

# CORNERSTONE

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April 2021

“THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU AT ST. PAUL’S”

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church

Volume 28, Issue 2



## APRIL IS A MONTH OF SEEING AND BELIEVING

After 12 months of shutdowns, quarantines, masks, social distancing and all the losses of life and time we have been experiencing in our life and in our churches, we have arrived at April, 2021. The month began with the Easter Celebration and the appearance of Spring. Suddenly, our spiritual life comes to life, as nature comes out of its winter dormancy with trees budding, flowers pushing up out of the soil, streams running with fresh water and birds building nests, awaiting the arrival of new births. Can you sense it or feel it in the air? It brings new hope and new beginnings.

Our churches are cautiously re-opening for in-person worship - and in-person ministry programs will follow. The mission of each congregation continues to be a strong and vital part of our lives. Likewise, PLUM is experiencing the newness of Easter’s life as we enter the Call Process, in search of an additional fulltime called pastor - and yet another congregation has inquired about membership in our association.

But, I don’t want to neglect the spiritual renewal that is a fundamental aspect of Easter and the Easter Season. Put away those Lenten garments and put on the festal garments fit for a wedding banquet. Easter is the grand wedding banquet of our Resurrected Lord. In John’s Revelation (19.9), we read: “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” That’s us!

Celebrate life as you watch the signs of life springing up in gardens and parks around you. Celebrate life as you watch the signs of life springing up in the lives of your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Celebrate as you find yourself declaring with the disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus: “they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.” Every time we break the bread of communion, whether in person or on Zoom, the Living Lord is with us. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Adorn your home with colored ribbons (and perhaps balloons). Rush to your telephones and call someone you know. Tell them the good news: Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Maybe they have already heard and already believe - but perhaps not. Don’t let them go uninformed!!!

If I sound like I have excitement in my voice, you would be right. We’ve had enough bad news. We have experienced enough loss. We have lived with tension, under a cloud, long enough. Come out into the brilliance of the light emanating from the empty tomb. Breathe the fresh air of deliverance and new life. See and believe that, in spite of the negative aspects of life that persist around us, the Resurrection of Our Lord is stronger and surer than anything that would defeat us. The victory is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

+Pastor Paul on behalf of the PLUM Pastoral Team

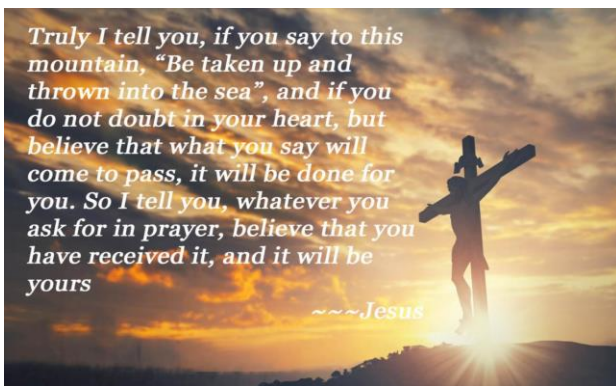


WORSHIP SCHEDULE  
*for*  
**Holy**  
WEEK

Maundy Thursday Worship Service: April 1st at 7:00 p.m. via [Zoom](#) or by [phone 1-646-876-9923](tel:1-646-876-9923)  
Meeting ID: 401 596 541.

Good Friday Worship Service: April 2 at 7:00 p.m. via [Zoom](#) or by [phone 1-646-876-9923](tel:1-646-876-9923)  
Meeting ID: 401 596 541.

Easter Vigil Service: April 3 at 7:00 P.M. via [Zoom](#) or by [phone 1-646-876-9923](tel:1-646-876-9923). Meeting ID: 401 596 541.



Easter Sunday Worship Service: April 4 at 11:15, in person service at St. Paul's; 3:00 p.m. via [Zoom](#) or by [phone 1-646-876-9923](tel:1-646-876-9923) Meeting ID: 401 596 541.

**Bulletins for these Zoom services will be emailed to you. If you do not have email contact Ann at 724-746-5897 and she will print a bulletin for you.**



**IN-PERSON SUNDAY SERVICES:**

St. Paul's invites all to attend Sunday Services, held at 11:15 A.M. Social distancing will be practiced and masks are required for entrance. We will have Holy Communion followed by instructions from the attending Pastor. **All are welcomed!**



Church offering for April can be mailed to the church or brought to the Sunday church services. All April contributions must be received no later than April 25<sup>th</sup>. Contact John Straka, 724-223-9032 if you have any questions.



"FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL BLESS YOU IN ALL YOUR HARVEST AND IN ALL THE WORK OF YOUR HANDS. AND YOUR JOY WILL BE COMPLETE."  
♥ Deuteronomy 12:15



**ST PAUL'S REORGANIZATION**

Please send anything that you wish to have published in St. Paul's Lutheran Church's newsletter to Ann Morrocco (724-746-5897) or email: [amorrocco1@verizon.net](mailto:amorrocco1@verizon.net) no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. It is important that everyone become involved. Please share your suggestions and/or assistance availability with Nancy Pollo (President), 724-207-0941 or John Straka, Finance Chairman, 724-223-9032.

# Celebrating Black Clergy

by Rev. Ryan Pusch

*This ongoing series will lift up the ministry of Black clergy who have served or are currently serving in our synod. Highlighted this month is the Rev. Brenda N. Henry.*



**The Rev. Brenda N Henry**

Brenda Henry is the first African American woman ordained in the SWPA synod of the ELCA. She serves as one of three full-time pastors called to Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM), and lives in the East Carnegie neighborhood. She also serves on our synod's Authentic Diversity and Justice Team. Brenda grew up in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and later moved to Michigan before ending up in Pittsburgh, but our interview focused mostly on her experience of hearing and responding to God's call to ministry.

Brenda's first vocation was as a social worker, and she earned an undergraduate and master's degree in that field, working in a variety of settings, including clinical settings. She talked to me about her process of discerning God's call specifically to be a Lutheran minister as an African American woman, and how she had the help and guidance of several key people that walked alongside her on her journey.

Brenda has participated and been enriched by a number of different church experiences over

the course of her life. She was baptized and confirmed in the Moravian tradition, joined a United Church of Christ congregation, and found the Baptist church a welcoming space to express her faith upon moving to Pittsburgh. She knew God had a plan for her, but talked to me about how she at first resisted the call to ordained ministry. Her journey of submitting to that call began with attending Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Brenda began her discernment journey into the call of the Lutheran church during her seminary field placement. She was placed at the Children's institute in Shadyside with supervisor Pastor Susan Schwartz. Pastor Schwartz invited her to engage in worship and other ministries at Hope Lutheran Church in Forest Hills as part of her placement. Then Pastor Schwartz invited her into another year of discernment as an intern at Hope for her final year of seminary. During this year Brenda also connected to Pastor Karen Battle, who was the first African American woman to serve as an ordained minister in the SWPA synod. Pastor Karen helped Brenda to fully explore what it means to be both Black and Lutheran by accompanying her on a few trips to visit Black Lutheran clergy and their congregations in Cleveland and Chicago and then meet with some of the student body of the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and the African Descent staff at Churchwide. Because the transition from a Black church experience to Lutheran worship involved a profound cultural shift, Brenda knew the importance of integrating these parts of her emerging identity.

At worship on Sunday during her trip to Chicago, she had a transformative experience which blended Lutheran and Black Church traditions during an altar call. The community prayed over her and anointed her head, hands, and

feet with oil as a blessing and affirmation of God's work in her call to ordained ministry. Brenda's discernment also brought her to deeply consider the tenants of the Lutheran theology of grace- where it is not our works, or what we do, that makes us acceptable to God, but it is the reality of God's love for us which insists that each of us is indeed "good enough." This was and is especially important to Brenda as a woman of color because of her experience throughout her life of feeling obligated by others to "prove herself" as worthy- being required to demonstrate her competency continuously in ways her white colleagues were never expected to. Brenda's discovery of what it means to be Black and Lutheran sadly also included the ever-present reality of experiencing prejudice and racism. She witnessed first-hand how her Black brothers and sisters could be instantly rendered invisible within meetings with other colleagues who remained unaware of their own power to marginalize their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Despite these challenges, Brenda's call to ministry dovetailed in many ways with her previous vocation as a social worker, where she could help give voice to and walk alongside the folks that had been pushed to the side or left behind by the powers of this world. The call to ordained ministry added a new dimension beyond social work, which is more focused on helping folks attain the resources they need to flourish. A ministry of word and sacrament connects individuals to the greatest resource with which to flourish- the Triune God- who invites us into a relationship with the One who calls us beloved. Brenda's call was not followed out of naiveté of the challenges she would face, but out of the invitation to engage in the enrichment of the Lutheran community through the leadership,

experience, and wisdom of Black siblings and other marginalized communities.

As a social worker she knew that healing couldn't be confined to hospitals, but had to touch every part of people's lives. Drawing from that experience, Brenda appreciates that ministry and healing cannot be confined to one place, but must encompass the entire community. Brenda brings her gifts of one-on-one engagement to her pastoral ministry, but even more she brings a passion and drive for creating spaces and ministries that impact people's entire lives. Her ministries invite us to ask ourselves "how can we, the beloved of God, right here and now be active witnesses of the light that changes not just individuals, but systems and entire communities?" We give thanks to God for calling Brenda to be our fellow colleague and sister in Christ and helping us to grow together in new and needed ways of seeking authenticity in worship and maintaining the gospel heart of justice.



Taken from:

SWPA Synod Authentic Diversity and Justice Working Group March Newsletter

To see the full newsletter go here:

<https://us2.campaign-archive.com/?u=79dcaa2fcb5382a6c602613cc&id=bd48e9faf0>

To see additional activities of AD&J and to sign up for email go here:

<https://www.swpasynod.org/ministries/diversity>



## Community News

Our domestic partner, **Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana**, Our domestic partner, **Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana**, suffered significant damage during the storms. Any support that we can provide for the Texas Disaster Relief will be appreciated. Please earmark your donation when sending to the church.

**BETHESDA** home is preparing for their new future residential unit (Wise Hall) that will house 20 youth with different levels of treatment. Supporters are needed to purchase 1 bed and mattress (\$1500); living space furniture (\$2000); 1 window (\$250). For those who remember the past, we helped fund a new well.

**SYNOD ASSEMBLY** will again be conducted by Zoom in June 2021. Dates and registration material to be announced later.

**Spring Cluster Event** SWPA Women of ELCA will have a spring garden party, Saturday, April 24, 10 A.M. Zoom ID98520138881; Meeting pass code 123456; call in 1-646-876-9923. Wear your best garden hat or make your own for a contest during event. Prizes awarded.

**Ecumenical Tenebrae Prayer Service** – Bishop Kusserow will represent our synod hosted by Catholic Diocese, streamlined from Saint Paul Cathedral; April 2, 2021, 7 P.M.  
(<https://youtu.be/0TD13LU50Mw>)



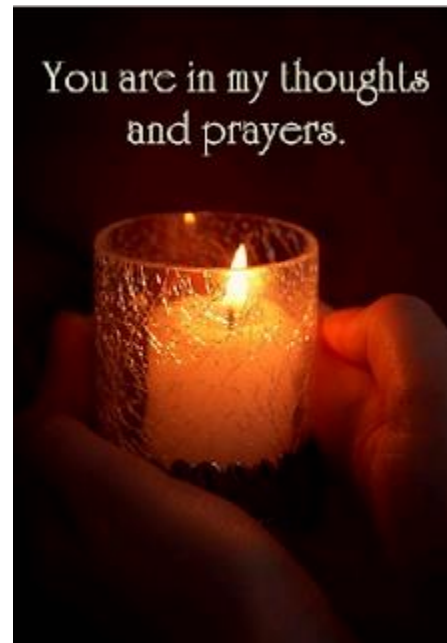
### **April Monthly Mission is Agape.**

On April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Camp Agape will celebrate their Sixtieth year of ministry. Each year the Board of Directors selects a person, group, or church that has made a significant donation toward the fiscal well-being of this ministry. Jill Shook has been selected from our ministry to be one of the individuals to be recognized with their Hall of Fame plaque that will be mounted on the wall of the Retreat and Learning Center and a framed certificate of recognition for St Paul's. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions it is still uncertain as to whether or not Agape will be able to hold a dinner and presentation even with a limited number of people or set up a Zoom for those who cannot be present. Information will be forwarded as soon as final details have been completed.

Camp Agape Summer 2021 is a ministry located in the Southwest PA Synod of the ELCA. Their mission statement is "Bringing people together in Christ through Outdoor Ministry. Their website is [www.campagape.org](http://www.campagape.org); there are scholarships available by calling 724-356-2308 or email: [executivedirector@campagape.org](mailto:executivedirector@campagape.org). All details, costs, dates, guidelines are located at their website. Agape also offers church-paid scholarships. Application forms are also available at their website. The Executive Director of Agape is Rick Frederick, 724-356-2303.

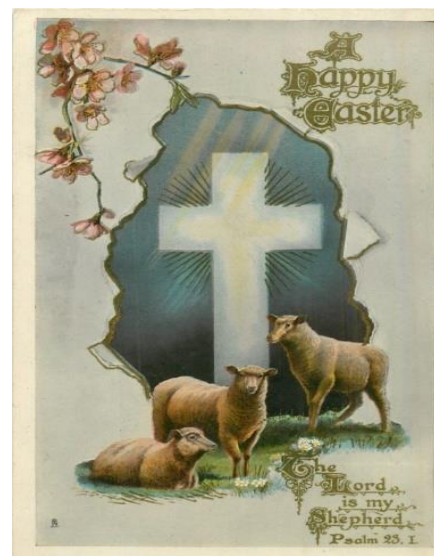


1. The PLUM Board has begun the process of Calling a Pastor. Nancy Pollo, President, and (Carol Ferens – alternate) will represent St. Paul's on the Call Committee.
2. At the PLUM Board Meeting Pastor John Gropp stated that most people usually only remember the words for the first stanza's of a hymn so he recommended that only 2 versus be used during a service.
3. Bible studies will convene again during the first week in May.
4. Easter Saturday Vigil will be a shorter service compared to the previous vigils. After the blessings there will be 4 stories by 4 different churches and communion.
5. Due to the pandemic we are behind in annual items so it is time for each of the 11 PLUM congregations to make preparations for Installation of Leaders and Congregational Meetings.
6. PLUM Board Meeting, April 26, 2021, 7 PM, on zoom.
7. Anyone interesting in attending the Agape First Appreciation Dinner at Agape on April 10, 2021, 5–7 P.M. must notify Rick Frederick, 724-356-2308, no later than April 6<sup>th</sup>. Dinner will be on zoom Meeting ID 963 4527 7443; Passcode 170560; by phone 1-346-248-7799 (Houston) or 1-699-900-9128 (San Jose).



### **Keep in your prayers:**

Karen & Logan Billingham, Anna Mae, Mark, Albert, Kristin, Jason, Pam, Virginia, Misty, Matthew, Jennifer, Betty Jane, Rich, Rachel, Pat, Donna, Randy, Anna Mae, Eddie, Steve, Barbara, Tom, Charlotte, John, Mark, Kelly, Mike, Carol Jean, Lee, the Miller, Paulick, Galano, Burchesky, Mele, Richmond, Porter, McGrail, Johnson families, all those suffering from the coronavirus, our Bishops, our Synod, our PLUM pastors and members and our church.





# God's Work OUR HANDS

## Eternal Candle

- April – Ann Morrocco
- May – **PLEASE SIGNUP**
- June –
- July -

## Altar Flowers

- April 4- Easter Lilies
- April 11 – **PLEASE SIGNUP**
- April 18 -
- April 25 -

## Lector

- April 4 – Carol Ferens
- April 11 – John Straka
- April 18 – Carol Straka
- April 25 - Lee Jones

## Assistant

- April 4 – Carol Jean Straka
- April 11 – Carol Ferens
- April 18 – Ann Morrocco
- April 25 - Carol Straka

If you are interested in serving as an assistant please notify Nancy Pollo, 724-207-0941 or email [nbutler.research@gmail.com](mailto:nbutler.research@gmail.com). If you wish to sponsor the eternal candle or flowers, please contact Ann Morrocco, 724-746-5897 or email: [amorocco1@verizon.net](mailto:amorocco1@verizon.net).



Emily Bell	April 6
Jennifer Porter	April 16
Jaxon Porter	April 20
Sydney Richmond	April 24
Rebecca Harvison	April 27



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE – 11:15 A.M.-St Paul's

April 4	Pastor John Gropp
April 11	Pastor Brenda Henry Baptism
April 18	Pastor Averell
April 25	Pastor Liz Mayforth



## **EASTER LILY DONATIONS**

John & Carol Jean Straka – In memory of Irene & Ed Straka (parents)  
John & Carol Jean Straka - In memory of Mamie & Louis Zanakis (grandparents)  
John & Carol Straka - In memory of Bertha & Andrew Straka (grandparents)  
John & Carol Jean Straka – In memory of Shirley & Bill DePaoli (CJ's parents)  
John & Ann Morrocco – In memory of Jill Shook  
John & Ann Morrocco - In memory of Bert & Emilie Barks (parents)  
John & Ann Morrocco - In memory of John & Carmella Morrocco (parents)  
John & Ann Morrocco - In honor of Jesus, "He is Risen"  
Milt & Charlotte Stemmler – In memory of Milton & Alma Stemmler (parents)  
Milt & Charlotte Stemmler – In memory of Ernest & Delores Kaul (parents)  
Lee Jones – In memory of Sherry Jones  
Ruth Latta – In memory of loved ones  
Robert Spitta – In memory of Pauline Spittka  
Robert Spitta – In memory of Charles Spitta  
Scott & Lisa Cregut – In memory of Peter & Gloria Karmazin

Scott & Lisa Cregut – In memory of Dan & Joyce Cregut  
Scott & Lisa Cregut – In memory of John & Marie Ulanich  
Scott & Lisa Cregut – In memory of all of our loved ones we have lost because of Covid.  
The Ferens Family – To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Margaret Ferens and Raymond Hausele.

**NOTE: We ordered 1 extra Easter Lily in case someone forgot.**

Please annotate your donation for Easter Lilies with your name and envelope # and place in the collection plate or mail to the church.