



St. Paul Partners

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Sponsored by Joyce Herman and Dewey Jones to the Glory of God

Waiting, Watching, Christmas is Coming

Dear St. Paul Family,

The season of Advent is upon us which means the countdown is on to the season of Christmas. Advent is the beginning of a new church year and is that time we say is a period of watching and waiting – anticipating the celebration of God’s great birth event.

At the Hanging of the Greens service the last Sunday of November we kicked off the season of Advent by dedicating the signs and symbols of this holy season pointing us to Christmas. During that service I talked with the children about the importance of waiting – the reminder that even though Christmas carols are playing and decorations are going up at homes and businesses alike, it is not yet Christmas. We wait. Waiting and watching are sort of like boundaries that can give us discipline to be patient. I asked the kids if they like waiting in line and they responded they do not. I admitted I don’t care for it either – I find myself wondering how long this is going to take, is there a way the line can move faster, and then I think about everything else I want to get done after I get through the line. When it comes to waiting I think a good spiritual discipline is to see it not as an inconvenience or a nuisance but as an opportunity – an opportunity to pray, to reflect, to ponder, to practice patience and/or to just be – after all many of you have heard me say before we are called human beings not human doings.

This year we are not quite as locked down as we were last year and so many are looking forward to doing more things person to person – shopping, spending time with family, etc. We tend to notice how different businesses and houses have their places decorated. Often times the décor and decorations is done within the context of the business or the taste of the homeowner. Some decorations are cluttered, others sparse. Some decorations cover

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every square inch while others are haphazard. We each like some more than others but catching glimpses of different ones gives us time to appreciate the different tastes and perspectives.

This year as part of our Advent journey I will be offering a sermon series on Christmas in the four gospel “homes.” In other words, if each gospel writer were in charge of decorating, what would their space look like? Each of the remaining Sundays in Advent and Christmas Eve we will look at the perspectives of Mark, Matthew, John and Luke as their writings pertain to Christmas. We will look at how the arrival and birth of Jesus is documented and described in each writer’s angle and perspective.

As we wait, watch and welcome the coming of Christmas, may this be a time of joyful anticipation and spiritual renewal for you and your family. You will find in this newsletter other opportunities to be involved with the church family for learning, caring conversation and just being. 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



Our Christian sympathy and hope in the resurrection is extended to the family of Pete Rader who passed away on November 1st. Pete grew up at St. Paul. His service was held at the church on November 13th officiated by Pastor Ralph. Memorials may be made to St. Paul Lutheran Church, 3761 Startown Rd., Newton, NC 28658.

Our Christian sympathy and hope in the resurrection is extended to the family of Judy Herman who passed away November 19th. A private memorial service was held at Bennett Funeral Home chapel officiated by Pastor Ralph on November 23rd. Memorials may be made to Community Home Care & Hospice, 1308 Davie Avenue, Statesville, NC 28677 or to St. Paul Lutheran Church, 3761 Startown Rd., Newton, NC 28658.



Church Council will meet Sunday December 12th in the Fellowship Hall immediately after worship. All newly elected Council members are invited to join us. We all send our prayerful congratulations to the 3 new St. Paul Church Council members who were voted in at the November 21st Annual Congregational Meeting. Lucy Ballentine, Glenda Townsend, and Eric Scronce will take their place on the Council in January 2022 as we thank outgoing Council members Gail Bowman & David Miller for their unflinching participation and involvement over the past 3 years.

DECEMBER

Birthdays

December 8	Donna Pero Brad Arrowood
December 10	Bradley Scronce
December 12	Joyce Warren
December 13	Braden Southers
December 15	Richard Helton
December 17	Lilly Arrowood
December 19	Barbara Sloop
December 20	Mariale Coulter
December 29	Brittany Hass

DECEMBER

Anniversaries

December 8	Morgan & Sara Lane
December 14	Mike & Barbara Reed
December 23	Roger & Sharon Frye

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,
Greetings and thank you so much for your cards and messages of good wishes for my birthday last month. I had a good day and I appreciate you!
Love, Mary Kraft

We want to let everyone in the congregation know how much we appreciate your thoughtful and compassionate care as expressed by your cards and phone calls during our recent convalescences. It was such a comfort to have solid evidence that the St. Paul congregation is so faithful in expressing Christian love! We feel very humble and blessed.

Sincerely,
Richard & Wanda Helton

Thanks for your prayers, cards and food during our brother Peter's illness and his passing away. We really appreciated everything.

The Pete Rader Family

Thank you so much for the constant love and support. You made my day with that Christmas card! I've been having a hard few weeks and that really lightened my heart. I appreciate the constant love! Have a great Thanksgiving and Christmas!

Love,
Zoey Lail

Editor's Note: Zoey is one of our college students who received a gift card from the church as a way of letting our college students know we pray for and support them. Her note is on the bulletin board.





Cards Received

St. Paul has received a note from Lutheran Disaster Response thanking us for the gift of \$709.37 for this ministry of the church. The note can be found on the bulletin board outside the office.

St. Paul has received a card from the synod office sending greetings during this holy season. The card can be found on the bulletin board outside the office.

A message of appreciation was sent to Pastor Ralph and the congregation from Dylan Lail for the gift card received as part of the College Care Ministry.



DON'T BE LATE!

As we gather to anticipate the birth of our Savior, we all find joy and look forward to the wonderful Christmas music associated with the season. Due to health precautions, we still do not have the St. Paul Choir, but that has not stopped the St. Paul Handbell Choir. It has been over a year since we have heard the clear tones of the brass bells heralding the coming of Christ. So, don't be late for Worship on December 5, 2021 because the Handbell Choir will lead us in the Gathering Hymn, Hark, the Glad Sound! And we will be led by them later in the month, on December 26th, as they lead us in singing Angels We Have Heard on High. Thank you, Barbara Sloop and all those who have practiced for months to enhance our worship experience through their musical offering.

HAVE YOU SIGNED UP YET?

No?? Why not?? Oh, we get it – you don't know what you'd be signing up for.... Can't be too careful these days.... Actually, it's pretty simple: just offer your time and talent to share with your Church family on January 2, 2022, when we have our Worship Service of Lessons and Carols. Look for sign-up sheets in the Narthex and on the Bulletin Board outside the Church Office. We'll make sure you know ahead of time what Scripture selections you are assigned (no surprises!).



2022 NEWSLETTER AND FLOWER SPONSOR SHEETS POSTED

The 2022 sponsor sheets for the St. Paul Newsletter and Flowers have been posted on the Bulletin Board outside the Church Office. Don't forget to specify if you want long stems for flower arrangements. If you are not able to come to the Church but want to "sign up", simply call the Church Office and talk with Morgan Lane (or leave a message) and he will enter your information on the sheet(s).



B-I-N-G-O!!

Nope, we aren't referring to that old song "B-I-N-G-O, and Bingo was his name-o!" We are talking about the WELCA-sponsored mid-week event of lunch and a few rounds of Christmas BINGO. Most of you have received invitations to this party to bring together many of our homebound members to share a time of faith, fun and fellowship. On Tuesday, December 7, 2021, from 11 AM – 1 PM we will gather in the Fellowship Hall so we can spread out and we will

be encouraging the wearing of masks (except when eating, of course!). The prize table will be overflowing with all sorts of special items and the box lunches for our guests will come from Jason's Deli (yummm!) Many WELCA members will serve as hostesses. If you need a ride to and/or from this happy time, be sure to call Gail Bowman or the Church Office or any other WELCA member – we'll make sure you get here and back home safely!

STUCK?? IN A RUT??

Gee whiz.... Are you perplexed about what to get for that person who always seems to get you a most unusual gift: that monogramed sofa pillow or a jar of organic bee honey from Venezuela or an Inuit hand-carved polar bear? Never fear: GOOD GIFTS is here!! Why not give them a gift that will keep on giving? How about 10 chicks for \$10.00? And add a rooster for another \$15.00. Betcha they never received fowl for families in need that will provide eggs for personal use or to sell! Or how about a pig for a family who needs help - chances they never received a piglet, donated in their name, for Christmas!!



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CHRISTMAS IN EUROPE

There might be all kinds of travel restrictions this year but you can still tour Europe during Christmas by simply coming to the Fellowship Hall on December 19, 2021, from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall after your evening meal, to see all the traditional celebrations that take place in Europe, courtesy of Rick Steves and PBS, during the holiday season. And, if you have a special traditional family cookie or dessert you want to share with your church family, please bring a few to share. They might be Swedish spritz or German lebkuchen or Italian pizzellis or ???? So, come and enjoy a “taste” of Europe!



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. As December 31st quickly approaches please remember that if you need to “catch up” please do so by this date. 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 also 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.

BLUE... OR RED...OR WHITE?

OK, we all know the Liturgical color is Advent blue. Maybe that is the challenge to poinsettia growers: create a blue one! In the meantime, though, we celebrate the birth of our Lord with red, white, pink or marbled poinsettias from a local small business to add more celebratory color to our Sanctuary. These beautiful plants are only \$12.00 each and will be delivered by Christmas Eve. Look for your order form in your weekly bulletin. On the back of the order form is your opportunity to honor or remember a special person. **Orders must be received by December 8th.** And please make your checks payable to St. Paul Lutheran Church.





CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Come join us on December 24, 2021, as we eagerly await the birth of the Christ Child. Although some activities such as a children's play or special Choir presentations are not possible this year, we still gather to celebrate our Savior's becoming human. We will still have our moving candlelight service beginning at 7:00 PM and close with our procession to the manger, as in years past. The love of our God never

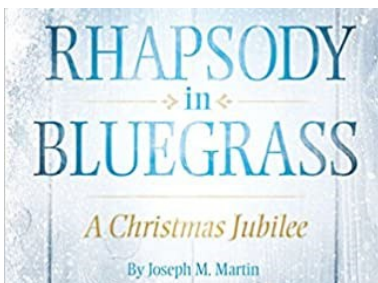
ends and we do not stop welcoming and loving His Son because of manageable health precautions.

OPEN HOUSE: The parsonage will be open for anyone to drop in Saturday December 18th from 2:00PM – 4:00PM. Come and spend some "outside of church" time with them and enjoy their special snacks and see their special Christmas ornaments and memorabilia

Christmas Concert at Limestone University

The Limestone University Chorus will perform a concert Sunday afternoon, December 5th at 3:00 in Fullerton Auditorium. Admission is free and you are cordially invited to attend. The theme for this year's holiday concert is "Carolers At My Door."

Dr. Gena Poovey is the conductor. Dr. David Thompson is the accompanist. Community members singing with the university students include volunteers from the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, Grassy Pond Baptist, Limestone Presbyterian, and First Baptist churches. Please join us for a live concert featuring several Christmas carol medleys and numerous beloved Christmas tunes. Advent Blessings!



Christmas Cantata at Bethel Lutheran Church

Finally! After a short absence due to COVID-19, the annual Christmas Cantata at Bethel Lutheran Church in Claremont (Catfish), NC is back on! Join Morgan Lane and members of the Oxford Community as they present "*Rhapsody in Bluegrass*" on Friday, December 17th at 7pm. The music will be presented with a live bluegrass band!

St. Paul Lutheran Church

3761 Startown Rd
Newton, NC 28658
Phone: (828) 464-3853
www.StPaulStartown.org

STAMP
HERE

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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.



Christmas Eve Worship

Friday, December 24th
7:00pm

Carols, Candlelight, &
Holy Communion