

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



JANUARY, 2021

WOULD JESUS GET THE VACCINE?

There seemed to be so many things to look forward to in 2020 and they just kind of crumbled into dust because of the completely unexpected Covid-19 pandemic. So, it is with joyful expectation that we shrug off this year and look forward to 2021. Though the changing of a year to a new calendar is more symbolic than anything else we will take whatever encouragement we can get.

I expect conditions to improve once we make our way through the winter and by spring and summer, with increased immunity created by widespread use of the several vaccines, we will begin to resume a bit more normality to our living.

Allow me to make several pastoral comments here on the vaccine which will play an important role in the restoration process. I am reluctant to speak compellingly to anyone concerning what they should do with their bodies. Our culture especially claims everyone needs to decide for themselves what medical remedies they wish to participate in, though I acknowledge we are inconsistent on this. For myself I will gladly receive the vaccine when it is available to me and I will take the vaccine for more than just practical/medical reasons. There are at least two dimensions related to our faith which I believe need to be considered.

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION

I believe God works remarkable acts of healing in our midst every day and none are less remarkable than the skill worked through the healers who have opened themselves to the knowledge God makes available to

bring healing and renewal of life through the medical sciences. As I see it, to not be open to medical interventions like tested and approved therapies and vaccines would be like taking a pass on an offered gift of healing by Jesus himself. Imagine the man born blind saying to Jesus, "You know what, I'll just remain blind, if it's okay with you, I'm really picky about what I do with my body." I will receive the gift of healing, in this case in the form of the vaccine, and say thank you to God and those through whom God has worked this miraculous healing as if it were from the hand of Jesus himself. To deny this would be to deny God's pervasive healing power, very much active in our world, in favor of a God who brings healing only through odd and discrete (and rare) direct interventions.

CONSIDERATION FROM CHRISTIAN ETHICS

In the first letter to the Corinthians Paul argues that a Christian's whole self is transformed by baptism. One no longer exists exclusively for oneself, but now your existence is completed in relationship with God and your neighbor. Paul sums it up in this way, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) For the Christian what you do with your body is not just a matter of concern to yourself, it concerns God and the people around you. This is especially true when what you do with your body directly effects the wider community. Christians have long pointed out the truth of this for human sexual relations. But this is also true, and is particularly and apparently true, in regards to the Covid-19 virus. What you do or do not do with your body has and will have a direct impact on the people around you. For a Christian this means our decision about a vaccine is not only about ourselves, we must also consider the role of our bodies as they affect health and wellbeing of the wider community. Therefore, as I interpret this for my own conduct, receiving the vaccine is a salutary and effective way to love and care for my neighbor by not allowing myself to become a vector for and carrier of the virus. Even if I were hesitant to take it for myself (which I am not) I would do it for the sake of those around me.

I offer this reflection as pastoral guidance based on my personal/theological reflection and reasoning for why I intend to receive the vaccine as soon as possible and I hope this will be helpful for you

also. Please contact me directly if I can be of help in your own considerations concerning the several vaccines soon to be coming more widely available.

Would Jesus take the vaccine? Well, he took the cross for the sake of others and I believe he would take the vaccine for the same reason. Jesus said, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)

--Pastor Frey

--WORSHIP IN JANUARY--

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.stpaulsdouglasville.com

If you do not have internet access for the livestream services, you may use a phone-in option. The number to call is 1-267-831-4320, then enter 188047034#. (This may be a toll call depending upon your telephone service.) The number will be used throughout the month of January for all services.

FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

Baptism: -- Dec. 13 -- **Giovanni Dennis Gonzalez**, son of Giovanni Gonzales-Estrada & Kristen (Boyer) Gonzalez

Funerals: Dec. 11 -- **Wilson Yerger**
Dec. 19 -- **Pat Jackle**

Memorial Fund contribution in memory of **Dorothy Brown** given by:
Pat Roland

Memorial Fund contributions in memory of **Pat Jackle** given by:
Helen Strain
Quilters

Contribution to the **Agape Fund** by Frank & Kathy Jablonski in memory of **Pat Jackle**.

Contribution to the **Agape Fund** by Alice Sprague in memory of parents—**Rev. George & Ann Deisher**

--YTD Giving thru November 2020--				
	<u>Jan- Nov,2019</u>	<u>Jan-Nov,2020</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>% chg.</u>
Offerings	\$ 327,214	\$ 319,562	-7,652.	-2.34
Vision 2020 Contr.	12,070	52,856	40,786.	77.16
Total Giving	\$ 339,284	\$ 372,418	33,134.	8.89

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----GRATITUDE THROUGH THE GLOOM by Joy Gerhart

Perhaps by the time you read this it will be 2021. Has much changed? I doubt it. Not yet. Maybe the mail will move a little faster. (Maybe my son will have gotten his Christmas presents in Dallas.) Maybe the curve will flatten a little. Maybe the sun will shine more—at least the days won't be quite as short. I imagine we will still be dealing with covid-burnout, breathing through masks and watching our every step.

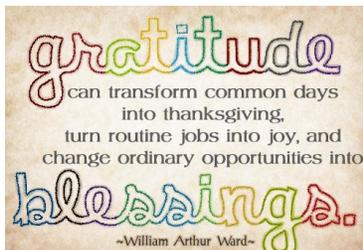
We usually talk about gratitude around Thanksgiving time, but maybe now is a good time to talk about it too. I remember a Vacation Bible School program on the parables that I did with another church which included a catchy song about having an attitude of gratitude. In addition to this song, many books have been written about having an attitude of gratitude. Gratitude journals are available to write about what we are grateful for. Maybe at this time when we don't feel it, we should work on it even more.

All of us have things to be grateful for. Most of us want for just about nothing, and some of us are trying hard to get rid of some of all that we have! We are all grateful that vaccines have been developed and are being distributed. We are grateful for all the people—caregivers, doctors, nurses, first responders, police, teachers, letter carriers, grocery store and other store workers, people who contribute and distribute food to those without, and anyone else I left out—who help us make it from day to day with minor trouble. Thankfulness isn't even a strong enough word for the technology that helps keep us connected to one another; even when it fails, we know it exists and can be fixed. We are grateful for each other—we know we are a phone call away or a letter away from each other. We are grateful that we have a community of Christian believers to keep us grounded and faithful, strong in the spirit and uplifted from despair. We are very grateful to have a pastor who works so hard for his flock, teaching and preaching, climbing on tall ledges and tackling technology to get the good news out to all.

Well, you get the idea. There is a lot to be grateful for—more than I could ever include in an article. But I have not mentioned the most important cause for our gratitude. That is God, of course. Without God's love, without God's promises, without God becoming incarnate in Jesus, where would we be?

In my last confirmation class of 2020, I emphasized two words: "relationship" and "grace." God desires to have a relationship with each one of us. God has made promises to us to be with us and save us, God has died for us, and God covers our sins with God's grace, God's undeserved gift of love.

So in the midst of all the gloom, we do have a lot to be grateful for, and maybe focusing on the positive can help lift our spirits and bring us hope in this new year.



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES ON JANUARY 10

Online Sunday school class will resume on January 10 at 9:15 with the special story of the Baptism of Jesus. (We hope you read about Simeon and Anna on your own over the Christmas break!) Everyone is invited to attend. The link is the same as the adult class:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86723392636?pwd=T05rYnp0V1RzRnlmWF FsQ1Z4dmZPQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 2339 2636

Passcode: 665304

Please contact Joy Gerhart if you plan to participate and have not already asked for a packet of leaflets.

NEW SUNDAY ADULT STUDY BEGINS JANUARY 10.....

Our next adventure in Bible Study will begin on January 10 with the study of "Embracing the Prophets in Contemporary Culture," a course featuring 10-15 minute videos with Dr. Walter Brueggemann.

Walter Brueggemann, arguably America's leading Old Testament scholar and theologian, takes us on a wild ride through the poetic prophecy of the Hebrew Scripture, identifying cultural contexts, putting a framework to Israel's history, and, most significantly—and times challengingly!—drawing connections between Israel's sociological, economic and spiritual status and that of America today.

Anyone who has seen Dr. Brueggemann in other videos knows he is not boring, but very engaging. Participant books are being purchased to go along with the sessions so please let Joy Gerhart know if you are interested in following the course or acquiring a book.

Those of you used to connecting with Bible Study via Pastor Frey's Zoom link will need to use this new link, Joy's zoom account.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86723392636?pwd=T05rYnp0V1RzRnlmWF FsQ1Z4dmZPQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 2339 2636

Passcode: 665304

Sunday school uses this link too, so we will be using a breakout room for our study—have no fear—it's no work for you, just for the host, Joy. We will aim to start at 9:15 am Sunday mornings.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES RESUME ON JANUARY 10

Seventh-ninth graders can tune in to their class using the link:
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/7013435262?pwd=cnJDa1lEakR1Y1hpaEJZMVZlQU93UT09>
Meeting ID: 701 343 5262
Passcode: 4VsL1Q

Tenth graders can join Pastor Frey for the study of Lutheran Living by using Pastor's link which we will send to you.

LEARNING MINISTRIES DAY—January 23, 2021

This year our synod's yearly event is all on-line and easy to attend. \$25 and a computer can take you on a magic carpet ride to an amazing keynote address by the Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing on "Journeys Through Revelation: Apocalyptic Hope for Today." She helps make the book of Revelation more understandable and not as a book of gloom and doom or time tables of "The End." Registration is open until January 15 for this conference day which includes the option to "attend" up to three one-hour workshops on many different topics, many not related to the keynote theme. It's all outlined on the synod website. Look it all up by googling nepsynod.org. There will be registration information there. (You can pay by check or credit card.) If you need any more information or help, please call Joy Gerhart at the church.

FEBRUARY 14 IS BLANKET SUNDAY: "WRAPPED IN LOVE"

Your gift of \$10 will be used to purchase special blankets used for a variety of purposes during natural disasters and other times of need. You can wrap those who lost much with a gift of love.



Use the special envelopes provided in the narthex or include your donation in your regular offering envelope, marked "blankets".

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: Nancy Moyer, Zach Mueller, Matthew Mueller, Lisa Mullen, Kim Murray, Susan Murray, Magdalena Nygard, Paul Muschick, Laurie Muschick, Riley Muschick, Reese Muschick, Lauren Musetti, Alexander Musetti, Christopher Musetti. 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, Tim Davidheiser, Barbara DePrefontaine, Emily, 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, Richard Pool, Mary Ellen Raneiri, Henry Rhoads, Joan Riegner, Pat Roland, Samuel, Audrey Serrian, John Smith, Carrie Sorber, Ralph Trainer, Becky Weary, Judi Weiler, Bob Wendel, Mason Yoder, Sandi Zelinski, family & friends of Pat Jackle, Wilson Yerger, Walter Shoffstall, Dennis Wilson, 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, Patsy Smale, Dale Szajek, Richard Wise.

THANK YOU...

The Lord has blessed us with the love of the congregation. May the Lord's blessings be returned to all of you threefold. You are all a reflection of His love.

--A grateful family who received a food basket

*Happy
Birthday!*

Jan. 1	Blaire Eidell	Jan. 20	Willow Havrilla
Jan. 3	Michael Hasara Harper McCord		John McCalicher Helene Wallauer
Jan. 4	Barry Leier	Jan. 21	Kelly Mooney Jeffrey Sowers Cindy Weidner
Jan. 5	Garrett Eisenhuth Breylan Kupp Christopher Michener	Jan. 24	Sarah Bartra Kiara Ray Richard Talbott
Jan. 7	Lida McManus	Jan. 25	Michele Hensley Aimee Luo
Jan. 8	Larry Barr Justine Sim	Jan. 26	Anna Brown Susan Murray Nathan Flamini Tim Oister Patsy Smale
Jan. 1	Phyllis Harwood	Jan. 27	John Cappellano Nolan Tindall Kennedy Yetter
Jan. 12	Daniel Kucharik	Jan. 28	Carter Ahles Garret Reinhardt William Ridge
Jan. 13	Diane Hartline James Waring	Jan. 29	Bonnie Simmons Jeffrey Sowers
Jan. 15	Kennedy Albright Ruby Saylor Lynne Zepp	Jan. 31	Eleanor Davidheiser David Zepp
Jan. 16	Hayden Moyer Brooks Yetter		
Jan. 18	Adrianna Cozzone Ray DiSandro Susanne Leier Connie Schittler		
Jan. 19	Jill Michener Jamie Trout		
Jan. 20	Kay Bonslaver Jeff Duplak		

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CONGRATULATIONS TO –

Harry & Susan Schweikert	Jan. 3	51 yrs.
Chester & Marsha Springel	Jan. 13	20 yrs.
John & Ellen Buck	Jan. 16	69 yrs.
LeRoy & Barbara DePrefontaine	Jan. 19	64 yrs.

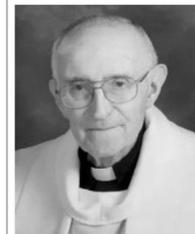
SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

A Note from the Bishop Elect

Dear Friends in Christ - The Seasons of Christmas and Epiphany proclaim the good news: "Christ with us" and "Christ revealed to us!" I cling to these words. I long to hold tight, loved ones who must stay apart for a time: my parents, siblings, nephews and nieces. And I grieve for those we have lost, cry out for an end to this present suffering. But I also hear this great promise with new ears and insights: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2 NIV). Let us trust that the Light of the World is here already, and yet his coming is on the cusp, ready to start making all things new. In the coming days, I so look forward to sharing the vision that God is ready to reveal, for new life and renewed purpose across our Synod. More to come: keep watch! - Chris deForest, Bishop Elect

The Rev. Richard H. Stough Honored for Navy Chaplaincy



The Rev. Richard H. Stough was recently recognized for 30 years of service as a U.S. Navy Chaplain with a \$1,000 contribution to the ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministry Fund for Leaders Scholarship Endowment Fund in honor of his service. The Endowment supports word and sacrament ministry candidates who will minister to military service members, and those who will serve as Veteran's Administration Chaplains or as Federal Prison Chaplains.

Because of its role in lifting up the Endowment Fund, this synod is designated an "ELCA Medallion Synod." Congregations can become "ELCA Medallion Congregations" by similarly supporting the Endowment Fund. Contact the synod office for more information.

Learning Ministries Day 2021 - Registration Deadline is Jan. 15

On Saturday, January 23, Learning Ministries Day will be held via Zoom for the first time ever; and you are invited! We will offer three one-hour workshop sessions with over 15 workshop options total. Our keynote speaker will be Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, where she has taught since 1994. She will be speaking on "Journeys through Revelation: Apocalyptic Hope for Today."

A \$25 fee will be charged for each participant which will include the keynote, three workshops of their choice, and a goodie bag mailed directly to their home. Online registration will be open until the end of the day on January 15, 2021. Checks must be received to the Synod Office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 15. Workshop descriptions and the registration link can be found on the synod website at godslove.org.

Hope, Reading Receives NAACP Community Impact Award



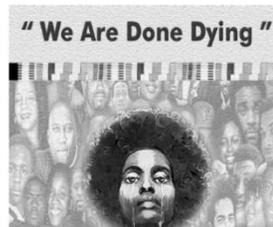
Food distribution staff at Hope

On Saturday, November 14, the Reading Chapter of the NAACP met for its 33rd annual Freedom Fund Gala - virtually, of course. Meals from "Grill Then Chill" were delivered to the homes of attendees. Following the meal, awards were presented to local organizations for their racial justice efforts. The Gala theme was, "We Are Done Dying."

Among the recipients of the 2020 Community Impact Award is a congregation of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod - Hope Lutheran Church in the Northwest section of the City of Reading. The award citation reads, in part, "We are thrilled to honor the church's dedication and commitment to making a difference with programs supporting the fullness of life for the residents living in our community."

Hope hosts the largest food pantry in the Helping Harvest Food Bank service area. Additionally, Hope's Table community outreach ministry provides a weekly meal for area residents; and Hope sponsors Café Esperanza, a One World Everybody Eat affiliate. The congregation has also offered summer and after-school programs for the multicultural children and youth who live in the neighborhood.

Pastor Mary Wolfe, who accepted the award on behalf of the congregation, commented, "We are so honored to be considered for this award. Hope has been enriched in many ways through the relationships we have been privileged to form with all of our neighbors."



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://nepsynod.org>.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 <i>New Years Day</i> Office closed. 	2 6 PM—Virtual Worship
3 8—Virtual Worship	4 7 PM- Christian Ed.	5 Quilting 6:15—CDC	6	7	8	9 6 PM—Virtual Worship
10 8—Virtual Worship 9:15—Sunday School--Virtual 9:30--Finance	11 7 PM—Pastoral Care	12 Quilting	13 7 PM--Council	14	15	16 6 PM—Virtual Worship 7:30 AM--Property
17 8—Virtual Worship 9:15—Sunday School--Virtual	18	19 Quilting	20	21 Social Ministry	22	23 Learning Ministries Day 6 PM—Virtual Worship
24 8—Virtual Worship 9:15—Sun. School 31 8—Virtual Worship 9:15—Sun. School	25	26 Quilting	27 7 PM—Worship & Music	28	29	30 6 PM—Virtual Worship