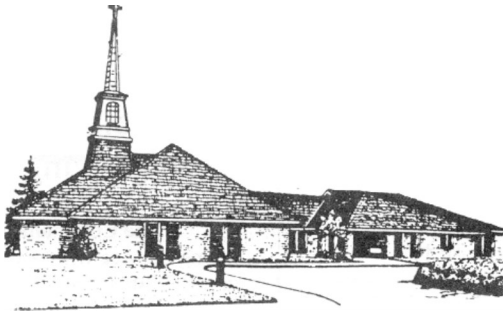




Spring Edition, 2024

St. Paul Lutheran Church

PO Box 200

277 W Pine Grove Rd

Pine Grove Mills, PA 16868

St. Paul Quarterly Letter

From the Pastor

In this Edition:

Council Report	Page 2
Fundraiser	Page 2
Prayer List	Page 3
Mowers Needed	Page 3

Many Easter stories seemingly involve late arrivals. The women who went to the tomb missed seeing the resurrection event, what if they had been there sooner? The male disciples were late to understanding and sharing the joyous message of the resurrection. Saint Thomas was a week late. Saint Paul says he was one “untimely born,” which is just a poetic way of saying, “born too late.” And yet, through all of these “latecomers,” our Incarnate God, Jesus Christ, chose to act. They were not “too late” because in Jesus Christ that is impossible.

On May 4, the Eastern Churches will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. Now, like us, the Eastern Churches celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord with the Paschal (Easter) Vigil. I am not exaggerating when I say that the vigil practiced by the Eastern Church is hard core. Their vigil begins shortly before sunset on Saturday and then lasts until about 3:30am Sunday morning. However, while some folks in the congregation are there the entire time, most of their congregations begin to arrive around midnight. This is a common practice, and there is no assumption that they were too tardy. Instead, they warmly embrace each other as the service approaches its culmination.

Compare this to when I entered seminary. Back then, I subconsciously assumed that if I had missed the beginning of worship I might as well not go at all. I am not entirely sure where I caught this assumption, but my hunch is that it came from our surrounding culture. As I have grown, learned, and matured, however, I realized that this is silly. “Late” truly is “better than never.”

We are entering a time of the year when there will be many causes of delay, so I encourage you to remember that Christ still works through “latecomers.” Yes, this means that you can arrive to worship after it starts, but this could also be doing something that you feel like it is “too late” to do. Introduce yourself to your neighbors even if it has been more than a decade since you moved into your house. Start a new hobby or skill you always wanted to learn. Perhaps invite a friend, acquaintance, family member, or neighbor to worship. Christ deeply loves and cares for those arriving late as well as those who were there the whole time.

To put this another way: Easter is our time of celebration. Easter is our biggest annual party. Whenever one celebrates at a party, there is no such thing as “too late.” There might be mild disappointment one didn’t arrive sooner, but that quickly fades in the glowing warm embrace of festivity. The love of Christ burns infinitely for you, for us. So, even if we are “late,” Jesus Christ still welcomes us in.

O God of creation, eternal majesty, you preside over land and sea, sunshine, and storm. By your strength pilot us, by your power preserve us, by your wisdom instruct us, and by your hand protect us, through Jesus Christ, our Crucified and Risen Savior and Lord.

Council President's Report

Here is an update on some of the exciting things that are happening in our congregation council.

Annual Meeting Summary – The church operating budget for 2024 was approved, including a \$3500 item for replacing the exterior basement doorframe in the event that this is not covered under our 2024 West Penn Power Sustainability Energy Fund (WPPSEF) proposal. Linda Rosensteel and Keith Kling volunteered for the Nominating Committee. Eleanor Bird volunteered for one of the two seats for congregation members at the June 15 Synod Assembly. The congregation also voted to allow Pastor Paul to move forward with petitioning the Synod to allow pastors to participate in alternative benefit plans outside of Portico.

Communication Plan – Michelle McMullen has agreed to form a team to recommend communication improvements to council. Council has drafted an initial communication plan for the team.

Fundraising Team – At the annual meeting there was interest expressed in some fundraising activities. Council agreed to hold an open zoom meeting, which was attended by Bill Stout, Sydney Bennington, Tyler Bennington, and Ephraim Govere. The team brainstormed some ideas that can benefit charity as well as our operating budget. Stay tuned for more information!

Care Ministry Team – Council also kicked off a team to look at creating a Care Ministry Team to supplement pastoral care provided by the pastor. Joy Kling, Linda Rosensteel, Linda Govere, Lauren Muthler, and Linda Muthler attended the initial team meeting. The team is looking at how we might be able to provide care to people in the congregation and possibly members of the community that are experiencing life difficulties.

ASHRAE Energy Audit – We received the results of our energy audit that was conducted by Envinity. They identified non-LED lightbulbs, windows, and the water heater (which is still the original water heater) as some of the items to consider replacing/improving. The cost of these items were recently included in our 2024 WPPSEF proposal, along with the replacement of the basement exterior doorframe. Unfortunately, we were informed that our proposal was not selected for funding in 2024. However, the program administrator would like to talk with us about the possibility of submitting a revised proposal. A date for this discussion has not yet been set.

Jeff Muthler
Council President

Fundraiser: The First Annual Goods and Services Auction will be held on Sunday, May 19, 2024, following the Fellowship Luncheon. Members of the congregation are invited to offer goods and services to be auctioned off to members and friends of the church. Please see the flyer on the table in the Narthex for more information. Please fill out a form for the goods and services you are offering and return it to the Bennington's by Sunday, April 21st, either in their mailbox in the lobby or via email to td.bennington@gmail.com. 10% of the proceeds from the auction will be donated to Interfaith Human Services.

BOLD WOMEN SUNDAY

St. Paul will celebrate Bold Women Sunday on **Sunday, May 12**, which is also Mothers Day. Women of St. Paul will participate in the service, providing special music and honoring the bold women in St. Paul's past during the homily.

If you have someone you feel should be honored, please speak to Linda Rosensteel, Morgen Hummel, or Linda Muthler. You can speak about them yourself during the service or give the information about that person to us and one of the women of WELCA will do the presentation.

Support Interfaith Human Services During Centre Gives!

Centre Gives 2024 is an 36-hour online community giving event that begins at 8:00 a.m. on May 8 and concludes on 8:00 p.m. May 9. During this time, please consider making a gift to Interfaith Human Services (IHS)—a community outreach ministry of our congregation. Our gifts to IHS support people in need throughout Centre County through the Centre County Fuel Bank, Emergency Vehicle Repair Program, Representative Payee Services, and other programs and services that build financial stability in struggling households. Giving to IHS during Centre Gives is easy. During the event, go online to: centregives.org and use the search bar to find Interfaith Human Services. Then follow the prompts to make a secure online gift using a credit or debit card. Thank you!

We continue to pray for:HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND

Liz Perez
 Diane Kemmerer
 Marilyn Niemann
 Lois Corl
 Paul Anderson
 Lois Folmar
 Shirley Gilligan
 Leroy Dreibelbis
 Sally Kolesar

FRIENDS/RELATIVES

Pastor Kelley
 Merle Eyer
 Ramona Book
 Marin Alexis Tomkiel
 Nathan Williams
 Fred Muthler
 Barry Anderson
 Cara & Holden
 Ruth Tier

OTHER MEMBERS

Eileen Butchkoski
 Janice Olsen
 Rich Olsen
 Pastor Paul
 Paul Anderson

Sam Bernstine
 Marlene Chamberlin
 Sylvia Way
 Pam Brocius
 Millie Harper
 Ann Clymer
 Joshua Potter
 Jay Rudy
 Dave & Marlene Kling
 Richard Gerding
 Dennis Dean
 Don Veit
 Pete Hogdon
 Chuck Harpster
 Kaysen Cameron

Please check this list and let Melissa know if a name can be removed.

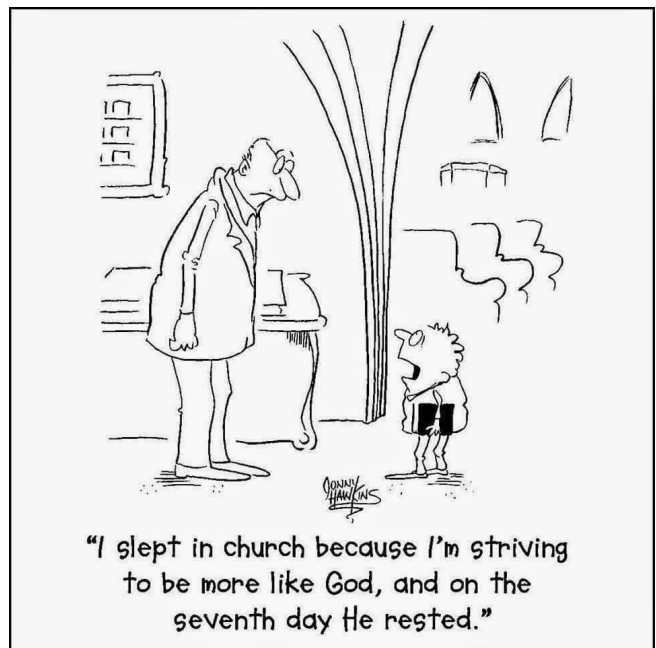
HELP WANTED: MOWERS

Spring has arrived! You may have noticed that the grass on the church lawn has begun to grow greener and taller. A signup sheet is on the table in the narthex. Each volunteer commits to two-week mowing periods in the rotation until fall when the weather gets cold and the grass stops growing. Gas gift cards are provided so that you can replace the fuel when needed. You can mow at your convenience on any day except Sunday. Questions? Call Linda Rosensteel or Delorse Homan

PINE GROVE MILLS FARMERS MARKET

The Farmers Market will open before you know it. St. Paul provides the parking lot for the weekly event that occurs each Thursday afternoon from 3pm until 7pm. We invite you to come and see and shop.

We also need volunteers to help with setting up (beginning at 2:15 pm), cleaning up (at 7 pm), or monitoring traffic (two-hour shifts from 3 to 5 and 5 to 7). You will be trained by one of our current volunteers, and will be contacted monthly to determine your availability. It's fun and rewarding! If you'd like to help, please contact Linda Rosensteel.



**SUMMER NEWSLETTER
 DEADLINE IS JULY 13**