



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

JUNE, 2022

WHEN THE WALLS CAME DOWN.....

The weather was described as “hot and sultry” in the June addition of *The Church Bulletin*, official newsletter of Amity Lutheran Parish - published by Lutheran pastor H.B. Ritter. It was Sunday June 11, 1922 and an uncomfortable feeling filled the air. Perhaps the discomfort came from Dr. C.F. Swift, guest preacher, announcing the unfulfilled pledges of Reformed and Lutheran members. Or possibly there was a deeper sense of foreboding in the air. Just a few hours later that air would explode.

At 5:16 PM that same day a tornado touched down in Amityville and completely destroyed St Paul's Union Church. The destroyed building had been the third church constructed on that site by the Reformed and Lutheran congregations.

The first log church was placed in 1752 and was replaced by a stone building in 1795. The brick church, dedicated on August 17, 1873, was a larger building, 52' x 81' with a steeple 123 feet high. The cost of this third building was \$21,635, with a seating capacity of about 700. The steeple had been severely damaged by lightning only ten years after its completion, but the building was sturdy and sound.

The destruction of the church made quite a scene and was widely photographed. Postcards of the ruin were printed and distributed, many of which survive in silent witness to the total devastation of the church; scattered pews, piles of bricks, organ pipes, the gigantic tower clock smashed in the middle of the sanctuary and the church bell at the edge of the debris field. For several days church members and community

residents visited the site pausing to be photographed amid the wreckage and whisper silent prayers of thanks that the cyclone didn't strike several hours earlier when the church was full.

It didn't take long for the members of the Union congregation, Reformed and Lutheran, to begin clearing the wreckage and planning to rebuild. Clearing the debris was no easy task as tons of brick and wood lay scattered across the property. The church bell, which had previously summoned worshippers to prayer, now was the gathering place for workers, reminding them of God's summons to rebuild the church.

Cooperation, sometimes in short supply in *union* congregations, was the essential resource in St Paul's rapid recovery from disaster. Suppers were held, contributions solicited, and joint Sunday School classes took the lead in raising funds. The Amity Charity Girls, Ladies Aid, the Dorcas Society and the Men's Bible Class pledged funds toward the \$80,000 cost of a new yellow brick church building. Within six months \$22,000 had been raised while, according to the *Reading Eagle*, “A community spirit seldom equaled is being manifested by the residents Amityville in the rebuilding of the church.” You might say the disaster put the *amity* in Amityville.

The new church building was completed and dedicated in May of 1925 at a total cost of \$121,000. This building was shared by the Lutheran and Reformed congregations until 1972 when the Union Church was dissolved, and the Lutherans (us) moved to our present church location. Today many members of St Paul's Lutheran Church are unaware that for 220 years we shared the site now occupied exclusively by St Paul's United Church of Christ. Fewer know that that building replaced the church destroyed by the cyclone in June of 1922. Consider also, that this disaster in the life of St Paul's occurred just three years after the worldwide Influenza epidemic of 1918-1919.

Coming out of our own two-year plus Covid-19 pandemic, which has so profoundly impacted not only our society but our church community, we would do well to reflect on the spirited witness to faithful endurance embodied by our spiritual forebears (and for some of our members their direct ancestors). Courage, resilience, flexibility, cooperation, faith, hope and love were the spiritual gifts given to the people which empowered them to emerge from disaster and create a new and

enduring witness to the *Amity* (friendship) of God in Jesus Christ shared in their community. Perhaps now it is our turn.

--Pastor Frey



FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

Baptism: --May 22 – **Everly Faye Matthews**, daughter of Arthur & Morgan (Oplinger) Matthews

Contribution to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of **John Bonslaver** given by Kay Bonslaver

--YTD Giving thru April, 2022--				
	Jan.--Apr. 2021	Jan.--Apr. 2022	Variance	% chg.
Offerings	\$ 123,706	\$ 130,987	7,280	5.89
Vision 2020 Contr.	19,125	19,657	532	2.78
Total Giving	\$ 142,831	\$ 150,644	7,813	5.18

THOUGHTS.....by Joy Gerhart

Our small but faithful Sunday Adult Study group has spent the winter and spring looking at How Lutherans Interpret the Bible and Making Sense of Scripture. Through the tutelage of Dr. Mark Allan Powell and Dr. David Lose, we have learned a great many things about the Bible. We learned that context is very important in understanding a Bible passage—both historical and literary context. It is helpful to look behind the scripture (historical context), in the scripture (for literary context, like is it a poem or story or narrative), around the scripture (how has the church interpreted the passage), and in front of the passage (how the scripture relates to what is going on in your life and the life of the community).

We learned that we interpret the Bible in terms of our social location—our age, gender, race, career, income, marital status, education, religious denomination, culture—and that our interpretation is not always the same as another’s interpretation. (My favorite learning was that The Prodigal Son parable is interpreted so differently in Africa and Russia. We all think the younger son squandered his money and that’s why he was starving. Africans point to the fact that no one gave him anything and he was an alien in a foreign land where he should have been shown hospitality. Russians relate to the note that there was a famine. How many of us even remember that detail in the parable?)

Another eye-opening part of our study was the discussion of the “Center of Scripture” and “What Gives the Bible Authority?” For us the cross and resurrection are central to our understanding of the Bible. We can use this center as a lens through which we see and interpret all of scripture. We know that the cross and resurrection show us that we are broken, mortal and vulnerable people who need God’s presence and salvation, and we also know that the cross and resurrection tell us that God loves us and accepts us. This is our confession of faith. This is what we believe. In terms of authority, there are two ways that people view the Bible. One is that people feel the Bible has authority by what it IS—the divine word of God. All the parts are connected like a chain with many links, and a chain of course is only as strong as its weakest link. So many times people try to defend parts of the Bible to maintain its overall authoritative integrity. In contrast to this, Lutherans tend to see the authority of Scripture as what the Bible DOES, its FUNCTION. The

Bible witnesses to God, and we give the Bible authority by reading it and taking it seriously. Authority is relational. Again, we see the Bible through the lens of what is central to our faith, our confession, the cross and resurrection; the other parts of the Bible support these central concepts.

Through the Bible we can see the truths of the story all around us. We start interpreting life in terms of the biblical story and in this way, it makes sense of our lives, and this sense-making-ability may be the chief reason we read and trust the Bible.

Mark Allan Powell suggests we pray before reading the Bible—he even used to write P.B.O. (pray before opening) on his paperback Bible in college. David Lose similarly suggests that we read the Bible with the expectation that we will find God there and we will grow in faith. Our reading of the Bible can be a conversation with God. But there is no conversation if the Bible sits on a table or on a shelf. We need to open it and read it to grow in our relationship with God.

(If this sounds like a lot to comprehend, it is. We spent a whole semester looking at these concepts. We also found that sharing insights into the Bible with each other helps in our understanding. The approach to the Bible as a community can greatly help us understand more and help us grow closer to God and one another.)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS.....

Sunday Adult Class--There will be no adult study on June 5 or during the summer Sundays. Plan to join us again in the fall! (The online class will be held on May 29 at 9:15 am.)



Adult Bible Study -- Adult Bible study will not meet on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30.

Vacation Bible School—Rainforest Explorers -- June 12-16; 6-8:00 pm



VBS time is sneaking up on us, but we will be ready to enjoy the Tropical Rainforest through music, stories, games, science, snacks, crafts and much more!

Registration forms are online, in the church in the CDC entrance and Narthex, and a phone call away if none of that works. All children ages 3 (potty trained) and up to those who have completed grade 6 are welcome! Older youth are invited to join us as helpers. Adults are welcome to lead or help, too! Invite your neighbors and friends. This is one way you can spread the good news of Jesus! Come and join the fun!

Confirmation on June 5



We will be welcoming 5 young people into the confirmed membership of our church on June 5, Pentecost. Pentecost is the day that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples waiting in Jerusalem. We pray that the Holy Spirit will fill each of our young people—Evan, Mark, Nolan, Reese and Riley-- with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, and the spirit of joy in God's presence. After our 10:30 am worship service, we will hold a reception for this class and the confirmation classes of 2021 and 2020 who were not able to have a reception because of the pandemic. You are welcome to come and celebrate, and please keep these young people in your prayers as they step into this new part of their Christian journey.

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: James Waring, Renee Waring, Zachary Waring, Georgia Wegman, Gary Weidner, Cindy Weidner, Christopher Weidner, Ashleigh Weidner, Mike Weidner, Brittany Weidner, Cale Weidner, Aubrie Weidner, Joan Weil. If you have anyone to add to the prayer list, call the church office. Please pray for those with special concerns: Bruce Basch, Sue Blevins, Linda Breitenstein, Diane Davis, Eve, Heath Fegely, Bob Fisher, Angela Fonte, Darin Freed, Anna Gyuris, Dave Hackett, Sara Hartline, Jackie Hurchalla, Kasper, Daniel, Kim Koury, Priscilla Leh, Lisa Lerch, Craig Nichols, Carol Pearson, Nathan Resch, Sue Trout, Kitty Varady, Sarah Weider, Rick Weiler, Shelly Wilson, family & friends of Gail Clifford, Arline Goodall, Stephen Willar, 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, Lauren Ridge, Gene Schaeffer, Audrey Serrian, John Shaner, Ellen Sheeler, Vernet Spence-Brown, Jason Stalnecker, 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!

6/1	Savannah Walter Sydney Walter	6/14	Susanne Walley
6/2	Erin Day Tracy Detwiler Adam Royer	6/15	Kylie Oesterling
6/3	Paige DePrefontaine Janice Goodman Kathy Kline Cory Miller Jared Miller	6/17	Darvin Levensgood Nicholas Luo Landon West
6/4	Sheamus Breen Aspyn Shaffer Ryan Siwinski Justin Sowers	6/18	Amy McCormick Nancy Stewart
6/5	June Geiger Avery Yetter	6/19	Ellen Buck Addison Cloutier James DeLaTorre Jennifer MacMullin
6/6	George Heath	6/20	Lylia DePrefontaine Rob Edinger
6/7	David Hiser	6/21	Amelia Fretz Julia Price
6/8	Olivia Cozzone	6/22	Maxwell Cicala Jennifer Kochert Patricia Sowers Lincoln Stoudt Larry Swavely
6/9	Andy Berger Annalee Catarious Maya Michener	6/23	Jaxon Day Eric Kupp Richard Weiler
6/10	McKinley Albright Tammy Eisenhard Nick Freitag Richard Kaufman	6/24	Louis Day LeRoy DePrefontaine Rory Emery Lisa Lerch
6/11	Gregory Hensley Cynthia Meng James Wolfe Ken Yoder	6/25	Ella Flamini Greg Kresge Jake Musselman
6/12	Charles Fix April Royer	6/26	Harrison Potts Mike Weidner
6/13	Matthew Kresge Jan Schell	6/27	Charles Brown
6/14	Riley Muschick	6/28	Sheila Angstadt
		6/30	Lilian Reber

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.....

Kathryn Berger	Cory Miller
Kaitlyn Esenwein	Jared Miller
Keith Forster	Ryan Parduski
Zachary Freitag	Katie Sarro
Emma Rose Hackett	Emma Serrian
Jansen Loscig	Luke Yambor



The graduates will be recognized during the services on June 12.



Bill & Carole Berry	6/1	48 yrs.
Matt & Adrienne Stumhofer	6/1	9 yrs.
Rich & Kristin Saylor	6/3	16 yrs.
Len & Geraldine Trauger	6/3	61 yrs.
Jamie & Sara Trout	6/4	11 yrs.
Dale & Kathy Szajek	6/5	46 yrs.
Charles & Margaret Burns	6/7	70 yrs.
Jay & Pat McClafferty	6/14	47 yrs.
David & Sue Prizer	6/14	47 yrs.
John & Linda Heisey	6/15	54 yrs.
Ray & Carolyn DiSandro	6/17	16 yrs.
Eric & Erika Kupp	6/17	5 yrs.
Patrick & Tricia Magner	6/18	12 yrs.
Ron & Kathy Rhoads	6/18	45 yrs.
Dick & MJ Talbott	6/19	51 yrs.
Harold & Ruth Grim	6/22	48 yrs.
John & Jeane Serrian	6/22	31 yrs.
Jerry & Jennifer MacMullin	6/24	33 yrs.
Craig & Wendy Yambor	6/26	23 yrs.
Judd & Tammy Eisenhard	6/28	14 yrs.
Christopher & Jill Michener	6/28	16 yrs.



IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO SAY THANK YOU, so thank you to everyone who

- helped make Soup and Bread possible for Lenten Services.
- donated gift cards to Redners so \$1,835 could be shared by six families in the Daniel Boone School District so they could have a nice Easter dinner.
- donated money towards Blanket Sunday. \$1,182. was collected.
- helped toward the collection of 75 pairs of socks for the clothes closet in Birdsboro.

SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA



Gaining Strength: Stronger Together

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you...” [Isaiah 43:2] This is the promise God made to the people of Israel, in a time when the whole nation was suffering the consequences of their turning away from their primary mission: to love God and love neighbor – especially, neighbors with the least advantages, status and resources. For our time, our church, and our synod, one of our most troubling issues is the sin of racism. Isaiah goes on to say: “Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!” [Is. 43:8] This speaks to the first step to take into those troubled waters: opening our eyes and ears to see and listen – with minds and hearts willing to go beneath the smooth surface and stir up the stories and truths that, though troubling, will clear the way for God “to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” [Is. 43:19]

+ Bishop Christopher deForest

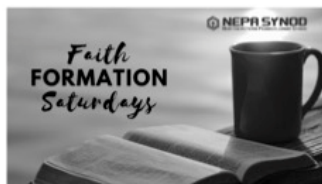
On May 22, 2021, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod hosted a virtual conference called “Trouble the Water,” an inaugural day of racial justice worship and workshops. The goal of this event was to help our congregations to be more welcoming to Black, indigenous, and people of color; and to focus on racial justice and reconciliation within our churches, communities, and synod.

Participants were welcomed with a brief introduction to what we hoped to accomplish, and a request for participants to join us in that troubled water – to be willing to experience the discomfort caused by the ripples, and to plan to ride the waves of change and progress that we hoped to create. The organizers started with a land acknowledgment, acknowledged our shared national history of racism and discrimination, and explained that such historical acknowledgment was not about blaming us as individuals today, but about understanding how we came to be where we are in order to understand how to move forward together.

Next, we all worshiped together with song, prayer, and a sermon by Rev. Dr. James Thomas on “The Sins of Racism.” Following worship, The Reverend CeCee Mills delivered an incredibly powerful keynote address, and after that two sets of concurrent workshops were offered. The first set of workshop options included Understanding Microaggressions, Trauma-Informed Neighborhood Engagement, Understanding Implicit Bias, and a presentation on the community organizing group POWER Northeast. The second set of workshops included Seeing and Disrupting Racism; Understanding White Privilege; and Church Together (led by ELCA Director of Racial Justice Jennifer De Leon).

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The “Trouble the Water” event provided important space for honest, difficult conversation: wrestling with systemic racism and naming our complicity in a broken, inequitable system. Your gifts cultivate a Synod culture that listens to the stories of all people and actively works towards reflecting the Kingdom of God. Our ELCA has a mission of encountering 1 million new, young, and diverse people with the Good News in Jesus Christ. Thank you for your faithful, generous, and consistent giving to Mission Support. It makes a difference as we endeavor to live out that mission. + Rev. Rachael Dietz



**Join us on the 2nd
Saturday of every month!**
(more information on our website)

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

June 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10 AM—Bible Study	2 Amity Fr. Circle bus trip 4:30—Flute rehearsal in F.H.	3 10 AM—Bible Study	4 6 PM—Holy Comm
5 <i>Pentecost</i> Confirmation 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sunday School 9:30—Finance 3 pm—Flute recital	6 10 AM—Bible Study 7 PM—Christian Ed.	7 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Knit & crochet	8 10 AM—Bible Study 7 PM--Council	9	10 10 AM—Bible Study	11 6 PM—Holy Comm
12 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. Graduate recog.	13 10—Bible Study 6:30—CDC 7 PM—Pastoral Care	14 Quilting 9 AM—Knit & crochet 2 PM—TOPS	15 10 AM—Bible Study	16 9:30 AM—Social Min.	17 10 AM—Bible Study	18 7:30 AM--Property 6 PM—Holy Comm
-----VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 6:00—8:00 p.m.-----						
19 <i>Fathers Day</i> 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm.	20 10 AM—Bible Study	21  Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Knit & crochet	22 10 AM—Bible Study 7 PM—Worship & Music	23	24 10 AM—Bible Study	25 6 PM—Holy Comm
26 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm.	27 10 AM—Bible Study	28 Quilting 9 AM—Knit & crochet 2 PM--TOPS	29 10 AM—Bible Study	30		