



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

MARCH, 2022

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' (Mark 8:27)

I grew up in half a double in downtown Allentown. The neighbor we shared a wall with used to paint his living room every year, every...single...year. He joked with my dad that it got easier every year because the room got smaller. By the time I moved out there must have been at least 20 layers of paint on the walls of that living room.

Imagine how difficult it would be to answer the question, what was the original color of that room? So many layers would have to be removed before you could get a glimpse of what lay beneath.

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" How would we answer this question today? If we were to be thorough, we might point to the vast library of material just in my office dedicated to answering the question, "Who do people say Jesus is."

This is not just a recent phenomenon. Since the very beginning of Jesus' ministry those who experienced him tried to describe him by consulting the Scriptures, comparing him to other biblical and ancient figures, or reaching out to other sources like Greek philosophy to articulate just who this Jesus was and what he means.

2000 years later Jesus is buried beneath layers of interpretation, so much interpretation is layered on him that we may wonder if we could possibly know anything at all about who Jesus actually was and is.

Many of the interpretations directly contradict other interpretations. Is Jesus a man of peace or the preparer of apocalyptic war. Is Jesus a healer or an afflicter? Is Jesus an advocate for the poor or personal wealth guru for the rich? Does Jesus stand with outcasts or hang with the up and coming? Is Jesus whatever anybody says he is? Can we possibly know who Jesus was and is as he knew himself?

For decades I have been listening to and reading about people who are no longer interested in "organized religion" or *The Church* but are still interested in Jesus. Bestselling author Anne Rice, who made the change from writing steamy vampire novels to Christian themed novels after her conversion to Roman Catholicism, famously posted in 2010:

"For those who care, and I understand if you don't: Today I quit being a Christian. I'm out. I remain committed to Christ as always but not to being 'Christian' or to being part of Christianity. It's simply impossible for me to 'belong' to this quarrelsome, hostile, disputatious, and deservedly infamous group. For ten years, I've tried. I've failed. I'm an outsider. My conscience will allow nothing else." (From her Facebook page)

Rice is not alone. The *Great Resignation* presently experienced in workplaces and civic organizations will be an accelerant to something we have already seen in the church, many are *out* but remain admirers, albeit secret admirers, of the idea of Jesus.

For those of us who are still *IN* for the church the question is, can we possibly strip away the seemingly endless layers of interpretation and uncover an authentic and unvarnished Jesus? I believe we can, and we must.

In Lent our midweek services will center on the theme of "Deconstructing Jesus." The term *deconstruction* is trending right now. It derives from French literary critic and philosopher Jacques Derrida. Not surprisingly, there is a lot of debate about what it might mean to deconstruct Jesus. To me, deconstructing Jesus is about unlayering meanings applied to Jesus and concentrating on how the Scriptural witness addresses how Jesus understood and represented himself in his unique context. Only when we see this more clearly can we begin to figure out what Jesus means for us in our unique context.

Is there something authentic and unvarnished to be said about Jesus that can serve as an inspiration and guide for those who remain committed to Jesus as Christ and to the community of the church meant to represent him? How can we speak plainly about what Jesus means to us and how his life can shape our lives and our church?

These will be our questions in Lent. When we approach the cross and the empty tomb of Easter this year I hope we can glimpse a Jesus freed from so many cultural wrappings who might speak a true and honest word to us that we might share with one another.

--Pastor Frey



The Lenten Worship Schedule:

Ash Wednesday March 2
11:00 AM and 7:00 PM Holy Communion & Ashes

March 9 – April 6 Wednesdays 7:00 PM
Holden Evening Prayer (Theme: Deconstructing Jesus)

Soup and Bread at 6:15 PM beginning March 9th
continuing before Mid-week services through April 6th

FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

Baptisms: Feb. 5—**Lucien Martin McDaniel**, son of Timothy & Allison (Steever) McDaniel

Feb. 13 – **Matthew Allen Wegman**, son of Brian & Kelsey (Brown) Wegman

Jack Henry James Havrilla, son of Justin & Alli (Watts) Havrilla

Feb. 20 – **Carson Leo Kupp**, son of Brian & Katelyn (Reinhart) Kupp

Funerals: Jan. 28 – **Russell Burns**
Feb. 3 – **Al Forster**
Feb. 19 – **P. Henry Rhoads**

Contributions to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of **Russell Burns** given by:

Larry Smoose	Perkiomen School
Cathy & Ed Kerper	Frank & Linda Mariani
Bonnie & Rick Gazda	Vivien Burns & family
Veronica Diehl	Carol & Bart Gorman
Stanley & Doris Molchanow	Barbara Nace
Bill Mariani	Anthony & Marie Marchese
Kathleen Marchese	Suzanne Boesch
Linda Westgate	Barbara Marchese
Linda Ertel & family	

Contributions to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of **Henry (Hank) Rhoads** given by:

Bernice & John Fromuth
Harold & Donna Haas
Russ & Pat Haas
Calvin & Ellen Sheeler

--YTD Giving thru January, 2022--

	<u>Jan. 2021</u>	<u>Jan 2022</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>% chg.</u>
Offerings	\$ 25,034	\$ 30,307	5,273	21.06
Vision 2020 Contr.	3,594	3,449	-145	- 4.03
Total Giving	\$ 28,628	\$ 33,756	5,128	15.19

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS—MARCH 13

Remember to set your clock one hour forward!



THOUGHTS ON LENT.....by Joy Gerhart

Here we go again—another season of Lent. Do you look forward to Lent or do you dread it? Or maybe you just don't care. Dealing with the stresses of covid, whether fighting illness, grieving for others, or just feeling restrained from doing things we enjoyed doing, some have slipped into a kind of apathy. I regret that I have seen so few of our St. Paul's kids over the past couple years because of the pandemic, and I regret that I can't do as much with youth and families. We try to cope the best we can.

I would like to suggest that we look to Lent as a time to grow or be revitalized. Lent is usually depicted as a time when we penitently sacrifice and refrain from doing certain things. I always said if I gave up chocolate for Lent, no one could stand working with me because I'd be so grumpy. (Now it's cookies!) Anyway, I think this is the wrong way to look at Lent. Let's look at Lent as an opportunity, a chance to gain a NEW PERSPECTIVE on our lives, a chance to become reacquainted with the great things that God HAS given us, a time to become renewed in our faith by reading what God has done for us in Jesus (by—gasp! —reading the Bible).



There are various images in the Bible about being changed. I have a black thumb so I'm not very astute in the ways of growing plants, but I just don't like the idea of pruning things. Well, I guess I'm okay if the branches are dead, but pruning back live branches and stems—not for me, even if it is good for the plant. I'm a little more comfortable with the image of a potter who gently molds clay. I'm better at working with clay than plants. I like to watch potters form and reform clay with their hands. It is a comforting image for me.

I found this lovely passage in Lamentations. (Did you even know there was a book of Lamentations? It is thought to have been written by the prophet Jeremiah, who did a lot of lamenting.)

The precious children of Zion,
Worth their weight in fine gold—
How they are reckoned as earthen pots,
The work of the potter's hands!

Lamentations 4:2

(Zion is another name for Jerusalem.)

Do you ever think of yourself as the work of God's hands? This is an interesting follow-up passage: "Will what is molded say to the one who molds it, 'Why have you made me like this?'" Romans 9:20b (The verses that follow are very interesting, too.)

One more passage that you all know: 2 Corinthians 4:7-- "But we have this treasure in clay jars/earthen vessels, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us." We have faith, we have the good news of Jesus, we have God's Spirit within us. We're so busy doing other things that we don't even take a moment to realize it. I'm suggesting that this Lent we do pay attention to this treasure, and maybe even the "pot" God has molded. I don't mean losing weight! I mean refashioning ourselves in our activities and habits so we honor the treasure we hold within, the precious gifts that God has given each unique individual. Perhaps we can try to focus more on each moment with appreciation. Possibly we can read a Bible verse or a devotion each day. Perhaps we can remember to say a prayer at a specific time each day and give God thanks for what we have.

Maybe it's not appropriate to say "Rejoice" in Lent, but I say we should rejoice in what God has given us and share it with others. We can make Lent a season of giving and growing in faith. 2 Corinthians 4:16 says. "So we do not lose heart, . . . our inner nature is being renewed day by day." Lent is a time of renewal. We are precious to God. Let us focus on how precious God is to us.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS.....

Adult Sunday School Class at 9:15 am online

The six-week study of the Historical Jesus concluded on February 20. We studied some amazing new material about Jesus and discussed some rarely discussed aspects of Jesus' ministry. If you might have any interest in reading about what we covered, please contact Joy Gerhart for printed notes and handouts for the course. Some of the sessions were taped also.

We plan to begin a new course on February 27 which will include videos by the same speaker, Mark Allan Powell. This course is entitled "How Lutherans Interpret the Bible." (If you own a Lutheran Study Bible you will find some of this same material in the center of the Bible on glossy pages, written by the speaker, but his illustrative stories are not included.) You may be interested to find that there is more than one definition for "The Word of God." You will learn that the Lutheran way of reading the Bible is not totally literal. This may help your journey through the Bible in Lent more meaningful. Join us at 9:15 am online for this seven-session study. The zoom link will be advertised in the eblast at a later time, or you can email Joy Gerhart at jgerhart@stpaulsdouglassville.com.

The following are the topics of the sessions:

Session 1: The Word of God

Session 2: What Lutherans Say About the Bible

Session 3: Where the Bible Comes From

Session 4: Interpreting the Bible in Context

Session 5: Determining Right from Wrong

Session 6: The Many Meanings of the Bible

Session 7: Devotional Bible

(As a personal testimonial, I can say that the things I learned in Session 6 were life-changing for me! – Joy)



Sunday School Back in person

All Sunday school and confirmation classes, with the exception of the Sunday Adult Class, have returned to in person meetings. Sunday school begins at 9:15 am and continues until 10:15 am. We will continue to require masks in the building. Please call Joy at the church if you have any questions.

Weekday Adult classes:

Everything meets at 10 am now. Wednesday's study of the Gospel of John is in-person and online.

Monday: Old Testament study Meeting ID: 873 0089 2165, passcode 067059

Wednesday and Friday: Meeting ID 219 384 065, passcode st.pauls

HOMEMADE EASTER CANDY SALE.....



We will again be partnering with Trinity, Bechtelsville, to sell Easter candy this year. Proceeds will go to the Mission Trip Fund.

\$6 for 1/2 lb.; \$12 per lb. We will be selling both milk and dark chocolate this year, including peanut butter, coconut creme and butter creme.

The deadline for orders is Sunday, April 3, and orders will begin to be available for pick up between April 3-16. Order sheets will be in church, or orders may be made by calling Ann Myers at 610-960-2378.

HELP TO DECORATE THE SANCTUARY FOR EASTER.....



If you would like to place an order for flowers to decorate the sanctuary on Easter, please complete the form below and return it in your regular offering envelope and mark the payment "Easter flowers". In order to insure availability, we would like to have as many orders as possible by March 27. **Final day to order is Sunday, April 3.**

EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM

Yes, I/We would like to order the following:

_____ Lilies (4 blooms+)	@ \$8.75	_____
_____ Daffodils (6" pot)	@ 8.00	_____
_____ Tulips (5 & 6 bloom)	@ 8.50	_____
_____ Azaleas	@ 15.00	_____
_____ Mums (7" pot)	@ 8.50	_____
	Total	\$ _____

Information for announcements: Given to the Glory of God—

_____ In honor of _____ by _____

_____ In Memory of _____ by _____

_____ As a gift by _____

Name _____

FUNDRAISER DINNER ... Eat in or take out available.

Tuesday, March 8, 4-8 P.M. at Wyomissing Family Restaurant to benefit an Afghan refugee family who aided US Troops. \$20 per ticket (100% of proceeds go to resettlement efforts. (Fried chicken, lemon herbed chicken, cheeseburgers, fish, mashed potatoes, pasta, vegetables, dessert and soft drinks.

Purchase tickets Online: AfghanCircleReading.EventBrite.com

Email: AfghanCircleReading@gmail.com

Mail: 3520 Plow Rd., Mohnton, PA 19540

(Please include your contact details and make check payable to Robeson Lutheran Church with memo "Sponsor Circle"



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, March 21, from noon to 7 pm**. Online registration is available at

www.GIVEaPINT.org. Use sponsor code 2050 or contact Rhonda Maloney at 610-858-9236.

HELP NEEDED FOR FAMILIES WITH FOOD INSECURITY THIS EASTER.....



One holiday is over, and now we are looking toward Easter. We will begin collecting gift cards from Redner's and Boyer's Market in Birdsboro to be given to five families in the Daniel Boone

School District plus one of our own church family. Because of your generosity, each family received \$230.00 in gift cards at Christmas time. Thank you for supporting our efforts to make a small difference in their lives.

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: Dick Talbott, MJ Talbott, Ronald Tindall, Nan Tindall, Noah Tindall, Nathan Tindall, Nolan Tindall, Lux Topakbashian, Bonnie Topur, Len Trauger, Geraldine Trauger, Jim Trout, Judy Trout, Jamie Trout, Katherine Trout, Anne Trout. If you have anyone to add to the prayer list, call the church office. Please pray for those with special concerns: Bruce Basch, Sandra Berger, Sue Blevins, Stuart Crichton, Diane Davis, Eve, Heath Fegely, Bob Fisher, Glenn, Sara Hartline, Jackie Hurchalla, Kasper, Daniel, Kim Koury, Linda Leffel, Priscilla Leh, Marquette family, William Mohler, Craig Nichols, Carol Pearson, Wendy Strain, MJ Talbott, Tyler, Kara & baby Emmie, Anne Weiser, family & friends of Henry Rhoads, Michele Sharkey, Al Forster, Russell Burns, 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.



AMITY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE BUS TRIP TO HUNTERDON PLAYHOUSE

"I Left My Dignity in My Other Purse"

Starring Joyce DeWitt, who played Janet, on ABC's Three's Company

Thursday, June 2, 2022

\$85, payable to Amity Friendship Circle
Leave church parking lot at **9:30 A.M. sharp**
Reservation deadline—**May 23, 2022**

Call Pat Roland 484-557-4885 for additional information. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex.



3/2	Ryan Davidheiser	3/18	Makenzy Wunderlich
	Ted Graefe	3/19	Mildred Faber
	Maggie Moyer		Giovanni Gonzalez
	Nancy Moyer		Bradley Mengel
3/3	John Bonslaver		Bonnie Moser
	Hadleigh Dominick		Wendy Yambor
3/4	Joseph Dowd	3/20	Jane Eagle
	Elizabeth Mosteller		Grace Oister
3/5	Mackenzie Gougler		Gary Weidner
3/6	John Meade	3/21	Evan Dominick
	Al Monroe		Alivia Fretz
3/7	Renee Waring		Aidan Sonon
3/9	Emma Rose Hackett	3/22	Deanna McCleary
3/10	Charles Drey		Alice Sprague
	Jessica Kucharik		Jackson Ware
	Rhonda Maloney	3/23	Ryan Levengood
	Ryann Michener		Kay Reber
3/11	Ryan Berger		Susan Schweikert
	Angela Fonte	3/25	Ethan Berger
	Pamela Wolfe		Matthew Cloutier
3/12	Aliyah Lubrano		Connor Szajek-Keppel
	Arianna Lubrano	3/26	Pam Cope
	Calvin Sheeler, Sr.		Joy Gerhart
3/13	Natalie Ridge		Ryleigh Hennessey
	Zoe Walt	3/27	Gretchen Parduski
3/14	Eva Eidell		Joan Weil
	Lucas Stumhofer	3/28	Zoey Hafer
3/15	Madison Albright		JoAnne Oxenford
3/16	Wayne Grace	3/29	John English
	George Rhoades		Faye Schadt
3/17	Bill Lerch	3/30	Charlotte Beil
	Eleanor Millard		Jacob Oister
3/18	Joseph Koury		Karla Rosenbusch
	Rose Stalneckner	3/31	Jen Davidheiser

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

Cesar & Amy Bartra	3/1	31 yrs.
Gary & Robin James	3/10	32 yrs.
David & Tina Hackett	3/13	21 yrs.
Greg & Norma Godon	3/24	32 yrs.
Barry & JoAnne Oxenford	3/27	46 yrs.

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION FOR THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR IS NOW OPEN.....

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 at the center.

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

AMITY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE NOVEMBER BUS TRIP

This is an early “Heads up” to let everyone know that the Amity Friendship Circle will be sponsoring a bus trip to the American Music Theater in Lancaster on November 10, 2022 to see their Christmas show. We will also have a buffet lunch at Yoder’s Restaurant and be transported by a New Rhoads bus. Price for the trip is \$85 per person. Sign up on the sheet in the Narthex or call Jan Schell at 610-779-7409 to make a reservation.

This is not to be confused with our June bus trip to Hunterdon Hills Dinner Theater. Just wanted to get the word out because many people make their own reservations to see this popular show and this would give you a choice to see the show, have a nice lunch, and not have to drive! Please join us!



Beloved Members of our Synod,

At its January meeting, the Synod Council made the difficult decision to once again hold the Synod Assembly online instead of gathering in person. We know this decision may come as a disappointment to you, and I'd like to explain how the Council came to its decision.

First, please know the decision wasn't easy, nor was it unanimous; however, the decision to move online did pass with an overwhelming majority voting in favor. Initially, many council members, like you, very much wanted to hold the assembly in person and gather as planned in Reading. But in discussion, a few realities just could not be overcome: vaccines were still not available for our youngest children (ages 0-4), a new variant was ushering in extremely high transmission numbers, and our local hospitals were struggling to keep abreast of testing and available beds. Given the swift onset and spread of the Omicron variant, the council wondered at the possibility of a new variant emerging at the time of the Synod Assembly. Like you, we just simply can't see into the future.

The gravity of these unknowns increased when coupled with the fact that there was a significant down payment cost for the facility – a cost we could not recoup even if, for whatever reason, we needed to cancel or downsize the Assembly. Use it, or lose it. As long as I have been chairing Synod Council meetings, I have never witnessed the Council making spendthrift decisions. Each financial decision is taken on deliberately and with care, the council focusing on being good stewards always and in every way. It was, in the end, a financial risk too great to take. So, once again, we will see you online on June 10th and 11th. But we hope you will find a way to see each other in person, gathering safely in smaller numbers as the situation allows, and enjoying each other's company as we get the business done and see what's happening around our Synod and throughout the ELCA.

Yours in Christ,
Kristen Edelman-Weiner
Vice-President, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod



50TH ANNIVERSARY PARAMENTS

Brenda Stauffer was the catalyst for the new altar and pulpit paraments that were dedicated for our 50th Anniversary. Brenda brought up the idea of creating quilted paraments at the brainstorming session that was held at Prince of Peace in January of 2021. A suggestion was made that the paraments be green so that they would be able to be used during the season after Pentecost, also known as Ordinary Time. This is the longest season of the church year and is represented by the color green.

The 50th Anniversary Task Force approved the designs for the paraments, Kim drew the designs out to scale and delivered them to Pam. Pam chose the fabrics and used an appliqué technique to create them. Brenda kept communicating with everyone to make sure the new paraments were completed on time for their dedication on January 16, 2022.

[VIEW FULL STORY HERE](#)

**BOOK STUDY:
WAKING UP WHITE**

The Racial Justice Team (a part of the Witness & Service Ministry Team) invites you to participate in a 5-part online Lenten book study, beginning Monday, March 7 at 7:00 pm and continuing the next 4 Monday nights at 7 on Zoom. Contact Samantha Drennan for more information!

**STEWARDSHIP
EXTRAVAGANZA**

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



Save the date SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2022
June 10-11
Virtual

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

March 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Prayer Shawl	2 <i>Ash Wed.</i> 11 AM & 7 PM— Holy Comm.	3 T3 Committee	4 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	5 6 PM—Holy Comm
6 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School 9:30--Finance	7 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) 7 PM—Christian Ed.	8 Quilting 2 PM—TOPS 2 PM—Prayer Shawl	9 10 AM—Bible Study 6:15—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service	10 7 PM--Council	11 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	12 6 PM—Holy Comm
13 <i>Spring ahead</i> <i>Daylight savings time</i> <i>begins</i> 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	14 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) 6:15—CDC 7 PM—Pastoral Care	15 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Prayer Shawl	16 10 AM—Bible Study 6:15—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service	17 9:30 AM—Social Min. 7:30 PM—Crime Watch	18 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	19 7:30 AM—Property 6 PM—Holy Comm
20 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School 1 PM—Girl Scouts	21 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) Noon—7 PM—Blood Drive	22 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Prayer Shawl	23 10 AM—Bible Study 6:15—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service	24	25 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	26 6 PM—Holy Comm
27 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	28 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	29 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Prayer Shawl	30 10 AM—Bible Study 6:15—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service	31		