2026 Congregation Officers

President-
Suzanne Umstott
Vice President-
Casey Colledge
Secretary-
Debbie Szymanski
Treasurer-
Stephanie Wade

2026 Congregation Council Members
Education (Faith Formation)-
Charity Friend
Evangelism-
Linda Zeller
Finance-
Brenda Aydelotte
Ministry in Daily Life-
Nancy Ayers
Personnel-
Brenda Aydelotte,
Casey Colledge,
Sue Umstott
Property-
Todd Umstott
Social Ministry-
Marsha Tarte
Stewardship-
Casey Colledge
Worship and Music-
Timmy Friend

St. Paul Church Staff

Pastor
The Reverend
Ryan K. Viands
Director of Music
Mark Steiner
Parish Administrator
Debbie Szymanski
Sexton
Brett Densock
Treasurer
Stephanie Wade

PROCLAIMING A TIMELESS CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD SINCE 1794

THE SPIRE

SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH † CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND

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October 2026

"And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city..."- Jonah 4.11

Bishop Gohl delivered this sermon to the Autumn Meeting of the ELCA Conference of Bishops

Today's reading from Jonah should be a short, "happily-ever-after" moment. Jonah finally goes as God calls. He preaches a lukewarm, less-than-inspiring sermon, akin to the wayside pulpit of Hampden Baptist Church in Baltimore, which long carried the succinct, but clear admonition: "Turn or Burn!" Nevertheless, the hearts of Nineveh are turned back to God. God sees Nineveh's repentance and chooses mercy. The city is spared! Glory! Glory to God

Except. Except Jonah! Jonah is not pleased. He becomes angry—not because God has failed, but because God has been faithful to God's own character. Jonah knew that the Lord is *"gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love."* He knew it, and he resented it.

That is a challenging word for those of us who lead in this church. Leaders are expected to make judgments, protect institutions, enforce standards, and respond to wrongdoing. Those responsibilities matter. A Lutheran Christian that does not make right distinction between Law and Gospel, a leader who does not honestly deal with right and wrong is not serving Christ or the church especially well.

In Jonah, though, we are reminded that leadership can become spiritually dangerous when accountability turns into a desire for retribution, or when our commitment to order leaves no room for repentance.

Jonah wanted Nineveh to receive what he believed it deserved. And God desired mercy. The conflict isn't between justice and indifference; it's between a narrow justice controlled by resentment and the deeper justice of God.

God appoints a bush to shade Jonah, then appoints a worm to destroy it, and finally sends a scorching wind. Through this small drama, God exposes Jonah's heart. Jonah is majoring in the minors: his larger-than-life "I'd-rather-be-dead" grief over the bush; while God calls him to center greater compassion for the people, the 120,000 people of the great city of Nineveh. And if he can't muster the compassion for the people, then the animals!

God's question remains open: "And should I not be concerned?" Jonah doesn't answer, and perhaps that question is squarely before all of us who are entrusted with leadership in the church.

They say confession is good for the soul, and so I'll confess: I recognize Jonah in myself. When I am more upset by inconvenience than by suffering. When I speak readily about the failures of others but slowly about my own need for mercy. When optics trump substance and performance hides a hardened and unchanging heart. When I assume that "those people," whomever "those people" are – are less deserving of patience, opportunity, or a new beginning.

Christian leadership begins not with superiority but with repentance. We lead as people who have been forgiven. We do not approach God by presenting our record of achievement. We come with empty hands, trusting Christ's promise. The cross reveals that God's mercy, which Jonah so casually dismissed, is real and costly. In Christ, the deeper justice of God is reconciliation, reparation, renewal, and life.

And so we strive to practice both truth and mercy. We name harm honestly, establish boundaries wisely, protect and stand in solidarity with those who are vulnerable. And we leave open the possibility of repentance, reparation, and transformation.

We ask not only, "What consequence is deserved?" but also, "What does faithfulness look like? What is God's desire for mercy and justice in this circumstance?

Gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love – God's compassion extends farther than our preferences, loyalties, and fears. It reaches toward those we would rather exclude. Mercy does not diminish leadership; it purifies it. It frees us from the need to win every grievance, and instead to seek the welfare and flourishing of those entrusted to our care.

So hear God's question to Jonah—and to us: Should I not be concerned? In Christ, God's answer is yes. God is concerned for this world God still so loves in Jesus Christ!

Dear ones, may God's yes shape our decisions, correct our anger, and teach us again not to lead from resentment, but from God's still amazing grace.

Perhaps we, like Jonah, needed this reminder: we don't have to do this work we share, we get to! Amen.

Mama Kay's Survivors October 4th, 2026

You are invited for lunch provided by Mama Kay (Cochrane) and her team following worship on Sunday, October 4th.

A fun dessert auction will be held with the luncheon.

Kay is a grateful survivor of breast cancer, but always on her mind are those friends and neighbors who did not survive, and the need for continuing research and development of the causes and possible cures of all cancers. There will be no cost; donations are appreciated.

The Sunday after Pentecost is Trinity Sunday. The following Sundays, are most commonly called Ordinary Time or the Season after Pentecost.

New green paraments, the color green, primarily signifying growth and renewal, were dedicated this year. Shown in the front middle panel, The Jerusalem Cross, a well-known Christian symbol.

The large cross represents Jesus, and the four smaller crosses represent the five wounds Jesus received during the crucifixion – his side, his hands and his feet. The four smaller crosses also represent the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), carrying the Word of God to the four corners of the earth. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." Mark 16:15

Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 4th
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.
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 and towels
- Toys and Treats

Please join us for fellowship
and a Pastor Appreciation
Luncheon on Sunday, October 18th
following worship.

Bountiful Blessings

We are asking for donations of tissues. If you are able to help assist our community neighbors in this way, please put donations in the box located near the parking lot entrance. Thank you!

OCTOBER Celebrations !!
1 – Wanda Hunt
4 –Casey Colledge
8 – Debbie Metheny
11 – Linda & Lynn Zeller – Anniversary (1969)
15 – Tamela Rankin
15 – Donna Goldizen
29 – Debbie Streicher

CHURCH HUMOR

One evening Pastor Steve asked how many had followed his instructions of the past week and read Mark 17, and every hand went up. The pastor said, "Mark only has 16 chapters. Let me begin my sermon on the sin of lying."

September has been a very busy month for church council. Among many things we are working on, we have formed a committee to update the descriptions for all Vestry chairs/committees. We are working diligently with the existing chairs to update those descriptions before the end of the year. We have also been working on the creation of a formal Standard Operating Policy/Procedure guide for all things related to the finances of the church. Any thoughts would be welcome.

As we head into fall and soon our thanksgiving season I am reminded of everything I have to be thankful for. Included in my blessings is my church family and all of the work we do in the community that we serve. As we move forward in our outreach, I would like us all to be mindful of the Blessing of the animals coming up and the request for donations for our local animal shelter where the need is great. We will also be participating in the safe and snug program again this year. Donations of hats, coats, gloves etc. will go a long way to keeping the students of Allegany County warm this winter. Hoping everyone is having a wonderful fall.

Blessings,
Sue Umstott, Council President

$10 Giving Sunday – October 18th

October-December Interfaith Food Pantry

I will include a GIVING SUNDAY envelope in the bulletin on the designated Sunday so if you don't have offering envelopes you can still give for the designated area of focus for that month/quarter.
Thank you for sharing your treasures!!
Casey Colledge, Stewardship Chairperson

The Allegany Lutheran Conference will come together for a joint Reformation worship on Sunday, October 25th at St. Luke Lutheran Church. The church is located at 1601 Frederick Street in Cumberland. Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. and will be followed by a luncheon. **Please sign up on the bulletin board if you will be attending the luncheon.**

Rehearsals for the Joint Reformation Choir are scheduled for Thursday, October 8th at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, October 15th at 6:00 p.m. and on Tuesday, October 20th at 6:00 p.m.
All rehearsals will take place at St. Luke's; please see Mark Steiner if you have questions.

The Allegany County Department of Social Services is hosting the 25th Annual Safe and Snug program. Donations of new coats, jackets, sweatshirts, gloves, hats and scarves can be brought to St. Paul Lutheran Church. A drop-off box is located in the side narthex. Monetary donations can be made payable to MASSBF with Safe and Snug in the memo section and mailed to ACDSS,
1 Frederick Street in Cumberland.

Children of the Congregation!

Our music director, Mark Steiner, would like to have
a children's choir sing during Christmas Eve worship.
Please contact Mark at mwsteiner@breezeline.net, call the church office or sign up on the bulletin board if your family would like to participate.
A rehearsal is scheduled for Sunday, November 8th following worship.
We will meet in the choir room; a light snack for children will be provided.

Dear members of the Schaidt Scholarship Committee,

Thank you for awarding me the Schaidt scholarship. The financial assistance toward my college education is very much appreciated.
I am truly grateful for your generosity and support.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,
Andrew Highland

Family Worship and Fun

The children of St. Paul Lutheran and their parents and grandparents are invited to join us on the third Tuesday of each month. We start with a family dinner, move to family worship in the small chapel, then back upstairs for a craft activity. We start at 6:00 p.m. and are usually finished in an hour and a half.

Our next event is on October 20th.

Please sign up if you plan to attend.

Oct 24th 5 p.m.-9 p.m.

Fall Intergenerational Activity

Fall on the Farm at Brookdale Farms/Pyramid Farms

We will have a pavillion for dinner and snacks, private camp fire, hayride, kids play area, corn maze and more.

Let them know at the gate that you are with St Paul's Church and find our pavillion for food/drinks

Please sign up on the bulletin board by October 18th for food preparation numbers.

November 1st, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Please submit names of loved ones to the office who have died within the last year for our All Saints remembrance.

You are invited to bring a framed photo or memento of loved ones for our All Saints remembrance table.

The eastern United States is an island. Boating numerous rivers, creeks, bays, Great lakes, canals, Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic Ocean, the "island" can be circumnavigated in a year. What does it take to prepare for and complete this year?

The Great Loop and Sip Presentation by Nancy Reed
Friday November 6 at 6pm in the Coffee House.
Please sign up on the bulletin board.
BYOB and a snack to share.

Church Prayer

Each Sunday Saint Paul offers prayer during corporate worship, building our community for believers around a shared faith. We worship and pray together on behalf of the body of Christ.

Requests are made through the church office and those requests are prayed for each Sunday as we gather together.

Personal Prayer

Each Sunday a letter with prayer requests is mailed to our prayer team. These requests can be placed in the prayer box on a table near the front door, request slip provided, or emailed to me at mutmab43@gmail.com, or by text at 240-727-1798.

Requests are prayed for each day, by the prayer team, in silent meditation, or one-on-one conversation with God.

Because these prayers are often deeply personal, focusing on personal honesty, and often give details unique to the requestor, they are prayed for in a quiet, private space, and are completely confidential.

When requesting prayer, please let us know if both corporate church prayer and private team prayer, is desired.

Kathleen Ball

Prayer Team Coordinator

Coloring page for kids of all ages!

Thursday	**October 1**
5:30 p.m.	Confirmation instruction-Conference room
6:00 p.m.	Paint and Sip-Coffee house
Saturday	**October 3**
12:00-1:00	Shake Your Soul
Sunday	**October 4**
8:30 a.m.	Choir rehearsal-choir room
10:00 a.m.	Worship
11:30 a.m.	Mama Kay's Luncheon
5:00 p.m.	Blessing of the Animals
Monday	**October 5**
10:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
6:00-8:00	Drawing class-Coffee house
7:00 p.m.	LBC! Meeting-Fellowship Hall
Wednesday	**October 7**
5:00 p.m.	Hand bell rehearsal
6:00 p.m.	Vespers-Luther Chapel
Thursday	**October 8**
4:00-6:00	Bountiful Blessings
5:30 p.m.	Confirmation instruction-Conference room
Saturday	**October 10**
10:00 a.m.	Grief Support Group-Coffee house
12:00-1:00	Shake Your Soul-Fellowship hall
3:00 p.m.	Fellowship hall reserved
Sunday	**October 11**
10:00 a.m.	Worship
11:30 a.m.	Book Study-Fellowship hall
Monday	**October 12**
11:00 a.m.	Chapel prayers
6:00-8:00	Drawing class-Fellowship Hall
Tuesday	**October 13**
5:30 p.m.	Council Meeting-Fellowship Hall
Wednesday	**October 14**
5:00 p.m.	Hand bell rehearsal
6:00 p.m.	Vespers-Luther Chapel
Thursday	**October 15**
5:30 p.m.	Confirmation instruction-Conference room

Saturday	**October 17**
12:00-1:00	Shake Your Soul-Fellowship Hall
Sunday	**October 18**
8:30 a.m.	Choir rehearsal-choir room
10:00 a.m.	Worship
11:30 a.m.	Pastor Appreciation luncheon
Monday	**October 19**
10:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
5:30 p.m.	Worship and Music Committee meeting via Zoom
Tuesday	**October 20**
6:00 p.m.	Family Worship and Fun
Wednesday	**October 21**
5:00 p.m.	Hand bell rehearsal
6:00 p.m.	Vespers-Luther Chapel
Thursday	**October 22**
4:00-6:00	Bountiful Blessings
5:30 p.m.	Confirmation instruction-Conference room
Saturday	**October 24**
10:00 a.m.	Grief Support Group
12:00-1:00	Shake Your Soul
5:00-9:00	Brookdale Farm Intergenerational Event
Sunday	**October 25**
Joint Reformation Worship at St. Luke Church	
Monday	**October 26**
10:00 a.m.	Staff meeting
6:00-8:00	Drawing class-Fellowship Hall
Wednesday	**October 28**
5:00 p.m.	Hand bell rehearsal
6:00 p.m.	Vespers-Luther Chapel
Thursday	**October 29**
5:30 p.m.	Confirmation instruction-Conference room
Friday	**October 30**
Beginnings Parade of Costumes-1/2 day	
Saturday	**October 31**
12:00-1:00	Shake Your Soul-Fellowship Hall