

WINTER 2019

EPISTLE QUARTERLY



December: which stories are told in your family?

December is a month of stories, from the classic *Rudolph the Rednose Reindeer* to the comic *Elf* to the serious *It's a Wonderful Life*. A whole genre has developed that makes December romance comedies: Hallmark Christmas Specials. In our own home, we have many books that we get out just for the holidays, with stories of Santa, Elves and snowmen.

These stories teach great lessons. For example, the story of *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* reveals that a community that keeps singing joy in spite of tragedy can transform the hardest of hearts. *It's a Wonderful Life* shows that when we put others first, we powerfully impact the world for good. I am not sure what *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* teaches, but I confess I have relieved some holiday stress laughing to it.

I admit that I have a growing concern that amid all of the great and meaningful stories of December, we miss out on telling THE story, THE story of God's love come to earth, THE story of the Prince of Peace being born among animals, THE story of angels proclaiming the birth of the long awaited Messiah to shepherds, yes THE story of Jesus birth. I say this not as a possibility, but something I observe as work with children in the community. A very surprising number do not know THE story.

Lutheran and other churches have often marked the four weeks leading up to Christmas as its own church season, called Advent. Advent means “coming” in Latin; Advent remains a season of preparing for the coming of Christ. This Advent, I invite you to consider ways to tell, celebrate and live into THE story of Jesus birth. As a church we have a weekly Advent event to help you do this:

- Advent Wreath Making (Dec. 1)
- Sanctuary Decorating (Dec. 8)
- Gingerbread Nativites (Dec. 15)
- Caroling in Lititz (Dec. 22)

We also have devotion books and of course, we will worship weekly. Each Sunday we will move more animals and people into our manger scene, reminding us how God chose to reveal love on Christmas night! The Gospel lessons this Advent will come from the first chapter of Luke, which tells the story of what happened leading up to Jesus birth. It was a dramatic time in which an angel visited the Temple of God for the first time in centuries...and then visited a young girl, who was asked to take on a daring and frightening task. Her “Yes” to God forever changed human history. I believe these stories from Luke 1 and the story of Jesus birth are stories that do not simply make us feel good for a night, but they challenge, inspire and inform us about God’s love and purpose for this world and our life. I believe they are stories we cannot live without. I hope your family has a wonderful December with lollipops, Christmas lights and lots of cookies. But I also hope your family has a meaningful Advent, in which you immerse yourself in the story of Christ’s birth and ponder the great work of God in becoming one of us.

Pastor Rob





*Join us as we celebrate the
birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve*

3:00 pm

*Traditional worship with communion & candle
lighting. Music will include organ and vocalists.*

6:00 pm

*Family worship with a child friendly message.
Featuring St. Paul children & youth music ensembles.*

9:00 pm

*Traditional worship with communion & candle
lighting. Featuring choirs, bells, strings & flute.*



Blue Christmas

Sunday December 15, 2019

4:00 pm

*A quiet, contemplative
service featuring the music
of harp, 'cello and piano*



ST. PAUL | *Children.*

Fall at St. Paul *for kids/families*



September's Faith Step-Stone for kids: our 3 & 4 year-olds began Sunday School with a Dr. Seuss-themed Rally Day!

October's Faith Step-Stone for kids: K & 1st graders led the Lord's Prayer on Reformation Sunday!



November's Faith Step Stone for kids: 2nd graders received their First Communion



ST. PAUL | Children

Coming Up....

ADVENT begins Dec. 1, 2019



Children will receive this Advent Devotional “Starry, Starry Night” in Sunday School. It’s a gift from St. Paul, intended for families to use at home as a way to help keep Christ in our homes.

Children’s Christmas Program

*presented by our
Sunday School Kids*

Sunday, December 22

10:00-10:30am

St. Paul Social Hall



*Join as the children present the story of Jesus’ Birth
through actions, story and song!*

Practices are during Sunday School

9:30-10:30

Dec. 1, 8 and 15





Safe Church Safe Places

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

St. Paul now has a council-approved Child/Youth Protection Policy. Written over the past eight months, a team of six St. Paul members met monthly for intense cluster meetings with two other area churches learning about child abuse: types, signs, offenders, prevention and education. These meetings were led by the “Safe Church, Safe Places” branch of Lancaster’s Samaritan Counseling Center. St. Paul’s policy outlines the legal responsibility we have to our children at St. Paul. Mainly, this includes: clearances for all volunteers and mandated-reporter training. We are SO grateful for all the volunteers at St. Paul who help our children. They provide a safe place full of Christ’s love. Thank you to the team who wrote our policy: Jim Hoffer, Carolyn Masey, Don Drenner, Jenn Maryniak, Karen Schaeffer (CELC director), and Deacon Emily Myallis (Children’s Minister). We are committed to St. Paul being a Safe Church—a place of sanctuary for survivors, for disclosures, and for the healing power of Christ to fill us all!

The policy is available for the congregation, and questions are welcome. Please see Deacon Emily (deaconemily@stpaulititz.net)



Nursery Helpers Needed

St. Paul offers Nursery Care during both worship services for children under the age of five. We rely on church-member volunteers to offer this loving care. We need more help! Ideally, we want two helpers in the room for each service - - can you help? You'll need to submit your child-safety clearances to Deacon Emily, and then sign-up on: ttsu.me/stpaulworship. Please note that Nursery care is available until Communion, at which point children and volunteers should rejoin the congregation so all can be together! Thank you to Jenn Maryniak for being our volunteer Nursery Coordinator!



Youth Scoop



A SERVICE FILLED FALL FOR THE YOUTH OF ST. PAUL

This fall was full of opportunities to serve for the Youth, with a focus on food insecurity and Peter's Porch. In September, we had our annual Paint Night with the Senior Shepherds. Jen's Pottery Den came and we painted 26 bowls for the Lititz Empty Bowls Dinner. In October, we had the opportunity to visit Peter's Porch during their Saturday morning breakfast. We toured the facility and helped families carry bags full of much needed groceries and clothing to their cars. In November, we hosted our Annual Empty Bowls Dinner, benefiting Peter's Porch and the youth once again helped run the show.

Service was even the focus of our many of our bimonthly meetings. We baked cornbread muffins for the Empty Bowls Dinner, painted toys for the Refugee Christmas bags, and visited Peter's Porch again for a special offsite meeting, where we bagged all of the food to be given out later that week.

We'd like to extend a special thank you to some of the volunteers who helped us with our special meetings this fall, Eric Wagaman, Nancy Boyer, Mary Anne Seitz, and Joe Doster!

We also hosted a new outreach event this fall. Led by volunteers, we hosted a Warwick Youth Tailgate for middle school and high school students before the Homecoming football game. It was a cold and blustery day, but it was a lot of fun, and always good to serve youth outside of St. Paul. Thank you to the Wyands, and Galbreaths for coordinating this special new event!

A special addition to Sunday mornings has been the start of our new Youth Mentoring Program. Once a month, the 5th/6th grade Sunday school class joins the High School class in the youth room for small group peer mentoring. The curriculum includes topics ranging from faith and church to conflict resolution and making good choices. It has been a wonderful way to connect younger and older youth and has been enjoyable for all. We look forward to continuing this program through the rest of the year!



A look ahead

- December 11th -Christmas Themed Youth Group Meeting. 6:30-8 in the youth room. Remember to see Johnna for your Youth Advent Devotional!
- There will be no youth group meeting on Dec. 25th* Regular meetings will resume in Jan on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.
- January 12th- Tubing at Iron Valley for middle school and high school youth. Times TBD. Rain date will be January 19th.
- February 2nd- Annual Youth Group Soup Sale Fundraiser

Empty Bowls Dinner Raised over \$10K for Peter's Porch!



The youth of St. Paul,
led by Johnna
McCormick worked
tirelessly to make this
event a success!



**St. Paul's Music Ministry continues
to grow Vibrantly!**



**Many generations
joined together to
praise God with
song!**

We joined the heavenly chorus in worship on All Saints Sunday.



St. Paul CELC

St. Paul CELC is thankful for the wonderful fall we have had! Thank you to the Lititz Fire Company for coming to visit us in October.

The children learned about fire safety and had the opportunity to climb inside the fire truck. The children have been collecting leaves, pine cones and acorns from the trees. We also enjoyed that the back field became our pumpkin patch. The children were able to pick a pumpkin to decorate and take home.

Thanks to Deacon Emily and Mrs. Campbell for continuing to expand our everyday ministry with Children's Chapel on Thursday mornings. The children love to hear the stories and sing the songs.



Rail Trail Church & other Microchurch Expressions are Emerging

by Pastor Matt Lenahan, liason to Mission & Outreach

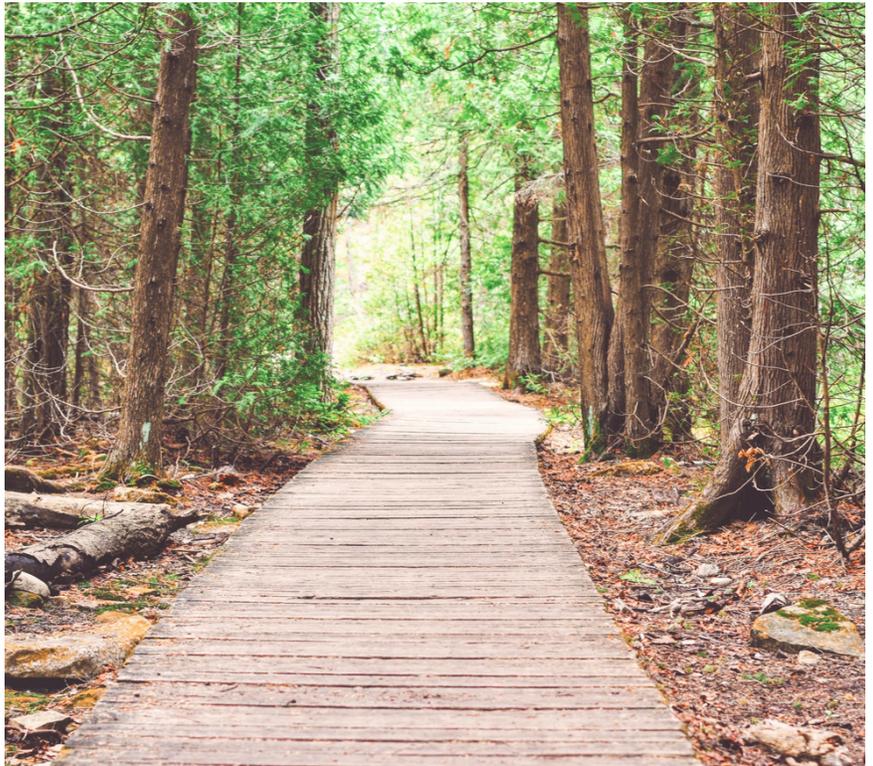
We gathered at the Warwick Township Building pavillion on a crisp November morning. We welcomed the group, prayed, read the story of the Good Samaritan, and hit the trail. Some people hiked, some ran, and some biked for about 30 minutes. We returned to the pavillion for a reflection time. We prayed the Lord's Prayer, shared healthy snacks, and blessed each other in this way: *In your breathing, in your rising, in your walking, in your speaking, in your listening, in your working, in your playing, in your serving, in your sleeping, in your dreaming, in your coming, and in your going may the breath and love of God fill you, body and soul.* The rail trail connects the communities of Lititz, Akron, and Ephrata. Many people across several generations spend time on the trail. It is a place for physical fitness and outdoor recreation. We noticed that there are trail users on Sunday mornings. What if we were church there? Dan Mummert & Pastor Matt started this new expression for

spiritual and physical fitness with the intention that a community might form there. The hope is to find a rhythm that includes both gathering on the trail and serving our community. We will be exploring ways to serve together at our December gatherings.

Microchurch gatherings connect people and invite people to practice discipleship together. They are intentionally small and organic, emerging from relationships and neighborhoods. Discipleship involves worship of God, table fellowship with each other, and service to our neighbors. Many people are seeking a small group with whom to explore and practice Christian faith. They are not necessarily interested in supporting congregational institutions, but they are interested in being the church together. Rail trail, dinner church & issue-focused house churches (like anti racism, eco-justice) are connecting people in ways traditional Sunday morning may not. We are learning to make space to pioneer these expressions in our local

Rail trail continued....

community, because we know there are people God loves who are not connected to the church. In 2020, we expect to plant and nurture several microchurch expressions as ways to connect people to the body of Christ. Maybe you will be drawn into one of these expressions. Maybe you will help to plant one. To find out more, talk to Pastor Matt Lenahan.



Vicar Emmy

This past month we officially gave our seminarian, Emmy Schreiber, her formal title of Vicar. Emmy is working as an intern at St. Paul while simultaneously taking full-time classes through Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. This is part of a new program offered through Luther Seminary called MDivX. Through this Program Emmy will receive her Master of Divinity in two years.

Emmy grew up in Manheim, PA and attended St. Paul Lutheran Church in Penryn. She graduated from Lebanon Valley College with a Bachelor of Arts. Prior to her seminary education, Emmy served as our youth director at St. Paul.

Emmy is a lover of God, single track mountain biking, dogs, and is always in search of the best soft pretzel in town. During the next two years Emmy looks forward to serving and growing in ministry at St. Paul.



Lay Communion Ministry

On Sunday, November 24, Christ the King Sunday, 12 members of St. Paul were installed as Lay Eucharistic Ministers. This is a ministry offering visits to our members who are unable to receive Holy Communion in the Sunday worshipping community of St. Paul church.

The visitors are members of St. Paul who have a deep respect and love for the Sacrament and the gifts it offers; and who desire the opportunity to share it with a home-bound member of St. Paul. They have received training under the leadership of Pr. Sheaffer. These visits will not replace the visits of the pastors, but will provide additional support given through our pastoral care ministry. This creates the opportunity for shared ministry among the congregation. Pr. Sheaffer will continue visitation with the home-bound twice a year and in the event of an emergency.

The Lay Eucharistic Ministers are:

Jenny Bitzer, Jane Brye, D. Michael Byler, Phyllis Frankhouser, Wayne Gongaware, Jim Millhouse, Kathy Ross, Al Rothermel, Vicar Emmy Schreiber, Gayle Stauffer, Joanne Strunck and Nancy Weiss.

Please keep them and our home-bound members in your prayers.

3Q Financial Summary

- Our revenue has been very healthy. Year to date, we have received \$436K. This is significantly better than the budget had anticipated, \$390K. We thank everyone for their generosity.
- Our expenses have been slightly below budget. We had budgeted for \$431K through the first nine months and have spent \$420K. We thank the staff and committee chairs for prudent spending. We know that there are still a number of purchases for the balance of the year.
- The leaves the church with a \$16K surplus for the first three quarters. Furthermore, certain building expenses should have been accounted for in 2018 and were not, meaning that our true surplus for 2019 is over 20K. This is very healthy for a congregation as we head into the final months.
- Based on this financial health, Council did approve increasing the Admin/Communication staff person, Deanna Wyand, from 25 to 30 hours per week. The budget had included potential for staff hour increases. Council also voted to hire a nursery attendant; after a hiring and training process this person resigned.

Capital Campaign

- The final project of the capital campaign has been approved – paving the back lot. We have paid the initial deposit \$25,000 and have money (just shy of \$50,000) for the remainder of the project. We are hoping to complete this in 2019, but weather may not allow this.
- We thank everyone for their generous contributions over the past five years. During that time we accomplished many important maintenance projects:
 - o Covered the asbestos tiles
 - o Remodeled 7 bathrooms
 - o Paved the front and back lots
 - o Resealed the stained glass window
 - o Re-built and cleaned the stone wall surface around the sanctuary
 - o Installed new doors around the church
 - o Eliminated \$130,000 of debt (some of which was capital campaign)
 - o Replaced the main boiler

Pledges for 2020

- Overall the amount of pledged money to St. Paul has dramatically increased from \$362,000 to \$419,000.
- We received 126 pledges. 33 people began or renewed pledging (19 people stopped pledging).
- We thank everyone for their commitment to St. Paul.

Zion Akron Update / Impact on Budget

- The Council of St. Paul and Zion Akron met on November 5 to discuss our continued cooperation and possible merger. Pastor Dave Fisher, who recently became a member of St. Paul, led the discussion. Pastor Fisher served on synod staff for a number of years as the liaison to the churches in the North Lancaster area and knows both congregations well. The topics discussed were two reports:
 - o Pr. Rob Myallis led a team of people from both churches in creating a report on integrating finances, governance and other assets in a possible merger.
 - o Pr. Matt Lenahan led a team of people from both churches in creating a report on integrating the people and ministry in a possible merger.
- Both churches are in stable financial condition, with neither having debts. Zion Akron has a fair amount of cash because they recently sold a rental property.
- That said, it became clear during the conversation that moving from cooperation to full-blown merger (of finances, assets, governance, etc) will take some time. The next step is building relationships and common ministry, not merger of finances.
- Therefore, the 2020 budget for St. Paul assumes that there will be no merger completed in the next 12 months.
- The councils will meet in January of 2020 to identify ways in which we can continue to cooperate (e.g. Peter's Porch, Youth Ministry, Wittle Farm) .

- Furthermore, Pr. Matt will be paid to serve as a liaison to the Mission and Outreach committee in 2020. Matt will also be starting house churches that will include St. Paul members. In addition, Matt will lead our Green Team efforts of using our “backyard” as a tool for ministry.

Audit 2019 & Finance Changes for 2019

- Pam Formica led a team of Debbie Herr and Kevin Martzall in overseeing an internal audit. Their 29 page report included a number of actionable items to help tighten our financial control environment. We thank the Audit Sub-Committee for their work and look forward to implementing their suggestions in the coming year(s).
- We hired Stephanie Risser to work as our financial assistant. We thanked Kim Swinko for filling in the past 11 months and helping to train Stephanie. We came to realize that we needed an employee who could work during the day.
- We also moved bank accounts from Fulton to Jonestown Bank. We felt the online system was easier, the fees were lower and we could more easily earn interest our account balances.
- We also moved to a web-based accounting, giving and people management software. This is with the same company so the data-migration was smooth.
- Yes, you read that correctly. This fall we hired a new staff person, switched banks and accounting software. If you didn't notice, you can thank our treasurer for making it smooth.

Council Approved Budget for 2020

Highlights

- The budget fulfills the budget requests of every budget area owner.
- The budget anticipates a surplus in 2020, building on an expected surplus of 2019.

Revenue Assumptions

- The revenue growth is anticipated at 4%. This is lower than previous years' growth and very conservative given that we are finishing a capital campaign. We project 2019 income to be \$591,000 and 2020's income to be \$627,325.
- The CELC will contribute \$27,500 to the church this upcoming year. This past year including a revision of the Church-CELC agreement to include 3 people from the church serving on the guidance committee of the CELC.

Process

- Stan Sneegas, the treasurer solicited input from the staff and committee chairs in late October. He met with each budget owner to discuss their requests. We thank Stan.
- He presented a budget on Nov 12, first to the finance committee and later the church council, who approved it. The finance committee walked through each budget area, recommending a few small changes that are included in the approved budget.
- On Sunday, Dec 8, Stan will offer a budget discussion meeting for those who wish to review the budget in greater depth.
- **On Sunday, Dec 15 there is a congregational budget meeting. This will take place after each worship service.**



Money Beyond our Walls

- In our budget, you may notice that there isn't very much of an increase in Mission and Outreach. This might give the impression that outreach is not crucial to our church. A few things:
 - o This year we are going to pick up nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ time of Pastor Matt Lenahan's time. Pr. Matt will be paid to serve as a liaison to the Mission and Outreach committee in 2020. Matt will also be starting house churches that will include St. Paul members. In addition, Matt will lead our Green Team efforts of using our "backyard" as a tool for ministry.
 - o This summer we will increase money available for children to attend Lutheran Summer Camps. We also budgeted for youth summer mission trips.
 - o Our buildings and grounds is one of the biggest resources for outreach. Each week we house CELC children, Scouts, Toys for Smiles toy shop and the Warwick/Lititz Community Chest.
 - o This amount does not include the numerous other dedicated offerings and the grants from the Endowment.



St. Paul 2020 Budgeted Expenses

Expense Area	2019 Budget	2020 Budget
Traditional Music	\$14,950	\$10,355
	<i>Note: This budget area decreased because last year we had more-than-typical work done on the organ. Furthermore, some expenses moved from this category into admin.</i>	
Contemporary Music	\$4,650	\$4,350
Worship Support	\$5,305	\$5,448
Children, Youth and Family	\$12,525	\$15,880
	<i>Note: This budget area increased because we have more kids in the program (including more camperships for children!). We are also hoping to offer a larger summer mission trip for youth.</i>	
Family Life	\$3,650	\$3,650
Mission and Outreach	\$26,200	\$27,350
	<i>Note: This budget area increased slightly because we slightly increased our contribution to the Synod and ELCA (to \$16,000). We also shifting more resources toward the Swanson family, the missionaries we support in Tanzania. Mission and Outreach here does not include the various extra offerings to mission partners and charities throughout the year.</i>	
Salaries and Benefits	\$352,136	\$371,473
	<i>Note: This budget area increased significantly. Beyond some increases in wages and hours, 2020 includes an extra pay period because of the calendar.</i>	
Administration	\$28,685	\$36,900
	<i>Note: This budget area increased for three reasons. First, we were not budgeting enough for paper. Second, some expenses from worship now fall under here. Third, there were some office and administrative needs (internet, e.g.) that we did not address in the past years that are in need of upgrade.</i>	
Buildings and Grounds	\$112,420	\$120,420
	<i>Note: This budget area increased because we continue to want to address long-term maintenance issues of our building.</i>	
Other Expense	\$6,700	\$7,700
	<i>Note: This budget area increased because after a six-month long internal audit, an external audit will now be worthwhile.</i>	
Governance	\$1,850	\$2,350
	<i>Note: This budget area increased because we needed to budget for synod convention delegates.</i>	
Total Budget	\$ 569,071	\$ 605,876



St. Paul Lutheran Church
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ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ROOTED AND GROWING