

# 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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MAY 2023

## “The Lord has gone up with a shout!” The Day of Ascension

## 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

Does the date of May 18<sup>th</sup> ring any bells for you? It is a special day in the life of our Christian faith. This year it is the day of our Lord's Ascension. Ascension Day is always 40 days after our Lord's Resurrection from the Dead, and ten days before the Feast of Pentecost. However, if May 18<sup>th</sup> did not ring a bell for you before you read the title of this reflection, don't be too hard on yourself. For by our secular society, this day goes virtually unnoticed by the world around us. There are no “Ascension Day” sales at the mall. There are no urgent appeals pointing us to the “true meaning of Ascension Day.” Hallmark doesn't even bother to print “Ascension Day” cards. There are no TV specials which sing your favorite “Ascension Day” songs. There is no fat bearded man in a red suit bearing Ascension gifts; nor does a six foot rabbit present us with chocolate figures of the ascending Jesus. As far as the rest of the world is concerned, Ascension Day is a big flop with no money to be made from it.

But, not for you. Saint Paul Church does offer a time of worship and reflection on this Day! We will be celebrating Ascension Day (Eve.) on May 17<sup>th</sup> @ 6p.m. in the Luther Chapel downstairs. So please plan to come. We are also planning during this mass a few Holy Baptisms too. But on May 18<sup>th</sup>, you and millions of Christians around the world, will celebrate the Day of Our Lord's Ascension to Heaven. A day we remember that Jesus rose from the dead and returned to Heaven, a day we remember how important this day truly is to our Christian faith. We believe it, and we confess it over and over again, when we say the creeds of this Church. “He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.”

As Christians, we believe in the Ascension. But, the celebration of Christ's Ascension has never caught on outside the Church. The world is not interested in the Ascension of Jesus Christ. Perhaps this is because Ascension is for “insiders.” The Ascension story is not for everyone; it is for people of faith. It is for you (and me). Now, does this “insider stuff” sound too exclusive?

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THE REVEREND  
RYAN K. VIANDS  
Pastor

DAVID RANKIN  
Director of Music

DEBBIE SZYMANSKI  
Parish Administrator

CASEY COLLEDGE  
Treasurer

RAMON ROCHE CARDONA  
Sexton

The Bible itself provides evidence that the Ascension story is an “insider’s” story. Accounts of the Ascension are found in Sts. Matthew, Luke, and Acts. They all note that only followers of Jesus watched him disappear through the clouds and heard the angel voices. Those who witnessed the Ascension were people who had committed their lives to Jesus.

During the forty-day period after Easter, the Risen Christ appeared to the people of faith many times. Jesus did **not** show himself to the Scribes and Pharisees. He did **not** appear to random crowds—those attracted only by his wondrous works. No, Jesus appeared to people of faith—to “insiders.”

The risen Lord taught the men and women who followed Him things about the kingdom of God. He got them ready to serve in His name.

We are to recall that it was a select group which was to wait in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It makes sense, then, that as the end of the forty days, only the “insiders” were eyewitnesses to the earthly departure of Jesus Christ. YOU are also a witness. YOU are an “insider”

Like the Disciples of old, we gather at worship to hear the words of our Savior. We worship our God, through prayer and praise. We too, believe in Jesus Christ and hunger to know him more deeply, and to enjoy unbroken fellowship with Him. And, like the first century Disciples after the Ascension, we do not see Jesus face to face. We know Him by faith, rather than by seeing Him physically.

When Jesus disappears from view, the Disciples stand immobilized—staring into the sky. The angels say to Jesus’ followers, “Why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.” The angels are saying, “Hey, don’t just stand here. Let go from this spot in the sky, now fading from your vision. Don’t try to live off those sweet memories of the past, as though God has nothing for you in the future.” It must be hard for the disciples to see Jesus disappearing into the sky that day.

They’d been His followers for a long time; they had known the anguish of His passion and death; they experienced unexpected joy when he rose from the dead. And now, they stand frozen in place as He is leaving them—frozen in the uncertainty about what the future holds. The Disciples stand still—longing for the safety of the past.

The angel’s words are an important message for all of us to hear, especially today: “Don’t just stand there. Don’t try to live off the memories of the past.” Let’s admit it. We all do it sometimes. We long for a time when all of our loved ones were alive and well again. We long for a time before we got cancer, or arthritis, or had hearing loss. At some point, we all long for those “good old days.” How often does it feel safer for us to look backwards—to a happier time. Remembering is a great and wonderful gift. However, standing immobilized (unable to move forward) is something that is **not** a blessing.

My dear insiders, although there are no special Ascension Day sales, no greeting cards to mark May 18<sup>th</sup> as Ascension Day, no chocolate Jesus figurines, there is much cause for our rejoicing on Ascension Day. For Jesus, the only Son of God, who was crucified, died, and was buried and rose from the dead, and is now ascended to the Father is now interceding for us. Let us rejoice that we have been chosen as witnesses to God’s salvation, mercy and love. Let us rejoice in the Good News of what God has done, is doing, and has yet to bring to completion for us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and the worlds. Thanks always be to God!!

In His Service,  
Fr. Ryan +

**Wednesday Vespers**  
**Observance of Ascension Eve**

Celebrate the  
Sacrament of Baptism with  
Holy Communion

May 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.  
Lower Level Chapel

A small reception will follow.

*From the president.....*

It was a very busy Lenten season, Holy week and Easter Sunday. We had a beautiful and well attended Easter service. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make St. Paul's Easter worship special for all those who were able to be there with us.

We are heading into another busy spring and summer as we prepare for Vacation Bible School. Debbie Streicher and the Faith Formation Team have something very exciting planned for the youth in our community.

We continue to look for individuals who would be interested in assisting by being part of one of our church committees. Please contact the church office or a council member for more details on how you might be able to help.

My appreciation to the committee members, church staff and volunteers for all of your hard work every day.

The next council meeting will be May 9th at 5:30 PM

Psalm 118:24 "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

Blessings

Sue Umstott, Council President



*We welcome you as members of St. Paul Lutheran Church to join with us in worshiping God, hearing his Word and sharing his supper, proclaiming the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serving all people and striving for justice and peace in all the earth.*

Casey Colledge  
Charity Friend  
Timmy Friend  
Becca Green  
Morgan Green  
Rachel Hare  
Ellen Roberts  
Marsha Tarte  
Todd Umstott

**LOFT**  
(Living Our Faith Together)



LOFT is an opportunity for both youth and adults to gather each Sunday following worship for caring conversations, reading scripture, and praying together. LOFT meets regularly throughout the school year and takes a break during the summer months.

**The last Sunday for LOFT will take place on May 21.** It will resume again in the fall.

**Almsgiving Boxes**



During Lent, households placed donations in Almsgiving Boxes. Many thanks to those who helped us collect \$632.50 as of this writing. The donations will go to the Children's League in Cumberland: <https://thechildrensleague.com/>.



*Happy 95th Birthday  
Dot Rhoads!!*

Dot would like to thank everyone for the birthday cards she received.

**The celebrations of MAY !!!**



**1 – Pastor Ryan's 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
with St. Paul**

- 6 – Doris Giornesto
- 11 – Patti & Eric Cosner anniversary  
(daughter of Pat Graham)
- 12 – Lisa Rowley
- 20 – Debbie Szymanski
- 21 – Liz Medcalf
- 25 – Meadow Wagus
- 29 – Patti Squires
- 31 - Stephanie & Marty Sharpless anniversary  
( daughter of Donna Goldizen)
- 31 – Diane Rhoads



## Vacation Bible School 2023



**St. Paul's Brass  
from Carlisle, PA  
will join us for worship on  
Sunday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.**

*All are welcome!-please  
invite family and friends to welcome  
them as we  
join together for worship.*



## Save the Date

Worship and our Annual Church Picnic will take place at the Lakewood Beach Pavilion on Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. Please sign up for the picnic on the bulletin board.

The Cumberland Area Joint Vacation Bible School 2023 will take place at St. Paul's from **Monday, June 12 through Thursday, June 15 from 5:30 to 7:30pm**. Registration forms for ages 5 through finishing fifth grade are available on our website. Go to the outreach tab and scroll down to Vacation Bible School. Click on that link to find the form.

**Puppet Team for VBS:** Those interested in learning puppet ministry skills and helping with VBS openings and closings are invited to join us for practices on June 5 and June 6 from 4:00pm to 6:00pm.

**Reminder!** There will be a fun, family kick for VBS event at Moon Glo Skating Rink on Saturday, June 10 between 11:30am and 1:30pm. Snacks, skate rental, and activities will be provided at no cost to participants.

# Surprise !

*And that, is an understatement!*

Thank you to my daughter, Debbie, son, Rick, and granddaughter Beth for planning the wonderful surprise birthday celebration, on April 30, after worship. Good job, Father Ryan for distracting me after worship until all was ready!

I had a wonderful celebration on Saturday with my family, with no idea of what was to come on Sunday. Debbie knows that my church family is so important in my life, and would be those I would want to celebrate with me in thanking God for the gift of life for 80+ years.

I was humbled by your presence and I cherish the beautiful rose bouquet, and each card and gift that I received. And what good secret keepers you are!!

“Above all, be loving. This ties everything together perfectly.” ~ Colossians 3:14

Your Sister in Christ,  
Kathleen Ball

# May

**Monday**  
6:30-8:30

**Tuesday**  
6:00 PM

**Wednesday**  
5:20 PM

6:00 PM  
6:30 PM

**Saturday**  
10:00 AM

**Sunday**  
8:30 AM

10:00 AM  
11:30 AM

**Tuesday**  
5:30 PM

**Wednesday**  
5:20 PM

6:00 PM  
6:30 PM

**Thursday**  
4:00-6:00

**Friday**  
11:00 AM

12:00 PM  
**Saturday**

10:00 AM  
**Sunday**

8:30 AM  
10:00 AM

11:30 AM

**May 1**  
Let's Beautify  
Cumberland meeting

**May 2**  
Joy Book Club

**May 3**  
Bell rehearsal

Vespers  
Choir rehearsal

**May 6**  
Western MD Food Bank  
Fundraiser-fellowship hall

**May 7**  
Book study  
Worship  
Adult and Youth LOFT

**May 9**  
Council Meeting

**May 10**  
Bell rehearsal  
Vespers  
Choir rehearsal

**May 11**  
Bountiful Blessings

**May 12**  
**Beginnings** Lunch  
with a Loved One  
**Beginnings** dismissal

**May 13**  
Dementia Support Group

**May 14-Mother's Day**  
Book Study  
Worship  
with St. Paul's Brass  
Adult and Youth LOFT

**Monday** **May 15**  
Bountiful Blessings delivery

**Wednesday** **May 17**  
5:20 PM Bell rehearsal  
6:00 PM Vespers-Ascension Eve  
Baptism with Holy Communion

6:30 PM Choir rehearsal

**Saturday** **May 20**  
Baby Shower-fellowship hall

**Sunday** **May 21**  
8:30 AM Book Study

10:00 AM Worship  
11:30 AM Adult and Youth LOFT

**Tuesday** **May 23**  
5:00 PM VBS Meeting

**Wednesday** **May 24**  
5:20 PM Bell rehearsal

6:30 PM Choir rehearsal

**Thursday** **May 25**  
4:00-6:00 Bountiful Blessings  
6:15 PM Worship and Music  
Committee Meeting

**Saturday** **May 27**  
10:00 AM Dementia Support Group

**Sunday** **May 28**  
8:30 AM Book study

10:00 AM Worship

**Monday** **May 29**  
**OFFICE AND SCHOOL CLOSED**

**Wednesday** **May 31**  
**Beginnings Last Day of School**

5:20 PM Bell rehearsal  
6:30 PM Choir rehearsal