

CORNERSTONE

"THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU AT ST. PAUL'S"

February 2020

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Volume 26, Issue 2



"OUR GOD IS AN AWESOME GOD."

These are more than just words of encouragement or a hymn we have heard or possibly sung. It is the persistent reality of where we collectively as the congregations and "Partners in the Ministry of the Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM)" continuously find ourselves. To begin with, I would like to welcome the members and ministries of HOPE Lutheran Church in Forest Hills who are beginning their trial year as part of our PLUM Ministries. They, HOPE, along with the call and ordination of our Pastor Brenda Henry, are but the most recent revelations of how, "awesome our God is." With the transitions a year and a half ago of Pastors Beth, (who I might say, stepped into the "ministry of retirement" where she, from all accounts, is as busy serving our Lord as when she was in our puddle); and Melba (who is always challenging things at Bethany Lutheran in Bethel Park); it's been an amazing year of fascination, challenge, and wonderment about the future and what is around the next bend in the road of ministry. I must say though that if this is what Moses experienced in the wilderness, I am tempted to say that I don't know how he made it work for 40 years; but then again, I do know how it worked for Moses as God continually placed support in his midst such as Aaron, Joshua, and Moses' family to mention a few. Likewise, God has placed support people in the ministry of PLUM who have encouraged us such as Pastors Jocelyn Johnston and Martin Rafanan, not to mention the countless ways so many of you stepped up to the

plate and did/do all that needed and needs to be done.

With the ADVENT of 2020, we can see some of God's plan coming to fruition using some of the energies of our past to build our futures. With the call of Pastor Brenda Henry in November, and the upcoming vote on Vicar Sue Devine on February 2nd; along with our vicar, Vicar Mandy Gilberti, Pastors Paul Koch, Liz Mayforth, Martin Rafanan, and myself, I am excited about the future God has planned for us. I see God retooling us for the future, not just changing the guard. As we begin this 3rd decade of the 21st century, I believe that God is challenging us and His Church. Is it possible that He is making us leaner and stronger, preparing us for the journey to come as he did with His "Children of Israel" in Egypt? With the introduction of challenges of change for two of our congregations, Trinity Evangelical in Mt. Oliver and East Liberty Lutheran, who reside in significantly different contexts, yet are finding themselves in similar plights. Ironically, as they contemplate the task of envisioning what the church could, should, or will look like in the future; they are becoming aware that the important structures of their future are not buildings but rather who or how they will serve. We, the pastors of your/our past, were all educated when telephones had rotary dials. The pastors of your/our futures all graduated last year around the time the iPhone 11 was coming out or had hit the market. We are exploring the uses of social media at the time when the mass communication tool of print media is coming to an end. We are addressing new experiences in outreach, as the "Rise Against Hunger" emergency food preparation is morphing into becoming more "welcoming congregations"

looking at sanctuary and “Entertaining Angels” experiences.

One of the most uplifting parts of our quarterly PLUM Board Meeting experiences is the “Sharing of Our Congregational Stories” of how we see the Lord working in and through each of our various congregations as we attempt to be relevant with a world that is ever changing. What happens if the Lord is using the collective supportive connection of our 11 small congregations to assist us in being the agile Body of Christ in the 21st century?

Oh, to be sure, there will always be the pain of change and adaptation that is ever present as we live in an ever evolving world. But isn't that where our collectivity can be helpful, as we allow this “awesome God” to be our strength?

Recognizing the blessings of our past, I am so excited when I look to the journey of our future. And to borrow “and modify” the mantra of Captain James T. Kirk of the starship Enterprise in the Star Trek episodes of the mid 1960s, “May we boldly (be willing to) go where no one has gone before.”

Peace,
Pastor John

“THE LIGHT OF CHRIST. THANKS BE TO GOD”

With these words, the Great Vigil of Easter begins. Following the lighted Easter (Paschal) Candle, the worshippers enter the hall to prepare for the Easter Vigil Lessons. Reactions to the Vigil vary from “it’s too long” to “it’s the most dramatic, meaningful worship of the year.” One thing is certain; it is the oldest liturgy in the history of the Christian Church. Its significance is unquestioned. Therefore the PLUM pastors have decided to dedicate the PLUM Lenten Study to a study of the Vigil and its parts.

The **actual study** will take place in those PLUM churches who have established weekly study times:

- St. Paul Canonsburg – Tuesdays 10:30 am
- Trinity Mt. Oliver – Tuesdays 11:00 am

- St. Andrew East Carnegie – Tuesdays 1:00 pm
- Messiah Munhall – Tuesdays 6:30 pm
- Hope Forest Hills – Wednesdays 12:30 and 6:30 pm
- East Liberty – Wednesdays 6:30 pm
- Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, North Huntingdon – Wednesdays 6:30 pm
- Christ Duquesne – Thursdays 7:00 pm

You are invited to any of these scheduled times and others may be added as requested.

The weekly study will focus on parts of the Vigil:
Week of 3/1/20: **The Opening of the Vigil and the Easter Proclamation**

Week of 3/8/20: **The first half of the Readings: (Creation – Flood – Red Sea)**

Week of 3/15/20: **The second half of the Readings (Valley of Dry Bones – Jonah – The Fiery Furnace.)**

Week of 3/22/20: **The Baptismal Renewal and the Litany of the Saints**

Week of 3/29/20: **The Easter Eucharist (Holy Communion) – John 20.1-18**

The **Sunday Service** will focus on a theme from Scripture and the Vigil. A **study insert** will be included in the bulletin for that Sunday, and **the sermon** will highlight the theme of the week. There will also be a **book**, which will be available to all and from which the theme of the week will be highlighted.

Over all the hope is that this will produce a comprehensive and cohesive Lenten Study experience that will deepen spiritual development and make your Lenten and Easter time more meaningful to you and your family. Watch your Sunday bulletin for more information as we approach and enter Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 26th. This year Easter Vigil is Saturday, April 11.

“Rejoice, now, all heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! Exult, all creation around God’s throne! Jesus Christ is risen!”

+ Pastor Paul Koch



There will be a Congregational Meeting on February 2, 2020 for a call vote on the recommendation of the St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church Council and the Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries Board. All voting members please attend.



SHROVE TUESDAY

The Hospitality Committee has planned a Pancake Supper for Tuesday, February 25, 2020. Pancakes and sausage will be served from 5:30-6:15 p.m. We have invited the members of PLUM to join us in fellowship that evening. Following the dinner, there will be an activity. If you are planning on attending contact Ann Morrocco by Sunday, February 23 at 724-746-5897. Come join us on Shrove Tuesday for some good food and Christian fellowship.



On Wednesday, February 26th Ash Wednesday service will be held beginning at 7:00 p.m. There will be Imposition of Ashes and also Holy Eucharist. Vicar Mandy Gilberti will be presiding at the service. Mark your calendar and plan on attending this service as we begin our 2020 Lenten Journey.



Thrivent Financial "Choice Dollars"

The Thrivent Choice program lets members choose where some of Thrivent Financials' charitable outreach funds go. If you are a Thrivent member who is eligible to participate in this program, you can choose St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church as one of the recipients for your annual Choice Dollars. Thank you to those who have already designated their Choice Dollars to St. Paul's! Your ability to designate your 2019 Choice Dollars expires March 31, 2020. For any questions concerning the Thrivent Choice Program, please contact your Thrivent representative.



The PLUM Combined Handbell Choir will meet for practices on the following **Saturdays at 2:00pm (February 1 and February 8, 2020)**. Practices will be at Bethany, Dormont. . All are welcome to join. (412-531-9363)



Please join us in welcoming Hope Lutheran Church, Forest Hills (353 Ridge Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15221, as the newest member of PLUM. Hope's worship service is at 11:15am. We are thrilled to have them as a part of the PLUM family!

You can contact Hope at **(412) 242-4476**, or by email at hopeforesthills@aol.com

February Assistants and Sponsors



Assisting Minister

- February 2 – Corey Ferens
- February 9 – Ann Morrocco
- February 16 – Carol Ferens
- February 23 – Ann Morrocco
- February 26 – Jill A. Shook

Eternal Candle

- Jill A. Shook

Fellowship

- February 2 – Jill A. Shook

Flowers

- February 2 – Carol Jean Straka
- February 9
- February 16 – Nancy Pollo
- February 23 – John & Carol Jean Straka

Lector

- February 2 – John Straka
- February 9 – Karen Billingham
- February 16 – Carol Jean Straka
- February 23 – Corey Ferens
- February 26

If you are interested in serving as an assistant or sponsoring the eternal candle or flowers, please contact Jill at 724-747-4418 or email: stpaulscbg@verizon.net.



February 2	Vicar Mandy Gilberti
February 9	Rev. Martin Rafanan
February 16	Sue Devine
February 23	Sue Devine
February 26	Vicar Mandy Gilberti

Pastor's schedule is subject to change without notice.



Kristin Richmond	February 4
David Kraeer	February 21
Cecelia Patterson	February 27
Milt Stemmler	February 27



Keep in your prayers: Ev, Matthew, Anna Mae, Alex, Mark, Albert, Jason, Pam, Virginia, Misty, Matthew, Jennifer, Betty Jane, Rich, Rachel, Pat, Donna, Randy, Anna Mae, Eddie, Steve, Barbara, Tom, Charlotte, John, Kelly, Mike, Colin, Tracey, Pastor Brandt, Pastor Austin, Matthew, the Miller, Paulick, Galano, Burchesky, Mele, Richmond families, our Bishops, our Synod, our PLUM pastors and members and our church. If anyone should be added or removed, please contact Jill (724-747-4416) or email: stpaulscbg@verizon.net.

“SOUPER” Bowl Sunday - February 2
Donations sent to Meals on Wheels