



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

FEBRUARY, 2021

From earliest times the season of Lent has been about the community of Christ joining together in solidarity with those preparing to become a part of the community through baptism. Those preparing for baptism did so through a process of catechesis, their process included: scripture reading, prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Since Christianity is a community faith in which individuals join together into one Body of Christ the whole community would also participate in the preparatory practices in partnership with baptismal candidates. A forty-day period of preparation, corresponding to Israel's forty years of wilderness preparation before entering the promised land and Jesus' forty-day wilderness preparation ahead of his temptation by Satan, was set aside to culminate at the Great Easter Vigil where baptisms were a central part of the liturgy. Communion would be received by the newly baptized at the dawn Easter service. This was the *Ordo*, ancient order that defined the rhythm of the church from earliest times.

It was in the middle of Lent last year that we began this pandemic ordeal, right after St Patrick's Day, I remember it well because St Patrick's Day decorations festooned the fellowship hall until June. It is hard to believe, almost a year later, we are still struggling with this virus, but we are. There are probably more people in our church community struggling with this illness now than at any other point in the pandemic. We have had several deaths and a number of hospitalizations. It is a difficult time.

As of this writing we are not meeting together for in-person worship. I am hopeful that the infection conditions will begin to change, and we will be able to begin worshipping in-person again soon. We will not do

this until community spread declines to a level more consistent with pre-holiday levels.

This kind of uncertainty makes planning difficult. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (February 17) whether our community conditions are conducive to in-person worship or not.

I am proposing that we do something a little bit different for Lent this year. Lent is all about gathering. Summer and fall worship demonstrated to us that even if we are open for in-person worship only about a third of our congregation will participate until a stronger, more widespread virus mitigation (i.e. vaccine) is effective. So, for Lent we are planning a ZOOM style gathering which will include a time for online fellowship, worship, family activities and study. These ZOOM services will begin at 6:30 PM on Wednesday evenings in Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday (February 17). This will be our mid-week format for Lent even if we are able to return to Sat/Sun in-person worship during the Lenten season.

To participate in our ZOOM Lenten gatherings, you will need the ZOOM software which is free and simple to download. We will supply a link for ZOOM software and instructions in next week's eblast. We are planning a tutorial on Shrove Tuesday (2/16) at 6:30 PM. We will also provide a phone-in number and instructions for those who do not have internet access.

My sincere hope is that these Lenten ZOOM services will be an opportunity to gather, at least virtually, in solidarity with the ancient practice of the church.

--Pastor Frey

--WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY--

If you do not have internet access for the livestream services, you may use a phone-in option. The number to call is 484-296-4416.

- Feb. 6 – 6:00 P.M. – Live-streamed worship
- Feb. 7 – 8:00 A.M. – Live-streamed worship
- Feb. 13 – 6:00 P.M. – Live-streamed worship
- Feb. 14 -- 8:00 A.M. – Live-streamed worship
10:30 A.M. – Parking lot service with Holy Communion
- Feb. 17 – Ash Wednesday

DRIVE THRU ASHES

Ash Wednesday, February 17, between 11:45 AM-12:30 PM you can come to church and receive the imposition of ashes from your car! Pastor Frey will be stationed at the drop-off circle in front of the church (by the columbarium), rain or shine, and you can receive ashes without getting out of your car.



- Feb. 20 – 6:00 P.M. – Live-streamed worship
- Feb. 21 – 8:00 A.M. – Live-streamed worship
- Feb. 27 – 6:00 P.M. – Live-streamed worship
- Feb. 28 – 8:00 A.M. – Live-streamed worship
10:30 A.M. – Parking lot service with Holy Communion

DRIVE IN WORSHIP

Drive-in Worship Services will continue through 2021. In February, these drive-in services will take place in the parking lot on the second and fourth Sundays of the month (2/14 & 2/28) at 10:30 AM. When you pull into the parking lot you will receive a bulletin, a communion set, and the FM frequency to listen to the service on your car radio. No advanced reservation is required. We encourage you to bring a non-perishable food item for donation to Safe Berks.

No in-building worship at this time. Worship services are live-streamed and can be viewed on Facebook at 6 P.M. on Saturday and 8 A.M. on Sunday or at any time on our website www.stpaulsdouglassville.com

FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

- Funeral:** Jan. 8 – Patsy Smale
 Jan. 12 – Bernice Hampton
 Jan. 14 – John Buck
 Jan. 15 – Lynwood Weil

Contributions given in memory of **Patsy Smale** by:
 Helen Strain (Agape)
 Calvin & Ellen Sheeler (Memorial)
 Anna Brown (Agape)
 Frank & Kathy Jablonski (Memorial)

Contributions given in memory of **Pat Jackle** by:
 Frank & Kathy Jablonski (Agape)
 Jane Kinder (Agape)

Contribution given in memory of **Lynwood Weil** by
 Linda Adams, Scott & Jean Christman (Memorial)

Contribution given in memory of **Dorothy Brown** by:
 Barbara Ackerman (Memorial)

--YTD Giving thru December 2020--				
	<u>Jan- Dec,2019</u>	<u>Jan-Dec,2020</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>% chg.</u>
Offerings	\$ 384,233	\$ 379,160	-5,073.	-1.32
Vision 2020 Contr.	12,095	57,622	45,527.	376.41
Total Giving	\$ 396,328	\$ 436,782	40,454.	9.26

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

THOUGHTS ON ONE YEAR AGO..... Joy Gerhart

I was looking through the Newsletter from February 2020 just out of curiosity to see what we were talking about then. I wrote about the Transfiguration which was February 23 last year (this year Feb. 14) and the Pre-Lenten Mardi Gras All Ages Sunday school event we had on Feb. 23, also, which was so much fun—coloring Alleluias and eating hand-made pretzels. Both youth groups went bowling in February. The day care floors were stripped and waxed, and we gave away our extra pews. We started a new Connections Committee, and everyone was thanked for their help at the Bazaar. The Women’s Group had just made Word Plaques and were looking forward to future speakers. Was that really just a year ago? Seems like much longer.

Well, what hasn’t changed is that I am teaching another Adult Class on Sunday mornings-- this one on the Prophets and how they speak to contemporary culture. What’s fascinating, and sad, is that much of what the prophets criticized the people of Israel for is what many of us are guilty of today—not taking the commandments seriously and being caught up in the rat race of a production economy where the demand is for more, more, more money, power and control. It may be just the spring board I need to propel me into Lent (which starts Feb. 17) into a time of penitential introspection (repentance and self-examination). I think sometimes we take God’s grace for granted and think we can get away with anything. We know God loves us and forgives us through Jesus, but we also know God wants us to be just and concerned for those who have no power, and not just by praying for them.

(Remember “God’s work; Our hands”?) How do we do this in the midst of a pandemic? How do we quell violence in this volatile time? How do we model Christian compassion when we are supposed to stay at home? How do we encourage peace and unity? I don’t have a lot of answers. I know some things we shouldn’t do, but what can we do?

Lent will begin mid-February this year. Many of our practices and activities have been put on hold and will continue to be for a little longer. How can we make Lent meaningful this year? Lent is usually a time for change, for turning away from bad habits and sinful things that draw our hearts and minds away from God. Lent is a time to re-examine or deepen our spiritual relationship and grow closer to God. As much as it isn’t Advent, I think we can look at this Lent as a season of

new hope of new changes. Many of us feel we have already been fasting from some of our pleasures, even just fasting from seeing our families. Now there is hope that there may be light at the end of the tunnel. With the vaccine and hopefully a plan to better distribute it, we may be able to crawl out of our caves unafraid. Maybe we can emerge with a greater appreciation for the things we have missed. Maybe we can better help those who have struggled even more than we have.

Sometimes I feel like I am “talking to the choir,” but even the choir needs to hear the commandments (law) and the good news (gospel). Let Lent be a time of reflection, repentance, and change for you.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES.....



Adult Bible Study on the Prophets

It’s not too late to join the Adult Group meeting Sunday mornings at 9:15 am on Zoom to hear Dr. Walter Brueggemann speak about the prophets and their message for us. This is not really Bible study in the literal sense of the word, but more of a study of how the prophets (often described generally, not specifically) reacted to the culture of Old Testament times in Israel and what message they delivered from God to the people. Brueggemann opens our eyes to see we have much in common with the people of Israel.

The class listens to a 12-14 minute presentation by Dr. Brueggemann every other week, and then on the alternative weeks we hear him address questions shared by a small group of people (for about 15 minutes). The rest of the class is our discussion time, and it is guided by the study book, available at the church.

The link is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86723392636?pwd=T05rYnp0VIRzRnlmWFFsQ1Z4dmZPQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 2339 2636

Passcode: 665304

This is the same as the children’s Zoom Sunday school class, and since Joy has to separate people into breakout rooms, we ask that you email

Joy the weekend of each class to let her know you are planning to attend the class. That way we can wait for you before starting the session. (email: jgerhart@stpaulsdouglassville.com)

Sunday School classes continue at 9:15 on Zoom

The link is the same as the adult class:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86723392636?pwd=T05rYnp0VIRzRnlmWFFsQ1Z4dmZPQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 2339 2636

Passcode: 665304

New curriculum for the spring will be available for pick up soon.

Confirmation 1 class continues

Seventh-ninth graders can tune in to their class using the link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/7013435262?pwd=cnJDa1IEakR1Y1hpaEJZMVZhQU93UT09>

Meeting ID: 701 343 5262

Passcode: 4VsL1Q

HELP SUPPORT RESIDENTS AT MANOR CARE.....

The Pastoral Care Team and Social Ministry Committee are developing a relationship with Manor Care in Pottstown. This nursing home has a population on the 4th floor with limited support from outside visitors, so we are stepping in to provide some items for them. In December snack bags were distributed. In January we gave stuffed animals to the ladies and car magazines to the fellas. February will be Girl Scout cookies and valentines.

If you would like to contribute to a fund to provide items for Manor Care residents you can send a check made out to St Paul's and put "Manor Care" in the memo line. Eventually, when the pandemic is over, we plan to visit with the residents.

FEBRUARY 14 IS BLANKET SUNDAY: "WRAPPED IN LOVE"

Your gift of \$10 (per blanket) will be used to purchase a special blanket which can be used for a variety of purposes during natural disasters and other times of need. Blankets can be used as a suitcase, a pillow, a coat, a tent, a bed or hammock, or floor covering among other things. They can be used as blankets too! You can wrap those who have lost so much with a gift of love.



Please put your donation in your offering envelope, write blankets and the \$ amount in the "other" space, and then mail to the church. You don't have to wait until February 14. Avoid the Valentine rush! Mail early!

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS.....

To our St. Paul's family, we thank you for your prayers, cards and support during this time. A huge thank you to everyone that have generously provided meals!

We cannot thank you enough. We are so blessed to have you all in our extended family!

God Bless,
Joe, Kim and Jordan Koury
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To the congregation of St. Paul's, thank you so much for the lovely planter. Your thoughtfulness is very much appreciated.

Bonnie Cuccaro
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Norma Godon would like to thank everyone for the cards and prayers following her recent surgery.

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Kitty Varady would like to thank everyone for the cards and Christmas wishes.

REGISTER YOUR CHILD FOR PRE-SCHOOL.....

Preschool registration for the 2021-2022 school year opened for church members on January 19.



Morning sessions for both classes are from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The afternoon sessions for both classes are from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Three-year old classes meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Four-year old classes meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Please call 610-385-3333 or pick up a registration form in the Narthex.

We hope to see your child at preschool in the fall!

OPEN DATES TO SPONSOR THE FLOWERS.....

	Apr. 25	Sept. 5
Mar. 7	Aug. 8	Sept. 12
Mar. 14	Aug. 15	Dec. 26
Mar. 21	Aug. 29	

Call the church office at 610-385-6616 if interested. There may be other open dates throughout the year. Watch for additional opportunities.

PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING THIS MONTH.....



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. Please include in your prayers this month: Bruce Musselman, Janet Musselman, Jake Musselman, Ryan Musselman, Drew Musselman, Ann Myers, Cuthbert Nairn, Chase Oesterling, Kylie Oesterling, Grace Oister, Jacob Oister, Ian Oister, Tim Oister, Cheryl Overly. 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, Fern Brown, Michael Burd, Charles Burns, Jane Burns, Tim Davidheiser, Barbara DePrefontaine, SuEllen Ellwanger, Emily, Julie Fiedler, Pamela Fitzgerald, David Friedman, Gary G., Norma Godon, Lee Hart, Linda Heisey, 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, Carol Pearson, Richard Pool, Henry Rhoads, Joan Riegner, Pat Roland, Samuel, Audrey Serrian, John Smith, Carrie Sorber, Wendi Strain, Ava Stumhofer, Ralph Trainer, Becky Weary, Judi Weiler, Bob Wendel, Mason Yoder, Sandi Zelinski, family & friends of Lynwood Weil, John Buck, Patsy Smale, Bernice Hampton, 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 Stalneckner, Craig Williams, Jane Williams; homebound -- Peggy Burns, Jennie Clouser, Carol DeLong, Betty High, Arlene Hildebeitel, Ellen Sheeler, Alma Shirey, Dale Szajek, Richard Wise.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO.....

2/1	Lee Hart	2/15	Christian Luo
2/3	Pr. Greg Frey	2/16	Lynn Grace
	Arlene Hildebeitel	2/17	Carole Berry
	Nicole Sudall		Nick Chroscinski
2/4	Mark Eisenhuth		Joanne Guss
	Jay McClafferty		Alexander Hackett
	Ryan Sonon		Elizabeth Jablonski
2/5	Tim Loscig		Gabriel Luo
2/6	Gabriel Gross	2/18	Marcus Betts
	Rachel Lau		Michael Casciano
2/7	Kevin Fisher		Magdalena Nygard
	Jacob Hasara		Warren Saylor
2/8	Lisa Bowersox	2/19	Norma Godon
	Mary Graefe		Emily Poole
2/9	Brynn Hennessey	2/20	Colleen Breen
	Ian Oister		Stuart Crichton
	Nathan Shingle		Morgan Kelly
	Gene Stewart	2/21	David Barr
2/10	Kristin Saylor		Riley Haring
2/11	Audrey Bokosky		Gavin Michener
	Brad Haring		Kristopher Moyer
	Chase Saylor	2/23	Maeve Bartra
	Olivia Sypherd	2/24	Cindy Dominick
2/12	Patti Hetzell		Rebecca Miller
	Alma Shirey		Joan Schaeffer
2/13	Cameron Hunter	2/25	Adrienne Stumhofer
2/14	Sue Childs	2/26	John Dollhopf
	Richard Kucharik	2/27	Alex Maloney
	John Wolfe		Deb Smith
2/15	Jennifer Bonetz	2/28	Greyson Fusco
	Nolan Breen		Palmer Loughin

HAPPY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY TO –

Darrell & Margaret Reitmeyer	2/1	46 yrs.
Jeffrey & Joan Schaeffer	2/14	40 yrs.
Lee & Sandra Hart	2/21	53 yrs.
Ed & Denise Chroscinski	2/22	24 yrs.
Robert & Marylyne Endy	2/24	31 yrs.

SYNOD NEWS
NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA



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From Our Bishop: Vital Signs for Now

As I write this in January, I have no way of knowing what our situation – national, state, or local – will be like. But I have no doubt in two truths. First, God will be with us and for us. Second, the big challenges will still be upon us. As people who believe in and follow Jesus, we always have these promises: *Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.* This means, wherever we are, and wherever we're headed, that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:39).

In the midst of all we face, across this Synod – our congregations, leaders, members and ministries – are playing *vital roles* in God's work to bring life out of death, love out of hate, hope out of despair, and joy out of sorrow. The Holy Spirit is revealing *vital signs* in our midst because of what Christ has done for us on the cross. So, I ask you: as part of the Body of Christ, *what are our vital signs right now?* How are we doing these three things:

Healing the hurting? Loving the land? Engaging the stranger?

As a Synod going forward, I'm calling these three, our *Vital Signs for Now*. Ways we are called by our God to address this moment through which we are now living:

- **Heal the Hurting** can include helping all of us, suffering through this pandemic. Those who are facing economic struggle. Those who are also ill from other afflictions, including addiction, anxiety and depression. Those having a hard time finding health care and security. And those in pain and fear from our large divides over politics.
- **Love the Land** can include the realities of climate change. The need to make our communities more livable for everyone. And deciding what is best to do with our buildings and properties, to bring more life to our neighbors as well as ourselves.
- **Engage the Stranger** can include anyone who feels estranged, inside and outside our churches. It includes all the ways that have made us estranged from each other and our core Christian values: the lack of welcome for all people, especially foreigners and our LGBTQIA+ siblings; racial injustice and white supremacy; the disregard of facts and the lack of listening to the "other side".

In these first days and weeks of 2021, as a Synod, let us work on these three things. And let us share with each other, what is working and how the Spirit is moving and leading. Let's tell each other and ask your pastors and councils to share with our deans and Synod staff. We will then share with the whole Synod. Let's go and grow more alive and vital, together, as church, by the grace of our great God.

Bishop Christopher deForest

Vital Signs!

When Pastor Michele Kaufman decided she wanted to have Palm Sunday and Easter services in-person last spring at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Mountaintop, she and members of the congregation decided to hold drive-in services on the church grounds. Jim Doxsey, a member of the congregation, purchased a low-frequency FM radio transmitter so members could listen to the service inside their vehicles. The concept worked well, and the outdoor services continued throughout the spring and summer.

In the spring, the congregation completed work on a prayer garden at the rear of the church where Pr. Kaufman conducted the services. Recently, the church moved its 9 a.m. service indoors, but kept the 11 a.m. gathering outside. As late fall arrived, the congregation came up with an idea to allow the pastor to continue to conduct the outdoor service, even in inclement weather.

They built her a Pastor Pod.

"The 9 a.m. service was moved indoors, maintaining social distancing and requiring masks," Pr. Kaufman said. "But we wanted to keep one of our services outdoors because several members of the congregation were dealing with cancer and other health problems. We wanted to make sure they could attend services but be safe."

The approximately 6x8 foot "Pastor Pod" is located adjacent to the church parish hall. It was constructed using two-by-four supports, has a platform, and a roof – the entire structure enclosed in plexiglass.



The congregation and surrounding community embraced the concept of the Pastor Pod with great enthusiasm. "We have people from as far as 25+ miles traveling to worship with us. We have several families from neighboring congregations and different Christian traditions attending on a regular basis because of the safety factor. The creativity and innovation and resilience this congregation has displayed in these trying times has been an inspiration. It has been our modern-day Reformation! We are church in every sense of the phrase!" reported Pr. Kaufman.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Mountaintop

Born and raised in Richmond, VA, I graduated from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA with a public policy and economics degree. After a year of itinerant youth ministry in the Midwest and 18 months as an inventory analyst, I admitted that the rustling in my gut was not indigestion but a call to sacramental service in the Church. I went to Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC, where I learned to appreciate the rhythm of daily life, shrimp and grits, theology, and Friday night cookouts. Since ordination, I've served St. James, Hobbie and St. John, Mohnton. I continue to be gobsmacked for the gift to be about what God is up to in the world—to point out Jesus, crucified and risen.

Pastor Rachael Dietz



I cheer for the Steelers and Packers passionately, stretch daily, roast coffee regularly, and travel through life curiously.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom) 7 PM—Christian Ed.	2 6:15--CDC	3 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	4	5 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	6 6 PM—Virtual
7 8:00—Virtual 9:15—Zoom Sun. School 9:30--Finance	8 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom) 7 PM—Pastoral Care	9	10 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom) 7 PM--Council	11	12 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	13 6 PM—Virtual
14 <i>Blanket Sun</i> 8:00—Virtual 9:15—Zoom Sun. School 10:30—Parking lot Holy Comm.	15 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	16	17 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom) 11:45—12:30—Drive thru ashes 6:30—Zoom service	18 10 AM—Social Ministry (Zoom)	19 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	20 7:30 AM—Property 6 PM—Virtual
21 8:00—Virtual 9:15—Zoom Sun. School	22 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	23	24 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom) 6:30—Zoom service	25	26 8 AM—5 PM--Blood Drive 10 AM—Bible Study (Zoom)	27 6 PM—Virtual
28 8:00—Virtual 9:15—Zoom Sun. School 10:30—Parking lot Holy Comm						