

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH 548 OLD SWEDE ROAD DOUGLASSVILLE PA 19518

Telephone (610) 385-6616 www.stpaulsdouglassville.com info@stpaulsdouglassville.com The Rev. Gregory W. Frey, Pastor

MARCH, 2023

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOUR PHONE TELLS YOU......

There has been a lot of buzz in the tech world over Microsoft's announcement of a new artificial intelligence (AI) based internet search engine. Search engines we are used to provide a list of relevant (or not) websites based on keywords supplied by the user. Bing will provide a narrative answer to your questions with reference to websites. The point is to make searches more conversational to get more engaging answers to queries.

Better use of artificial intelligence to power internet searches is not being sought by Microsoft alone. Google, the company that has come to define internet searches and itself become a verb in our language, also announced an AI based "chatbox," named Bard. During the televised roll out of Google's Bard, company CEO asked it to describe the discoveries of the James Webb telescope. The answer was conversational, in-depth, and contained a mistake. It claimed the telescope took the very first pictures of a planet outside our solar system which was inaccurate. Google's parent company lost 100 billion dollars in market value that day due to the notice of this mistake.

You might think this puts Microsoft in a great position, but the truth is Microsoft's AI is also being found to produce search results littered with mistakes.

Artificial Intelligence seems to be very good at putting together long, plausible statements which essentially predict the next word in the

sentence it is creating. But AI sometimes simply makes stuff up and confidently presents mistakes as truth.

Both companies acknowledge mistakes in the current technology but promise, over time, that the technology will improve, and factual errors decrease. But some critics question whether this itself is not mistaken since AI technology is always essentially a prediction model for what word should come next in a sequence and does not have the capacity to truly discern true and false information.

Here is the problem, we already live in a world where our human intelligence accepts as true or false pretty much whatever we want to believe is true or false. If you do not believe this, switch between cable new shows and you will quickly discover that alternative universes are daily on display for our consumption. And do we now have to worry about our internet search engines gaslighting us too?

Where are we to look for stable truth to establish as a foundation for our lives? Of course, my answer is in God, but not just any God. I would point toward the God testified to in Holy Scripture and the figure of Jesus who is the embodied interpretation of truth founded in God. Jesus said, "I AM the way, the truth and the life."

Clearly, disagreement, sometimes radical disagreements, exist over diverse interpretations of Jesus. But I believe that if you consider Jesus' person as seriously as Jesus' work, some important truths may be firmly established. By Jesus' "work" I refer to Jesus' death on the cross for the forgiveness of sin. This "work" is rightly emphasized. But it must be understood in the context of Jesus' "person" that is the content of what Jesus the person did and taught before and through his death on the cross.

Jesus went about among the most marginalized and despised of his society and offered them acceptance and hope. Jesus spoke out against the unjust systems of the Roman Empire and the well-connected collaborators among his own people, (especially the religious establishment) and called them to account before the vastly different principles of the *Kingdom of God*.

You did not have to be poor to be a follower of Jesus, but Jesus repeatedly decried wealth as an inhibitor of discipleship. You didn't have to be powerless to be one of Jesus' disciples, but worldly power entangled would be disciples in unjust systems designed to elevate the powerful and keep the powerless down.

To be a follower of Jesus is to use Jesus as a lens through which truth and truths are measured. When our spiritual selves are at their best this is an act of faith and confidence. When at their weakest it is the suspension of disbelief and the conscious deferral of cynical relativism summed up by Pontus Pilate's exclamation during the trial of Jesus, "What is truth?"

The truth is that God loves God's creation and provides guidance on how we might live in love with God and one another. The elements of that love and insights for living that life are found in Holy Scripture and its interpretation amid the gather community of the Church. In a world increasingly abstract and arbitrary we may find solidity and confidence not in ourselves and certainly not in artificial intelligence but in Jesus alone.

--Pastor Frey

2023 LENTEN PROGRAM



The Path of Worship

Mid-Week Lenten Services at 7:00 PM will

feature the Holden Evening Prayer worship setting and the theme will be *Faithful Followers*; significant Christians commemorated during the season of Lent whose unique witness demonstrates the diverse ways to be a follower of Jesus. Commemorated Christians will include poets and musicians, women advocating for faith and freedom, great people of prayer and some Christians you may never have heard of who gave voice to God's amazing grace shown forth in Jesus Christ. Wednesday worship is preceded by a soup and bread supper at 6:00 PM.

The Path of Knowledge

Watch the Netflix series called *The Chosen* season 1. The series describes itself as "...fresh take on the Gospels and follows Jesus as he gathers his disciples, heals the needy and sacrifices himself for the sake

of humanity." It is available on Netflix but also can be freely accessed on a website and app called Angel Studios

https://watch.angelstudios.com/. A discussion guide is available on their website and we will use the discussion guide for our conversation during dinner before the Wednesday services at 6:00 PM. Special tables will be reserved at soup and bread for those who wish to participate in the discussion of the series. The schedule will be: March 1: Episodes 1 & 2, March 8: Episodes 3 & 4, March 15: Episodes 5 & 6, March 22: Episodes 7 & 8, March 29: Summery and looking ahead to seasons 2 & 3.

The Path of Prayer

Acquire a free copy of a daily Lenten Devotional at the church and/or you might also check out the online devotional from Luther Seminary at www.luthersem.edu/godpause/lenten-devotional. Find someone who will agree to read along with you who you can check in on and they you.

FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.....

Funeral: February 8 – **Richard Kaufman**

Contributions to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of **Richard Kaufman** given by:

Barbara Keim Charles Merkle
Pat Roland Dick & MJ Talbott
Amity Friendship Circle Joan Wendel
Jane Kinder Rick & Judy Weiler
Frank & Kathy Jablonski Dolores Heins

Pagoda Federal Credit Union Chuck & Ruth Ann Williams

Jan Schell

Contribution to the **Agape Fund** in memory of **Richard Kaufman** given by Greg & Norma Godon

Contribution to the **Memorial Fund** in memory of **Ellen Sheeler** given by Jan Schell.

YTD Giving thru January 2023–								
	<u>Ja</u>	n. 2022			Jan. 2023		<u>Variance</u>	% chg.
Offerings	\$	30,307		\$	42,865		12,558	41.44
Vision 2020 Con	ntr <u>. </u>	3,449			3,265		-184	5.33
Total Giving	\$	33,756	\$		46,130		12,374	26.82

THOUGHTS ABOUT GRACE.....by Joy Gerhart



Ever since we heard Grace Fabian at our Women's Group gathering, we have been talking about her.

Grace was a missionary to Papua New Guinea with her husband starting back in 1969, the year men first stepped on the moon. She went to help translate the New Testament into the native language of the Nabak people, a language which was never written down. She was supported by the Wycliffe Institute which sends missionaries to many parts of the world to create new translations of the Bible.

She told us how she didn't feel like she fit in—a white woman in a black society. Regardless, she persevered to learn the language and write it down. It's hard enough to travel as a missionary to a foreign land and even have children there, but to try to translate the bible into an unwritten language had many challenges. One passage was 2 Corinthians 2:14, extremely difficult. She says in her book:

The scene was a triumphal procession of Paul's day accompanied by the sweet odors from the burning of spices in the streets. Then we talked about the cinnamon bark that the Nabaks burn to create the pungent aroma during their dancing and how our lives are a fragrance to the Lord and to others around us because the Good News is within us.

Grace's co-worker Kondo looked at a rose bush planted by her husband Edmund. Kondo said, "the rose has a beautiful fragrance, but no one knows it until the rose blooms. Most often we Christians stay tightly closed like these buds. We often keep the Good News to ourselves, but

the verses we translated today are telling us to open up and let the fragrance of Christ come out."

Another difficult passage to translate was Colossians 2:15, where the verse talks about Christ making a public spectacle of Satan when he died on the cross. She and Kondo talked about the humiliation conquered people would feel being led through the crowds of cheering victors and presented to the king. Kondo said that this wasn't a problem to translate because "We do almost the same as Bible times." He described a traditional song and dance that the Nabaks enjoyed performing when their victorious warriors came home from battle. He even demonstrated how the victorious flap their loincloth in the faces of defeated foes to humiliate them. [Grace demonstrated the action for us.] She realized they had the expression needed for that verse in Colossians about a public spectacle. Grace says in her book: "So in Nabak we say, 'when Jesus died on the cross, he took away the bows and arrows from Satan. Jesus disarmed him, and, in a manner of speaking, he flapped his loincloth in their faces.'"

The most difficult part of Grace's story is that one day, while her husband was working at the computer, a man who had been working with them picked up a hatchet and struck her husband in the back of his head, instantly killing him. The man had been experiencing hallucinations and hearing voices, and evidently thought he could stop the voices by hitting Edmund.

Grace did not elaborate on the horror, only that there was blood everywhere and she was frequently violently sick from the memory of what happened. The people were very supportive and showered her with food. She could not eat it all, and she urged one of her co-workers to take a chocolate cake to the jail to the man who had killed her husband. The man could not bear to eat the cake because he viewed it as holy food, too sacred for his lips. Grace decided she needed to take her whole family to the jail and forgive the man.

You might be surprised to hear that Grace did not leave Papua New Guinea immediately. After the murder in 1993, which she calls "the incident" in her book, she stayed until 2005 when the translation was finished. She visited the murderer Milinjnanje (Milla) many times in jail and in a mental facility. He was finally able to receive medications which

made his hallucinations cease. She involved him in her work of translation, having him check them for mistakes in grammar or confusing phrases. Later, this man's wife asked Grace to be her sister and began to introduce members of her family to Grace as her aunt and her cousin, etc.

Grace is a gentle spirit but extremely strong in her faith. She was a real inspiration to all of us—one who truly embodied her faith and convictions. Her book, *Outrageous Grace*, covers more of the story than she was able to share in her short time with us. (I have a copy if you would ever like to read it.) She now lives in Douglassville, and recently wrote me and asked me to pray for her daughter and son-in-law and their friends who live in Turkey, some near the horrible earthquake.

We are so glad she was able to come and speak to us!

A VIEWING PARTY TO WATCH THE CHOSEN.....

Come and join us in the library on Tuesday, February 28, or Monday, March 6, from 2 to 4 P.M. to view the first two episodes of *The Chosen*. This is a streamed series about Jesus which we are encouraging everyone to see and discuss at the soup suppers before our Wednesday Lenten evening worship services. Joy will be your host. Please sign up if you are planning on attending.



Spring Clothing Drive – We are sponsoring a Clothing Drive March 1-31 that will benefit Church of Nazarene, Birdsboro and St. Luke's Clothing Rack, Gilbertsville. Time to clean out your closets! Please donate clean, gently used adult and/or children's clothes for all seasons.

Please pack clothes into white 13-gallon plastic bags and place to the right of the door as you enter Fellowship Hall. We will be delivering the clothes weekly during the month of March!. Thank you!! Social Ministry

ATTENTION—HOMEOWNERS NEEDING EXTRA HELP!!.....



Mission Trip Birdsboro & Beyond is currently accepting applications from homeowners for assistance with general home maintenance, landscaping, painting, etc. Deadline to submit your application is May 15. Forms may be completed online at

<u>www.missiontripbirdsboro.org</u> or paper copies are available in the narthex.

GROCERY GIFT CARDS FOR EASTER DINNER.....

It is not too early to plan ahead for our families in need at Easter. We are collecting gift cards to Redner's and any other food stores so that families may shop for their Easter dinner. Collected gift cards will be given to those Daniel Boone students' families as well as several families within our congregation. Thank you in advance for giving!

EASTER CANDY SALE.....

We are now taking orders for Milk and dark chocolate peanut butter, coconut crème and butter cream Price this year is \$14 a pound, \$7 for 1/2 pound. Order sheets are in the narthex or contact Ann Myers at 610-960-2378 or annmmyers@aol.com.

Candy will be ready for delivery on or before the week of March 26. Proceeds will benefit the yearly Mission Trip.



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 **Tuesday, March 14, from 1 to 7 pm**. Online registration is available at www.GIVEaPINT.org.

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

UDEV	I DATES TO	CDUNIOUS THE	ALTAR FLOWERS	
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April 23

June 11

June 25

Cost is \$35. Call the church office if interested (610) 385-6616

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". Or if you are making your payment electronically, please complete the form and return it to the church office so we have the sponsor information for the bulletin. In order to ensure availability, we would like to have as many orders as possible by March 19. Final day to order is Sunday, March 26.

EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM Yes, I/We would like to order the following: ____Lilies (4 blooms+) @ \$9.25 ____Daffodils (6" pot) @ 8.25 ____Tulips (5 & 6 bloom) @ 8.75 ____Azaleas @ 16.00 ____Mums (7"pot) @ 8.75 ____Total \$

Azaleas	@ 16.00	
Mums (7"pot)	@ 8.75	
	Total	\$
Information for announce	ments: Given to the G	lory of God—
In honor of		by
In Memory of		by
As a gift by		
Name		

THANK YOU TO OUR CONGREGATION FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!



You will be enriched in every way that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. 2 Corinthians 9:11

We thought that we would take a minute to thank our members for their generosity through the past year in each of the Social Ministry community outreach endeavors. During 2022, our congregation donated the following:

- a catered meal per month to Safe Berks for 35-40 residents
- requested "Wish List" items delivered every 2-4 weeks
- 174 pairs of new socks to Church of the Nazarene
- \$982 on Blanket Sunday
- treats, trinkets, snacks, parties, books, magazines, crafts, and time visiting the residents of ProMedica Nursing Home, Pottstown, PA, every other month
- Easter Baskets, Thanksgiving Baskets, and Christmas Baskets for members of our congregation as well as students at Daniel Boone Middle School
- Hoagie take away dinner for 120 people at Mission Birdsboro
- Eight boxes of school supplies to Daniel Boone Middle School
- Angel Tree 210 gifts for children of incarcerated Reading residents through Berks Connection/Pre-Trial Services (BCPS)
- Hoagie meal for 150 people through Love, Inc.
- 30 winter coats for residents of Safe Berks at Christmas
- 22 gifts for the children residents at Safe Berks at Christmas
- over \$1,500 in gift cards at the holidays for those in need
- time baking, cooking, packing and serving meals and desserts to those in need
- time assisting Pastor Frey and area Pastors in Nursing Home Worship Services

We thank you for your amazing capacity to give!

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:



Elizabeth Burns, Olivia Hendricks. Jenna Hendricks, Katelin Hendricks, Magnolia Bushman, Callan Kriebel, Tiffany Cappellano, Gryffin Cappellano, John Cappellano, Faith Casciano, Michael Casciano, Annalee Catarious, Noah Charlton, Dave Prizer, Sue Prizer. If you have anyone to add to the prayer list, call the church office. Please pray for those with special concerns: Carol Basch, Dale Boughton, Lee Crater, Deborah, Joyce Drey, Freddie Jackson, Sr., Jamie, Kim Koury, Bill Lerch, John McCalicher, Frank Mann 3rd, Carol Pearson, Dave Prizer, Jonathan Reinhold, William Shand, Tanner, family & friends of Evelyn Heacock, Barry Ginnetti, Brian Jackson, Richard Kaufman, and all others listed below or those we name in our hearts: Makayla Becker, Sue Blevins, Avery Boorse, Linda Breitenstein, Michael Burd, Jake Campbell, Jeff Cremi, Darrell, Barbara DePrefontaine, Ethan, Eve, Heath Fegely, Carol Flisock, Richard Garrow, Ron Glaser, Norman Griffen, Joanne Guss, Anna Gyuris, Sara Hartline, Jackie Hurchalla, Jevin Heller, Connie Hunter, Val Jermacins, Terry Johnson, Tom Krezanosky, Priscilla Leh, Leo, Joanne Marnell, Shirley Martin, Louise Minner, Randy Mohler, Danielle Moyer, Ron Mutter, Craig Nichols, Richard Randolph, Ray, Bonnie Reppert, Lauren Ridge, Patty Salemno, William Seisler, Audrey Serrian, John Shaner, Vernet Spence-Brown, Jason Stalnecker, Toby, Carolyn & Matt Tokarski, Craig Williams, Jane Williams; Sandi Zelinski, homebound --Charles Brown, Fern Brown, Peggy Burns, Jennie Clouser, Carol DeLong, Betty High, Arlene Hiltebeitel, Dale Szajek.



3/2	Ryan Davidheiser Ted Graefe Maggie Moyer	3/19	Mildred Faber Giovanni Gonzalez Jack Havrilla
	Nancy Moyer		Bradley Mengel
3/3	Hadleigh Dominick		Bonnie Moser
3/4	Michael Day		Wendy Yambor
•	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
	Jessie Kucharik		Jackson Ware
	Rhonda Maloney	3/23	Ryan Levengood
	Ryann Michener		Kay Reber
	Reagan Rusiewicz		Sue Schweikert
3/11	Ryan Berger	3/25	Ethan Berger
	Angela Fonte		Matthew Cloutier
	Pam Wolfe		Connor Szajek-Keppel
3/12	Aliyah Lubrano	3/26	Pam Cope
	Arianna Lubrano		Joy Gerhart
	Calvin Sheeler, Sr.		Ryleigh Hennessey
3/13	Natalie Ridge	3/27	Sherry Mann
3/14	Eva Eidell		Gretchen Parduski
	Lucas Stumhofer		Joan Weil
3/15	Madison Albright	3/28	Zoey Hafer
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	Joe Koury		Karla Rosenbusch
	Rose Stalnecker	3/31	Jen Davidheiser
	Makenzy Wunderlich		

ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS TO:

Cesar & Amy Bartra	3/1	32 yrs.
Gary & Robin James	3/10	33 yrs.
Dave & Tina Hackett	3/13	22 yrs.
Greg & Norma Godon	3/24	33 yrs.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS— MARCH 12

Remember to set your clock one hour forward!



AMITY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE BUS TRIP...

It's time once again to travel with the Amity Friendship Circle to Dutch Apple Dinner Theater to see ELVIS THE MUSICAL on Thursday, June 8, 2023.



Tickets and bus price \$100.00 Depart Church Parking Lot at 9:30 AM sharp Reservation deadline May 4, 2023

Sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

Please call Pat Roland for more information 484-557-4885. You do not have to be a member to go along with us.

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Love for the Least

The Global Missions Team at the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Emmaus, PA, led an advent appeal this past holiday season to support the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Arusha Lutheran Medical Center in Tanzania, which was established by ELCA medical missionary Dr. Mark Jacobson, and also had the opportunity to lead the church's worship services on their annual Global Missions Sunday, held this year on January 22, 2023, to share about this ministry with those in attendance.

When a baby is born prematurely in Tanzania, it is considered as good as dead. Premature babies there are often referred to as 'stillbirths.' This was not acceptable to the staff of Arusha Lutheran Medical Center. Fifteen years ago they began to offer neonatal intensive care, and pediatrician Dr. Steve Swanson joined the program in 2011. Initially they were only able to save 4% of the babies. Today they serve almost 400 babies annually, and the survival rate in 2022 was 92%.

The care at the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center NICU is the best in Tanzania, and in most of East Africa. No baby is turned away because of inability to pay or insurance status. The five doctors and 26 nurses who staff the NICU do not just care for the tiny infants, but for the parents as well. A hospital bed and meals are provided to every mother with a baby in the NICU and both parents are encouraged and coached on how to interact with their babies.

Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit raised \$3,785 from their Love for the Least appeal to be directed to the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center NICU in Tanzania, and 175 preemie knit or crochet hats were lovingly crafted for the NICU infants, which they hope to send to Tanzania. These hats can save lives by helping to keep the babies warm.

Charlotte Gross, Co-Coordinator

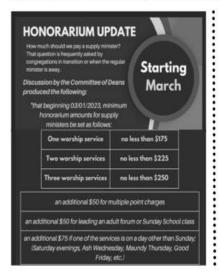


ATTENTION ALL CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

Now is the time to figure out who will be your voting members at the synod assembly! Don't worry, it will be well worth their time and yours! Let's have a record turnout, as we gather together (in person) as a synod for the first time since the Great Disruption of 2020. If you have any questions contact the synod office, and together we'll figure it out together!

BEING PUBLICLY INCLUSIVE OF ALL SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP YOUR CONGREGATION CAN TAKE TO BE THE COMMUNITY CHRIST CALLS YOU TO BE!

Become a Reconciling in Christ congregation! Reach out to Stacey Burke in the synod office (stacey@nepsynod.org) for more information.



FOR THE MOST UP-TODATE NEWS AND STORIES
FOLLOW US ON ALL
SOCIAL MEDIA
PLATFORMS OR VISIT US
AT GODSLOVE.ORG

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

March 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10 AM—Bible Study 6:00—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service Choir rehearsal	2 Noon—Amity Fr. Circle	3 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	4 6 PM—Holy Comm
5 Girl Scout Sunday 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School	6 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) 7 PM—Christian Ed.	7 Quilting 2 PMTOPS 2 PMKnit & crochet 6:30Finance	8 10 AM—Bible Study 6:00—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service Choir rehearsal	9 6 PM—T3 7 PMCouncil	10 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	11 6 PM—Holy Comm
12 Spring ahead Daylight savings time begins 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School Bread, Bowl, Bible	13 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) 6:30—CDC 7 PM—Pastoral Care	14 Quilting 9 AM—Knit & crochet 1-7 PM—Blood Dr. 2 PMTOPS	15 10 AM—Bible Study 6:00—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service Choir rehearsal	16 9:00AM—Social Min.	10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	18 7:30 AM—Property 6 PM—Holy Comm
19 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School Bread, Bowl & Bible	20 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom) 7 PM—Finance & CDC	21 Quilting 2 PMTOPS 2 PMKnit & crochet	22 10 AM—Bible Study 6:00—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service Choir rehearsal	23	24 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	25 6 PM—Holy Comm
26 8 & 10:30—Holy Comm. 9:15—Sun. School 1 PM—Girl Scouts	27 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	28 Quilting 9 AM—Knit & crochet 2 PMTOPS	29 10 AM—Bible Study 6:00—Soup & bread 7 PM—Mid-week Lenten service Choir rehearsal	30	31 10 AM—Bible Study (zoom)	