

**Sponsored by the St. Paul WELCA in memory of Helen Bowman**

## **HISTORY IN THE MAKING**

Dear St. Paul Family,

On July 4th history will be made so to speak as we observe our nation’s 245th birthday. As we have lived through a deadly global pandemic and continue to move into a post-pandemic world we are living in history as nobody else has been experiencing what we have unless they are over 100 years old and were alive during the flu epidemic of 1918.

Aside from pandemics and disease there are positive ways we are experiencing history on a church level. Last month our NC Synod held it first ever synod assembly that occurred 100% virtually. I am also happy to report that all was well planned and thought out with very few glitches. The “big ticket” item on the agenda was the election of a bishop and I am pleased to report that The Rev. Dr. Tim Smith (former pastor here at St. Paul) was re-elected on the first ballot by an overwhelming majority. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find an article about his re-election along with some reflections.

As for the rest of our synod, there was other good news shared of what we are up to in our synod that is having ripple effects in making God’s love known. Our synod is currently supporting several unique mission partnerships. Living Waters Congregation in Cherokee, NC reaches out to the Native American population there. The pastor is the only full-blooded Cherokee pastor in the ELCA. Many in that area are poor and that congregation with the help and support of others across the synod helped keep a food pantry going that provided 80% of needed food to that community during the

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pandemic. There is a mission church in West Charlotte with a special emphasis on helping school children from poor areas. A congregation called The Dwelling reaches out to the homeless population in Winston-Salem with an average worship attendance of 80. It is a partnership between us Lutherans and the Moravian Church there and is the only partnership of its kind in the country. There is another mission start in South Winston Salem which we have in partnership with the Episcopal Church. They are reaching people who have never been part of a worshipping community before now. Also, even in the midst of a pandemic, our synod was able to increase its financial giving and support across the synod and globally.

Here more locally at St. Paul we are blessed to be able to re-start our traditional July ministries. We are again spearheading the Christmas in July initiative where you will find a tree in the church to support the giving of school supplies. More information on that can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Plans are also shaping up to the point where we know we can definitely offer our Agape Day camp again on

July 19th – 23rd. We are still taking applications for rising 1st – 8th graders. Please let me know if you can volunteer your time or if you need an application for a child. The Kure Beach trip is also going to happen at the end of this month like it normally does, a time for retreat, reflection and an opportunity to enjoy one of our ocean-front centers.

Some of this is historical and some is revamped as we move into a “new normal.” What is clear is that God is not done yet – not with us – not with the Church. The Lord continues to birth new expressions of faith and it’s all possible through the power of God working through your benevolence dollars, your prayers, your time and your energy. Thanks be to God!

I look forward to being with you this month as we move forward together and make history through our telling and living the story of Jesus and his love. May God continue to richly bless you as you put our mission into practice to Witness, Welcome, Worship and Work in the name of our Lord.

Yours in Christ,  
*Pastor Ralph*

**Our Christian sympathy and hope in the resurrection** is extended to Almeita Helton and family upon the death of her brother, Mr. Michael Heavner.

**Our Christian sympathy and hope in the resurrection** is extended to Betsy Lindler and family upon the death of Betsy’s father, Mr. Charles Lamm.

**Our Christian sympathy and hope in the resurrection** is extended to the family of Kim Bass Conrad who died on Friday June 25<sup>th</sup> under hospice care. She was a former member of St. Paul and the daughter-in-law of former St. Paul Pastor Dwight Conrad. The funeral service was held at St. Paul on Thursday July 1<sup>st</sup> officiated by Pastor Ralph.



# JULY Birthdays

July 8	Ann Hass
July 11	Eric Scronce
July 12	Mary Grace Urcinola
July 16	Ann Walker
July 17	Aidyn Herman
July 19	Deborah Guthrie
July 25	Connor McNeil
July 28	Libby Wells

# JULY Anniversaries

July 31 Jerry & Myrtle Urcinola

## ***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](mailto:morgan@stpaulstartown.org)



St. Paul Family,  
Thank you for the cards and prayers during the loss of my brother.

Love, Your Sister in Christ,  
Almeita

*Editor's Note: The card from Almeita is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway outside the church office.*

Dear St. Paul Family,  
Thank you for the beautiful birthday cards, gifts, well wishes, prayers and support you sent for my birthday. It all helped make my day extra special. I am truly blessed and thank you for being part of that.

Joy & Peace,  
Pastor Ralph



### **CARD MINISTRY**

As many of our Worship attendees have seen the last two weeks, we have restarted our Sunday Card Ministry. Sponsored by St. Paul WELCA, each week we offer 2 cards in the Narthex for members to sign and send special wishes for special people. Recipients may be homebound members or those who might just need a special boost to know they are missed and prayed for. We offer “clean”

pens in one cup for members to use to sign the cards and a cup marked “used” pens which will be sanitized for use the next week. Hand sanitizer is also available after leaving a signature and/or message. If you have a special request for a special recipient, please let the Church Office know or on the blue attendance cards, note “Card Request” and the person’s name. WELCA has seen the signed cards posted in the premises of homebound members and knows what it means to be remembered. So, help WELCA ensure we are reaching all who need a paper “smile!”

### **THANK YOU!**

The women of St. Paul WELCA want to thank all of you who attended our 2-part event for Advance Planning. We hope it was helpful and, at a minimum, a conversation-starter with your family members. If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Rev, Sandi Hood at Carolina Caring (phone: 466-0466).

### **WELCA WEARY**

Like many of you, we all need a break now and then. The St. Paul WELCA members voted in June to take that break and will not meet in July. Our next meeting will be August 9, 2021, in the Fellowship Hall from 6-7 PM. All St. Paul women are welcome to become part of this active group of faith-filled women working together for our church, community and the world.



### **Corrections and Additions for the Church Directory**

Donna Pero - (828) 409-3234

Deborah Guthrie’s cell: (828) 234-8702

Keith & Kathy Frye  
1734 8th St. Dr. NE # 207  
Hickory, NC 28601



## **HO-HO-HO, OH NO!!**

Nope, it's not time to appoint the Sanctuary for Advent BUT it is time for *Christmas in July*! This year more area young people will be attending elementary school in person beginning in August. The needs will still be there, perhaps more so, for supplying the school tools they will need to succeed. Pencils, pens, note books and paper, composition books, rulers, crayons, colored pencils and, yes, even earbuds plus the backpacks to carry all these tools will all be needed at Startown, Blackburn, and Maiden Elementary Schools. The evergreen tree in the Sanctuary is decorated with ideas so take an idea card and purchase the item on the backside or

just purchase what you can that would help a young girl or boy start school with the needed tools. Our drive will run through July and your donations can be placed beneath the tree during the month. And, if it is easier for you, you can make a monetary donation, marked "*Christmas in July fund*" and donations will be split between the three schools. Teachers can also use items like hand sanitizer, tissues, etc. Take a moment and remember back to your first day of school and smile as you help a child make the same kind of happy memory!

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## **IT'S SO EASY!!**

Our Mission Statement printed in every weekly bulletin and in our monthly newsletter contains the 4 "W's": to WITNESS, WELCOME, WORSHIP AND WORK. Yes, it can be challenging to know HOW to live out that statement. This month, though, it can be easy to fulfill that purpose. Yeah..., right... HOW?? Support the Agape Day Camp experience being offered July 19-23, 2021. We can "WITNESS" to God's love by supplying some of the craft needs, such as tin cans (15 oz. or larger), seeds, pipe cleaners or by providing a protein source such as Vienna sausage or Beanie Weenie. These protein sources will be combined with the donations from other Catawba County ELCA churches to create weekend food bags to be donated by the Corner Table of Newton. We can "WELCOME" the trained, vaccinated Agape counselors who will stay in the Fellowship Hall that week. We can "WORSHIP" by praying for the counselors, attendees and volunteers. And we can "WORK" by offering our time as volunteers – see the sign-up sheet in the Hallway outside the Church Office. So, help St. Paul fulfill our mission to meet the needs of our community.

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## **PRAYERS FOR SAFE TRAVEL**

Please remember in prayer all those who will be traveling to our annual Kure Beach Retreat from July 22-25, 2021. In addition to safe travel, may the Holy Spirit infuse them with appreciation of our creation in such a beautiful setting with fellow faithful members and families. And, don't FORGET the sunscreen!!!

# BISHOP TIM SMITH RE-ELECTED ON FIRST BALLOT

Attribution: Pastor Jennifer Shimota for the NC Synod



Bishop Tim & Wendy Smith  
at the 2021 Synod Convention

Each ELCA synod holds a bishop's election every six years. In 2015, Rev. Timothy Marcus Smith was elected to the office of Bishop of the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA, and he has served faithfully for nearly six years. This means a bishop's election was a point of business at the 2021 synod assembly.

At the outset, Bill Horne, Vice President of the ELCA Church Council, addressed the assembly about the process for the election of a bishop. He reminded those gathered that this is not only an election with votes and ballots but a time of discernment, a

moment to listen closely to the Spirit's guidance. Vice President Horne described the ways a bishop is a pastor, a servant, a symbol of our unity, the chief ecumenical officer in the synod, and CEO of the synod.

Vice President Horne called us to pray for our bishop and the work of the Spirit and continued in presiding over the bishop's election by explaining how each ballot works.

**1st ballot**—Voting members may write in any person serving on the ELCA roster of Word and Sacrament. 75% of valid votes are required for an election on the first ballot. If there is no election, then the assembly moves on to the second ballot.

**2nd ballot**—Nominees who do not wish to be on the ballot going forward withdraw their names. Votes are cast for the remaining nominees. 75% of valid votes are required for an election on the second ballot. If there is no election, then the assembly moves on to the third ballot.

**3rd ballot**—The seven nominees who have received the most votes (plus any ties for 7th place) are on the third ballot. Each nominee will address the assembly and a background check is done on each nominee moving forward in the election. 66% of valid votes are required for an election on the third ballot. If there is no election, then the assembly moves on to the fourth ballot.

**4th ballot**—The three nominees who have received the most votes (plus any ties for 3rd place) are on the fourth ballot. 60% of valid votes are required for an election on the fourth ballot. If there is no election, then the assembly moves on to the fifth ballot.

**5th ballot**—The two nominees who have received the most votes are on the fifth ballot. A majority of valid votes are required for election.

The Rev. Jasmine Tesdahl (Holy Trinity, Hickory), chair of the Bishop’s Election Committee gave instructions for voting using Zoom Polls and Google Forms, and Greg Hudgins invoked the Holy Spirit prior to the first ballot, praying “Lead this assembly to one heart and one mind in you.”

After the votes were cast, the assembly had a scheduled break. Phil Tonnesen brought us back from our break and opened the second session with a prayer of thanksgiving for those who have made the assembly possible.

Vice President Horne stepped to the mic to read the results of the first ballot. 357 valid votes were cast, making 268 votes necessary for a candidate to meet the 75% required for an election. He read the names of everyone who received a vote. Many received one vote, several received two votes, a few received 4, 6, or 8 votes. The Rev. CeCee Mills, the synod’s Associate Director for Evangelical Mission, received 11 votes, and the person with the next most votes was Bishop Tim Smith with 289 votes (81%). Vice-president Horne declared Timothy Smith elected.

Bishop-elect Smith addressed the assembly, first inviting his wife, Wendy, to join him. Thanking Wendy for her partnership and support as they have moved through life together, he then turned to the assembly and said, “Thank you for the confidence that you place in me and the Holy Spirit for our moving together into the future.”

Because Bishop Tim was re-elected on the first ballot, several steps of the full election process were not needed. One of the most important pieces of the election process is prior to the third ballot when the top candidates address the assembly and answer questions crafted by the elections committee. Since this step was not used for Bishop Tim’s election, those questions were posed to him in a session affectionately called “Bishop in the Hot Seat.” Without seeing the questions ahead of time, he answered extemporaneously.

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The Rev. Jasmine Tesdahl posed several questions. Here are a few highlights.

**Q: What does your commitment to antiracism look like in your daily life, and how will you continue to lead predominantly white congregations, so that BIPOC people will not be harmed?**

A: It's a real journey. A part of that has been something I shared in the past election, growing and learning that I have more work to do with my own privilege. Personal discovery and confession are a part of my journey. Sharing that with people in a hopefully disarming way: "I know that I have privilege, so let's talk." Reading books about racism, being a part of our synod's Racial Justice Network as a member, not a leader, and lots of discussion. But, mostly the personal habits and language we don't even know are racist because privilege by its nature doesn't know that it's there. It blinds us. I am very much committed. Sometimes, it's hard to know if I go to Elizabeth City (and march) because I'm bishop or because I'm Tim. That answer is yes.

**Q: How would you respond to the statement, "My pastor/bishop is too political?"**

A: We are all political all the time. Our synod assembly is political. We just had an election. Politics is how we live together in relationship. It's how we structure our lives. The important part of this is that isn't partisan. It doesn't begin in politics. It begins in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then connecting of dots politically becomes a lot easier. (...) There is not a place in the world where politics does not exist, including a pulpit.

**Q: What is the biggest challenge in moving the body of Christ forward in such a politically charged climate in the U.S.? How will you work toward unity in the next six years?**

A: One of the things I learned a long, long time ago working with App State and Grace Lutheran in Boone, every time we tried to get slick—for the most part didn't work. People who wanted to be involved, what they really wanted to find was spiritual depth and nurturing of faith...I'm all in for holy innovations, but preach the gospel as faithfully as you can, and in doing so be clear about what you feel convicted to say as long as it is gospel-based, but be fair and love your people, modeling for them how we can live within our differences.

**Q: Do you have anything you would like to say to the synod, now that you have been re-elected?**

A: Thank you for the confidence that you put in me, but you have placed that confidence in the office of the bishop, which has great and faithful people. We are here for you!



## BISHOP SMITH'S REFLECTIONS

*Bishop Tim reminds us that, moving forward with hope, we will do our best to be the Church together.*

Attribution: Deacon Susan Jackson for the NC Synod

The Friday morning agenda allowed assembly participants the opportunity to hear from Bishop Timothy Smith. Bishop Smith's reflections, while they included his thankfulness of being reelected as well as his memories of six years ago, mostly focused on the past two years of ministry within our synod. The past year and a half of ministry has been extremely difficult as we have had to grapple with the effects of COVID, with political, racial, and economic tensions, and with the ever-changing nature of the Church.



While the Church looks and feels different than it did a year and a half ago, the core commitments that the North Carolina Synod instituted have not changed. The NC Synod's commitment to keep Jesus at our core, to be generous, to build relationships, and to be reconciling are still our chief priorities. With that comes a commitment to build healthy leaders and healthy congregations. The synod is here to equip and support our leaders and congregations so that we can do ministry together.

Bishop Tim also expressed the ways that the NC Synod stepped up to ministry during COVID-19. Reallocating and shifting "rainy day" funds, providing support to rostered leaders, providing COVID-relief grants so that congregations can keep doing ministry has been vital in the past year. Ministry also continued through the establishment of the Racial Justice Network, 15 ordinations, and the continued growth of lay leadership, particularly through connection with congregation presidents.

Along with that is a commitment to help our smaller congregations receive pastoral care, particularly through Synod Authorized Ministries and lay leadership. Currently, 59 interims are needed while 40 are available. The synod wishes to equip all our congregations with healthy leaders so that ministry can be done together. Yet, the synod also invites our congregations to open hearts and minds to new possibilities, as future ministry will be different.

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As we enter this time of regathering, NC Synod will continue to engage in ecumenical partnerships, ministry with our companion synods, and ministry with each other. Expressing the desire to continue collaboration together, there is hope that monthly connections with rostered ministers and council presidents will continue, as well as further development in lay leadership. There is a deep commitment to support ministry, both physically and financially, in addressing racial inequality and justice concerns within our congregations. Thus, the All Races One Church Fund is being developed to address the financial needs in caring for our neighbors in faith.

Bishop Tim closed his remarks reminding us that moving forward with hope, we will do our best to be the Church together. It is not the end yet, so there is plenty of time for us to be about the way of Jesus. As we journey forward, Jesus gives us the strength to be the Church together. Thanks be to God for the ministry of Bishop Tim Smith and the NC Synod!

## AN ICON FOR ASSEMBLY

*As prayers and paint mixed together, the image of four friends looking down through a hole in the roof became the centering form in a blooming coneflower.*

Attribution: Synod Staff



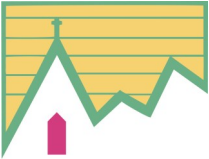
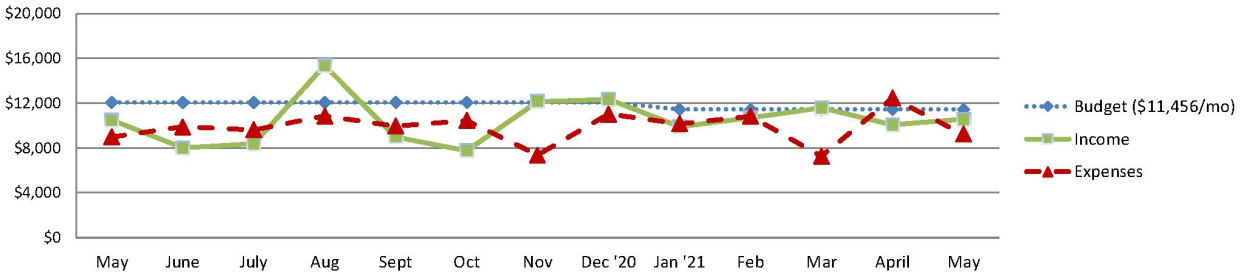
“What bring you strength for the journey?” Assembly-goers were asked to submit their answers to that question ahead of this year’s NC Synod Assembly. After gathering the responses and considering the assembly text of Mark 2 (the story of the paralytic let down through the roof), artist Sister Michelle Walka says, “I offered these responses as a written prayer layer on the canvas. As prayers and paint mixed together, the image of four friends looking down through a hole in the roof became the centering form in a blooming coneflower.”

At first glance, the four friends might not be noticeable. However, once spotted, they quickly become the primary focus. Those deep blues combined with gorgeous golds and deep reds invite reflection and renewal.

The painted icon, named “Strength for the Journey,” became the visual that centered synod assembly over the three days. The painting had a prominent place on the stage alongside those presiding over business as well as guest speakers. For those joining assembly on Zoom, the icon could be seen as part of the countdown slide during periods of voting. From beginning to end, the icon reinforced the theme and helped to focus the assembly on God’s gracious presence and power. Fans of the icon may purchase prints or note cards directly from the artist.

See [www.BelovedArtandPractice.com](http://www.BelovedArtandPractice.com) for more information about the artist or to order a print.

**General Acctnt - St. Paul Operations**  
(rolling 12 months)



**Church**  
FINANCES

	Beginning Balance	Income	Expenses	Ending Balance
General Fund	18,636.73	10,576.34	9,239.51	19,973.56
Dedicated Fund	31,298.31	1,728.84	974.95	32,052.20
Current W/H Tax Payable	-6,896.02	150.19	10.00	-6,755.83
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>43,039.02</b>			<b>45,269.93</b>

**Fund Balance**  
 Gift & Memorial Fund: \$10,735.99  
 Mission Campus CD: \$152,380.71

NOTE:

**May 2021 Council Highlights**



**Council Notes**

- Lilly Arrowood approved for Rite of Confirmation
- Graduate recognition to occur soon.
- First aid kits to be replaced.
- Mission Property clean up scheduled for 5/15 at 8:30am.

**June 2021 Council Highlights**

- Thrivent Choice Dollars were designated to the Kure Beach Retreat Fund and the Good Samaritan Fund.
- Rental application for Mission Property is being looked at for any suggestions or improvements.
- An honorarium was approved for the Advanced Planning Workshops led by Carolina Caring
- First aid kits are now located in the Mission Property kitchen, the Church kitchen, and the Sacristy behind the sanctuary.
- WELCA to discuss CPR training.
- Talks are in the works to allow a Home School group to use our church facilities.
- WELCA will sponsor the annual Christmas in July drive. (See elsewhere in our newsletter for more information).
- No council meeting in July.
- Jonathan Jarrett has submitted his resignation to the council.

## **St. Paul Lutheran Church**

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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.



## **AGAPE DAY CAMP**

Agape Day Camp will be held at the St. Paul Mission Property from Monday, July 19th through Friday, July 23rd. Camp is for rising 1st through 8th graders. Registration is still open! Contact Pastor Ralph or Barbara Sloop for more information.