

# PROCLAIMING A TIMELESS CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD

SINCE 1794



# THE SPIRE

SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH † CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND

## 2020 CONGREGATION OFFICERS

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Dr. Burton Streicher  
**Vice President:**  
Kathleen Ball  
**Secretary:**  
Debbie Szymanski  
**Treasurer:**  
Stephanie Wade

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**Education (Faith Formation):**  
Debbie Metheny  
**Evangelism:**  
Cecil Bell  
**Finance:**  
Suzanne Umstott  
**Ministry in Daily Life:**  
Nancy Lohr  
**Property:**  
Edward Ayers  
**Social Ministry (Fellowship):**  
Cindy Read  
**Stewardship:**  
Burton Streicher  
**Worship and Music:**  
Kathleen Ball  
**Youth:**  
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October 2020

## Pastor's Ponderings

Not everything that pleases us, comes from God. Not everything that displeases us, comes from the Devil. In fact, the opposite can be quite true more often than we would like to think or admit. The disconnect is a matter of the heart. We are and ever will be children of ole Adam and Eve. We play at and replay the fall of Eden in new ways, as well as, tried and true ways, each and every day with the breaking of dawn.

What is required to reconnect that which is broken is a revolution...a revolution that goes where no other has gone before...a revolution begun with father Abraham, is reborn in the manger, sanctified upon the cross, confirmed by the empty tomb and continues wherever faith breathes and seeks the ways of God.

The odd thing about this revolution is that both sides seek the same thing... to fill that God shaped hole in the human heart. BUT! And this is a big but (I know, the pun is halfway intended.) That big but is this... the two sides want to fill in that shaped hole in distinctly different ways. One side invites you into a life of trust, sacrifice, servanthood, and loving others as you would want to be loved and looked out for. The other side offers the same invitation with one exception-at the center of that life is YOU.

Normally, those two sides dance around another in a careful two-step allowing your conscience to rest at an acceptable state of discomfort. But then, something comes up, tipping the balance. Like the good'ol boy who got a visit from the new priest one afternoon. He knew he was coming and watched him drive up the long lane to his farmhouse. When he arrived, he invited him up on the porch where he had set out a couple of rocking chairs and a table with some sweet tea for them to share. He thanked him, accepted the tea, a good sign, sat down and began admiring the expansive pasture before them and the barn with the pigsty beside it. The ol' boy was impressed...he had a good eye. After a bit he said, "I was wondering. If you had a hundred head of cattle, would you give – say-the profit of fifty of them to the church?" Why you know I would," said the good 'ol boy. "Now that's nice to know," he answered. *continued on pages 2 and 3*

THE REVEREND  
RYAN K. VIANDS  
Pastor

DAVID RANKIN  
Director of Music

DEBBIE SZYMANSKI  
Parish Assistant

STEPHANIE WADE  
Treasurer

RAMON ROCHE CARDONA  
Sexton

Then after a bit more of talk, the priest asked, “You know, I was thinking if you had fifty goats for milking, would you give the church the profit from the selling half the milk?” Well, his host gave him a look and said, “You know father, I think you and I are going to get along right well, but you’re starting to hurt my feelings. I already told you if I had a hundred head of cattle, I’d give the profit for half.” “I’m sorry,” he said, “I meant no offense I was just making conversation but I do have one more question, though.” “Apology accepted,” he said, “Go on what is your question, padre?” The priest looked over to the barn, “I was wondering,” he said, “If you had two pigs, would you donate one to the church?” And, at that, the good ‘ol boy jumped up from his rocking chair and said, “Now Preacher, that’s not fair! You know I got pigs!”

Sometimes faith and reality come together in such a way as to challenge us by tipping the balance between the two sides seeking to fill the God-shaped hole in our hearts. That’s what is happening in our first lesson from a couple of weeks ago (Lectionary Readings. St. Matt. 20:16.) The Israelites, who have been praying for freedom for generations and are tasting it for the first time, are having second thoughts after a month-long taste. Second thoughts about the God that has freed them, the path he has set them on, and the life to which he has called them. Their faith and their reality have come together with the challenge-trust God and live as his child or preserve me and mine? That’s the nature of their complaint and their grumbling.

For generations and millennia upon millennia this story has been shared to let the people of God know...there will always be a struggle for balance between looking out for yourself and trusting God. It is also told to remind us that God hears, understands and answers our prayer in the midst of that struggle...he answers it in ways that move us to trust him more as he builds and cares for His kingdom in, with, and through us.

“So, the last will be first and the first will be last.” Takes on a different shade of meaning doesn’t it? It’s not the first time Jesus says it in St. Matthew’s gospel. In fact, he says it just before this parable. Jesus has told a rich man to go sell everything in order to gain access into heaven-not a comment on riches so much as a call to trust something beyond riches and looking out for yourself. The disciples point out that they have given everything away and are feeling pretty good about that and asks what’s in it for them! Jesus tells them-they’ll judge over the 12 tribes of Israel- but they aren’t anything special-many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first, he tells them. Then he tells this parable to explain. And, when they hear it, they grumble just like the Israelites.

“Why are you giving me the stink eye?” he asks, “Are you upset because I’m generous? So, the last will be first and the first will be last.”

If God is to build His kingdom, care for it and sustain it-in, though, and with you and I-His grace, His generosity of love and presence need to be trusted and lived by us.

Times like this when it seems so many are at each other’s throats, when a stealthy and often deadly virus that we have yet to completely understand can reach out and grab us or a love one without a warning... how we live, how we interact, how we look out for each other, how we treat one another-all of it reveals who we really are as God’s beloved children. And as Christians, it is always a reflection of Christ in us.

Times like these find us facing the same tests and warnings and guidance as those Israelites learning faith and trust in God and the disciples learning faith and trusting Jesus -Grace of God, The love of God, God and His self in the flesh.

Former President Calvin Coolidge invited some people from his hometown for dinner at the White House. Since they did not know how to behave at such an occasion, they thought the best policy would be just to do what the President did. The time came for serving coffee. The President poured his coffee into his saucer. As soon as the home folk saw it, they did the same. The next step for the President was to pour some milk and add a little sugar to the coffee in the saucer. The home folks did the same. They thought for sure that the next step would be for the President to take the saucer with the coffee and begin sipping it. But the President didn't do so. He leaned over, placed the saucer on the floor and called the cat in. In times like these, we must be extremely careful who and what we imitate. Do we imitate and embody the ways of this world? Or do we imitate and embody the countercultural ways of our Lord, Jesus the Christ? If we walk with our Lord, alongside and with the least, the weakest, the at risk, the outcasted, the forsaken, the forgotten, the despised- so the last will be first and the first will be last and we can move ahead together in the abundant grace of God as He cares for His kingdom in, with and through us. Amen=(Let It Be So!).

Children of God, let us pray,....  
Almighty, and Ever-loving God,  
Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we too have known your love, and experienced your care and provision. You invite us to extend that love to the broken and hurting world around us- to care for others as deeply as we are to care for ourselves. And so we bring the needs of your/our before you now.  
We pray for the many who do not have enough: enough food to eat, or shelter to keep warm; enough employment, or many to pay their bills; enough medicine or medical care.  
Lord in your great mercy, hear our prayer.  
We also pray for those who have more than enough, but who still struggle to find meaning and purpose in this life; who indulge in dangerous or self-serving activities to dull their own pains of loneliness or to fill a hole/void that only your presence can truly fill.  
Lord in your great mercy, hear our prayer.  
Most merciful God, our father, your grace reaches out to all of us. You call us to live as citizens of heaven, working together with one heart and mind. Strengthen us to live in a manner worthy of the Good News we have graciously received, offering our lives in humble servanthood of your kingdom, where the last are first and the first are last, and there is grace enough for ALL. Lord in your great mercy, hear our prayer  
In the name of Jesus Christ, (+) our Savior and Lord, Amen.

## A Word from the President

The church council met in fellowship hall on 8 Sep 2020. The council approved an annual maintenance agreement with Verdin Bells and Clocks to service our carillon bells in the steeple. The bells have not been serviced for the past 7 years and need some maintenance attention. The council also approved the property committee's request to replace the front portico and pole lights on the Washington Street driveway for \$4,140. The council then discussed our current deficit in total weekly giving to date. The congregation approved in January a weekly offering budget of \$65,000 for the year and by the end of August only \$36,454 has been collected. This is 10.7% below where we should be or \$6,966 behind in meeting our budget goal. If our church income does not cover our expenses, the difference has to come from our current savings balance which has dropped by about \$14,380 (or 14%) since the beginning of this year. While we are in unusual circumstances with year with the pandemic restrictions on church activities, the bills still come in. We have been very fortunate that we have been able to keep up with expenses in the past few years. The council hopes the congregation will keep our stewardship responsibilities in mind as we watch our financial situation closely this year.

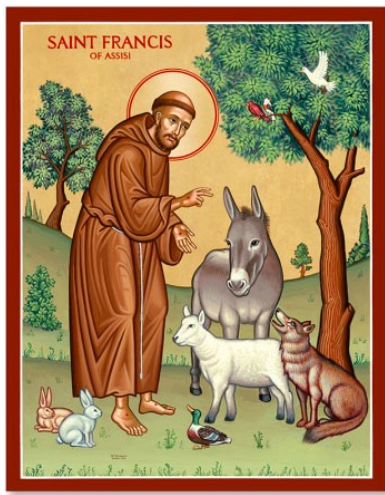
Living our Faith Together (LOFT) began again via Zoom conference calls on Monday 21, September at 7:00pm and will continue via conference calls until we can safely begin meeting after the worship service in Fellowship Hall again. St. Paul's will again participate with this year's Cumberland CROP Walk on Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm. Information/donation packets are available in the office for those who wish to donate and/or walk. We are closely watching the progress of the pandemic situation and are reducing the restrictions whenever we can safely.

I hope everyone was able to enjoy our nice September weather. The leaves are beginning to change color which should produce a beautiful October for us. Be safe and healthy as we continue to deal with this unusual pandemic situation.

Prayers and blessings to all,

(Burt Streicher, Council President)





## Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>

at


5:00 p.m.

on the Washington Street lawn.

Please bring your pet in a carrier or on a leash for a special blessing and a treat. We will also collect items needed by the Allegany County animal shelter:

- Dog food
- Cat food (wet and dry)
- Kitten & puppy food (wet and dry)
- Kitty litter (prefer the plain, non-scoopable clay variety)
  - Blankets
  - Towels
- HIGH-EFFICIENCY Laundry detergent ONLY
  - Clorox wipes
  - Bleach
  - Fly traps
- Air fresheners
  - Leashes
  - Collars
  - Toys
  - Treats

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020  
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



**taking  
faith  
home**  
TFH BIBLE STUDY

*God directs our ways.*

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WEEKLY MILESTONES:  
Take a moment to have each Bible Study member share a recent mountain high and/or valley low in their lives.

SCRIPTURE READING:  
Matthew 21:23-32 (NRSV) Parable of the two sons

LOFT meets every Monday evening at 7:00 pm online using Zoom. The Bible study format uses the Taking Faith Home bulletin insert that is received each week via email or snail mail. Mountain Highs and Valley Lows are shared followed by scripture readings and discussions. The closing includes a hymn for the week, prayer, and a blessing. If you would like to join this group, please contact Debbie: [dstreicher52@gmail.com](mailto:dstreicher52@gmail.com).



Cumberland CROP Walk  
Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:00

Please meet in the CBIZ  
parking lot at 1:30.

Donation envelopes are available  
in the church office.

Anyone who is able to obtain pledges to raise money for the CROP Walk can also walk or run on their own schedule to raise awareness of hunger and assist local food pantries and the Western Maryland Food Bank.

## Puppet Ministry Team News



Planning and practices for a Christmas presentation will begin in October. If you are interested in helping with puppets, props, music, or technology, please contact Debbie Streicher: [dstreicher52@gmail.com](mailto:dstreicher52@gmail.com).



### **Birthdays and Anniversary for October**

8 – Debbie Metheny  
 11 – Linda & Lynn Zeller –  
             Anniversary (1969)  
 12 – Bob Davis  
 15 – Donna Goldizen  
 29 – Debbie Streicher  
 30 – Ed Ayers

**Congratulations to all !!!**



**Sunday**

**10:00 AM**

**5:00 PM**

**Monday**

**7:00 PM**

**Thursday**

**4:00-6:00**

**Sunday**

**10:00 AM**

**2:00 PM**

**Monday**

**7:00 PM**

**Tuesday**

**5:30 PM**

**Sunday**

**10:00 AM**

**Monday**

**7:00 PM**

**Tuesday**

**10:00 AM**

**Wednesday**

**5:00-6:00 PM**

**Thursday**

**4:00-6:00**

**Sunday**

**10:00 AM**

**Monday**

**7:00 PM**

**Tuesday**

**10:00 AM**

**October 4**

Worship

Blessing of the Animals

**October 5**

LOFT via Zoom

**October 8**

Drive-Thru

Bountiful Blessings

**October 11**

Worship

CROP Walk

**October 12**

**OFFICE CLOSED**

LOFT via Zoom

**October 13**

Council Meeting

**October 18**

Worship

**October 19**

LOFT via Zoom

**October 20**

Lutheran Questions,  
 Lutheran Answers study

**October 21**

APPS drive-thru

**October 22**

Drive-Thru

Bountiful Blessings

**October 25**

**Reformation Sunday**

Worship

**October 26**

LOFT via Zoom

**October 27**

Lutheran Questions,  
 Lutheran Answers study



## Bittersweet October

The mellow, messy, leaf-kicking,  
perfect pause between the  
opposing miseries of summer and  
winter.

*-Carol Bishop Hipps*

## REFORMATION SUNDAY OCTOBER 25<sup>th</sup>

Worship at St. Paul's  
10:00 a.m.

**Please wear red!**

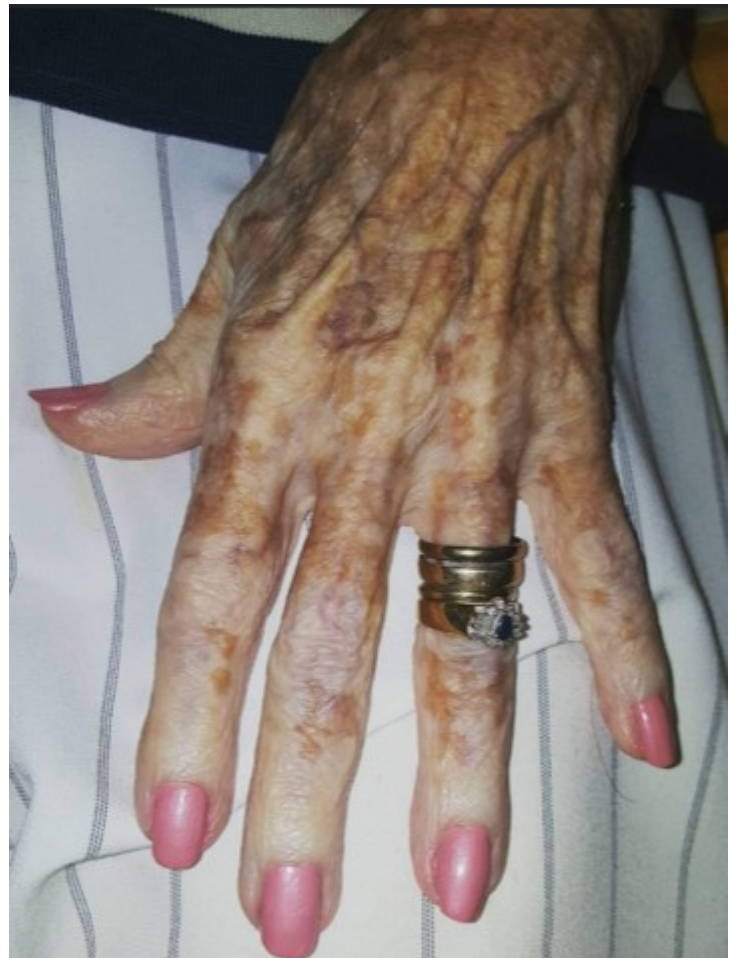
## ALL SAINTS SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>

Worship at St. Paul's  
10:00 a.m.

We will remember those whom we  
have lost  
in the past year. Please submit  
names of  
family members or friends you  
would like included  
in the remembrance.

Today I painted a new residents nails at work and as we were going over colors, she mentioned she wanted clear. The only thought that came to my mind was "CLEAR?! That's no fun." I asked her why she wanted clear and she said, "My hands are ugly, I don't want to draw attention to them." I then carefully responded with, "Your hands tell the story of your life. They tell the story of love, of care and adventure. These hands have touched and held things that most people can only wish to one day." And with that, she went with the color pink for her nails.

Sometimes what we are so insecure with, others find beauty in. 💕

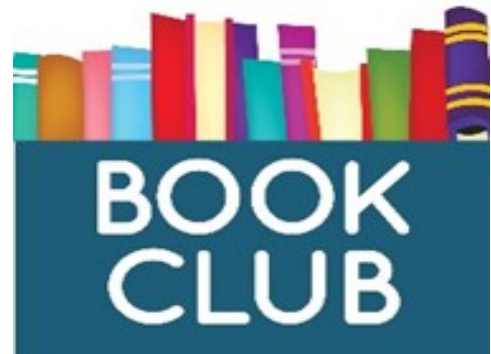






## **Safe and Snug 2020**

The Allegany County Department of Social Services' 19th annual Safe and Snug Program will operate from October 1 through October 31, 2020. The program, funded entirely by community support, distributed 431 coats along with hats and gloves to children in need within our community in 2019. St. Paul's will collect new coats, hats and gloves and deliver them to the Department of Social Services. If you wish to make a monetary donation, please send it to ACDSS, One Frederick Street, Cumberland, MD 21502-attention finance and note Safe and Snug in the memo section.



The Book Club has selected for their next book The Astronaut Wives Club by Lily Koeppel. The wives of the Mercury Seven astronauts have a story of their own. Overnight, these women were transformed from military spouses into American royalty. They formed bonds that would withstand the test of time, even as divorce and tragedy touched their lives. They stayed friends for half a century.



# Being a Christian is like being a pumpkin!

God picks you from the patch and  
brings you in.

(John 15:16)

Then washes all the dirt off of you.

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

He opens you up and scoops out all  
the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds  
of doubt, hate, greed, etc.

(Romans 6:6)

Then He carves you a new smiling  
face.

(Psalm 71:23)

And He puts His light inside you to  
shine for all the world to see.

(Matthew 5:16)



# Thank you

Dear Members and Scholarship Committees,

I feel honored and fortunate to have been selected by the Bowersox and Schaidt Scholarship Committees as a scholarship recipient for my higher education at West Virginia University. I thank you for this generous donation.

I am currently attending WVU as an undergraduate student with a dual major in biology and Spanish. The knowledge and experiences I gain from my time here will create a solid foundation towards my goals of working in wildlife conservation as well as sustainability in developing countries around the world.

I am taking the financial responsibility for my higher education throughout my time at WVU. The cost of an education, especially in unprecedented times such as these continues to place a burden on students and their families. I place my academics as a top priority.

These scholarships will allow me to dedicate more time to my studies which would otherwise be spent working to complete my college payments. Thank you again for this opportunity, with your assistance I am one step closer to accomplishing my dreams.

Anastasia Simpson

Dear St. Paul Family,

Thank you, once again this year, for the financial assistance provided by both the Schaidt and Bowersox Scholarship awards. These scholarships have been a great help to my family over the last four years, and previously with my brothers.

In the Spring, I will be graduating from the University of Maryland, earning a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. My hope is to work in the investment/financial planning field. I have interned for two summers with McCaskill Financial in Frederick and found that I really enjoy investment analysis. Eventually, with more experience, I plan to teach people of all ages and economic backgrounds how to achieve financial security.

Thank you for your continued support. I hope you will always be proud to say, "he grew up at St. Paul."

Sincerely,  
Sean Wade

# *The Installation of The Reverend Ryan K. Viands+*



September 13, 2020