

CORNERSTONE

December 2018

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

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church

Volume 24, Issue 12



Dear Partners in Ministry,

GROWTH VS. CHANGE

WOW!!

Can you believe I must figure out new and creative ways to get off the floor without looking like a beached walrus? Why? Because I have two thigh high grandsons; who for now, the floor is where they spend their time running, falling, tumbling, rolling, giggling, pondering, and looking up at the clouds, the ceiling, and the monsters (grown-ups) in their midst.

DO I NEED TO CHANGE OR GROW?

I must learn a new language (the one kids speak), new songs, new stories, new words, large print books with lots of pictures that they have already studied. (The large print at my age is not all bad, but I’ll not admit it in my “professional life.”) And I must find the mouse in the picture, next to the bookshelf, that they take glee at pointing out because I’m the new kid on the block.

DO I NEED TO CHANGE OR GROW?

I can no longer depend on my 15-minute power nap to revitalize me for the next race of the day as it can easily become an hour or more coma.

DO I NEED TO CHANGE OR GROW?

Who would have put together the PLUM picture of the last 6 months? At this time last year, as pastors, our big sweat item was how do we cover 24 worship services in 12 hours? If you will recall, in 2017 the last Sunday in Advent was Sunday morning and Christmas Eve was Sunday night. (For many in our congregations it was, “Do we have to do church twice in the same day?”) But look at us now. With Pastor Jocelyn coming on board in June 2018 and Pastor Beth retiring in July, Vicar Brenda formally starting her 9-month internship in August and Pastor Melba resigning her call with PLUM and taking up a part-time call with Bethany, Bethel Park, who decided their time with us helped them discern and recommit their efforts to go it on their own. Trinity Lutheran in Sheraden has merged with St. Andrew in E. Carnegie, while East Liberty is in the process of selling their property and sorting out as a congregation with prayer and discernment what their new ministry might become.

IS IT CHANGE OR GROWTH?

Although change and growth share some significant elements in that they both offer newness, challenge, possibilities, options, and potential, I think change just for the sake of change can be and many times is counterproductive--If its purpose is to keep us off balance, distracted, or just collective busy work--then it is truly not helpful and for most part is usually a waste of time and energy. However, if on the other hand, its purpose is to move us from where we are to where the Lord wants us to be, it can be very powerful, meaningful, and righteous.

Our lessons in the new Narrative Lectionary series this fall have helped us focus on some of these challenges. Yes, we are revisiting Biblical stories of the Mighty Acts of God working in the midst of his people that we may not have heard since our Sunday school days. (Yes, similarly some of the “new” stories I’m reading to our grandchildren Logan and Connor, I have not read since I read them to our kids over 35 years ago in the mid-1980s.)

Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that God frequently takes the small and what the world might see as inconsequential and uses that to change the world for good. He took David, a shepherd and his five stones and slew the giant Goliath. He took Moses, a refugee, ex-convict to free his people from oppression in Egypt. He took Abraham, a nomad in the middle of the desert and made him the father of many nations. Repeatedly, the stories point to the fact that we celebrate a God that continually uses what the world sees as insignificant to make the world a better place.

And then there is us. PLUM is a collection of what the world sees as irrelevant and trivial. Now, 10 small congregations, and yet we are and can change and challenge the communities in which we reside. In the words of the prophet Micah from last Sunday’s narrative lectionary reading Micah 6:8b, we can, “do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.” This is what we are doing when we fight for justice, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and humbly walk with our God in prayer and perseverance. Looking at our past excites me for our future as we face the ever-changing landscape of the world surrounding us. When we accepted the challenge to join other small congregations to grow and adapt to our ever-changing world, who would have thought that it was for something more vital than just perpetuating our existence? The ministries from our 10 small bands of servants are changing worlds and lives, providing hope and wholeness to those we serve.

May we continue accepting the changes the world places in our paths, growing in our faithful actions, and keeping our eyes on the Lord God Almighty whom we serve. May we be always thankful for the Blessings He showers on us. Besides, personally, I think the best is yet to come.

In Christ’s Service,
Pastor John



*Merry Christmas to All from
Pastors Jocelyn, Liz, Martin,
Paul, John, and Vicar Brenda*



The Annual Meeting for election of President, Vice President, Recording Secretary and two council members at Large and the adoption of the 2019 Budget will be held on Sunday December 9th following the worship service. Nominees are Jill A. Shook, President; Nancy Pollo, Vice President, Scott Latta, Recording Secretary and John Straka and Carol Ferens, Council members at Large. A copy of proposed budget is also included. Make plans to attend.



Our Christmas Eve Candlelight service will begin at 7:00 p.m. Vicar Brenda Henry will be leading worship that evening. There will be special music provided by a String Quartet from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Make plans NOW to attend as we celebrate the Birth of our Savior. P.S. Anyone having Facebook is encouraged to spread the news about our special guests.

Lessons and Carols



Join us on Sunday, December 30 (the final day of this year) as we worship God through Lessons and Carols. Vicar Brenda will be leading our worship. Lay readers are needed, contact Jill.



St. Paul's committed \$2,800.00 towards Mission support for 2018. With only one month remaining, we are short of our commitment by \$401.00. We have in the past years, exceeded our commitment. Let's try to do it again this year.



Poinsettias

The Christmas season is approaching and it is time to order poinsettia plants to decorate our sanctuary. The choices are red or white, at the cost of \$7.00 per plant. All orders and money are due by Sunday, December 16th and money is due by Sunday, December 23th. To order, please fill out the information below and return completed form in the offering plate or by mail to:

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
210 North Jefferson Avenue
Canonsburg, PA 15317-3828

You may also order by email at stpaulscbg@verizon.net.



Name _____

Please order ___ Red Poinsettias \$7.00 each

Please order ___ White Poinsettias \$7.00 each

In memory of _____

In memory of _____

In memory of _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

In honor of _____

In honor of _____

Paid _____ (date) _____

Cash _____ Check _____



December Assistants and Sponsors

Acolyte

- December 2 – Jaxon Porter
- December 9
- December 16
- December 23 – Joshua Porter
- December 30

Assisting Minister

- December 2 – Ann Morrocco
- December 9 – Carol Ferens
- December 16 – Ann Morrocco
- December 23 – Jill A. Shook
- December 30

Eternal Candle

- Ann Morrocco

Fellowship

- December 2 – No Fellowship
- December 9 – Nancy & Mark Pollo
- December 16 – No Fellowship
- December 23 – Jennifer Porter
- December 30 – No Fellowship

Flowers

- December 2 - Carol Jean Straka
- December 9 – Ann Morrocco & Jill A. Shook
- December 16 – Carol Jean Straka
- December 23 – Jill A. Shook
- December 30 – Lee Jones

Lector

- December 2 – Mark Pollo
- December 9 – John Straka
- December 16 – Carol Jean Straka
- December 23 – Lee Jones

Worship Leaders

- December 2 – Rev. Liz Mayforth
- December 9 – Rev. Jocelyn Johnston
- December 16 – Rev. Paul Koch
- December 23 – Rev. Martin Rafanan
- December 24 – Vicar Brenda Henry
- December 30 – Vicar Brenda Henry



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Charlotte Stemmler	December 2
Lindsey Nimal	December 3
Anna Mae DeWalt	December 5
Ann Morrocco	December 6
Jordyn Porter	December 6
Bridget Layton	December 11
Jonathan Bowland	December 13
Peter Dibble	December 18
Aaliyah Gilpin	December 20
Scott Latta	December 31



Ev, Sharlene, Anna Mae, Mark, Albert, Patty, Pam, Virginia, Betty Jane, Rich, Edward, Anna Mae, Eddie, Randy, Steve, Barbara, Jim, Charlotte, John, Pastor Wayne, Dr. Wolfson, the Miller, Paulick, Galano, Burchesky, Richmond families, our Bishops, our Synod, our PLUM pastors and members and our church. If anyone should be added or removed, please contact the church office (724-745-5962) or email: stpaulscbg@verizon.net.