

PROCLAIMING A TIMELESS CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD

SINCE 1794



THE SPIRE

SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH † CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND

2023 CONGREGATION OFFICERS

President:

Suzanne Umstott

Vice President:

Debbie Streicher

Secretary:

Debbie Szymanski

Treasurer:

Casey Colledge

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August 2023

Pastor's Ponderings

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Education

(Faith

Formation):

Debbie Streicher

Evangelism

Jane Roderick

Finance:

Casey Colledge

Ministry in Daily Life:

Nancy Ayers

Property:

Todd Umstott

Social Ministry (Fellowship):

Cindy Read

Worship and Music:

Liz Medcalf

Youth:

Gary Miller

The miracle of the loaves and fishes from last Sunday's gospel lesson is a tale we have heard over and over since childhood. It is the only miracle recounted in all four gospels. Yet despite its familiarity, its full meaning often escapes our understanding and maybe even our own belief system. Was this miracle merely a crowd pleaser? Did Jesus just throw in a free meal for the multitudes... sort of a biblical version of free-hot-dog-day at the ballpark? Or was it simply a huge parlor trick meant to wow the faithful and confound the skeptics? Doubtless the miracle served both purposes. But in all of Christ's words and actions, there is a single, much deeper message: **God loves us. And Jesus is literally the embodiment of that love.** Where we see scraps, he can create abundance. Where we see emptiness and depression, he can create profound fulfillment and boundless joy. He is the bread of life. And in Christ, that life is abundant. The crowd did not need to come back for seconds. They were filled to satisfaction and there was enough left over for doggy bags... twelve baskets worth. What a perfect analogy for God's love. Out of scarcity comes the endless buffet, the bottomless basket.

This is a very different kind of miracle, but a very familiar kind of gospel... while it is comforting, it is also challenging. In other miracles, Jesus is presented with a problem. He acts miraculously to resolve it... publicly calling on God the Father, laying on hands, commanding spirits... and then the miracle happens. But in this gospel the miracle takes place off-stage. And it comes not directly from Jesus, but through the hands of the disciples, which is a minor miracle in itself. As the holy gospel begins the disciples are ready to shoo the crowd away: Go home folks. The show's over. But Jesus transforms them from would-be bouncers into sacramental servants. He instructs them to share their meager provisions with the people. It is a teaching moment for the disciples and for us. We are not meant to be passive recipients of God's grace, but to be active channels of his love. We do not come to Christ merely to be fed, but to feed others. That is a condition of our discipleship.

continued on page 2

THE REVEREND
RYAN K. VIANDS
Pastor

DAVID RANKIN
Director of Music

DEBBIE SZYMANSKI
Parish Administrator

CASEY COLLEDGE
Treasurer

RAMON ROCHE CARDONA
Sexton

From the president.....

Continued from page 1

That does not mean occasionally making a painless contribution or going through the motions of community service. Charity is not mindless, mechanical giving. It is sharing the love on which we are nourished. It's not dispensing empty, loveless calories. It is sacrificially giving of ourselves as Christ has given of himself to us. Like the disciples when they fed the hungry crowd that had over-stayed their leave, Jesus expects us to be loving, to be nurturing, especially to those who are inconvenient... the poor, the aged, the infirmed, the addicted or the unloved.

While the holy gospel speaks of "crowds," each one on that hillside was a beloved child of God. Like us, each had primitive survival instincts that ask: "Where's my share? Why didn't I get that piece?" Yet everyone was fed and each went away satisfied. God does not love us as crowds, or as a species... a mere category of his creation. He knows and loves each one of us in our own personal failings and foolishness. He has a plan for each one of us and more than enough love to fill your basket and mine to overflowing abundance. You see dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we are given these gifts of abundance so that we too may share as God has shared with us, to be a blessing to others. In that blessed assurance, let us taste and see the goodness of the Lord. And like the disciples, let us have the faith to dig into our own scarcity and share in abundance from the bottomless basket of God's love. You are a blessing to be a blessing! Don't miss the opportunity. Thanks be to God.

In His Service, Fr. Ryan +

Summer has been a very busy time here at St. Paul's. We have accomplished a great deal of things over the last 2 months from building and ground maintenance to continuing our social ministries.

The annual church picnic was a huge success thanks to all of the hard work and planning done by Cindy Read, Social Ministry/Fellowship, the Streichers and everyone else who helped and participated.

Our appreciation also goes out to Debbie Streicher and the Faith Formation team for another great Vacation Bible School.

In the month of July, we had a fundraising lunch to benefit the American Cancer Society/Relay for Life Team: Mama Kay's Survivors. Not only was it an excellent way to raise money and awareness for a great cause but it also turned out to be a wonderful opportunity for good food and fellowship.

As always, many thanks to the committee members and church staff and everyone who volunteers their time to our church and our community.

The council will meet again on September 12th.

I hope everyone is having a wonderful and safe summer.

Blessings
Sue Umstott, Council President

Worship at St. Paul's needs you!

The Worship and Music committee is looking for more people to help with the weekly worship services. There's a wide range of roles with different levels of commitment, but there's something for almost everyone.

When we gather for worship, we are all ministers, assembled to pray, sing, praise, celebrate communion and be sent forth in mission.

As St. Paul writes, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" (1 Cor.12: 12).

Starting at the doorways to the sanctuary, we want to return the greeters before and after the service, especially to welcome visitors and guide them into the service. Ushers, who assist with directing the congregation during communion, may also take a more active role in welcoming visitors.

Pastor Ryan would like to train a few people to serve as Liturgical Deacons, assisting with the service and the mass, such as offering prayers and leading the creeds. Crucifers and acolytes are always needed, and in some cases, they may assist with communion as well. Speak to Pastor Ryan about serving in these roles.

Lay readers are also needed on Sundays and during Wednesday Vespers. They read the lessons and psalms, and, if there is not a diaconal minister that Sunday, lead the intercessory prayers.

Those interested in assisting with running sound and screens would be appreciated, especially to relieve those who handle those tasks most of the time. On the musical side, choir members are always needed to help lead the liturgy and hymns and sing anthems. The bell choir can use extra hands, too; a basic ability to read music and count are what's needed most (although it helps if you know your left from your right). Members wanting to offer other musical talents would be welcome as well. Speak to David Rankin if you are interested.

In many cases, one person can handle more than one role, such as a lay reader also singing in the choir or a diaconal minister also serving as crucifer. And there are opportunities for participants of all ages.

For those who might be uncomfortable in the spotlight but also want to assist with worship, there is also a need for a person or persons to help coordinate, helping to ensure that the needed roles are filled each Sunday and Wednesday. Generally all that will be required is a calendar and email, with an occasional phone call, then relaying that information to Debbie Szymanski to include in the weekly bulletin.

If you have questions or want to volunteer, speak to Pastor Ryan, David Rankin for music, or Liz Medcalf, chair of the Worship and Music Committee (lizdmedcalf@gmail.com, 301-697-5983).

Finance/Building Update

Where has 2023 gone all of the sudden? It's hard to believe we are in the month of August already. We have been so blessed so far this year with not so many hot days which has been a big help with regards to the air conditioning system here at the church. As is the case with our own homes, updates to the church home are going to be needed very soon. Our air conditioning system has had some issues in the past couple of years and we have been able to repair a few of the units that were in need of updates, but we will not be able to keep repairing indefinitely. I am writing to ask for your consideration of an extra gift to help us offset the costs of replacing the air conditioning units that are problematic.

We currently have 10 large air conditioning units (2 are completely non-operational and 2 are on their last leg). We had received an estimate and the cost of new units is \$9,275 per unit. This would mean a total of \$37,100 if all 4 units would be replaced.

If you would like to contribute to the Building Fund on behalf of the air conditioning project, please include your gifts in your offering envelope and make sure to mark the Building Fund amount on the envelope. The Finance Committee and Building Committee appreciate all assistance that is received to help offset this large upcoming expense.

Casey Colledge
Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair



God created you for a purpose! The next PLACE two-day spiritual gifts assessment will be offered at St. Paul's on **Friday, September 29 and Saturday, September 30**. Debbie Streicher will facilitate. Mark your calendars now and stay tuned for more information in the September newsletter.





*You are in my
thoughts and prayers.*

How often do we say to someone, “I’ll pray for you” or “You are in my thoughts and prayers” or “I prayed for you today?” These words come easily when we hear that someone is in need of prayer, but do we act on them? Our best intentions get sidetracked at times, or in the busyness of our lives we just forget.

Saint Paul offers two formats for prayer needs:

Corporate prayer on Sunday mornings – names that have been given to the church office are read during intercessions. The names are included in the bulletin so that we can pray for the needs during the week. These requests are by name only and can be submitted to the office.

Intercessory Prayer Team – Requests to the prayer team are for named specific needs, names may be included or not. These requests are submitted to the team by a letter received by the team each Sunday evening, by email or by a letter mailed on Monday morning. These requests are treated with complete confidentiality, prayed for daily throughout the week and can be submitted to Kathleen Ball.

Requests for prayer can be given to both, if so requested.

Prayer is about relationship. Prayer is about raising our minds and hearts to God.

Please consider joining the prayer team, if you feel called to do so, by contacting me at mutmab43@gmail.com or 240-727-1798.

Kathleen Ball

Intercessory Prayer Team leader

*“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work;
prayer is the greater work.”*

Oswald Chambers



September 9th and 10th

The church will be open for tours on
Saturday from 10:00-4:00 and on
Sunday from 12:00-4:00.

There will be no rummage sale this year.



LOFT (Living Our Faith Together)



Mountain Highs
and
Valley Lows



Caring
Conversations



Devotions



Rituals
and Traditions

On behalf of Making Strides Against Breast Cancer and the Mama Kay's Survivors Team, we want to say a great big "Thank you" to everyone who participated in any way for our after church luncheon on July 30th.

It was a huge success for two reasons. First, since it was a fundraiser, you will be pleased to know that your donations for the event totaled \$1,098.00. For this we are very grateful. The second reason the day was a huge success was the time spent in fellowship with each other. Such time is invaluable for a healthy congregation and we found it very, very pleasant.

Again we want to say "Thank you" and also that all of you have been wonderful. We had fun and the Cancer Society benefitted. Hopefully we can do this again in the fall.

Kay and Jay Cochrane

LOFT (Living Our Faith Together), is an opportunity to gather for fellowship and grow in our faith together for children, youth, and adults. After a summer break, we begin again on Sunday, September 17 and will meet each Sunday following worship. Adults meet in Fellowship Hall and children and youth meet in a room downstairs for craft and activities. *More information about LOFT for the fall will be found on the website and in the September newsletter.*

Faith Formation Team Meeting

Plans are in progress for LOFT and additions to Christ Cubby for the fall plus a few other opportunities for us to grow in our faith together at St. Paul's. The Faith Formation Team will meet in Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, September 6 at 5:30pm to discuss and make further plans for the fall. If you are interested in joining us or have questions, please contact Debbie Streicher (dstreicher52@gmail.com or 703-303-7255).



The Cumberland Area Joint Vacation Bible School began with a very successful kick-off gathering for all ages on Saturday, June 10 at Moon-Glo Skating Rink.

Vacation Bible School was hosted at St. Paul's and took place June 12 through June 15 from 5:30 to 7:30pm. A follow-up appreciation meal for all the volunteers was had on June 29th.

Donations were collected for the Union Rescue Mission.

The congregations involved this year were St. Paul's Lutheran, St. Luke's Lutheran, Metropolitan AME, Souls Won Outreach Cathedral, and First Presbyterian.



Coloring page for kids of all ages!

I am fearfully
and wonderfully
made. Psalm
139 v 14





I want to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers over the last 9 months while I dealt with my back problems.

It's so good to be back in church and see everyone.

Thanks also to Pastor Ryan for his visits and bringing communion.

What a wonderful church family we have.

Sincerely,
Gregg Mazzone

St. Paul's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for participating in our Garden Tour. We had a lot of positive comments and you were a great addition to our project.

Thank you,
Garden Club of Cumberland



Dot and Diane Rhoads
2120 Greentree Road,
Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Dementia Support Group

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning- thinking, remembering, and reasoning- to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. The following fall under the dementia umbrella: Alzheimers, vascular, Lewy body, Frontotemporal, and others. Life can become a challenge for those living with and providing care for those with dementia.

The Dementia Support Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Saturday each month at St. Paul's in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00am. If you or someone you know could benefit from this group, please feel free to join us. It is facilitated by a retired nurse who specialized in dementia patients and their families. For more information or questions, contact Debbie Streicher at dstreicher52@gmail.com.

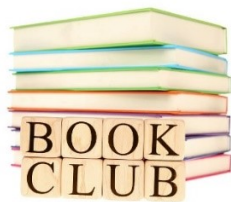
ST. PAUL'S APPS



A PLACE PEOPLE SHARE

APPS returns!

Our weekly Wednesday afterschool program for students at West Side Elementary will return this fall. We plan to welcome students back to St. Paul Church on Wednesday, September 27th. If you are interested in volunteering to assist teachers or help with snack and meal preparation please contact Stephanie Wade at 240-522-2645.



Joy Book Club

For Tuesday, August 29, at 6 p.m. (location TBA):

Finding Dorothy by Elizabeth Letts.



Friday	August 4
Last Day-Beginnings Summer programs	
Sunday	August 6
10:00 AM	Worship
Tuesday	August 8
5:30 PM	Council meeting
Wednesday	August 9
5:00 PM	APPS meeting
Thursday	August 10
4:00-6:00	Bountiful Blessings
Sunday	August 13
10:00 AM	Worship
Wednesday	August 23
	Beginnings First Day of School
Thursday	August 24
4:00-6:00	Bountiful Blessings
Saturday	August 26
10:00 AM	Dementia support group
Sunday	August 27
10:00 AM	Worship
Tuesday	August 29
6:00 PM	Joy Book Club



5 – Terry Hostetler
22 – Rena Christopher