

St. Paul Partners

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St. Paul Lutheran Church

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Sponsored by Pastor Ralph and Mary Kraft to the glory of God and in honor of the St. Paul Family

Everything Epiphany

St. Paul writes: *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.”* + 1 Corinthians 12: 4-6 +

Dear St. Paul Family,

Last month I mentioned we are in the season of Epiphany in the life of the church which means it is a time where our scripture lessons and our focus in worship is on this sense of revealing. Jesus is being revealed to us more and more who he is – the Lord, our Savior, the Messiah. As we live, move and breathe in our calling as God’s children, St. Paul in the scripture above reminds us we are called to use our strengths and gifts, not only for worship of our Savior but also for the building up on the kingdom of God. In other words – we are called to be Christ-like and to make the love of God known to a hurting, anxious and confused world. Here at St. Paul we come together weekly in person and on-line to pray, praise and hear God’s Word to us. Our gracious response to Jesus and his love is shown, not only in what you do in your day to day life but also in what we as a church do. We are active in reaching out to others, not only members but those in the community who are in hurting and in need. We have an active WELCA ministry, on-going prayer shawl ministry, card ministry and give regularly to the Corner Table Soup Kitchen as well as to ECCCM.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see a reminder that we can always support the workings of the larger church through things like the ELCA Good Gifts ministry, and our coat drive for those who need one in this community. Also, through your support to me as

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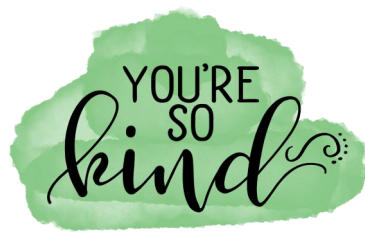
your pastor there are ways I am able to serve the larger church as well. While we expect church members to serve in their local church in some way, pastors (and lay people) can also serve on the synod level. I have been asked by the Bishop's office to serve on a task force that trains lay people to be SAM's (Synodically Authorized Ministers). These are folks being trained to serve pastoral functions in specific small churches who are not large enough to call a full time or even a part time pastor. In fact the first weekend of this month I will be away at Lutheridge helping to lead a time of intensive training for these folks. Meanwhile there will be lay people here leading worship for you that Sunday. I will also be serving as one of the spiritual directors for a Via de Cristo weekend to be held in South Carolina in mid-March. The training for this weekend means I will be traveling to Charlotte on a number of Saturdays for four-hour workshops this month and next month to be part of the preparation and planning.

Through these activities, ministries and other forms of outreach we are partners in ministry helping to reveal Jesus to others as he has first been revealed to us. I look forward to being with you during this special time of year as we put our mission into practice to ***Witness, Welcome, Worship*** and ***Work*** in the name of our Lord.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ralph

St. Paul has received a postcard from Carolina Caring (formerly known as Hospice) thanking us for our generous support in 2021. Between us and other partners we were able to serve 3,772 patients, 81 of whom were seriously ill children., 1,264 days of hospice care provided to uninsured patients, 64 palliative care visits to uninsured patients and 12 counties served. The postcard is on the bulletin board in the hallway outside the office.



KURE BEACH CANCELED FOR 2022

We have learned that there will not be any guests allowed to stay on site at Kure Beach Retreat Center for all of 2022. This is so that necessary renovations can be made to the building and there can be a time of reflection regarding future use of the facility. This is disappointing as every summer we look forward to that retreat weekend. Please know this was not an easy decision for the leaders at Agape + Kure Beach ministries but is made for everyone's safety while discerning the future. We can be in prayer for the necessary maintenance and look forward to re-gathering in 2023.

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	Bryson Arrowood Madison Arrowood
February 28	Logan Warren

FEBRUARY Anniversaries

None recorded.

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

AGAPE DAY CAMP IS A GO!!!!

We will again be able to offer Agape Day Camp at our Mission Property this summer. ***Our week is for Sunday July 17th – Friday July 22nd.*** Once again Camp Agape will send counselors to us that we will host as they lead the campers. We have room for 32 campers who are rising 1st – 8th graders. Think about children, grandchildren, neighbors and other people you know who could benefit from this week of day camp. Registration forms and other information will be available in the near future. Keep in mind we will be needing volunteers from the congregation to help. Also, be in prayer as our camps are currently reaching out to college campuses recruiting counselors for the summer.



TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Thank you for your continued giving this year. It helps us not only pay bills and salaries but also support the many different ministries we have going on here at St. Paul and the wider church through our NC Synod and ELCA.

If you would like to sign up for electronic giving please contact the church office or visit our website www.stpaulstartown.org where you can find a donate button at the bottom of the home page. Offerings can also be mailed to the church office at 3761 Startown Rd., Newton, NC 28658. Offerings can be dropped off and placed in the black drop box outside the building next to the metal stairs and of course the offering plates during worship on Sunday mornings. Thank you again for your continued financial support of our church.

OH, NO...NOT AGAIN!

Yes, it is that time again: the time to figure out how to show your loved one how much you care about them. Yep, it's Valentine's Day this month! Whether you have been celebrating time together for 5, 10, 25, 40, 50 or more years, every year you're faced with the annual question of what to do to mark the occasion. There are the usual items like flowers, candy and cards. And, of course, there's always jewelry ("diamonds are a girl's best friend"). But why not be really original and give your loved one a really "good gift?" When is the last time they received 10 chicks? Or perhaps a share of a fish farm? And they might be the envy of their friends if they received a ceramic water filter! Now you are probably asking yourself where could I find such unique gifts on such short notice? The answer is simple: the ELCA Good Gifts catalog! These gifts and more are available by mail and online. What better way to show your love than by giving a gift that keeps on giving to others? Ten chicks are only \$10.00 and you don't have to wrap them! A ceramic water filter is only \$30.00, you don't have to wrap it or pick it up at curbside and it will provide clean water without chemicals or electricity for those who need it most. Or how about giving them a goat, telling your special someone they are the "greatest of all time" and buying a goat that will provide needed nutrition in challenging and unreliable terrain and climate? OK, if we have sparked your interest, then check out www.ELCA.org/good-gifts for more ideas and how to surprise your special loved one or honor a spouse. PS: your gift is tax-deductible – a win-win!

PS: Guys, we suggest NOT buying a pig – she might not understand....

ELCA
GOOD
GIFTS
CATALOG



BRRRR...

The cold days (and nights) of winter are upon us. Most of us are blessed with warm homes and coats to stave off the seasonal chill. However, many of our neighbors in Catawba County are not as fortunate. That's why we are holding a coat drive for the next 4 weeks to benefit the patrons of Newton's Corner Table. It's not too late to check our closets for that jacket or coat that we no longer wear. It's not too late to rummage through our drawers for gloves, hats, scarves or toboggans that we haven't worn lately but are still clean and useable. Too many in our community are either homeless or lack the resources to obtain the warmth offered by a coat or scarf. We CAN and SHOULD help these neighbors. God has blessed us – can we do less? This special collection will end February 27, 2022. And if you can't bring your donation to the Church, please call the Church Office and we will arrange to pick up your donation. Just walk outside tonight without a coat, hat or gloves and experience what some in our neighborhood are experiencing – we CAN make a difference! The coat rack and tub in the Narthex are waiting for your donation (and so are those in need).



WELCA CELEBRATES ST. VALENTINE!

The St. Paul Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will gather in the Fellowship Hall from 6-7 PM on St. Valentine's Day, February 14th. Following devotions offered by Lucy Ballentine, we will discuss future plans, including information about Safe Harbor, a program for women which offers aid and education to our sisters in need in Catawba County. We will also

develop plans for an Easter BINGO event. There's lots of going on with the women of St. Paul – come and join in on the planning – we need your input and help! Hope to see you!!



The next meeting of the Congregation Council will meet on Sunday, February 13th in the Fellowship Hall, following worship.

BLUE AND GOLD CEREMONY

The congregation is invited to the Cub Scout's Blue and Gold Ceremony, to be held in the St. Paul Fellowship Hall on Saturday, February 26th from 2pm until 4pm.



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS – JANUARY 2022

Motions approved:

- December 12, 2021 Minutes
- December 31, 2021 Treasury Report
- Pastor's Report
- Witness Report
- Election of Council Officers: Pastor Ralph Kraft, President; Mary Carriker, Vice-President; Gail Blackburn, Secretary & Marty Coulter, Treasurer



Council Notes

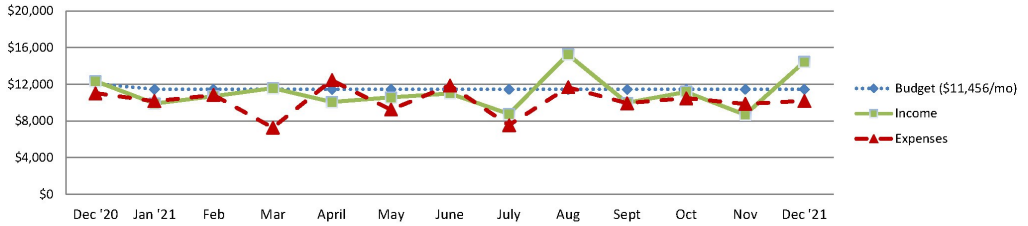
Items of Interest:

Mounting of Church Canvas Pictures (We are working on how to handle the covering and hanging of these beautiful canvas pictures from our 2005 – 100th year celebration so that everyone can enjoy) Stay tuned!

Bingo anyone?? Welca may be looking at another Bingo gathering around Easter! Look for more information!



General Acct - St. Paul Operations (rolling 12 months)



	Beginning Balance	Income	Expenses	Ending Balance	Fund Balance
General Fund	23,446.11	14,435.52	10,189.26	27,692.37	<u>\$10,738.59</u>
Dedicated Fund	32,260.62	1,629.01	451.72	33,437.91	
Current W/H Tax Payable	-7,356.57	30.00	0.00	-7,326.57	
Total General Fund	48,350.16			53,803.71	<u>\$153,725.89</u>

NOTE:

General Fund: Dedicated Fund:

General receipts, Newsletter, benevolence, Pastor, Administrative, Music, Support Ministries, Maintenance, Utilities, Flowers, World Hunger, Advent/Lent offerings, special event offerings
Agape Day Camp, Good Samaritan, Youth, Kure Beach Retreat, Memorials, Building Fund, Mission Property, Property Improvement, St. Paul Scholarship Fund

St. Paul Giving for 2021	
Benevolence	\$12,600
ECCCM	\$340
Corner Table	\$0
Hospice	\$0
World Hunger	\$3,475
Seminarian Support	\$0
Good Samaritan	\$2,808



February is African American History Month. As this important time of the year approaches, I'm mindful of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," one of my favorite hymns. I remember learning this song in second grade at Mount View Elementary School in Omaha, Neb., when it was introduced to me as the "Negro National Anthem." Even as a child, I realized that this song's words spoke to generational scars that ran deep in the African American community.

Most of us have heard this song many times, and it has been included in our worship resources for several decades. In the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, this hymn (562) is listed under "Celebration, Jubilation." In the African American Lutheran hymnal *This Far by Faith* (296) and in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (841), it's found in the "Praise, Thanksgiving" section. In *Lead Me Guide Me*, the African American Hymnal of the Catholic Church, you'll find the hymn (649) under the heading "Social Concern."

It's obvious to me that this anthem is all three of these descriptions. In the poetry of its verses, I witness our God, who is very present in our joys, as well as our spiritual, physical and generational hurts. Embedded in these words is a God who is embodied in and with us through our shouts of celebrating and our cries for justice.

Witness the powerful lyrics:

Lift every voice and sing till earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty.

Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies, let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us; sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us; facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died; yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet come to the place for which our parents sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears have been watered; we have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, thou who hast brought us thus far on the way; thou who hast by thy might led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee; lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee; shadowed beneath thy hand, may we forever stand, true to our God, true to our native land.

In these verses, writer James Weldon Johnson presents the harsh reality of marginalized people. He speaks of weathered generations, tired souls and crying hearts. These are a people who are mindful of the pain and tears of the past, yet stand on the strength and faith that are born in adversity. The words remind me of the interconnectedness that our lives have with all of humanity.

We're able to see the forgotten ones crying out for freedom and liberty. We can see a people who are confident that, through their raised voices, heaven will hear and echo the freedom cry of God's people. We can see people who have been mistreated and oppressed but find reason to rejoice and petition our God for justice. These children of God hold tightly to the hope that sustains them as they look toward a brighter day for future generations.

We see those who desire spiritual fulfillment and seek God's guidance as they walk life's paths. We embrace protected people who find shelter from the scorching heat of oppression and injustice under God's mighty, nurturing hand. We unite with these faithful people who are committed to God and their community. We recognize members who are part of the body of Christ.

And if we look very closely, we may even see our own reflection.



Angela T. !Khabeb is a pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. She enjoys an active home life with her husband and three children.

St. Paul Lutheran Church

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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.



Drive-Thru Ashes will be offered at St. Paul Lutheran on Wednesday, March 2nd, from 12pm until 12:30pm.

A Community Ash Wednesday Service is being held at First United Methodist Church in Newton at 7pm.