirit is leading, centered in Christ, relying on God. We wish you blessings, love, joy, peace and hope, in this season and into this bright new year. God bless.



Online Assembly 2020 - We Did It!

Our Synod was the first in Region 7 to hold an online assembly, and it went really well. Elections were held. Resolutions were adopted. Reports were received. Events were celebrated.



Elections. The process for electing a bishop was overseen by Mr. Ed Cool and by Mr. William "Bill" Horne II, Vice President of the ELCA, who also brought greetings and a report from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. Pastor Christopher deForest was elected to serve a six-year term as bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod on the 5th ballot, with 260 votes. Pastor Ryan Hersch, of Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing, received 222 votes. The other five candidates were Pastors Charles Grube,



Becca Middeke-Conlin, Nelson Quiñones, Susan Ruggles, and Martha Sipe.

Additionally, Pattie Corcoran, Joshua Fink, Pastor Gregory Frey, and Louise McLoughan were elected to the Synod Council either by their Mission District or by the Assembly; and Dr. Margaret Ann Rapp and Pastor Michael Ware were elected to the Synod Discipline Committee.

Worship. Assembly worship was coordinated by Deacon Michael Krentz, who also composed a hymn "We Are Church Together" especially for Assembly 2020. Opening worship was a Service of the Word and included participants from around the synod, as well as a sermon by Bishop Zeiser. There was also music and prayer throughout the course of the Assembly.



**We Are Church,
We Are Called**
50•40•10

Celebrations. A highlight of the first Friday evening was a video celebrating 50/40/10, the 50th anniversary of U.S. Lutheran churches' decision to ordain women, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of the first women of color, and the 10th anniversary of the ELCA's decision to officially ordain people in same-gender committed relationships. The Assembly also recognized major anniversaries of rostered ministers, especially those celebrating 50 years of ordained ministry.

Vice President Kristen Edelman-Weiner's Report. Vice President Kristen emphasized the importance of "Moving Forward as Church Together." Using the metaphor of an old tree line on her property and the efforts she made to revive it, Kristen acknowledged that new growth doesn't happen easily. It requires hard work; attention to caretaking; patience; the willingness to take risks and encounter failures; and above all, faith in God's promises and an optimistic hope in the future God intends for us.



**Because of COVID-19 safety concerns,
Bishop-Elect deForest will be installed at a future date.**

Please visit the synod website at godslove.org for updates.

Synod News is published monthly by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
2354 Grove Road, Allentown PA 18109; 610-266-5101. nepsinfo1988@gmail.com.
View the full color edition online at <http://nepasynod.org>.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Quilting 6:15—CDC	2 10 AM—Bible Study 5:30—Girl Scouts	3	4 10 AM—Bible Study	5 6 PM—Holy Communion
6 8 & 10:30 -Holy Com 9:15—Sunday School (Zoom) 9:30—Finance	7 10 AM—Bible Study 2 PM—Blood Dr. 7 PM—Christian Ed.	8 Quilting	9 10 AM—Bible Study 7 PM--Council	10	11 10 AM—Bible Study	12 6 PM—Holy Communion
13 8 & 10:30 —Holy Comm 9:15—Sunday School (Zoom)	14 10 AM—Bible Study 7 PM—Pastoral Care	15 Quilting	16 10 AM—Bible Study 5:30—Girl Scouts	17	18 10 AM—Bible Study	19 7:30 AM--Property 6 PM—Holy Communion
20 8 & 10:30 —Holy Comm 9:15—Sunday School (Zoom)	21 10 AM—Bible Study 7 PM-Longest Night (livestream)	22 Quilting	23 10 AM—Bible Study	24 2,7,10—In-person worship 4 & 8:30—Parking lot worship	25 <i>Christmas</i> 10:30—In-person worship 	26 6 PM—Holy Communion
27 8 & 10:30 —Holy Comm 9:15—Sunday School (Zoom)	28	29 Quilting	30 5:30—Girl Scouts	31		