



Praise & Patter – January 2021

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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In just a few days, we will celebrate the Nativity of our Lord on Christmas Eve at 3 PM and 7 PM. The 7 PM service will be broadcast on Facebook live and Zoom teleconference. The nave will feature familiar decorations, music, and readings. We will celebrate Holy Communion and close out the service with a candle lit singing of "Silent Night." Of course, we will also be wearing masks, sitting farther apart, and the singing will be restricted to the worship leaders. It will be a joyous celebration of Christ's birth – a time to give thanks to God for the blessings of 2020 and to look forward in hope to a new year.

With all of the changes we have experienced in 2020, there is one thing that has remained the same. We live in a world that is driven by consumerism. As early as October, electronic and print media started announcing Black Friday offers, discounts, and sales. The airwaves are filled with retailers trying to convince us that their product is better and we need to buy it. And, all of this tempts us to spend money we do not have to give gifts to people who most likely have more than enough.

As Christians, we know that the real message and meaning of Christmas has nothing to do with giving gifts to each other. Instead, Christmas celebrates God's gift of love to us. In the greatest gift ever given, God breaks into creation and history in the flesh and blood of Jesus the Messiah. All four of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) proclaim the good news of "God with us." During his earthly ministry, Jesus heals, teaches, and casts out demons. He gathers a small group of followers together and sends them out to perform the same mighty acts. But, the most important thing Jesus does is offer his life as a sacrifice in order to save us from sin and death, so that we might have life now and in eternity.

For centuries, the world has been trying to sell us various products that promise to give us a happier and more fulfilled life. Of course, if their message is true, we ought to be the most joyful and thankful people of all time after all the years of buying new stuff and throwing out the old. Is that true? Are we the most happy and joyful people on the face of the earth? Are we content and satisfied with what we have?

Many years ago, the people of Israel were longing for a better future. They awaited the birth of a king, a messiah, who would restore the dynasty of David. They hoped that God would take vengeance on their political enemies and free them from oppression by other nations. "For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make their wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song" (Isaiah 51:3). It was into this world that God chose to break into creation and fulfill the hopes and dreams of his people – but not in the way they imagined. The birth of Jesus introduced a new chosen people and a new kind of kingdom.

As we navigate life in this world, where "what we have" and "what we are" never seem to be enough, the good news is that Jesus promises hope, peace, joy, and love. God is our hope, who meets us where we are and doesn't wait for us to purchase a better future. "The Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14). God is our peace when the world around us is in chaos. God is our joy, even in the midst of struggles and hardships. God is love and our hearts will remain restless until we place our lives in God's hands. Only God can fill the void caused by our chronic dissatisfaction.

The only way to find hope, peace, joy, and love is to trust that God has a plan for our lives. God does have a plan for our lives right now, and God also promises a future when Jesus will come again and give us the final gift of eternal life. In the meantime, our mission is to share the gospel with those who have not yet experienced the love of Christ.

If you are looking for a way to share the love of Jesus with others, consider a gift to Lutheran World Relief, or to a ministry that reveals God's presence in the lives of others. Instead of trying to buy happiness or purchasing more stuff for your family and friends, you can offer new life to others and share the love of Jesus Christ at the same time.

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP at 9:00 AM EACH SUNDAY!

In-Person – Please make a reservation each week by Friday at 10:00 AM. You can call (301.791.1738) or email (info@stpaulsfunkstownmd.org). Also, remember to bring your completed health information form.

+ Masks must be worn at all times when in the building. If you can't wear a mask, please stay home and enjoy Facebook Live or join by conference call.

+ There will be no childcare.

Please visit our website – www.stpaulsfunkstownmd.org. There is a link on the home page to "COVID-19 Resources." There, you can find a copy of the "health information form" and our complete "Return to Worship" guidelines.

Facebook Live – www.facebook.com/stpaulsfunkstown

Conference Call – Dial in number: 301-715-8592

Meeting ID: 581-113-3494#

Tithes and Offerings

Loving God, you powerfully proclaim through your prophet John the Baptizer the need for us to repent of our sins and to prepare the way of the Lord. We place our offerings upon your altar with the knowledge that they will support many ministries that proclaim your Good News and lead people on your path. By offering you these generous gifts, we prepare ourselves to be led along your path of grace and love. We pray with your guiding presence. Amen. Mark 1:1-8

THANK YOU for your faithful & generous giving, which helps us to share the good news of Jesus. Please visit our website www.stpaulsfunkstownmd.org and click GIVE to learn about electronic giving options. You can also mail your offerings to the church or drop them off during office hours, which are 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon.

Offerings received in November: \$24,594.97

Expenses paid in November: \$21,796.93

Principal paid on debt: \$2,030.95

Faith Formation

Crossways Bible Study meets on Tuesdays at 10:00 AM -- in person and by telephone starting January 5, 2021.

Our Daily Bread booklet for December January, February are available for pick up.



Our prayers are with:

The family of **Peggy Renner**.

The family of **Richard "Dick" Troxell**.

The family of Holly Weaver (granddaughter of **Ray & Marlene Barger**).

Prayer Ministry: Remember these brothers and sisters in Christ in your daily prayers:

January 3 Bill & Judy Morningstar; Todd Morningstar; Ted, Marianne, Joshua, Heather, Aaron, Ryan, Megan, Trey, & Devin Morningstar, Jr.; Keldra Morningstar and Zachary Morningstar

- January 10 Russell Moseley; Christie Moser; Charles Mowen; James Mowen; Barbara Mumma; Christopher Mumma; Deborah Myers; William & Mary Myers; Larry, Jackie & Logan Nally; Spencer Nally; Karin Engstrom, and Gary Naugle
- January 17 Linda Nelson; Jack & Nancy Newkirk; Ann-Dee Nichels, Richard Nigh; Robert Nigh; Brian, Tara, Megan & Lindsay Oberholzer; Donald & Cheryl Obitts; Bryan Obitts, Michael & Karen Pierce;
- January 24 Jeff, Sharon, Julie & Chloe Poffenberger; Jane Potts, Roger Powers; Nelda Prather; James & Bradley Prather; Brianna Price, Jackson Price, Harriet Pryor; Chris, Stacey, Landen and Rylei Purnell; Ashley Reedy, Doris Reel;
- January 31 Andrew, Whitney, Allison, Carys, Elliott Reichard, Steve & Debbie Reichard; Martin, Donna, Matthew & Lacey Reichert; Bill Renner; Patrick Renner; Amy Renner; Tom & Eileen Renwick, Martin, Lois & Ashley Richards; and Jerry & Doris Richardson

January Birthdays

1	Jeremy Barron	6	Lynn Spalding Jean Clopper	17	Erica Unger
2	Jane Potts*	7	Inge Dudda* Gracie Leonard	18	Larry Nally
3	Brenda Hamilton Judy Bowers	16	Gerry Volz	19	Curt Dudda*
5	Stacy Purnell			20	Suzanne Watson
				22	Samuel Sarvey

***=80 years and over**

January Anniversaries

1	Wilbur & Barbara King	27	Jerry & Doris Richardson	20	Jeff & Sharon Poffenberger
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Winter Cancellations

In the event that it is necessary to cancel a Sunday worship service or any other church activity due to inclement weather, we will announce the cancellation on radio stations, WARK, WHAG, WJEJ, on television station WHAG, on our website and on the answering machine at the church office. While every effort will be made to provide as much advance notice as possible, decisions sometimes cannot be made until the last minute. During the week, if Washington County Schools dismiss early or are closed due to inclement weather, St. Paul's will also cancel activities on those days. Please always use your best judgment when determining if it is safe for you to travel to attend a scheduled event.

2021 Offering Envelopes

St. Paul's first started using an "envelope system" for weekly offerings in 1888! 2021 envelopes are available in Fellowship Hall. So that we can track our voting member numbers, all confirmed members of St. Paul's receive an assigned envelope (couples receive one box of envelopes). Please pick up your box of 2021 envelopes and begin using them after January 1, 2021. PLEASE NOTE: It is very likely that your offering envelope number will change in 2021. Please note the new envelope number when you pick up your offering envelopes.

2020 Contributions

IRS regulations require that all contributions to St. Paul's for 2020 be received by December 31, 2020. Any offering received after that date (regardless of the particular year's offering envelope or the date on the check) will be credited towards 2021 offerings.

Newsletter News

The deadline to receive information for the February newsletter is NOON on January 19th. Your meeting this deadline ensures we can publish the February Newsletter by the end of January.

Annual Reports

Ministry Team Reports for 2020 are due in the church office by January 24. Copies of the Annual Report will be available on February 7.

Signup Charts: The Signup charts for 2021 Altar Flowers, Eternal Light and Communion Elements are posted on the bulletin board. Altar Flowers are \$60.00 for both vases or \$30.00 for one. Please indicate if you are purchasing one or both. The Eternal Light and Communion Elements are \$10.00 per week.

Seeking support for COVID nursing staff at Meritus

When the pandemic first started, Meritus hospital staff received much support and kindness from our community. Now COVID numbers are higher than ever in the community as well as in our hospital. The Spiritual Care department is looking to see if there any interest in possibly providing 1 meal a week for at least 2 departments (15 staff approximately) within the hospital. If you are interested please contact Jeanette Brill at 301-790-8296, fax 301-790-8711, email Jeanette.Brill@meritushealth.com.

Thank You Notes

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers and cards during and after my heart surgery. The power of prayer is amazing. Roger Bowers.

Thank you to everyone who helped decorate for Christmas. All help is appreciated. The Decorating Committee.

Church Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Church Secretary: Carol Ann Rossman

Pastor: Lee Brumback + 540.335.1710 + prlee@stpaulsfunkstownmd.org

Director of Music: Cara Price

Council President: Travis Fouche 301.730.8926