

EPISTLE QUARTERLY

Lent 2020



Let's face it. We live in a culture that is not great at listening. We are constantly distracted by our many devices and screens warning us of "BREAKING NEWS." We are short on the time necessary to listen; it turns out it is easier to write a nasty comment online than to listen to where someone else is coming from. While this is bad for our politics and even worse for our relationships, it is also detrimental for our spiritual health.

More than struggling to listen to each other, we struggle to listen to God. We go through life wondering how to move forward, so often with limited access to God's voice of guidance and wisdom. This year for Lent, we are going to focus on *listening*. How can we listen to each other? How can we listen to God? Our hope is that this season we will grow in our capacity to listen to others and ultimately God. To guide our weekly reflections, we will hear Gospel stories of Jesus encountering others. Jesus shows us the power of deep listening to bring forgiveness, healing and new life.

Ash Wednesday, Feb 26: Listening to your body...recognizing we are all mortal.

Lent 1: Sun., March 1: Listening to the Word...recognizing we all live by God's Word.

Lent 2: Sun., March 8: Listening to ourselves...recognizing we all have rudders we can't see.

Lent 3: Sun., March 15: Listening to the stranger...recognizing we all bring gifts to the well.

Lent 4: Sun., March 22: Listening to the ignored...recognizing that all have a story.

Lent 5: Sun., March 29: Listening to the grieving...recognizing we all carry grief.

Palm Sunday: April 5: Listening to creation.. recognizing God speaks there too!

Beyond Sunday Morning worship, how can you participate in St. Paul's Lent 2020?

Sunday Morning Small Groups: Most of the current Sunday morning classes will work through a curriculum on listening. In addition, we are creating another one or two small groups just for Lent; let Pastor Rob know if you are interested. We also invite folks to consider helping with the confirmation class during this season.

Wednesday Nights: Starting March 4, from 6 to 7:15 on Wednesday nights, we will have a meal and worship in our Social Hall. This will allow us to take advantage of a new sound system and piano in the Social Hall!

Home Devotions: We have created a tool for doing listening prayers at home. These will be available starting Sunday, Feb. 23.

In addition to prayer, we encourage the traditional Lenten disciplines of fasting and giving. This year our special Lenten outreach will be Heifer International and their work in Tanzania, which is very close to the areas where we currently have partners!



Council Updates

Zion Akron Cooperation: Councils of both congregations met in January to discuss ways our churches can cooperate. We've focused on developing concrete ways we can continue to work together, rather than exploring details of merging. The Councils are jointly working on a list of 5-7 steps we can take in 2020.

PrayGround and Sacred Grounds: Council took steps to move both of these proposals forward. See elsewhere in the newsletter for more info.

Archives: Council approved money from the memorial fund for the creation of a new archives room in the lower level of the church. This room would not have sunlight, which tends to damage the historical documents.



Annual Meeting

The annual meeting is tentatively set for March 29, 2020. Pastor Rob will give a deeper presentation about the mission and ministry of the congregation two times:

- Sunday, March 29, 2020 at noon, immediately following the second service, Media Room.
- Thursday, March 26, 2020, at 11:30, Media Room.

Both times you can bring lunch! The annual meeting will include election of Council and Endowment chairs. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please see Council President Al Rothermel; Al will lead the Nominating Committee, as his time on Council is ending this summer.

Year End Finances

We thank everyone for their generosity to the congregation this past year. A comprehensive summary of finances will be available in the annual report, which is scheduled to print in March.

In the general fund last year, we received in \$607,750 in income. We spent \$563,140 meaning we had a surplus of \$44,610. This is the fourth year we have ended the year with a surplus. We ended the year with nearly \$129,000 in our general checking account, or just about 2 months of budgeted expenditure.

The capital campaign had income of \$78,000 and ended the year with a balance of \$61,210 in the capital campaign fund. This should cover the costs of the back lot; weather delayed this project until Spring of 2020. Once this project is complete, finance committee will make a recommendation to Council about what to do with any potential surplus. One idea Council has asked finance committee to consider is the creation of a capital fund.



Sacred Grounds Project Update: The St. Paul Green Team

In partnership with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Lancaster Conservancy, and the National Wildlife Federation, St. Paul Lutheran will become a Sacred Grounds natural habitat site this year. As a recipient of a lawn conversion grant through DCNR, St. Paul will plant an acre of native trees and two acres of meadow grasses and wildflowers on the back property between the church building and Moravian Manor. The intention is to steward this land to provide a healthy natural habitat for birds, pollinator species, bats, and other struggling wildlife populations. This will improve the health of the entire ecosystem, by planting native plants and trees. We will confront climate change and create a beautiful natural landscape to enjoy and share. Sacred Grounds will become educational space too, as we learn the value of planting and caring for natives, making habitat for pollinators, and eliminating grass mowing. It will also reduce stormwater runoff on our property.

As caretakers of God's creation, we believe we are called to till and keep our garden home in a way that honors the Creator's intentions and serves the entire earth community. The welfare of the land directly impacts the welfare of the human community. In an age of ecological suffering and climate crisis, St. Paul is making a leadership contribution to the healing of the earth. We will host a Sacred Grounds workshop on the morning of April 18th. Please save the date and plan to attend. Watch for updates, the landscape design, and the date for tree-planting!



Lenten Wednesdays Meal & Worship 6-7:15 PM Social Hall

Building on the success of last year, we will again offer a mid-week Lenten meal and worship service in the social hall. Rather than have two locations for the meal and worship, we will worship and eat in the same place. We will open with a prayer and song; break bread and enjoy soup together; then we will worship at the tables where we have eaten. Our tables will provide some small groups for reflection during the worship service. This format, we hope, will provide a chance to listen to others and to listen to the Word!

This year we have a new sound system and piano in the social hall. One of the ways we will use this in worship is that each week we will have a "visitor", someone who encountered Jesus in the Bible. They will share their experience meeting Jesus. We look forward to listening to:

March 4: Nicodemus

March 11: Woman at the Well

March 18: Blind man

March 25: Martha and Mary

April 1: Pilate

We still are looking for two more actors, so contact Pastor Rob if you are interested. We thank Tami Ruckel for leading up the food!

Thirsty Thursdays

Join Pastor Matt at ABC, Lititz the third Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:00 for conversations about things that matter: God, faith and life.

We gather to talk, eat and drink.

Topics vary each month.



Music News

The Knotwork Band
Sunday, March 8
3:00 PM

The Knotwork Band performs Celtic folk music from Ireland, Scotland, England, and Brittany, as well as American and World music. The wide spectrum of musical styles (ranging from beautiful airs and waltzes to exciting jigs and reels) and the variety of instrumentation (silver flute, high and low whistles, wooden flute, guitar, mandolin, to name a few!) will provide a toe-tapping musical afternoon for the entire family!



No charge for admission. Offerings are received at each event to support future Concert Series programs. Free parking and handicapped accessible.

The Heritage Chorale
Sunday, April 26
4:00 PM

Based in Lancaster, the Heritage Chorale strives to promote and preserve the choral art form through performance excellence. From madrigals to spirituals, all choral styles are represented. Their quality is based on the art of bel canto, which emphasizes purity of tone, contoured phrasing and vocal blend. The repertoire includes both a capella and accompanied works.



St. Paul's Assistant Organist of the Day

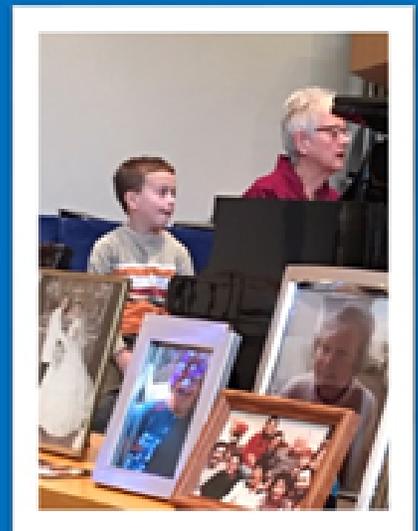
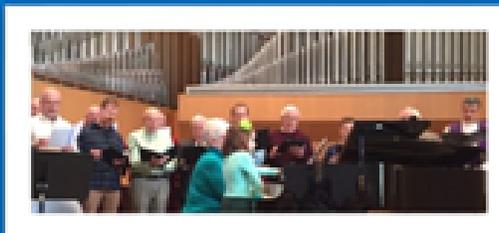


Young people (Grade 2 and up!) have opportunities to learn more about the lovely instrument in the St. Paul sanctuary. They are invited to share the bench and:

- Pull stop knobs - turn on the trumpet, add some booming trombone pedal notes, and rotate our “star” of bells
- Push pistons - change the volume level and type of sound coming out of the organ pipes
- Turn pages

No preparation or previous knowledge is necessary. Assistants arrive at the organ bench five minutes before the beginning of worship to receive instructions for the day.

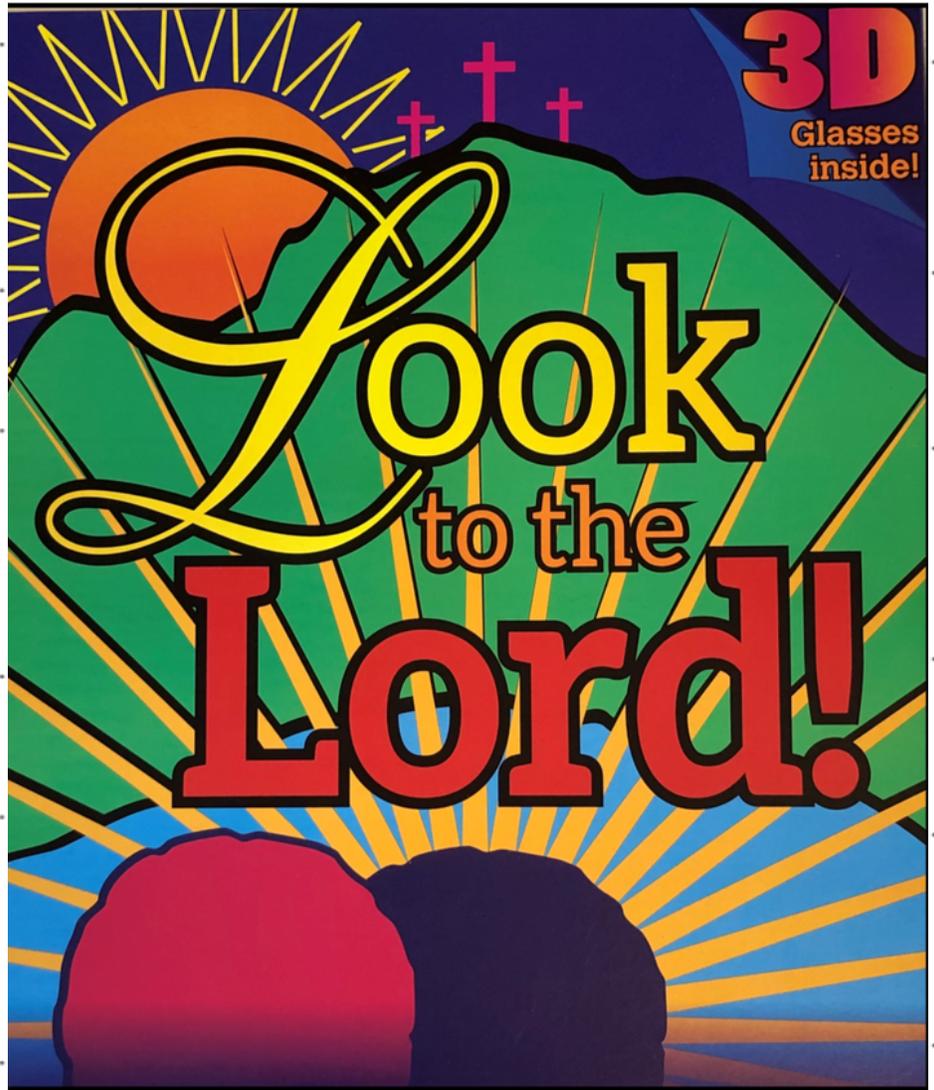
Assistants will be sharing the bench this spring, February through March.



Lent 2020 Theme:
While the Congregation is Listening”....
the kids will be “Looking”

This *Lent*
children will
Look
to the *Lord*

*Our devotional book uses
3D glasses to Look for Jesus
on the pages inside!*



LOOK!

LOOK!

LOOK!

At Home, use your devotional to Look for the Lord with the cool glasses inside! (devotionals given to children in Sunday School on Feb 23!) Share what you see with your family! Lent is a special time to dive deeper into God’s Word. Enjoy the vivid pictures that will jump off the pages filled with Bible verses! a little bit of body text

In Worship, the Children’s Sermons during Lent will be a time to LOOK & listen for something special! Come to worship during Lent for these weekly surprises!

During Sunday School, Deacon Emily will visit the kids’ Sunday School classes during Lent to give you something to LOOK at: the migration of Monarch Butterflies from Mexico to the US! Come to Sunday School each week to create a special Butterfly and LOOK at how far these precious creatures have come!

...Oh look a
Butterfly!!



The Kids' Sunday School 2020 Lenten Service Project:

In addition to LOOKing at the Monarch Butterflies migration North each Sunday with Deacon Emily.....

Children will take a few minutes to create a beautiful Butterfly during Sunday School!

These butterflies will be collected weekly and saved until Easter.

On Easter, the Narthex will be filled with hand-made butterflies!

The congregation will be invited to take a Butterfly (or two!) by leaving a donation (suggested \$5). These butterflies will make lovely Easter-season gifts for friends and loved ones!

The donated funds will go directly to creating a Monarch Waystation on the grounds of St. Paul Church this Spring!



SUNDAY April 5 (Palm Sunday)

The 4th annual: HOLY-WEEK EGG HUNT!

This year, it will take place DURING the Sunday School hour.

Come for the fun, faith and friends!

Dear Church,

A change to Nursery-Care is coming this Spring!



Beginning April 19th, 2020—St. Paul will offer a new PRAYGROUND area in the Narthex for children to be supervised in faith-filled play during worship times.

The current Nursery Room (classroom 104) will no longer be used during worship. The last Sunday for childcare in that room will be Sunday, April 5 2020. (April 12th is Easter; no nursery care is offered on this holy day).

Our church council decided this change at their February meeting. Their decision is based on the recommendations of St. Paul's Children/Youth/Family (CYF) team. The reasons for this change are these:

- 1. The location of the current Nursery room is dangerously far from the Sanctuary should an emergency occur anywhere in the building, especially inside the Nursery room.**
- 2. We love children in worship! We have a wonderful Narthex intentionally designed with a glass wall and sound system allowing children/families to participate in worship from outside of the Sanctuary. CYF wants to make better use of this space for all ages to worship together.**
- 3. St. Paul only needs ONE church-volunteer supervising children in the open space of the Narthex because it is not enclosed nor isolated in a classroom far away.**

With a few small changes, CYF intends to create an area in the Narthex where children can be attended by a volunteer and/or by their own parents. This location has the added benefit of children easily able to join worship for the Children's Sermon, Communion and any other time during the service. Parental help for any needs such as diaper changes or crying will be easily accessed.

If you'd like to help, give input or provide ideas—please see Deacon Emily.



ST. PAUL | Youth

Winter Highlights

This winter we learned, led, served, and even had time for some fun. In January, some youth attended special workshops, where they learned the skills needed to make the wooden toys created by the Toys for Smiles group. Thank you, Joe Doster, for this special opportunity!



We also made time for a fun trip to Iron Valley for some tubing.

In February, the youth had several opportunities for leadership. Monthly peer mentoring between the high school and 5th/6th grade is going very well. The high school youth also led the Children's Sermon during worship and did a fabulous job illustrating the importance of reflecting God's light onto others. Great job, Audrey, Emily and AJ!



Soup Sale Success!! On Super Bowls Sunday, we held our annual soup sale fundraiser and raised \$785 towards our summer mission trip!



The youth delivered cards and flowers to some special women who are all missing a loved one this Valentine's Day. The recipients were very surprised and so appreciative of the kind gesture!



Looking Ahead

Lenten Youth Retreat

All youth in grades 7-12 are invited to a Lenten Retreat at Camp Kirchenwald April 4-5th. The theme will be "Listening to Creation" and we will focus on our responsibility as Christians to preserve and protect this beautiful world God created for us. Cost is \$20 per person. Youth must sign up by March 27th.

Disaster Relief Mission Trip

This summer, will be joining a group from several local churches on a Disaster Relief Mission Trip in Monmouth County, New Jersey. We will be helping to repair homes damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2016. The trip is June 21st-June 27th and is open to all youth ages 14 and up. We will subsidize the cost of the trip through fundraisers and the cost to you will only be \$50 per person.

Africa Bound

Did you know we have 3 high school youth visiting Tanzania this summer for a study trip? Let's pray for Emily, Audrey, and Sam as they prepare for this life changing experience as ambassadors of St. Paul!





2020 EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM

If you wish to order Easter flowers to be placed in the nave for Easter, please complete the order form and return it with your payment to the church office no later than Monday, March 23: (Make checks payable to St. Paul).

Given by: (please print name)

Phone _____

Please indicate the number of flowers ordered:

_____ **Daffodils \$5.50**

_____ **Lily \$6.75**

_____ **Muscari (Blue Bells) \$2.75**

_____ **Tulips \$5.75**

In Memory of:

In Honor of:

_____ **To the Glory of God**

Total remitted with order form: \$ _____



St. Paul CELC News

The children had a wonderful Christmas season learning about Christmas traditions, writing and mailing letters to Santa, and hearing the Christmas story from Deacon Emily at Chapel.

We are looking forward to having a great new year. Since November we have had an increase in new families. Many of our classrooms are now full or almost full. Invitations have been sent out to the families and staff to join St. Paul for CELC Sunday on March 1st. We hope to have a good turnout.

In March we will be hosting our annual family night to celebrate CELC's 35th birthday. St. Paul CELC has been around since 1985. Our celebration includes games and activities for our families.

We would like to thank the church for awarding us \$2,750 from the Endowment Fund. This award will go to the CELC scholarship fund. The scholarship fund is a blessing to some of our families, and we are very grateful for this award.





Stephen Ministry

On Feb. 2, three members of St. Paul were commissioned as Stephen Ministers. Kim Oravec, Valarie Peifer and MaryAnn Seitz completed months of extensive training to become Stephen Ministers. Please keep them in your prayers as they carry the love of Christ to their care-receivers. We thank Pr. Jim Roth for his leadership.

Stephen Ministers: The After People

Now that St Paul has begun commissioning new Stephen Ministers, people have asked, "What exactly is a Stephen Minister?" One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the **"After People."**

Stephen Ministers are there:

- ...after** the phone call you hoped you'd never get.
- ...after** the funeral, when everyone has left & your emotions come crashing in on you.
- ...after** the relationship falls apart and the bottom falls out of your life.
- ...after** the doctor says, "I'm sorry, but there's nothing more we can do."
- ...after** the last child drives away – and the house suddenly seems empty.
- ...after** the gavel comes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- ...after** the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- ...after** your family & friends have heard your story many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the "After People." They are ready to come alongside you – or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives – and provide comfort and support for as long after as needed. For more information about Stephen Ministry or to have a Stephen Minister walk with you in an after situation, please contact Pastor Rob Myallis or Pastor Marty Sheaffer.



St. Paul Lutheran Church
200 W. Orange St.
Lititz, PA 17543



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ROOTED AND GROWING