

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



JANUARY, 2023

NOW IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME... (2 CORINTHIANS 6:2)

Need we be reminded that God is the *Master of Time*, not us? In fact, if you are like me you often feel like a slave to time. At the height of the pandemic it seemed like we had nothing but time but now, back to normal, time is a scarce commodity. It seems that we are always running out of time. Time passes so quickly. Deadlines are upon us before we know it and we feel the intense pressure and stress that these fixed moments in time cause us. If only we could in some way s-t-r-e-t-c-h time. But we cannot.

The founder of *Microsoft*, Bill Gates, a man who has amassed around \$81 billion in personal wealth, was asked what one thing he wanted. He replied, "More time." Indeed. We would all like more time. Time is a ruthless taskmaster. Mr. Gates, by the way, has also been quoted as saying attending church is not an efficient use of his time.

Personally, I don't want "more" time. I tend to think the maxim is true that "A task tends to expand to fill the time allotted to it." Time is like storage space. If there were more time, say an eight day or a twenty-fifth hour, we'd just end up with more "stuff" to fill up that extra time.

In a culture never truly satisfied, but always wanting more; more money, faster technology, more this, that and the other thing, it is not surprising we should want more time. But the fact is, we're not gonna get it! And we don't need more time, we need to decide what's really important in our time and make sure we have time for those important things.

Mr. Gates doesn't find church an efficient use of his time. In a way he is right. As society measures efficiency (time is money), it isn't efficient. In a book on worship titled, *A Royal "Waste" of Time*, Marva Dawn describes how our culture, and especially our most recent market culture, is training us to think first and foremost only about OUR immediate needs. It's easier to sell more products to people who already have enough of just about everything if you can convince them that because they are the center of the universe they deserve the newest and best of everything. To such a market self-sacrifice is a mortal enemy, and institutions that don't reinforce our self-centeredness are a useless waste of time.

From this perspective, which of course, is far more subtly suggested than the above, genuine, selfless worship *is* a "waste" of time. It is a waste of time because true worship is not centered on us but on God. While church worship surely does meet our most basic need, communion with God and one another, this can only truly be realized when our devotion is taken off ourselves and directed toward God alone. In a way we lose ourselves for at least one hour a week. Some call this an unnecessary waste of time, others have come to recognize that this time is what gives true meaning and purpose to all the other time and activities of their lives.

As we enter the New Year 2023 let us take up the cause of Jesus for a new and acceptable time. Let us commit ourselves to "wasting" time together by turning our whole attention and our worship to the creator and sustainer of us all at least once a week. By doing so you will not gain more time, but the time you have will take on greater significance and have deeper meaning. Happy New Year, may God bless your time by his presence in it.

--Pastor Frey



FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

Funerals: Dec. 13 – Elmer Davidheiser
Dec. 16 – Ellen Sheeler

Contributions to the Memorial Fund in memory of **Ellen Sheeler** given by:

Sandra Hoffman	Pat Roland
Ed & Dottie Arnold	Jan Schell
Clara Koch	John & Jeane Serrian
Everhart’s Garage	Gary & Cindy Weidner
Howard & Connie Hunter	Charles & Fern Brown
Frank & Kathy Jablonski	Darrell & Margaret Reitmeyer
Barbara Keim	Adrienne Sheeler
Jane Kinder	Joan Weil
Pat Levengood	Diamond Credit Union
Tom & Deb Longstaff	Jerry & Suzanne Kupp
Ann Mengel	Darvin Levengood
Karen Merkel	Barry & Vicci Eidell
Dave & Carole Renninger	Tim Schell & Cindy Manning
Gloria Rhoads	Rob & Sandi Levengood
John & Linda Leffel	

Contributions to the **Agape Fund** in memory of **Ellen Sheeler** given by:
Fred & Mary Ellen Hoffert Anna Brown
Mary Graefe

Contribution to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of **Betty Yocom** given by
Barry & Vicci Eidell.

--YTD Giving thru November 2022--				
	Jan.-Nov. 2021	Jan-Nov. 2022	Variance	% chg.
Offerings	\$ 307,859	\$ 331,197	23,338	7.58
Vision 2020 Contr.	46,927	46,204	- 723	- 1.54
Total Giving	\$ 354,786	\$ 377,401	22,615	5.99

THOUGHTS ON THE WISE MEN.....by Joy Gerhart

Happy New Year! I puzzled and puzzled over what I could say for this issue of the Newsletter. I thought about the theme of seeing the year with new eyes. Hopefully that will be my theme soon, and some of you know why. That idea didn’t go anywhere.

Since I couldn’t think of any profound words, I thought I’d turn to Martin Luther. I have a book of excerpts of Martin Luther’s Christmas Sermons, translated and arranged by Reformation scholar Roland Bainton. Luther said some things that surprised me and maybe they will surprise you, too. He is surely a man of faith!

Here he reflects on the Wise Men whom we celebrate on Epiphany, January 6. (Remember Luther lived in the 1500’s!)

These Magi, or Wise Men, were not kings, but learned men in the art of nature.

Without doubt they dabbled also in superstitions, for they allowed themselves to be guided entirely by the course of the star. The star was simply a sign to the Magi, and the astrologers are not in a position to base their art upon this passage of the Gospels. The wise Men did not try to cast Christ’s horoscope. They simply saw that this was a sign of a great king and they asked only where he was. In order to give no comfort to the astrologers, Christ made a brand new star as a sign of his birth. How the Magi knew that this star meant the birth of a king is more than I know.

When the Wise Men received the divine revelation that the king of the Jews was born, they made straight for Jerusalem, for, of course, they expected to find him at the capital in a lordly castle and a golden chamber. Where else would common sense expect to find a king? In the royal city, everyone is so cold and unfriendly that no one goes with them and show them the child. They do not believe themselves that to them is born a king. How desolate for the birth of a king!

Why did the star not take the Wise Men straight to Bethlehem without any necessary consulting of the Scriptures? Because God wanted to

teach us that we should follow the scriptures and not our own murky ideas.

Now the Wise Men had the faith to follow the word of the Prophet Micah. They were not offended that the king was not born in Jerusalem. They left the Temple and went to the cow stall. They followed the Word, and God comforted them by putting back the star, which led them now to Bethlehem and to the very door where the young Child lay.

Faith pays no regard to what it sees and feels, but clings only to the Word. The wise Men were cast down and offended. They had started out in the confident expectation of finding him, and as a matter of fact found nothing. This struggle the Wise Men passed through, and because they believed the word of the prophet, God sent the star again, more friendly than the first time. It was close to them as their guide. They were certain now and did not need to ask the way.

Though they saw but a tumbled down shack and a poor young mother with a poor little babe, not like a king at all, meaner than one of their own servants, they did not shrink, but in great, strong faith cast out all misgivings of common sense, and, following simply the word of the prophet and the witness of the star, they accepted him for a king.

If we Christians would join the Wise Men, we must close our eyes to all that glitters before the world and look rather on the despised and foolish things, help the poor, comfort the despised, and aid the neighbor in need. The Kingdom of Christ is to be found among the lowly and despised in persecution, misery and the holy cross. Those who seek Christ elsewhere find him not.

[Then about the gifts:] We see that incense is faith, gold is hope, because faith believes that all things and ought to be of God, and hope accepts and sustains what faith believes. The myrrh is love. Faith takes us from ourselves, that we should refer everything to God with praise and gratitude. Hope fills us with the concerns of others, that we may endure all in patience without resentment. Love reduces us to that nothing which we were in the beginning, so that we desire neither goods not anything outside of God, but simply that we should commit

ourselves truly to his good pleasure. This is the way of the cross by which we come most speedily into life.

We can present our gifts in the same way: he who gives of his goods to help the poor . . . he is giving to the Baby Jesus.

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: Mason Betts, Audrey Bokosky, John Bologna, Tara Bologna, Jennifer Bonetz, Ashley Bonetz, Austin Bonetz, Kay Bonslaver, Jenevieve Bortz, Richard Bowersox, Lisa Bowersox, Stella Boyd, Amelia Boyd, Piper Braun, Aubrey Braun. If you have anyone to add to the prayer list, call the church office. Please pray for those with special concerns: : Bruce Basch, Carol Basch, Sue Blevins, Linda Breitenstein, Jennie Clouser, Jeff Cremi, Lee Dierolf, Joyce Drey, Carol Flisock, Richard Garrow, Joanne Guss, Arlene Hildebeitel, Val Jermacins, Kim Koury, Tom Krezanosky, Leo, Bill Lerch, Shirley Martin, John McCalicher, Louise Minner, Randy Mohler, Danielle Moyer, Craig Nichols, Carol Pearson, Ray, Bonnie Reppert, Patty Salemno, William Seisler, Gene Stewart, Larry Swavelly, Toby, Carolyn & Matt Tokarski, Kitty Varady, Tom & Bobbi Vinchosky, Sarah Wieder, family and friends of Minerva Scalese, Raul Mercado-Gomez, Ellen Sheeler, and all others listed below or those we name in our hearts: Carole Barbary, Makayla Becker, Avery Boorse, Michael Burd, Jake Campbell, Darrell, Diane Davis, Barbara DePrefontaine, Ethan, Eve, Heath Fegely, Ron Glaser, Norman Griffen, Anna Gyuris, Sara Hartline, Jevin Heller, Connie Hunter, Terry Johnson, Priscilla Leh, Joanne Marnell, Toby Minner, Ron Mutter, Richard Randolph, Nathan Resch, Lauren Ridge, Gene Schaeffer, Audrey Serrian, John Shaner, 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

1/1	Blaire Eidell	1/20	Jeff Duplak
1/3	Michael Hasara Harper McCord		Willow Havrilla John McCalicher Helene Wallauer
¼	Barry Leier		
1/5	Breylan Kupp Christopher Michener	1/21	Kelly Mooney Jeffrey P. Sowers Cindy Weidner
1/7	Barbara Greth Lida McManus	1/24	Sarah Bartra Charles Eagle Kiara Ray Richard Talbott
1/8	Larry Barr Justine Sim		
1/11	Phyllis Harwood	1/25	Michele Hensley Aimee Luo
1/12	Daniel Kucharik		
1/13	Diane Hartline James Waring	1/26	Anna Brown Nathan Flamini Franklin Mann, IV Susan Murray Tim Oister Shirley Schaeffer
1/15	Kennedy Albright Ruby Saylor Gene Schaeffer Lynne Zepp		
1/16	Hayden Moyer Brooks Yetter	1/27	John Cappellano Nolan Tindall Kennedy Yetter
1/17	Kylie Beaver		
1/18	Adrianna Cozzone Ray Disandro Susanne Leier Catherine Weikel	1/28	Carter Ahles William Ridge, IV
1/19	Jill Michener Jamie Trout	1/29	Bonnie Simmons Jeffrey M. Sowers
1/20	Kay Bonslaver	1/31	Eleanor Davidheiser David Zepp

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO—

Harry & Sue Schweikert	1/31	53 yrs.
Chester & Marsha Springel	1/13	22 yrs.
LeRoy & Barbara DePrefontaine	1/19	66 yrs.
Clair & Catherine Weikel	1/19	28 yrs.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THE BAZAAR RAFFLE...

My Dad's Flooring area rug won by Kay Weikel
 Mini vacation donated by Tom & Debbie Longstaff won by Luisa Mann
 David Bause canvas prints won by Kandy Fielding
 Manatawny Winery wine basket won by Sue Walley
 Basket from Hyres Pest Control won by Evelyn Tyson
 Framed photograph "Andro Botticelli Primavera" donated by Cindy Manning and won by Luisa Mann
 Carousel Horse donated by Paul & Kay Reber won by Kandy Fielding
 Abstract painting painted by Daryl Szajek and won by Karen Schreier

BREAD, BOWL AND BIBLE--SAVE THE DATE

Bread, Bowl and Bible is back for 2023! Sunday, March 5 will feature Dr. Guy Irwin, President of United Lutheran Seminary, and March 12 will feature Rabbi Brian Michelson, rabbi of Oheb Sholom in Wyomissing.

The event will meet at St. John's Lutheran church in Boyertown from 3 to 6 pm on both Sundays, and soup and bread will be served. More information will be available soon!



SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA

Generosity and Vitality in the NOW Normal

A Stewardship Extravaganza

January 21, 2023 | Trinity, Lansdale



Generosity And Vitality In The NOW Normal
Sponsored by the Southeastern PA and Northeastern PA Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Saturday, January 21, 2023
8 A.M. To 4 P.M.

Trinity Lutheran Church
1000 W. Main St., Lansdale, PA 19446

An In-Person Only Event
Cost: \$40 per person (includes lunch)
FREE for SEPA/NEPA Synod seminarians and first-call pastors

Engage with outstanding church leaders in plenary presentations and question-and-answer sessions.



Keynote:

Ryan Burge: "The Nones: From The Overlooked Category to Impossible to Miss in Less Than Fifty Years"

Register Now!

Join us!

LEARNING MINISTRIES DAY

January 28, 2023

WWW.GODSLOVE.ORG/LEARNINGMINISTRIESDAY



SAVE THE DATE

SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2023

JUNE 1-3



ELCA

A Fresh Look for the ELCA

The ELCA has released refreshed branding featuring a cleaner look and a modified color scheme. Learn more at elca.org/Resources/ELCA-Branding. The new logos should be used in digital media including websites, email, and social media. Printed materials may be used until they are depleted.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:30—Holy Comm. One service only 9:15—Sunday School	2	3 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Knit & crochet	4 10 AM—Bible Study (in-person) 7 PM—Christian Ed.	5 Noon—Amity Fr. Circle 7 PM—Choir	6 10 AM—Bible study (zoom)	7 8—12—Council retreat 2 PM—Women's Gr. 6 PM—Holy Comm
8 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9 AM—Bazaar mtg. 9:15—Sunday School	9 10 AM—Bible study (zoom) 6:30--CDC 7 PM—Pastoral Care	10 Quilting 9 AM—Knit & crochet 2 PM--TOPS 7 PM--Finance	11 10 AM—Bible Study (in-person) 7 PM--Council	12 7 PM—Choir	13 10 AM—Bible study (zoom)	14 6 PM—Holy Comm
15 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sunday School	16 10 AM—Bible study (zoom)	17 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Knit & crochet	18 10 AM—Bible Study (in-person)	19 10 AM—Social Min. 7 PM—Choir	20 10 AM—Bible study (zoom)	21 7:30 AM--Property 6 PM—Holy Comm
22 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sunday School 1 PM—Girl Scouts	23 10 AM—Bible study (zoom)	24 Quilting 9 AM—Knit & crochet 2 PM--TOPS	25 10 AM—Bible Study (in-person) 7 PM—Worship & Music	26 7 PM—Choir	27 10 AM—Bible study (zoom)	28 6 PM—Holy Comm
29 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sunday School	30 10 AM—Bible study (zoom)	31 Quilting 2 PM--TOPS 2 PM—Knit & crochet				