

FEBRUARY 2021

EPISTLE QUARTERLY

St. Paul Lutheran Church



LENT 2021: CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART O GOD!

A Journey from Brokenness to Wholeness

Many days I wake up and there is an ache inside of me. I can't quite put my finger on it, but I know that something is not well in this world and in my soul. After a year of pandemic living, I long for healing and wholeness. We all do.

As we begin Lent on Ash Wednesday 2021, we certainly come with a deepened awareness of our own mortality. We also come with a confession that we are depleted, frustrated, and worn. Yet we are not without hope.

Indeed, this Lent will be a journey of hope, a journey from brokenness to wholeness. The warming weather, the lengthening days, and the (eventual) distribution of the vaccine will usher in incredible changes in our lives. To mark this pivotal time, we will focus this Lent on God's work of healing in our lives and in our world.

God is at work, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, bringing healing to you and this world.

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Lent 2021:

- Ash Wednesday
- Small Groups
- Lenten Project

Connecting through Music
Youth/Kids
Financials



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ROOTED AND GROWING

To consider what this might look like, each week we will reflect on a different aspect of healing:

Feb. 17	Ash Wednesday	<i>Me and My Body</i>	Physical
Feb. 21	Lent 1	<i>Me and Myself</i>	Emotional
Feb. 28	Lent 2	<i>Me and My Friends</i>	Relational
Mar. 7	Lent 3	<i>Me and My Things</i>	Financial
Mar. 14	Lent 4	<i>Me and Creation</i>	Environmental
Mar. 21	Lent 5	<i>Me and The Nations</i>	Societal
Mar. 28	Palm Sunday	<i>Me and The Church</i>	Communal
Apr. 4	Easter	<i>We and God</i>	Spiritual

“
Create in
me a clean
heart O
God!

We invite you to come along on this journey!

- **Worship:** We will continue to have multiplatform worship on Sunday mornings. We will also offer a mid-week evening prayer service, in-person, and call-in
- **Home Faith:** We will offer a devotional book; each week we will make three devotional videos and provide other resources on social media.
- **Small Groups:** We have several bible studies and small groups meeting on Sunday morning and throughout the week. If you are not in a group and would like to be, please contact Kim Todd (ktodd@stpaulsititz.net; 626-4709).

Blessings as we journey to the ultimate spot of healing, the cross of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Rob



Worship

RESTRICTIONS

WHEN ARE THEY GOING AWAY?

TDOTMVEOOOC: This depends on too many variables entirely out of our control.

As more people get vaccinated and both hospitalizations and caseloads go down, we can ease our restrictions.

Council has resumed in-person worship and imposed a limit on the number of people in the sanctuary. We continue to increase the number of people allowed in the space. We have not had to turn people away who want to come inside for worship; people continue to be very cautious, eagerly anticipating the vaccine. Our focus continues to be the health and safety of people, which means offering a number of options.



ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17, 2021

7 AM 11 AM 7 PM

In-Sanctuary (Sign-ups NOT required);
Call-in (717-625-4400) and FM 88.1 will
be available for each.

The service will follow the traditional Ash
Wednesday service but will be shortened.

Ashes:

We plan on doing an in-person imposition
of ashes at the end of the service as
people are exiting. We will offer an ash-
cross tattoo for those who do not want to
be touched. We will offer ashes (and ash
cross tattoos) to those who have come to
the parking lot for worship.

Physically Distanced. Musically Connected.

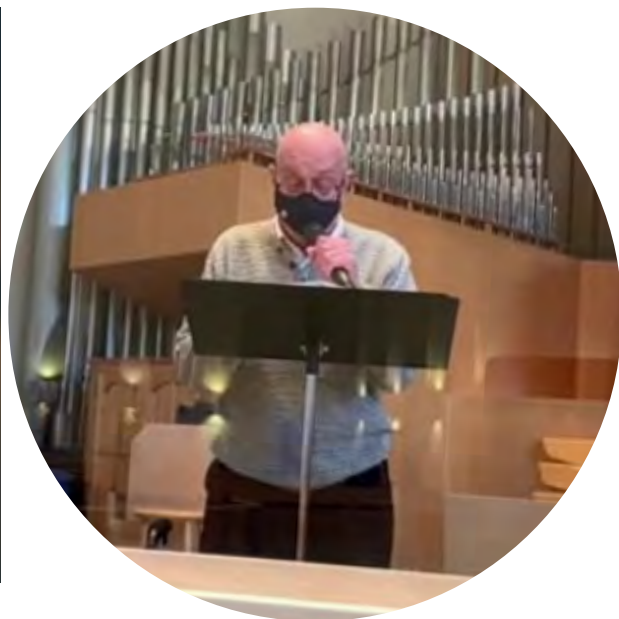
5 Ways TO PARTICIPATE IN WORSHIP MUSIC DURING LENT

1

Be a Song Leader!

While our choirs have had to silence their songs temporarily, you can raise your (masked) voice in song by serving as a cantor for worship! Rehearse with Pam Drenner at your convenience for:

- 8:15 or 10:45 Sunday morning worship
- Midweek Holden Evening Prayer



2

Play or sing with the Praise Band!

Kurt Brown, band leader, will find a place for you! You can sing, play an instrument, or both.

The band rehearses and leads worship twice a month. All ages are welcome!



3

Participate in the liturgical music, hymns, and songs at home during live-streamed worship services.

- Sing along (or play along if you're an instrumentalist) to music in the bulletin. If you have a hymnal, try singing/playing along to the four-part harmony.
- Move and groove! Many hymns and songs can feel like dances. Dance, clap, or move as you feel called to! Expressive movement isn't limited to up-tempo music; even slower music has its own flow and sense of groove.





4

Provide special musical offerings for Sunday morning worship.

Consider providing instrumental or vocal music for a prelude, offertory, or postlude.

- Not comfortable playing for in-person worship? Pre-recorded musical offerings can be incorporated into our live-stream worship videos.
- Musical offerings requiring a collaborative keyboard accompaniment part can be worked out with Pam Drenner.

5

Ring with a Handbell Choir!

The handbell and chime choirs are small ensembles that rehearse safely while physically distanced and wearing masks. Ringers learn new music and play once a month for Sunday worship services.



Ensembles rehearse with leader Susan Cardwell on Mondays:

Children's Chimes: 4:30 pm – 5:15 pm

Jubilate Ringers (adults): 7 pm – 8 pm

Want to know more? Contact:

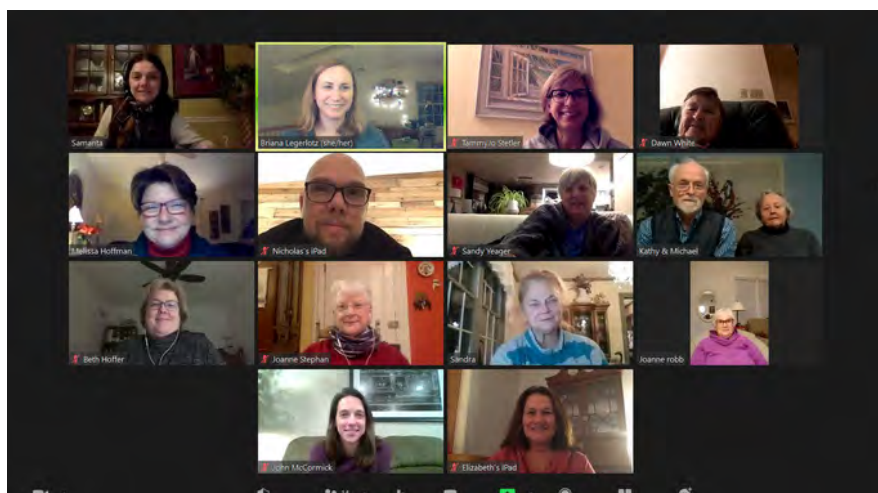
Pam Drenner, Music Director – pdrenner@stpaulsititz.net

Kurt Brown, Praise Band Leader – growrevenue26@gmail.com

Susan Cardwell, Bell Ensemble Leader – handbells@stpaulsititz.net



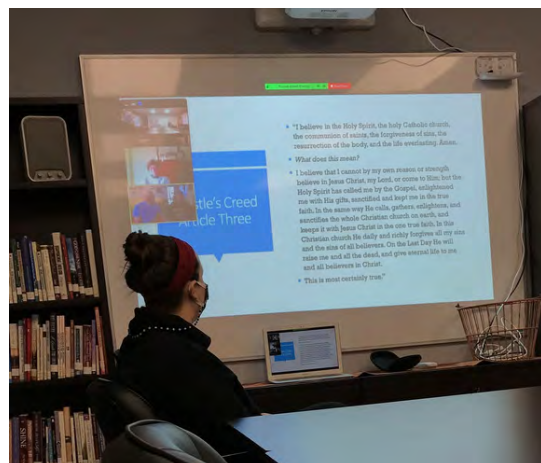
ADULT FAITH FORMATION



The virtual Antiracism and Faith small group learning about systemic racism on Feb. 1st.

Home Faith Formation — Few of us will be making physical journeys this Lent, but we are all invited to a journey of the heart, a journey toward wholeness, a journey we make with Jesus. Our church-wide Lenten devotional is, “With Your Whole Heart: Family Devotions & Activities for Lent” by Amy Welborn. It has something for all of us, the family of God at St. Paul—one church, one devotional, one heart. Booklets are available in the narthex, or contact the church office to have one delivered. Videos will be posted each Monday, Wednesday and Friday of Lent to accompany the daily devotions. You can find them on the church website, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram @stpaulinitz.

Winter at Wittel Retreat — Would it benefit you to take a day away from your ordinary? A one-day individual, guided retreat is an opportunity to settle in and open up to God with our whole hearts so that God can make our hearts whole. We will keep the rhythm of fixed-hour prayer, take time to be outside for movement around the property or on nearby trails, and enjoy a farmhouse-cooked hot lunch. Bring your own books along for quiet spiritual reading, or borrow from the provided selection. Plan to unplug from devices, and to accomplish little other than care for self and soul in the company of Christ. If that sounds good to you, email Kimberly Todd (ktodd@stpaulinitz.net) to register.



The hybrid Taking Root small group discussing the third article of the Apostles' Creed on Jan. 31st.

LENT 2021

SMALL GROUPS

A second session of **Antiracism and Faith** has learned, discussed and grown together at the intersection of our faith and the call to become allies in the pursuit of racial equity in our country. During Lent, there is a new opportunity to continue the conversation around several books including, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James H. Cone. Augsburg Bible Study, Families in Faith, and Talk and Tots are rooted and growing together in faith, hope, and love from week to week.

Grief groups took the resources they acquired during several weeks meeting together into a hiatus during the second wave of the pandemic. They are reconvening to conclude their sessions, and new groups are forming now to begin after Easter.

Taking Root, led by Vicar Emmy, will conclude a ten-week journey through foundations of the Christian faith including The Apostle's Creed, The Lord's Prayer, Baptism and Holy Communion. This small group has tested technology and found an ideal for gathering some in-person and some via Zoom.

Two new small group opportunities are in the works! Families in Faith and Talk and Tots have led the way, and now a new group for *Splash Families* is forming to share the journey through the early years of parenting. Second, young adults can look forward to faith-based professional workshop-style opportunities for gathering and growing coming soon!

Children @ Church

Advent & Christmas 2020

Highlights included:
Our Hidden Picture Advent Devotional
Sunday School over Zoom
Yard Sign Nativity Pieces
And our annual Gingerbread Nativities!



Epiphany 2021

Highlights included:
Movie Night
Star Gazing
Winter Retreat at Camp
Bibles given to 3rd Graders
Make-over of Classroom 6



Lent 2021

We are Looking Forward To:
Mystery Source of Light Zoom game prizes!
Lenten Devo: With our Whole Heart
Children's Sermons with a special surprise!
Cards of Caring: to Luther Acres members
Winter Fun Day at Camp Kirchenwald
Acolyte Training for 4th Graders
Apostles' Creed Art Show for 5th Graders
Celebrating Easter Together!
And Sunday School resuming in-person OUTSIDE in the Spring!



Girum & Esrael Charles enjoying time with their St. Paul friends on Zoom.

Lenten Service Project

One Church + One Book + One Heart + One Project

This year our congregation will be collecting personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief as our lenten service project. LWR works with Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice, and human suffering. They provide aid in emergencies to people in need, regardless of race, religion, or nationality.

Soap, towels, toothbrushes and combs. These simple gifts improve the standard of living for people around the world. To donate a kit, please see the list below.

Items for each kit:

- 1 bath towel (light-med weight, approx. 27"x52", dark color)
- 2 bath-size bars of soap in the original wrapper (4-5 oz)
- 1 adult-size toothbrush in original packaging
- 1 wide-toothed comb (remove packaging)
- 1 metal nail clipper (remove packaging)

Kits can be dropped off at the church from March 10-20. We will also offer two drive-thru drop-offs at the back parking lot of St. Paul on March 14 & 21 from 9:30 - 11:30 am.



YOUTH HAPPENINGS

Winter Highlights

The St. Paul Youth Group stayed connected virtually this December and January. We met each Sunday morning for confirmation class and high school bible study. On Wednesdays, we continued to meet weekly over zoom for prayer and virtual games. For our Christmas celebration, we completed a virtual Christmas escape room and enjoyed opening our Christmas goodie bags together. In January, we enjoyed gathering safely in person for SNOW TUBING at Iron Valley. It was so much fun just being together, but racing down that snowy hill was extra special.



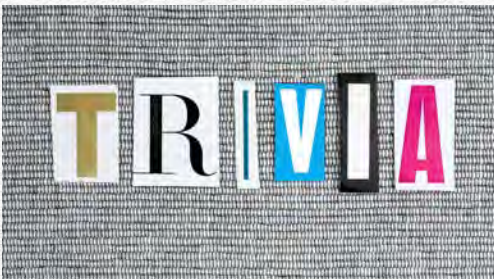
February Service Project

On Sunday February 14th from 2-4 pm, we will be meeting for our Valentine's Day service project. Please plan to meet at 2 pm at the pavilion and we will leave shortly after to make our "special deliveries." We will need all the help we can get so please let us know asap if you are able to help.

Email jmccormick@stpaultitz.net for questions or to sign up.

Play & Pray Wednesdays

Beginning in February, we will meet 2x / month over zoom for prayer and games from 8:15-9 pm. Upcoming dates for this are Feb. 17th, March 10th, March, 24th, April 14th, and April 28th. A zoom link will be sent via Remind app prior to the meeting start. All youth in grades 7-12 are welcome to join!



NEW! Trivia Tuesdays

Attention youth trivia fans! Starting in March we will be beginning monthly Trivia Tuesday on Zoom. Trivia nights will be held on the first Tuesday of each month beginning on March 2nd from 8:15-9 pm. Prizes will be awarded.



ST. PAUL | Youth



We are excited to announce our plans to travel to Pittsburgh this summer for the Week of Hope summer mission trip. This trip, open to current 8th-12th graders, will take place Sunday, July 18th - Friday, July 23rd. There will be a brief meeting for interested youth and parents on Sunday, February 14th at 1:30 pm in the social hall.

Please let me know if you are interested but unable to attend.

Confirmation Camp

After the cancellation of confirmation camp in 2020 due to the pandemic, plans are underway for Lancaster County Confirmation camp this summer at Camp Kirchenwald.

The camp will run from June 20th-26th and will be a collaboration of several ELCA churches within Lancaster county. Camp Kirchenwald is taking great care to make sure camp is a safe experience for all campers and staff and is looking forward to hosting our youth this summer. Families of current 6th and 7th graders should mark their calendars for this important experience in their faith journeys.

2020 brought many changes and challenges to worship, and Christmas was no different. Late November, the St. Paul staff mapped out several options for Christmas services. We were busy ironing out all the details. As each day passed & Covid cases began to rise, our plans changed. Plan A was no longer an option; Plan B was thrown out; Plans C, D, & E never had a chance. Somewhere in all the planning & unplanning, the perfect solution came to light: Worship Under the Stars! (Outdoor worship, in December, in Pennsylvania. What could go wrong?) Our staff & volunteers were energized, this one of a kind event was going to work! One last-minute change was needed due to Mother Nature's sense of humor but did not dampen our spirits. December 23, on Christmas "Adam" we worshipped and it was Glorious! **Christ is born!**
Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad (Ps. 96-11).

Pastor Rob & Deacon Emily delivered the Christmas message in poetry

*Twas the Night before Christmas Eve
When all through the grounds
The creatures were gathered
With fire-pits all around*

*The Christmas lights were strung
By the pavilion with care
In the certainty of knowing
Christmas surely would be there!*

*The children were nestled
All snug in their coats
Holding glow sticks 'stead of candles
Keeping near to their folks
And Deacon Emily in her big boots
And I in my collar
Were ready to preach
For at least half an hour*

*When out in the forecast
There came such a prediction
That Christmas-time weather
Would even ruin the benediction*

*Away with our old plans
They flew like a flash
Wednesday is better
So we all made a dash
The moon-lit church field
Even with last week's big snow
Was no deterrent to us
St. Paul's worship is "a-go!"*

*When what to our wondering eyes should appear
But stars overhead
And loved ones - far, but yet near*

*With six feet of distance and masks common now
We knew in a moment worship would happen &
how!*

*More hearty than ever
Those worshippers came
To praise the new child:
Jesus Christ is His name*

*No covid; no zoom calls
No rain; No cold
No change of these plans
Changes what's been foretold*

*To the top of the roof
To the top of the steeple
Let's say it and sing it
We are Christmas people!*

*As leaves that before the winter must fall
Only to grow back on the Vine so vibrant and tall
So too the Christmas story brings life out of death
God was made incarnate in Jesus' first breath*

*And then in a twinkling
We heard in the Gospel
The marvelous story
That tonight we recall*

*As we gather outside
It's a new safety measure
Jesus birth story
We retell and treasure*

*He was dressed all in cloths
A tiny head and two feet
The stable was meager
Dirty, not neat*

*A bundled up baby
Lying sweet in a manger
Hardly looked like a king
Could this story get stranger?
The stars how they twinkled
His mother was Mary
Supported by Joseph
Around animals, hairy*

*What came from her mouth
Wasn't 'bout ribbon nor bow
But the gift of a child
Who'll make sin white as snow*

*For this child born to her
Would amaze and surprise
He will heal and forgive
And wipe tears from all eyes
He had a radiant face
He'd turn water to wine
We imagine he laughed
Casting evil to swine*

*He was kind and forgiving
A right merciful man
Who called his friends followers
And revealed God's own plan*

*The apple of God's eye
Had plenty to dread
Yet he knew the future
His life wouldn't end dead*

*He spoke many words
Lived out prophecies foretold
Though gentle with children
To injustice he was bold*

*And laying a finger
Just a touch of his hand
Or a simple word uttered
Caused the lame to stand*

*Jesus, born for the cross
Was destined to die
Yet God chose to be born
To save both you and I*

*And now hear him exclaim
Cuz he's always in sight
I am born for you
No matter the night*

*+
written by Deacon Emily Myallis
Christmas 2020 (worship on 12-23-20)*



2020 Year-End Financial Results

1. 2020 Income and Expenditure

<u>The numbers</u>		<u>The Story</u>
Income		Our offerings exceeded our expenditure in 2020. We were able to have the resources to fulfill the call God placed before us – an enormous task – of being the church during a pandemic. While many churches needed to say no to ministry because of a lack of resources, we could say yes!
Offerings	\$581k	
Other	<u>\$ 35k</u>	
Total	\$616k	
Expenses	<u>\$599k</u>	Salient fact #1: Our 2020 offering exceeded our 2019 offering significantly (580K vs 551K), more than overcoming the reduction in normal “rentals” and “other income.”
Net	\$ 17k	Salient fact #2: Almost 1/3 of our giving is now done online. Have you considered giving online to St. Paul?

2. PPP Loan Forgiveness

<u>The numbers</u>	<u>The Story</u>
\$71,595: PPP Loan St. Paul received in Spring 2020.	Our treasurer, Stan Sneegas has completed the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness application for PPP Round I (Spring 2020). We have received confirmation that the application has been accepted by JBT Bank and passed on to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for finalization. We should be eligible for full forgiveness.
\$71,595: Amount we anticipate may be forgiven by the SBA.	
	Salient fact #1: The PPP money is not included in our income and expenses for 2020 shown above.

3. Roof

<u>The numbers</u>	<u>The Story</u>
\$50,000-\$60,000: Replacement of roof around social hall	While a considerable amount of our roofs are in need of repair, the most immediate need is the flat portion near the social hall. There is significant ponding which can lead to leaks and roof failure. The finance committee has recommended that the church use the capital campaign balance and some of the current reserves in the general fund to complete this project as soon as possible. After this immediate need is addressed, a plan will be developed to address the remaining roof repair as well as the other capital repairs needed in the 3-5 year time frame.
~\$200,000 Remaining roof repairs	
\$33,000 in capital campaign account (this includes \$9,000 given from endowment toward roof.)	Salient fact #1: People have mentioned having solar panels on our roofs after they are renovated.
	Salient fact #2: You can give toward the roof repair.



St. Paul Lutheran Church
200 W. Orange St.
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ROOTED AND GROWING