

EPISTLE QUARTERLY

WINTER 2022



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

ROOTED AND GROWING

“Sing to the Lord a New Song” ~ Psalm 98

by Pastor Rob

I love to hear people sing. Once in Tanzania I watched as a group of women cleared a field. They were making room for outdoor seating for a large funeral the next day. As they worked they began singing together. I could not understand the Swahili words, but I understood the message: Praise the living Lord, whom we serve and who has raised our sister up to life everlasting. Their song put a new song in my heart.

I sense that Americans used to sing more, whether in choirs, fraternities, fire halls, family hikes or church. I lament this change. Perhaps this is why I love the comedic Christmas movie, *Elf*. The main character, Buddy, is a human who thinks he is an elf. He repeatedly can't help but sing, even in public and even when it gets him in trouble. While the movie clearly has a silly premise, it does acknowledge that at Christmas in America, you don't have to be an elf to sing. Christmas, which strangely and beautifully connects us to the past, might just be the one time of year we are allowed to sing in public.



SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG

Let's be clear then, this year, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas: I invite you to sing at church, in your home and even in public the next few weeks. We've put together a whole bunch of resources to help you sing a new song:

- a daily devotion book written by members of the church about their favorite Advent and Christmas hymns
- a corresponding Spotify playlist and daily Facebook postings;
- a Podcast on the Scripture behind hymns that will be available for home use but also will guide various small group Bible studies.

Admittedly, there may be all sorts of reasons why you are struggling to sing a new song this year (beyond the inability to carry a tune!). Life presents us with many challenges that can wear down our spirit. Turns out the people we meet in the Bible leading up to the birth of Jesus also had heaviness on their heart. They poured out their hearts in song, in songs of joy, and songs of sorrow. Hope wins out, but the struggle is real.

Historically, the Lutheran church has viewed the four Sundays leading up to Christmas as a season of Advent, a season of hopeful expectation. This hope is grounded in the Biblical story of God choosing to love this world in spite of its brokenness.

May the Holy Spirit find the way to work in you, hope, the hope of Jesus, that causes you to be filled with a new song, one of thanksgiving and joy.

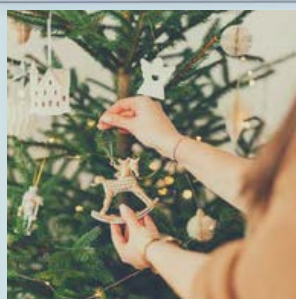
ADVENT

for ALL

Join us on Sundays at 6:30 pm as we prepare
our hearts & homes for the coming of Christ.



Make an Advent Wreath



Decorate the Sanctuary



Gingerbread Nativities



Caroling & Cocoa

ADVENT

St. Paul Sings a New Song for Faith Formation in Small Groups and at Home this Advent

Songs of the Spirit is St. Paul's Advent devotional for 2022.

St. Paul members contributed reflections, stories and prayers to make an inviting resource for devotion and worship this Advent season. Copies are available in the Narthex while supplies last, and a digital version will be available at stpaulnititz.net throughout the season. For daily inspiration, follow St. Paul Lititz on Facebook and listen to the Spotify playlist of accompanying music (Profile: St. Paul Lititz; Playlist: Songs of the Spirit).

Ponder Anew Podcast

Pastor Rob's Bible Study Podcast, *Ponder Anew*, will return for a seventh season to explore the wisdom and worship of hymns and songs this Advent. Several small groups will use the episodes and accompanying discussion guides to grow in faith and fellowship over the four weeks of Advent. To find a small group that's right for you, please contact Kimberly Todd (ktodd@stpaulnititz.net).



Wednesdays in Advent

HOLDEN PRAYER

Nov 30, Dec 7, 14, 21

7 pm in the Sanctuary,
led by Pr. Robert Wallace



POD & PUB

7:30 pm, Bullshead Pub

Pod & Pub returns for Advent! Listen to the most recent episode of *Ponder Anew*, Pastor Rob's weekly Bible Study Podcast, on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or at stpaulnititz.net. Then meet up at the Bull's Head in Lititz on Wednesdays (Nov 30, Dec 7, 14, and 21) at 7:30pm to discuss it with others. Contact Justin Charles (justindcharles@gmail.com) with interest and questions.

Senior Christmas Dinner

Mark your calendars for the senior Christmas dinner and program on Sat Dec 3 at noon in the Social Hall. We will share a meal and some holiday cheer. Sign up in the Narthex or call Kathy Ross 717-468-7582. Volunteers are needed to make this event a huge success. Sign up in the Narthex.

ADVENT FOR KIDS

Faith at Home

Children receive an Advent Devotional book for use at home with your family. This year's Devotional is called "Sing a Song of Christmas". A spotify playlist will accompany each day's song so you can listen and sing along! Pickup your music-themed Goodie-Bag in Sunday School or with Deacon Emily. May the music proclaiming Christ's arrival fill your heart and home this season!



Faith at Church

Sunday School children will present a part of the Christmas Story in worship (10:45am) Sundays in Advent. Please attend Sunday School so you can practice. The church loves to hear the story of Christmas told by children, and the children have fun with costumes, props and proclaiming the Good News: Jesus is born for you!



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY



Bobbi Jo Curty as one of our "Jo's" engaging with the kids at the Children's Sermon

Journeying with Joseph, FALL 2022!

With Sunday School off to a wonderful start, St. Paul's Fall Children's Ministry jumped into the church-wide study of Joseph! Each Sunday, our Children's Sermons welcomed a "Jo" from the congregation to read us a part of Joseph's story. This connected our story to the biblical story.

Whatdaya Know Joe?!

A new Podcast by kids, for kids! To dive deeper into the Joseph stories, our children in grades 3-6 launched a Podcast this fall! We recorded 5 episodes exploring the story of Joseph and our own experiences around big topics of jealousy, dreams, gifts, transformation and reconciliation. You can listen to these short & sweet episodes on the St. Paul podcast website. They're precious and insightful!



Reformation Exploration!

We like to go BIG on Reformation Day for kids at St. Paul. This year, we held an afternoon event tailored to families new to the Lutheran heritage. We explored the Reformation through interactive stations around Faith Alone, Grace Alone and Word Alone. A shared meal ended a wonderful evening for families to talk about faith, church and the love of Jesus!



"Nailing" 95 theses to the church doors on Reformation Day

YOUTH MINISTRY



It was a fun and busy fall for our middle school and high school youth at St. Paul.

Once a month, our 5th and 6th graders head over to the Youth Room for Mentor Mornings with the High School youth. They enjoy large group games and activities and the high school youth lead small group bible studies and discussion on topics particularly relevant to pre-teens. This month, they discussed The Good Samaritan and how to care for each other. They finished the morning by writing notes and assembling care packages for the college students in our congregation!

Earlier this fall, we opened our doors to all Warwick Middle and High School youth after the homecoming football game for a night of safe fun and fellowship. Over 150 kids came and enjoyed food, games, music, a smore station and the giant bobbing for apples inflatable. We were also able to raffle off some awesome prizes donated by local businesses. Thank you to all who donated food and to all of the brave adults who stayed up late to chaperone!



Youth Advent Service Project

December 18th, 9:30-10:30

Meet in the social hall during Sunday School with 2 dozen of your favorite family Christmas cookies. A cookie swap will be held, and later, we will deliver the cookies and visit the homebound.

Youth Group Pre-Caroling Christmas Party

December 18th, 5:30-6:30

Join us in the youth room for a pizza dinner and some Christmas fun. Hang around for caroling around town followed by cookies and hot cocoa. Sign up by Dec. 11th for the party.

EMPTY BOWLS

2022

St. Paul hosted over 350 guests for the 4th Lititz Empty Bowls Dinner on Nov. 6th at Rock Lititz Pod 2. Upon entering, guests were able to choose their own handcrafted bowl, all donated by local artists, and view the fabulous items available for bid in our silent auction and chance raffle. 13 restaurants came out to serve their signature soups and entertainment was provided by Kurt Benit and Papa Tater. All profits raised this year went to the Lititz Warwick Community Chest, and Atle Bjanes, the LWCC President, came to thank the crowd and share a little bit about the good work they are doing for our community.

The Lititz Empty Bowls Dinner was created in 2017 to help St. Paul Youth gain leadership skills and serve the community.

The 6-12 grade youth group served in a variety of ways, from washing and packing all of the bowls in preparation for the event, to taking tickets at the door, pouring drinks and serving delicious bread and desserts donated by local businesses. 11th grader, Maggie Turner designed our event poster and the T shirts worn by all of our volunteers.

This year, our support was greater than ever and we successfully raised over \$13,000 for the LWCC! Our success would not have been possible without the Empty Bowls team and all volunteers!



Christmas Services December 2022

Quiet Christmas

Sunday, December 18 at 4:00 pm

For those whose hearts are hurting. You are not alone.

Quiet Christmas is a gentle, contemplative service for those carrying pain or loss this season.

Special music by Jane Brye, Harp and Peter Brye, Cello.

Christmas Eve

3:00 pm

Traditional worship with Holy Communion and candle lighting.

Special music will begin at 2:40 pm.

6:00 pm

"Joy to the World" worship with a child-friendly message.

Children & Youth will provide special music.

9:00 pm

Traditional worship with Holy Communion and candle lighting.

Special music will begin at 8:40 pm.

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 25, 2022

10:00 am

2022 ST. PAUL HIGHLIGHTS

(Organized by the values articulated by the strategic plan)

Hope: Jesus' victory over the grave means that the future belongs to God.

- We lived out hope by:
 - Launching a Capital Campaign for a new roof with solar panels, both of us which invest in the future of our congregation, our community and our world.
 - Adopting a very bold and forward looking vision statement as a result of our strategic planning process: "Answering Christ's call to revitalize lives and the community by allowing the sacred ground to become the common ground."
 - Breaking ground on an outdoor prayer labyrinth in our Sacred Grounds, which will invite members of the whole community into prayer year round.

Community for all Ages: Christ calls us to love another as he loved us.

- We lived out Community for all ages by:
 - Expanding our small group offerings to include options for people in their 50's and 60's.
 - We invited children to offer their insights in "Whaddaya know Joe", a children's podcast on the stories of Joseph.
 - Invited youth into leadership roles, including on Council, Endowment committee, Acolyte scheduling and lego club.
 - Sending people of all ages to the Lutheran camps in the areas. Nearly 1 in 10 kids at Camp Kirchenwald was through St. Paul!

Service: Jesus Christ modeled and taught us to serve others in our daily lives.

- We lived out service by:
 - Hosting Dr. Stephen and Jodi Swanson, who serve as medical missionaries in Arusha, Tanzania, on a home visit.
 - Sending youth to Puerto Rico to help with post-disaster rebuilding efforts.
 - Accompanying a refugee family from Afghanistan as they began the process of integrating into the United States.
 - Mentoring a mother through *Bridge of Hope* as she sought to move out of poverty.

2022 ST. PAUL HIGHLIGHTS

Inclusive Participation: Worship is an act of the whole people, responding in prayer and praise to God.

- We lived out inclusive participation by
 - Welcoming dozens of people into volunteering for worship.
 - Creating an Advent devotional with each day's devotion written by a different congregation member. Also for Christmas, our crafters group made new Chrismons (ornaments) for our tree.
 - Continuing to offer online worship and hybrid Bible studies, reaching new people, busy members and also our homebound members; we added an intro and closing to our online services to create a helping people feel more welcome.
 - Dedicating a new piece of artwork for our pray-ground, "Jesus loves the Little Children of the World."

Cooperative Innovation: The Holy Spirit guides us in developing new ministries, enabling us to make bold moves for the Gospel.

- We lived out cooperative innovation by
 - Deepening our partnership with CELC, returning governance to the church. The church and CELC worked together to complete a huge lighting project in the education wing; launch a pre-K counts class for underprivileged students; host a fall-festival; and start new chapel experiences for the children.
 - Organizing Empty Bowls event to bring artists, businesses and volunteers from the church together to raise money for the Lititz Warwick Community Chest.
 - Hosting the Healthy Communities Seminar series; we worked with local government leaders and businesses, bringing people together to plan and then participate in the regional planning process.

MOVING FORWARD 2023

***“Answering Christ’s call to revitalize lives and the community
by enabling the sacred ground to become the common ground.”***

This is our newly adopted vision statement. It reflects the feedback received during the focus groups: Saint Paul is healthy and vibrant, but there is a sense that we are called to do more. We find ourselves at a curious time, in which so many are spiritually hungry, but also so many have deep wounds and reservations about Christianity and the church. We sense God calling us to be the place in which people discover or rediscover God’s grace; we want to be a community in which we find out that we have two powerful things in common: a deep need for God in our lives and a tremendous desire to help others. We believe we can impact lives and the whole community here, serving as a leading congregation.

Strategic Initiatives

Reflecting on this vision as well as our affirmed mission statement: “Rooted in God’s grace, we grow loving relationships with Jesus and each to serve in this world”, has led the Council to adopt four strategic initiatives:

- Add additional worship opportunities: Beyond our current Sunday morning sanctuary worship service, we want to offer worship services that are not necessarily in the sanctuary or on a Sunday morning. This already happens (Lent, online, outdoor in the summer), but we want to expand this.

MOVING FORWARD 2023

Strategic Initiatives

- Leverage existing outreach relationships to drive participation and share faith: It is clear that we have the capacity to bring resources, people and institutions together to serve others. We would like to focus our efforts to help ease volunteering, enhance cooperation, share our faith and impact more people.
- Welcome the next 300 visitors, integrating 150 into active members: Each week we have people visit our congregation - in person and online. While we rejoice in people visiting for worship and faith formation at St. Paul, we want to find ways to help people build relationships with Jesus and each other - to put down roots here.
- Design and implement an appropriate structure that allows us to implement the strategic plan: We want for example, to devote more staff resources to welcoming and integrating new members. We also know that COVID changed a number of our ministries and volunteer patterns; we haven't yet reflected this in our committee structures; lastly, we know we need to update our constitution.

Pastor Rob will discuss these in more detail at three meetings:

- 11:30 AM, Thursday, Dec 1, Media Room
- 7 PM, Tuesday, Dec 6, Zoom
- After the annual finance meeting, Dec 4, Noon in the Media Room

BUDGET 2023

New costs may be incurred as we begin to implement the strategic initiatives, such as new furnishings for the narthex to welcome people. At this point, however, the only budget implications involve staffing, with some potential (modest) adjustments to ensure our strategic goals are met.

Comparison of 2022 and 2023 Budget - What is Changing and Why

Worship & Music

2022 Budget: \$13,755 **2023: \$13,915**

It is expected that costs will rise as we order more music for the various ensembles that play, sing, and ring.

Mission and Outreach

2022 Budget: \$26,575 **2023: \$26,575**

Many of these projects are funded through special appeals, so this amount is expected to remain the same.

Administration

2022 Budget: \$48,200 **2023: \$46,315**

In 2023, we expect to spend a bit less, deferring some modest costs to 2024.

Buildings and Grounds

2022 Budget: \$131,875 **2023: \$112,850**

We anticipate spending considerably less here. Our small capital projects, which are usually funded out of budget, will be put on hold until we receive the roof/solar rebate. The past few years have also seen the completion of many capital projects

Roof and Solar Panel Allocation

2023: \$425,000

We expect to receive significant rebates. This large expenditure will need approval by the congregation, hence the inclusion in the budget process.

Staffing

2022 Budget \$433,850 **2023: \$470,000**

Significant increases are likely in this area.

- Due to inflation, we felt the need to give meaningful raises (Pastor Rob and Deacon Emily have requested more vacation in lieu of meaningful raises)
- Pastor Robert Wallace will also work for the full year in this year's budget.
- Per the strategic plan, we want to expand our staffing related to welcoming and integrating new members.

Total:

2022 Budget: \$677,304

2023: \$696,943 General

\$425,000 Roof/Solar

BUDGET 2023

The 2023 general budget represents a 3% increase in total spending. It would require a 2% giving increase over projected 2022 income for us to have revenue match giving. Currently, we are operating with a year-to-date surplus.

The Annual Congregational Budget Meeting will be held on Sunday, Dec 4, after both worship services. The budget will be mailed electronically. This year the budget will include the capital project of roof replacement and panel installation; therefore, the vote on the budget will also include voting on this project.

If you have questions on the budget, you can contact Deb Rothermel, our treasurer (drothermel535@dejazzd.com).

Give from The Heart *Capital Campaign*



We have received pledges or donations of over \$325,000 from 85 giving units, including a generous gift from the CELC. To complete the project, we will need to raise over \$400,000.

Pledges are still being accepted. Pledge cards are available or you can send an email to the financial assistant: finance@stpaulinitz.net.

As we receive funds prior to spring 2023, our borrowing needs will be reduced (and so will our costs).

We are grateful for your generosity and support of St. Paul Lutheran Church.



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



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ROOTED AND GROWING