

St. Paul Partners

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Sponsored by Gail Blackburn in honor of healthcare workers

Guess Who Turns 60 This Month!?

Dear St. Paul Family,

Sixty years ago the Lutheran Church embarked on a ministry for children that included a talking dog with a voice that would bellow, “*Oh, Daaaavey!*” In February 1961 the animated series Davey and Goliath made its debut on a medium that was still rather new technology for the average household – the television. It is the feature story for the January/February issue of the Living Lutheran magazine. Copies are still available at the church.

The series revolved around a ten year old boy named Davey and his dog Goliath. Davey and sometimes his friends could hear Goliath talk but not the adults. The program was conceptualized by what was then the United Lutheran Church in America and Clokey Productions, Inc. Creators Art and Ruth Clokey were the producers of the children’s show called Gumby which was stop-motion animation where the characters looked like painted clay figures and moved in rather robotic type ways. The Clokey’s had dreamed of doing something Christian based for children and when they were approached by the Lutheran Church committing \$1 million dollars of the national church budget for this outreach, it all came together.

Most episodes are 15 minutes long although some special ones were made that last 30 minutes including ones for Halloween, Christmas, Easter and when Davey and his friends receive their first Holy Communion. In a typical episode, Davey finds himself in a bind and Goliath guides him through it almost acting as Davey’s conscience in facing situations where faith in God would help the characters overcome a challenge. According to a 1973 study by the

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American Research Bureau it concluded that the show was seen by 5.1 million people a week on commercial TV. Other studies showed that church and unchurched child viewers showed significant gains in their identification of religious values after watching the show.

In recognition of the 60th anniversary of the show's genesis, I will be showing different episodes during Lent during the Sunday school hour in the Fellowship Hall starting at 8:30AM. We will discuss biblical values observed and explore how the messages still apply today. If there is interest I will do an encore presentation of the series later this year at a time when more may feel safe coming out. For now the series will begin February 21st, the first Sunday in Lent.

As we journey together during this Lenten season I look forward to ways we can grow spiritually in our relationship with God and each other. Be good to yourself and be Christ like to each other. Together we are partners in ministry as we put our mission into practice to *Witness, Welcome, Worship* and *Work* in the name of our Lord.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ralph

LENT BEGINS FEBRUARY 17TH

The word Lent comes from the old English word *lencten*, which means springtime. The season of Lent fits in well with our spring season in the Northern Hemisphere. The season begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter Eve. This is a 40-day period (not counting Sundays) that parallels with the 40 days that Jesus fasted in the wilderness. It is a season where we begin a faith journey with Jesus to the cross.

This year our Lenten theme will focus on "*Places of the Passion.*" Due to the on-going pandemic, we will not be doing Lenten suppers or evening prayer services this year but instead I will incorporate different places of the passion into my Sunday sermons which will include Jerusalem, Bethany, The Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, The Courtyard and Pilate's Judgement Hall.

For Ash Wednesday on February 17th I will offer a drive-in at the church parking lot from 12:00noon until 12:30PM. Anyone who wishes may come to the parking lot at that time and I will impose ashes on your forehead while you sit in your vehicle and also offer a blessing prayer. In the event of rain, vehicles will park under the carport awning next to the kitchen. I will wear a mask and make every effort to be safe. This is open to anyone and everyone.

Prior to this at 11:00AM I will do a phone tree message where you may have some water at home and I will say a prayer blessing and you may make the sign of the cross on your forehead with water. This of course will be for the benefit of those who don't feel comfortable coming out or can't make it to the drive in.

FEBRUARY

Birthdays

February 6	Tom Lail
February 16	Glenda Townsend
February 20	Danny Southers
February 21	Sharon Frye
February 25	Richard Blackburn Dewey Jones
February 26	Madison Arrowood Bryson Arrowood
February 28	Logan Warren

FEBRUARY

Anniversaries

February 5	Noah Lindemann & Gena Poovey
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Did We Miss Your Birthday or Anniversary?

If so, please accept our apologies!
Let us know so we can make it right by calling
(828) 464-3853 or email
morgan@stpaulstartown.org

Dear St. Paul Family,
Joyce Herman wishes to thank everyone for your thoughts, prayers, cards, phone calls and visits as she recovers from a broken arm. She is recuperating well and plans to be back in church very soon.

Dear St. Paul Family,
The little phrase "God bless you" somehow seems to be the best.
Thank you so much for the generous Christmas gift and the love that gave it!
With Love,
Mike Reed



Our Christian sympathy and hope in the resurrection is extended to the family of Mrs. Evelyn Alma Wise Ridenhour who passed away Sunday January 10th at the age of 91 at Trinity View Retirement Community in Arden, NC where she resided. She was the wife of Pastor Ernest Ridenhour who served as pastor for St. Paul from 1955-1962. The family will schedule a memorial service at a later date. Memorials may be made in her name to Trinity View Retirement Community, 2533 Hendersonville Road, Arden, NC 28704 or the Lutheran Church of the Nativity, 2425 Hendersonville Road, Arden, NC 28704.

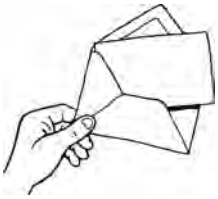
YOUTH NEWS

Congratulations to Savannah Lail who has excelled at playing volleyball for Maiden High School as a junior this year.



Congratulations to Karina Coulter who is a senior at Foard High School and has been named All State runner for her cross country team.

Pictures and articles high lighting both of these young women can be found on the youth bulletin board in the fellowship hall. If you have news about our youth to submit for the newsletter, please let Pastor Ralph know.



2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES: Offering envelopes are now in the narthex. Please pick yours up at your earliest convenience. If you would like yours mailed to you or would like to make an appointment to pick up please contact Morgan or Pastor Ralph.

Cub Scouts will be using the Fellowship Hall for their awards banquet on Saturday February 20th.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY WITH BISHOP SMITH: Back by popular demand! Bishop Tim Smith will lead a synod-wide Bible Study on the book of Isaiah on Thursdays from February 11 to March 25 at 7:00PM. The class will be virtual via Zoom. There is no cost but you must register to receive an email with the Zoom link. If you miss a session, recordings will be available for watching at your convenience. All are welcome; spread the word! The link to register is: <http://bit.ly/Bishop-Lent-Study>.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Catawba County residents age 65 and older may now schedule an appointment to receive the COVID-19 Vaccination. Catawba County Public Health, Catawba Valley Health System (CVHS) and Frye Regional Medical Center (FRMC) are working together to schedule appointments for those eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine through a new website, www.CatawbaVaccine.org. You may also call the Catawba County Public Health Department's COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment Line at 828-695-6650 to set up an appointment. The appointment line will be available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



WELCA MONDAY

Nope, that is not a typo! We are back (for now) meeting on the second Monday of the month – that’s February 8, 2021, in the Fellowship Hall from 6-7 PM. Donna Pero has offered to lead us in spirit-lifting devotions. In addition to expanding our regular activities, we will also be celebrating the retirement of one of our members with silly gifts sure to bring lots of smiles and good wishes. We have plenty of room to spread out and really hope many of you will join us that evening. And, if you prefer not to drive at night, please let Gail Bowman know – we can arrange a safe and free St. Paul “Uber” service – don’t let that keep you from sharing your time and faith with your sisters in Christ.

CROCHET CRONIES

Now did you really think that the St. Paul “Crochet Cronies” were just a couple of wizened old ladies who sat around, needles clacking, gossiping about others?? Think again, dear friends! Yes, needles may clack but there is NO gossiping – that’s Rule # 1!! You might hear an “ow” when someone pricks their finger with an embroidery needle but you will not hear criticism of the Pastor’s sermon or the color dress someone wore – that’s Rule #2!! We share our experiences, our faith and every bi-monthly gathering ends with prayer. We share patterns of projects, not patterns of life. We help one another with handwork methods and listen to one another (something we ALL need to do!). We have lots of yarn and tools and especially a desire to share what we know (and learn from others). Please come and see what you have been missing from 9-11 AM in the Conference Room on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month (Feb 8th and 22nd).



WHERE IS HE??

Many of us watched as Bryson Arrowood grew up in our community and church. Last summer he joined the US Army and did his basic training at Fort Benning, GA. We have since learned that he has been transferred to Fort Riley in Kansas for additional training. Why not send him a note, or even better, a NC postcard, letting him know we appreciate his service?? Fort Riley was erected in 1853, was instrumental in the westward expansion and

is the home of the "Big Red One." Let Bryson know he is in good company at Fort Riley. His address is Bryson Arrowood, PO Box 2648, Fort Riley, KS 66442.



AIN'T IT THE TRUTH?

The Bible lifts up competing narratives as a foundational human dilemma. While all of creation God proclaims, “very good,” God also warns the first humans that even in paradise there are boundaries, that enhance the greatest gifts of all—relationship with God and with one another. The tree of which they are instructed not to eat is the Tree of all knowledge of good and evil.

Then comes the first competing narrative. The serpent beguiles them. “Did God tell you that you would die if you eat that fruit? Silly old God! No, the TRUTH is that God knows that if you eat of it you’ll know everything! You’ll be like God! Equal in power. Totally in control of your own destiny without even needing a God who wants to squelch your rights and power to choose!” (Genesis 3, my paraphrase)

And you thought our generation invented alternative facts, competing narratives, and conspiracy theories! No, the pursuit of, claim to, assault on truth and the struggle to control the narrative defining reality are ancient. Not bearing false witness makes the Top Ten biblical list of necessary boundaries for faithfully living into the gift of community. Luther founded his stance of

Reformation over against the traditions of the religious establishment as fundamentally a referendum on biblical truth that had been subjugated to human power and institutional preservation and control. His favorite Gospel was John.

All of the synoptic gospels, of course, recount the competing narratives of Jesus and Peter. Jesus shares that to be Messiah means to suffer. Peter is having none of it. Jesus calls him “Satan,” pointing out that Peter is setting his mind “not on divine things but on human things.” John’s Gospel, a generation later than the synoptics and written to a Greek world of emerging Gnosticism, is a study in competing narratives. Good vs. bad. Light vs. dark. Temporal vs. eternal. Righteousness vs. evil. And yes, truth vs. lie.

The Gospels, many note, are Passion (suffering) narratives with extended introductions. As we enter yet another pandemic season of Lent, we focus again on the theology of the cross central to our Lutheran faith. Sin (curved in on self, as if I am center of the universe—a lie) urges us on to one-up rather than love our neighbor. Sin centers the narrative in what is alluring for me or my group—the beguiling lie. Sin labels me “us” and you “them,” to be despised, blamed, used, eliminated—a lie! First John reminds us in our liturgical confession that “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

From John 18:37: “Then You are a king!” Pilate said. “You say that I am a king,” Jesus answered. “For this reason I was born and have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice.” 38 “What is truth?” Pilate asked. John 8, of course, gives us the promise we hear each Reformation Sunday that “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Even

the classic prologue of John (1:14) asserts that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth.” Truth matters. Immensely. Foundationally. And it isn’t a concept for us. It’s a PERSON. (John 14:6) “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” So, when Pilate asks the question in Chapter 18, believers already know the answer. “What is truth?” “You’re looking at him,” Jesus replies (again, my paraphrase).

Our truth, our foundation, our conviction, cannot be a political party or politician or news network or pastor or bishop or pop theology or sound byte. Our truth is the person of Jesus Christ, and everything—EVERYTHING—we proclaim and to which we aspire and for which we live and even might be called and willing to die are that truth. Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. Knowing that, Paul writes to the Philippians (3:10) “I want to know Christ...” A great Lenten discipline. Less CNN and Fox. More Scripture, prayer, worship, study, and serving the least of these where, says Matthew 25, we meet Christ.

As the old spiritual urges us, “You can have all the rest. Give me Jesus.” This truth alone, which informs our daily interactions and choices with family and friends, our politics, our stewardship, our spiritual practices, is the truth which alone sets us free. That relationship nurturing and “so what?” discerning is lifelong work. And part of that truth of which I’m increasingly aware and to which I’m committed is that none of us will live truthfully, none of us will be free, until we all do and are—together. The subjective “my truth” rampantly popular even in the church these days can only be helpful to the point that realizes “my truth” will only bump up against “your truth” unless somehow we both commit to a more objective “our truth,” a universal truth. Short of that, January 6, 2021, September 11, 2001, etc. will define us.

We live for a truth far beyond your and my and

our subjectivity. Jesus, the Christ. To embrace his way begins just like Lent does—in wilderness temptation—and baptism does—with renunciations, the necessary “no” that free us to embrace a greater “yes” of belovedness in Christ. I invite you this Lent with me and with Peter and Pilate into a reboot entirely, to the core. To consider, “What is truth?” Who am I? Who tells me who I am and should be, and why? Are they manipulating me for their purposes, or do they truly have my wellbeing and the wellbeing of all in mind? And finally, insofar as I am able, to whom shall I listen and follow? That will effectively be my truth, my God. I invite you to follow one who knows you entirely, warts and all, yet loves you, forgives you, holds you, gifts you, calls you and all into that gracious embrace. If you know a more truthful and yet more hopeful narrative, I want to hear it.

Walking With You,

Tim

Bishop Tim Smith



NC Synod
ELCA

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www.StPaulStartown.org

STAMP
HERE

<<Address Here>>

We the people of St. Paul are called and empowered by God- To Witness through Christ; To Welcome everyone through the Holy Spirit; To Worship with joy; and To Work with God to meet the needs of our community.



Ash
WEDNESDAY

ASH WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Drive-in Imposition of Ashes
In the Church Parking Lot
1200pm until 12:30pm