



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

**FEBRUARY, 2022**

*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup>Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup>When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.'<sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.'<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'<sup>6</sup> Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup>He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. <sup>9</sup>When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup>and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.'<sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. (John 2:1-11)*

"Things will never be the same after the pandemic." This statement is undeniably true. The old saying, "You cannot step into the same river twice" suggests that no experience is ever exactly the same as any other. But somehow, we know the change being produced by the pandemic is different, more sweeping and permanent. For those who believe that things will never return to the way they were at the church before the pandemic I have to admit I agree.

Of course, this does not mean that everything or even most things at the church will change. It simply seems undeniably true to me that

there are ministries, practices and, in some cases people, who will not return when the main sweep of this pandemic is over.

I want to affirm this as true for more reasons than simply because it is. I do not think expecting a return to a pre-pandemic state will prepare us in any substantive way to begin to evaluate what the church should look like going forward. A restoration to a return point pre-pandemic is not a reasonable goal and should not be the measurement applied to our reemergence.

It is also important to note that the changes which will emerge are not a direct result of the pandemic itself. American's religious attitudes and expectations have been dramatically changing especially over the last decade. I believe we will find that the pandemic has accelerated this process of change just like it has accelerated other societal changes.

But here is the key question for us, is what is to come necessarily inferior to what has been before?

It is natural for we humans to look nostalgically back to the past and suspiciously toward the future. The thing about the future is it is so darned uncertain whereas the past is something with which we have some familiarity. But there is no logical reason to assume that the past is superior to the future.

The story of Jesus turning water into wine got me thinking about this. In the story, which is the first public sign Jesus carries out in the Gospel of John, Jesus and his disciples are at a wedding in the town of Cana. Jesus' mother discovers that there is no more wine and suggests to Jesus he do something. Jesus, somehow, turns the water in huge stone vessels into wine and it is far superior wine to the wine originally provided for the wedding guests.

It is this detail—the superiority of the wine Jesus provided—which is highlighted in the chief steward's statement. '*Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.*' In a nutshell, the best usually comes first followed by the inferior but with Jesus it is the other way around. In an even smaller nutshell...with Jesus, the best is yet to come.

On one level we know this to be true. The Kingdom of God, what John’s gospel calls Eternal Life, is a future, not-yet reality. Jesus assures his disciples throughout the gospels that good things given up in the present will be restored. These heavenly expectations of no more sighing and weeping and being restored in the loving relationships of those people (and animals!) we have lost is promised by the God whose love of life is so profound that God will not allow any of it to be lost.

But is there a promise of better things to come suggested in the miraculous and superior wine story on this side of the veil of death? I believe there is. In Jesus the possibility exists for better things so long as we are open and receptive to their possibility.

Why would Jesus make this water into wine his very first sign in John if it was not vitally important? In an important sense everything that comes after this miracle builds on its foundation, the foundation that in Jesus the best is yet to come.

As Christians we are called to live in the reality that Jesus has the will and ability to redeem our past and transform our future in such a way that the quality of the future exceeds that of the past. The future, even though uncertain, is not something to fear but the new mission we are called into by *paths as yet untrodden* yet is assured by the undiminished presence of Christ.

I hope this story of the wedding at Cana will be a reminder to us, in the uncertain days ahead, that while things will not be quite as they were before, this is not something to be anxious or sad about for our savior and guide began his public ministry with a sign that we would do well to remember, “In Jesus the best is always yet to come.”

O God, you have called your servants,  
to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,  
by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.  
Give us faith to go out with good courage,  
not knowing where we go,  
but only that your hand is leading us,  
and your love supporting us,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

--Pastor Frey



**FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....**

**Baptisms:** 12/26/21 – **Antonia Santos Gross**, daughter of Chris & Bianca (Santos) Gross

1/2/22 – **Jennifer Lorraine Sowers**, daughter of Jeffrey & Katherine (Harrison) Sowers

1/15/22 – **Lily Marie Guldin** daughter of Aaron & Amanda (Childs) Guldin

**--YTD Giving thru December, 2021--**

	<u>Jan.-Dec. 2020</u>	<u>Jan-Dec. 2021</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>% chg.</u>
Offerings	\$ 379,230	\$ 371,201	- 8,029	-2.12
Vision 2020 Contr.	57,552	52,788	-4,763	- 8.28
<b>Total Giving</b>	<b>\$ 436,782</b>	<b>\$ 423,989</b>	<b>-12,793</b>	<b>-2.92</b>

**THOUGHTS ABOUT EPIPHANY BY JOY GERHART.....**

Since Lent does not start until March 2 this year, that gives us time to think about Epiphany. We talk about the meaning of Epiphany every year, but somehow the meaning often evades (even) me, sometimes. I do associate the word with a lightbulb going off in my head and my saying, “Ah ha! Now I get it!” What does that have to do with our faith in Jesus? I think it has to do with who we believe Jesus to be, who the Scriptures profess Jesus to be.



I am currently teaching a course about “the historical Jesus” and how some differentiate the historical Jesus from the Jesus of faith. Many in our class have never thought this way before, and why should we? We have been raised in the household of faith. It is interesting for us to hear how others think and for us to learn about other perspectives on Jesus. (Not everybody is ready for this journey.) Are you aware that historians of Jesus’ time DID write that there was a man, Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified? There are not huge volumes, but there are historical writings about Jesus’ existence.

“That Jesus was on earth” is one thing, but WHO Jesus was and is, is another.

Epiphany is a time when our readings help REVEAL who Jesus is to us. The wise men followed a star because they knew it signaled that an important KING was being born. Jesus changes water into wine as a SIGN of God’s abundance and love and reversal of expectations. Jesus REVEALS God to us. Jesus REVEALS God’s will for the world: that the blind see, the lame walk, good news really comes to the poor, and the oppressed are set free. Jesus preaches in Luke’s “Beatitudes” that the hungry will be filled, those who weep will laugh, and those who are poor will receive the kingdom of God—more reversals.

Epiphany means a perception of the essential nature or meaning of something (OR someone); a MANIFESTATION or appearance. I’ve always liked that word MANIFESTATION. Something “manifest” is readily perceived by the senses and especially by sight; easily understood or recognized by the mind. (I guess a “manifest”—list of passengers would be the list of people who are really there.)

I love the hymn “Songs of Thankfulness and Praise” whose refrain is “God in flesh made manifest.” That’s who Jesus is. That’s what we learn about in Epiphany! Aside from “manifest” rhyming with “wedding guest” in the hymn, we learn about how God in Christ, in flesh, is manifest: in healing, in fighting the devil, in bringing good from ill, in giving us an example to imitate.

I recently heard a verse to the hymn I hadn’t heard before:

*Manifest on mountain height,  
shining in resplendent light,  
where disciples filled with awe  
your transfigured glory saw;  
from that place you went with them  
steadfast to Jerusalem;  
cross and Easter day attest  
God in Christ made manifest.*

Of course, this verse refers to the Transfiguration which is the event we celebrate on the last Sunday in Epiphany, the Sunday before Lent, where Jesus’ image turns pure and dazzling white, and he is seen talking

to Moses and Elijah by three of his disciples. Here we see Jesus in his true glory and majesty. Here we see Jesus enveloped in light -- LIGHT, another aspect of Epiphany, which enables us to see. Light shines—light reveals--we see—we are enlightened in Epiphany.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES.....

### Special Opportunity for Study: Faith Formation Saturday

The synod is offering more Faith Formation Saturday classes in 2022 beginning the second Saturday of February. Pastor Frey will be leading the first session on February 12 from 10 am-12 noon. It is about How the Bible Came to Be: The transmission of the Bible across distance and through time has been a fascinating and miraculous process. Exploring how the Bible has come down to us in the forms in which we have it today addresses some of the most important questions concerning Biblical authority and interpretation. It is also an amazing story which, in many ways, is still unfolding. The presentation will utilize pics and graphic and opportunities for conversation. You may register by going to the synod website at [nepasynod.org](http://nepasynod.org) and click on the logo that says Faith Formation Saturdays. There is a minimal fee of \$5, but it is not clearly visible in the introductory information. You will receive the zoom link after you register.

Upcoming Faith Formation Saturdays will be:

March 12: Roger Timm—“The Churches the Apostles Left Behind”

April 9—Scherelene Schatz—“Early Church Fathers” (100-500 AD)

May 14— TBA

June 11– Cheryl Statham—“Leaders of the Reformation”

### SUNDAY SCHOOL WILL STAY VIRTUAL UNTIL AT LEAST FEB. 6

In an effort to keep everyone safe and healthy, we will continue to offer Sunday school, Confirmation class and adult classes online until at least February 6. The Christian Education Committee will be meeting on February 7 and will determine whether we will continue online or return to in-person classes. We will inform all families directly by email and also include the information in the E-blast. Please call or email Joy Gerhart with any questions.

### Adult Study on Sundays at 9:15 am

“What Are They Doing to Jesus?” is the title of the course we are currently studying in our Sunday morning adult class. Involving 20-30 minute videos led by Dr. Mark Allan Powell, Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, the six-session course, begun on January 16, takes us through studies of the historical Jesus through apocryphal gospels, history writings at the time of Jesus and evaluation of Jesus by historians in our time.

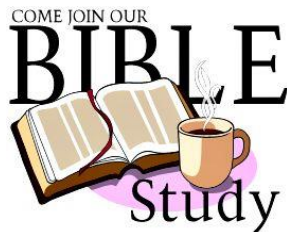
- Session 3—(January 30)—The Jesus Seminar (an evaluation of the words of Jesus conducted in the ‘80’s and ‘90’s, primarily)
- Session 4—Jesus and Politics: Was Jesus a Revolutionary?
- Session 5—Did Jesus Work Miracles?
- Session 6—Who Killed Jesus and Why?

Mark Allan Powell tries to determine whether historical studies of Jesus undermine the Christian faith or in fact confirm and support our religious confessions. Meeting ID: 827 2209 0356 Passcode: 598177. (Since we started this course entirely by zoom, we will continue entirely by zoom. Things changed since the announcement in the January newsletter.)

### Other Adult Classes Accessible Online

Monday Bible Study on the Old Testament Lesson for the upcoming Sunday led by Joy Gerhart:  
Meeting ID: 873 0089 2165 Passcode: 067059

Wednesday and Friday Bible Studies led by Pastor Frey: Meeting Code: 219 384 065 and Password: st.pauls (Wednesday is on the gospel of John and Friday is the upcoming gospel lesson for Sunday) All of these classes begin at 10:00 am.



### ALTAR GUILD HELP NEEDED!!.....

Joan Wendel retired after being chair of the Altar Guild Committee for 25 years. Thank you Joan for all those years of service. We are grateful many people still agreed to serve on the committee. We have some new names who have to be trained, but we need more volunteers especially for the 10:30 service. There will be on-line sign up and you can select the Sundays you wish to serve. The 1st and 3rd Sundays will be 'meal communion' and all other Sundays will be intinction.

Also, we need the names of people who are willing to supply two loaves of round, white bread for the 1st and 3rd Sundays. A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Narthex.

### FEBRUARY 13 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 either bring it or mail to the church.

### ALTAR FLOWER SPONSORS NEEDED FOR THE FOLLOWING SUNDAYS...

- April 24                      August 14                      September 4
- August 28                      September 11

Cost is \$35 per Sunday. There may also be other dates available throughout the year.



As we turn the calendar and start a new year, it's also time to think about updating our Simply Giving Contributions. Simply Giving is so simple, sometimes we forget that we may have wanted to

increase our giving in the new year. So, there's nothing like a pleasant reminder that now would be an excellent time to make any changes to your Simply Giving contributions. It's easy to do. Just call the church office at 610-385-6616 and let Susanne know that you would like to update your giving. She'll gladly email you the form to complete and send back. It's that simple!

Also, if you currently don't take advantage of the Simply Giving program, now would be a great time to get started. The process to get started is the same. Just call the church office and ask to be included in the program. Susanne will send you the form to complete and send back.

Simply Giving is a great way to stay consistent with your church offerings, and it helps the church out by receiving a consistent income stream as well. Given the events and uncertainty of the past two years due to the COVID crisis, it's even more important for the church to receive offerings on a regular basis, particularly as congregants may be worshipping via Livestream instead of in-person.



So, pick up the phone and call and ask for your Simply Giving form today!

**THE SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE APPRECIATES YOUR SUPPORT DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.....**

We want to take this opportunity to thank our congregation for the generosity shown during Christmas 2021. Despite difficult times for everyone, our congregation:

- donated \$1,340.00 in gift cards that will be distributed among our one family and families designated at Daniel Boone School.

- donated 190 gifts for fifty children whose parents are imprisoned and not able to provide gifts for their own children. More than 1,000 children were included in this program in the Reading area.
- sponsored a catered Christmas Eve meal for more than 35 residents at Safe Berks.
- sponsored a Christmas Luncheon Party for residents of Manor Care with Christmas carols, stories, and a craft, along with their favorite dessert.
- Three members donated Thrivent grants for gift cards for a total of \$750.00 that was used to purchase 24 coats for women at Safe Berks

Your generosity abounds and is overwhelming during this time where everyone is in need. We are blessed with the grace of God and our gratitude is shown through our giving.

**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: Adrienne Stumhofer, Lucas Stumhofer, Aubrey Stumhofer, Ave Stumhofer, Nicole Sudall, Janet Suglia, Harlan Swavely, Larry Swavely Eileen Swavely, Olivia Sypherd, Dale Szajek, Kathy Szajek, Seth Szajek, Henry Szajek, Stephanie Szajek, Connor Szajek-Keppel. If you have anyone to add to the prayer list, call the church office. Please pray for those with special concerns:

Cindy, Diane Davis, Eve, Bob Fisher, Al Forster, Norman Griffin, Sara Hartline, Kasper, Daniel, Kim Koury, Marquette family, Craig Nichols, Mark Painter, Michael Pearson, Wendy Strain, MJ Talbott, family & friends of Rachel Cox, and all others listed below or those we name in our hearts: Makayla Becker, Avery Boorse, Michael Burd, Jake Campbell, Darrell, Barbara DePrefontaine, Ethan, Ron Glaser, Jevin Heller, Connie Hunter, Terry Johnson, Joanne Marnell, Ron Mutter, Richard Randolph, Henry Rhoads, Lauren Ridge, Gene Schaeffer, Audrey Serrian, John Shaner, Ellen Sheeler, Vernet Spence-Brown, Jason Stalneckner, Joan Wendel, Craig Williams, Jane Williams; Sandi Zelinski, homebound -- Charles Brown, Fern Brown, Peggy Burns, Jennie Clouser, Carol DeLong, Betty High, Arlene Hildebeitel, Dale Szajek.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO.....**

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

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS.....**

Darrell & Margaret Reitmeyer	2/1	47 yrs.
Kathy & Robert Kline	2/5	39 yrs.
Robert & Jane Eagle	2/10	21 yrs.
Jeffrey & Joan Schaeffer	2/14	41 yrs.
Lee & Sandra Hart	2/21	54 yrs.
Robert & Marylyne Endy	2/24	32 yrs.



# SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA

FEBRUARY 2022 • ISSUE 2 • VOLUME 30

## *Faith in Action*

### Arndt's Lutheran Church in Easton



Hunger is a real problem in our country and our area of Pennsylvania is no different. Last year we started a reverse Advent food drive where congregants collected food items each day during Advent, culminating with delivery to our local food bank. It was such a success that we decided to expand it to the community. Volunteers will collect, sort, and deliver food items to the pantry right after Christmas when the need is the greatest. This year's food drive was very successful as we collected 983 lbs. of food valued at \$1671 for the ProjeCt Easton Food Pantry in Easton, PA. Approximately 43 families from Arndt's and people outside the community participated in the project. A local moving company donated a truck and manpower for the delivery. We hope to make this project an annual event of providing for those in need.

# FAITH FORMATION SATURDAYS



FAITH FORMATION SATURDAYS OCCUR THE SECOND SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH, STARTING IN FEBRUARY, RUNNING FROM 10:00AM - 12:00PM

## STEWARDSHIP EXTRAVAGANZA

**\$** JUNE 18, 2022 **\$**  
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, LANSDALE  
AN EVENT ORGANIZED BY THE SEPA AND NEPA SYNODS (REGISTRATION FORTHCOMING)

## PRAYING TOGETHER



Marty Everhart  
Doug LaFauci  
Roy Koehler  
Phyllis Pelletier  
Emma Weaver

# MISSION SUPPORT 2022



Send in your mission support commitments for 2022. You can find the form on the synod website, under the resources tab.

**boundless**  
god beyond measure  
JULY 24-28, 2022  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
REGISTER NOW AT [ELCA.ORG](http://ELCA.ORG)

Save the date SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2022  
June 10-11  
Reading

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

# February 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<b>1</b> Quilting 6:15—CDC 2 PM--TOPS	<b>2</b> 10 AM—Bible Study	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	<b>5</b> 6 PM—Holy Comm
<b>6</b> 8 & 10:30—H.C. 9:15—Sun. School (zoom) 9:30--Finance	<b>7</b> 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) 1 PM—Prayer Shawl 7 PM—Chr. Ed.	<b>8</b> Quilting 2 PM--TOPS	<b>9</b> 10 AM—Bible Study 7 PM--Council	<b>10</b> 7 PM—T3 (zoom)	<b>11</b> 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	<b>12</b> 6 PM—Holy Comm
<b>13</b> 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	<b>14</b>  10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) 7 PM—Pastoral Care	<b>15</b> Quilting 2 PM--TOPS	<b>16</b> 10 AM—Bible Study 5-9 PM—Relay For Life	<b>17</b> 10 AM—Social Min.	<b>18</b> 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	<b>19</b> 7:30 AM--Property 6 PM—Holy Comm
<b>20</b> 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School 1 PM—Girl Scouts	<b>21</b> 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) 6 PM-Chime mtg.	<b>22</b> Quilting 2 PM--TOPS	<b>23</b> 10 AM—Bible Study 7 PM—Worship & Music	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	<b>26</b> 6 PM—Holy Comm
<b>27</b> 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	<b>28</b> 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)					