

PROCLAIMING A TIMELESS CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD
SINCE 1794



THE SPIRE

SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH \dagger CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND

**2021 CONGREGATION
OFFICERS**

President:

Suzanne Umstott

Vice President:

Kathleen Ball

Secretary:

Debbie Szymanski

Treasurer:

Stephanie Wade

**CONGREGATION
COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Education

(Faith

Formation):

Debbie Streicher

Evangelism

Jane Roderick

Finance:

Suzanne Umstott

Ministry in Daily Life:

Nancy Ayers

Property:

Edward Ayers

Social Ministry (Fellowship):

Cindy Read

Stewardship:

Vacant

Worship and Music:

Kathleen Ball

Youth:

Gary Miller

15 N. Smallwood Street

Cumberland, MD 21502

(301) 722-6604

www.stpaulcumberland.org

Email: debbie@stpaulcumberland.org

September 2021

Pastor's Ponderings

A Month in Remembrance

Twenty years later.

How well do we remember.

Those moments are frozen in time and eternity.

Most of us (26 years and older) can tell where we were and what we were doing at 8: 45 a.m. twenty years ago this September 11th. Most of us have our own story of how the terrorist attacks affected us.

The events of 9-11 hit me very hard. I literally stood there in front of the television set and was frozen and shaking. I cried out to God, as I watched the buildings where I had visited a few years before explode into dust and rubble.

It was devastating witnessing the two World Trade Centers, crashing down especially knowing that thousands of innocent people were about to die. And for all their blessed souls, we still remember them during this month. They will not be forgotten.

As our nation and as we a people of deep Christian faith remember this month in remembrance: we are called to think back, to recollect, to memorialize, to analyze, and to pledge to one another that we will never forget.

As I, your shepherd, thinks back on this horrible day in our nation's history, I should and must relate this day to my own Christian walk in how I am to understand these event in history and how I must reflect on it due to my Christian viewpoint of faith. I cannot look at these events of twenty years ago like just anyone else in our secular society does.

I have to remember 9-11 through the eyes of faith.

THE REVEREND
RYAN K. VIANDS
Pastor

DAVID RANKIN
Director of Music

DEBBIE SZYMANSKI
Parish Assistant

STEPHANIE WADE
Treasurer

RAMON ROCHE CARDONA
Sexton

continued from page 1

There is much more to remember than just waving a flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance or even singing the National Anthem during this month of remembrance. We must remember as Christians, our approach to September 11th **is** different. Our actions and thoughts are to be deeply and distinctly rooted in the biblical idea of “remembrance”.

There is a powerful biblical precedent for “remembrance” in our Holy Scriptures. One book that comes to mind is the book of Deuteronomy. In the book of Deuteronomy, the Israelites are given specific instructions on how they are to make offerings to God in the Promised Land. When future generations present a portion of their harvest to the priest, they are to remember and recite the story of how they were given their land: “*A wandering Aramean was my ancestor,*” they say, referring to Jacob, their destitute, landless fore-father, who sought refuge from famine in the land of Egypt.

Then, they tell Jacob’s story, recalling that: “*he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, and, through God’s grace, he became a great nation.*”

As the Israelites remember, they make the pain of their ancestors their very own. By remembering, they bring an event from the past into the present-and they do it in such a way that it has a powerful effect on the here and now. They are saying: “*I too, am a slave in Egypt.*”

So, also, we remember the events of September 11th, 2001. And in so doing, we sense a deep and personal identification- and we remember the event of 9-11 in a way that transforms the present and the future. As we remember the afflictions of twenty years ago, we discover that we join with the victims and their loved ones. And, we say “I, too, am a victim of the terrorist attacks.” We focus on how the events of twenty years can shape this year, and how our memory of the past can transform our vision of the future. And so, we remember.

In like manner, our salvation history is about remembering. Remembering is the approach that Jesus took on that fateful night—the night in which He was betrayed. Taking bread and wine, Jesus said, **“Do this in remembrance of me.”**

In the Christian faith, remembrance bring an event from the past into the present-it recalls an event in such a way that it has a powerful effect on the here and now in a very mystical way.

In the gift of the Eucharist (Holy Communion), the meal reminds us of the gruesome suffering and the gory death of God’s only begotten Son. This meal reminds us of the tragic breaking of Christ’s very own body and the spilling of His most precious blood (not in a Twin Tower, or a Pentagon Building, but on a rugged wooden cross).

However, there is much more. In the Holy Sacrament of the Altar (Holy Communion), we also have the absolute assurance that as we partake of the bread and the wine, Jesus is very present with us—here and now.

In Holy Communion, Jesus is very present in a powerful and mystical way—actively transforming our todays and our tomorrows. This is the essence of our very faith—and so, we **“do this in remembrance,”** frequently and joyfully—time and time again.

In the Eucharist (Eucharist—the Greek word which means, “Thanksgiving”) we receive the gift of hope and joy and peace, that this old world cannot begin to give us. You see, this is the core of our very faith-knowing that Christ is truly present with us—here and now.

Yes, Christ is with us today- as the hurts grab us; and the tears flow once again. The people of God are never alone in their affliction; not in ancient Israel and not in these United States. When God’s people cry to the Lord, God hears our voices, no matter what the secular world may say, or what TV Evangelist might proclaim we as a nation may deserve.

continued on page 3

continued from page 2

Our very own patron saint of this parish church affirms in his writings to the people of Rome, “*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor rulers, nor things present, not things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor terrorist attacks—nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” The epistle of St. Paul to the Romans 8:35.

Now, did you hear the good news?!

Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus!

God never leaves us abandoned. This is the word of God that the people of 9-11 needed to hear—this is the word of God that we need to hear these twenty years later, and these are the irreplaceable words that future generations will need to hear tomorrow and twenty plus years from now.

Therefore, ultimately, there is nothing that can destroy us—as long as we put our faith where it must be placed, in Jesus the Christ of Nazareth.

This is not to say that we won’t be treated harshly; or that we will not be afflicted, for we are attacked everyday by something in this life, on all sides that is not of God’s will. But as we remember the suffering deaths of thousands of fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters, we know that when we cry to the Lord, God hears us and He responds. This is a rock-solid, foundational truth to stand upon.

For we as Lutheran Christians, can do no other.

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus our Lord,

When we gather at the Altar of the Lord, we remember God’s promise to never leave us or forsake us. EVER! And by remembering, we are enabled to make this truth real and active in our own daily lives.

This month, as we remember the horrors of twenty years ago, let us embrace the lessons of the day.

Let us renew our faith in God who is our Father, and rededicate ourselves to being God’s holy people.

On the day of September 12th, 2021 A.D. (this coming Sunday), let us rejoice in receiving Holy Communion, as we accept God’s amazing gifts of hope, joy, peace, forgiveness and salvation.

Let us rejoice in this month of remembrance that our God will never leave us or forsake us now, or throughout all eternity.

Thanks be to God for His amazing grace!

In Christ’s Service,
Fr. Ryan +



Happy First Anniversary!

The Installation of
Pastor Ryan Viands
September 13, 2020



So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is **love.**

-1 Corinthians 13:13

The Worship and Music Committee and the St. Paul Council have approved the following guidelines, to be used during this time of increased infections in Allegany County.

Showing our love for God and our neighbor by:

Wearing masks upon entering, moving about, and leaving the building;

Refraining from talking in the Nave;

Respecting social distancing;

Reminding each other of the guidelines, if necessary.

LOFT (Living Our Faith Together)



On **Sunday, October 3rd**, we will gather in-person **in Fellowship Hall** following worship to begin our Bible studies for the fall. We will observe the CDC guidelines for meeting together, be seated with 2-3 at a table, and use Taking Faith Home as our guide for faith-filled conversations. All ages are invited to join us. At this time, we will ask that families be seated together until the guidelines are lifted. It is one step at a time but just being able to meet in-person this year is a big step!

Updated information will be published in the Sunday worship bulletin as the date grows nearer. At this time, there will be no coffee or snacks. As the faith formation team discussed plans, it was mentioned how much we all look forward to gathering again. Hope to see you on the 3rd!

Faith Formation for Families with Children



Beginning on Sunday, October 3rd, there will be an opportunity for children and their families to meet in the chapel on the lower level to learn about worship and explore their worship bags each week. Pastor Ryan will facilitate during this time and help the children become familiar with the different aspects of worship.

On October 3rd, there will be a blessing of the worship bags during worship for children and their families. Resources for prayer, scripture, and more will be found in each child's individual bag for use during worship each week.

Parents and grandparents, please mark Sunday, September 26 on your calendars as the day to meet and learn more about the opportunities for children in our congregation for the coming year. The meeting will take place following worship in Fellowship Hall.

If you have questions, please contact Debbie Streicher.
dstreicher52@gmail.com or 703-303-7255

Cancer Tote/Prayer Shawl Ministry



If you like to sew or knit or crochet, please consider making a cancer tote or a prayer shawl for this ministry. These two bags shown below were recently distributed to those going through chemotherapy. The bags with inside pockets and/or outside pockets work well for bottles of water, snacks, hand sanitizer. The inside is used for books and the prayer shawl.

We are in need of both totes and shawls. Please call Diane Rhoads for shawl information. 301-729-6593.



September celebrations

September – 8 - Burt & Debbie Streicher - Anniversary (1979)
13 – Anniversary of Pastor Ryan's Installation in 2020
13 – David Rankin - birthday
28 – Kaden Sharpless (Goldizen's grandson) - birthday



Our prayers may be awkward.

Our attempts may be feeble.

But since the power of prayer is
in the One who

hears it and not in the one who says it,
our prayers make a DIFFERENCE.

Our parish has had an intercessory prayer ministry in place for 15 years.

A letter is prepared each week advocating prayer for current, critical needs, as well as prayer for long-standing needs.

There is no secret formula to “standing in the gap” for others.

A simple prayer to begin:

Father in Jesus name, I do not know how to pray, but Your Word says the Holy Spirit will guide me and I trust Your Word.

Please consider joining with us in this ministry of prayer, and please let us know if we can pray for you.

Kathleen Ball
Prayer Ministry Coordinator
mutmab43@gmail.com

**“Praise Him with timbrel and dance.
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.” Psalm 150:4**



This month we honor and count our blessings for this talented and dedicated couple,
David and Tamela Rankin, our beloved organist and his wife.

David's daytime/weekday job is as a Licensed Professional Counselor. In leisure time he sings with The Choral Society, Scholars of St. Cecilia (Mountainside Baroque) and occasionally in Emmanuel's parish choir for special events.

Tamela's vocation and activities include special education teacher at Westernport Elementary School, Cumberland Choral Society, Mountainside Baroque, “The Luther League” puppet ministry team, Handbells at St. Paul’s and also the First Presbyterian Church, clarinet accompanist here, lector at St. Paul’s, Potomac Concert Band, Potomac State College/Community Concert Band, community theater at Potomac State College ----- goodness gracious, busy lady!!

In their “spare” time, they can be seen kayaking along local rivers, streams and lakes.

Parents of three grown children ----- Ian, Andrew and Katie and recent in-laws to Amy when she married son Ian.



continued on page 8

continued from page 7

St. Paul's is truly blessed to have this couple with us on Sundays.

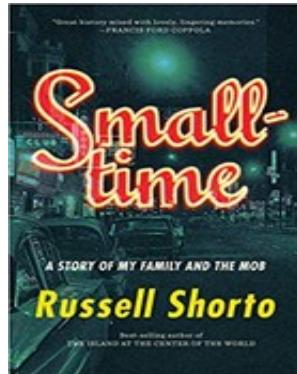
David's organ music is so beautifully played, coordinated with the lessons and sermons, and an inspiration to us all, so much so that many don't even want to leave until the very last note!! And, what an enjoyable sense of humor, too!!

Tamela, devoted wife, is David's support in so many ways ----- accompanies him on her clarinet, involved with the choir, co-directs the handbell choir ----- often with four bells in her two hands! She serves as a lector when needed, sings solos as needed, leads the liturgy also as needed and for many years served as our Assisting Minister.

What would we do without this fine couple? Don't even try to think about it!

David and Tamela, we thank you with all our hearts for all you do so graciously and willingly. God bless each of you just as you bless us each week.

(And, Happy Birthday, David!!)



The Joy Book Club has chosen as its next book, **Small-Time** by Russell Shorto, a Story of My Family and the Mob, as our next book. The setting is in Johnstown PA.

The author, who has written incisive works of narrative history, never thought to write about his own past. He grew up knowing his grandfather and namesake was a small-town mob boss but maintained an unspoken family vow of silence. Then an elderly relative prodded: **You're a writer—what are you gonna do about the story?**

Signed copies of the book are available at The Book Center, Cumberland and Main Street Books, Frostburg.

We have lively, thoughtful discussions, sometimes wandering off into other areas! Please consider joining us. All are welcome.

I WAS THERE

You say you will never forget where you were when you heard the news on September 11, 2001.
Neither will I.

I was on the 110th floor in a smoke filled room with a man who called his wife to say “Goodbye.”
I held his fingers steady as he dialed. I gave him the peace to say, “Honey, I am not going to
make it, but it is OK....I am ready to go.”

I was with his wife when he called as she fed breakfast to their children. I held her up as she tried
to understand his words and as she realized he wasn’t coming home that night.

I was in the stairwell of the 23rd floor when a woman cried out to Me for help. “I have been
knocking on the door of your heart for 50 years!” I said. “Of course I will show you the way
home – only believe in Me now.

I was at the base of the building with the Priest ministering to the injured and devastated souls.
I took him home to tend to his Flock of Heaven. He heard my voice and answered.

I was on all four of those planes, in every seat, with every prayer. I was with the crew as they
were overtaken. I was in the very hearts of the believers there, comforting and assuring them that
their faith had saved them.

I was in Texas, Kansas, London. I was standing next to you when you heard the terrible news.
Did you sense Me?

I want you to know that I saw every face. I knew every name – though not all know Me.
Some met Me for the first time on the 86th floor.

Some sought Me with their last breath. Some couldn’t hear Me calling to them through the smoke
and flames; “Come to Me....this way...take my hand.” Some chose, for the final time, to ignore
Me. But, I was there.

I did not place **you** in the Tower that day. You may not know why, but I do.

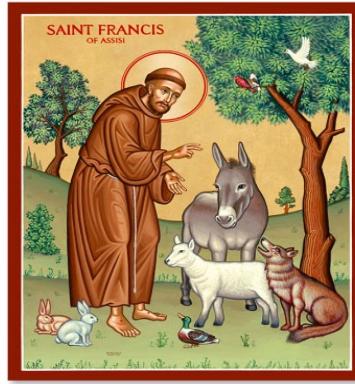
However, if you were there in that explosive moment in time, would you have reached for Me?

September 11, 2001 was not the end of the journey for you. But someday your journey will end.
And I will be there for you as well. Seek Me now while I may be found. Then, at any moment,
you know you are “ready to go.” I will be in the stairwell of your final moments.

God



Sunday	September 5
10:00 AM	Worship
Monday	September 6
OFFICE CLOSED-LABOR DAY	
Wednesday	September 8
5:00 PM	APPS meeting
Thursday	September 9
4:00-5:00	Drive-thru Bountiful Blessings
Saturday	September 11
12:00-4:00	Heritage Days Tours
Sunday	September 12
10:00 AM	Worship
12:00-3:00	Heritage Days Tours
Tuesday	September 14
4:00 PM	Faith Formation Meeting
5:30 PM	Church Council Meeting
Sunday	September 19
10:00 AM	Worship
Thursday	September 23
4:00-5:00	Drive-thru Bountiful Blessings
Sunday	September 26
10:00 AM	Worship



Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 3rd

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