

CORNERSTONE

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

June 2019

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Volume 25, Issue 5

This month's pastoral perspective comes from Vicar Susan Devine. Sue is a seminary student serving a one year internship at Hope Lutheran Church of Forest Hills. She is a member of St. Andrew Lutheran in East Carnegie, former President of PLUM, and served as presiding minister at worship services in PLUM congregations in 2018.

"But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you." 1Peter 3:15

Recently, I was blessed to attend two workshops. It is something that I have grown to love. I meet new people from all over our synod, the information is almost always helpful and it is a chance to experience community with others who have the very same questions, doubts and fears that we have. We are not alone in our struggles.

These recent workshops shared a common theme. We need to share our stories, the stories of our congregation and especially, God's story. I learned some interesting statistics. We will soon be living in a world where 5 generations live side by side.

If you are under the age of 70, the North American church has never been growing in your lifetime. 30% of people under the age of thirty have never been to church.

Only 12-14% of the population of the United States attends worship regularly. Those are some staggering statistics. I hear over and over again; "Our church is dying. We need more people to attend church." Sometimes, our motives are a little off. We want more people so the load that we bear is lighter and there will be more money to meet the

budget. We are sad to see empty pews. We make excuses for people – they work, there are competing activities. We recently asked people at Hope to ask people why they don't attend church. I heard many of the usual responses – "it's boring, I don't feel welcome, I can worship God without going to church".

Here are some other interesting statistics:

82% of people asked reported that they would attend church if someone they trusted asked them.

86% of people say that they came to church because someone invited them.

6% of people say that they came to church because the pastor invited them.

2% of people say that they came to church because of advertising.

So what does all of that information mean for us? For me, it means that there are a lot of people who do not attend church, some who have never attended church. It means that there are a lot of people who do not understand as we do that being in a Christian community feeds our souls and nourishes us for the everyday living that encompasses most of our lives. It means that each day, every one of us comes in contact with people who say that they would come to church if we just asked them. You may need to ask more than one time, but don't give up.

This is where our stories, God's story and the story of our congregation come into play. As Peter said, "Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you." When someone asks, "How did you get through what you were going through"; we can say "with the help of God and the support of my church". When someone thanks us for helping them, instead of just saying "You're welcome" we can say,

“because of what Jesus has done for me, I feel like it was the right thing to do”.

There are many, many ways that we can share our stories and be true witnesses to what God has done in our lives. I hope we will share more with each other in the coming months.

I leave you with a few questions to ponder:

What about your faith life brings you joy?

What is your favorite story about Jesus?

Who told you about Jesus?

Who can you tell about Jesus?

I would love to talk about these things with you.

Let's get together and share our stories.

Peace be with you,

Vicar Sue

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

My year-long Interim position with PLUM will soon be coming to an end. Though it was only for a short period, I am thankful God called me into ministry with all of you for this time. Serving as an Interim Pastor in a cooperative ministry was a unique experience and I am grateful for the opportunity to grow. I am also glad to have had the opportunity to share my gifts with you.

Thank you for your ministry with and to one another and your communities. God is working through you to share the good news of God's love for everyone. I pray that you continue to listen to the ways the Spirit may be calling you as individuals, and as the Body of Christ. I look forward to our paths crossing again in the future.

God's peace be with you,

Pastor Jocelyn

Upcoming Events



June 9, 2019

Wear Red

SYNOD ASSEMBLY



This year's synod assembly will be held June 13-15 at California University of Pennsylvania in California, PA. Corey Ferens will be representing St. Paul's as a Lay Voting Delegate (under the age of 21). Carol Ferens and Jill A. Shook will be our Lay Voting Delegates. An election to call a Synod Bishop will be held during the assembly. The Synod Council is asking you to pray for the leadership of our synod. Please pray for Bishop Kurt Kusserow who has indicated his willingness to serve another term. Pray for the Pastors who may be named on the ecclesiastical ballot as they discern God's calling and for the assembly as they hear God's calling for our synod.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our annual congregational dinner meeting will be held on Sunday, June 30, 2019 following the worship service. It will be a Pot Luck Dinner with the meat, roll and beverage supplied by the church. We will be reviewing 2018 and possibly voting on a bid to replace the steps and sidewalk leading to the church office. Make plans now to attend.



TUESDAY, JULY 25

Lutheran Day at Kennywood will be held on Tuesday, July 25th. The price for an all-day ticket is \$25.00. Proceeds from the ticket sales will go to the ELCA World Hunger Global Barn Yard. The gates open at 9:30 a.m. Welcome and Morning Prayer will be at 11:30 a.m. in Pavilion 1. Deadline for ticket orders is Sunday, June 30th. See Jill with your order and payment.



SUNDAY, JULY 28

The PLUM Board Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 28th at Christ Lutheran Church in Duquesne. The meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m.



The PLUM annual picnic will be held on Saturday, August 24th at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Oakdale. The picnic will begin at 1:00 p.m. and will be a covered dish event. More details will be in the August newsletter. Mark your calendar to attend this event.



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Back, by popular demand! Christ Lutheran Church, Duquesne will host a joint PLUM Service Project from 10:30 a.m. to Noon. All PLUM Congregations and members are encouraged to participate. Together we will share our blessings as we work side by side as part of the ELCA's "God's Work Our Hands" to help overcome world hunger. For this event, we will be working with the "faith based" organization "Rise against Hunger" to host a meal packaging event. This year our neighbors from St. John's Lutheran Church in North Versailles will be joining us. Together we will package 15,000 meals! We will need to raise \$3,146 by August 30th. So we are asking each PLUM congregation to contribute \$315.00. We will need at least 40 to 50 people (including young people in our congregations) to help package the meals. Additional details will be forthcoming. Any questions: christluthduq@gmail.com or 412-466-7773.

Stewardship and Mission



The Stewardship and Mission committee is collecting used Brita Filters during the month of June. Money for each Brita filter that we recycle will be donated to the Heifer Project International. We are still accepting Pull Tabs for the Ronald McDonald Home Charities and Box Tops for Education for Bethesda Children's Home. June 30th is the deadline for collecting pull tabs and Brita Filters, but Box Tops will continue through November.

June Assistants and Sponsors



Assisting Minister

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

Eternal Candle

- Anna Mae Kostelich

Fellowship

- June 16 – St. Paul's
- June 30 – Congregational Dinner

Flowers

- June 2
- June 9 – Ruth Latta
- June 16 – John & Carol Jean Straka
- June 23 – Anna Mae Kostelich
- June 30

Lectors

- June 2 – Carol Jean Straka, Jill A. Shook
- June 9 –
- June 16 – Carol Ferens
- June 23 – Ann Morrocco
- June 30 –

If you are interested in serving as an assistant or sponsoring the eternal candle or flowers, please contact the church office (724-745-5962) or email: stpaulscbg@verizon.net.



Keep in your prayers: Ev, Matthew, Anna Mae, Mark, Albert, Patty, Pam, Virginia, Betty Jane, Rich, Ann, Rachel, Pat, Donna, Edward, Anna Mae, Eddie, Randy, Steve, Barbara, Charlotte, John, Kelly, Pastor Wayne, Tondi, Cooper, Dr. Wolfson, the Miller, O'Donnell, Paulick, Galano, Burchesky, Grove, 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.



Stephanie Richmond	June 8
Austin Filby	June 9
Natasha (Kelley) Johnson	June 9
Carol Ferens	June 17
Carol Jean Straka	June 18
John Straka	June 18
Rob Mrvos	June 25



Interested in being eligible to apply for \$250.00 to help St. Paul's do a special project or fundraiser? Then become an associate member of Thrivent Financial. The cost is \$19.95 per year and you can then apply for an Action Team funds. Action Teams receive \$250.00 for a specific project (the church has received money in the past to help with Vacation Bible School and Bags Lunches for the Food Pantry). See Jill for more details.

Worship Schedule

June 2	Rev. Jocelyn Johnston
June 9	Rev. Martin Rafanan
June 16	Rev. Martin Rafanan
June 23	Vicar Brenda Henry
June 30	Rev. John Gropp

Pastor's schedule is subject to change without notice.