

CORNERSTONE

**“THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU
AT ST. PAUL’S
September 2023 Volume 32, Issue 6
St. Paul’s Lutheran Church**

Pastor’s Article for August

***LIVING IN LIGHT OF OUR BELIEF –
WE CAN ONLY CHANGE OUR COMMUNITY
BY LIVING OUR FAITH.***

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

Dear partners in ministry,

A few Sundays ago, at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Irwin, we led one of the most amazing worship services in my over 20 years of pastoral ministry. During that service, the church received 5 young people through baptism. This event was amazingly incredible because these young people came to Immanuel not through a traditional evangelistic means but through a community partnership relationship with a youth training organization that uses Immanuel’s building for its activities. Thank God for the awesome stewardship and leadership of the members at Immanuel, it was your willingness to

share your facility with a neighbor you knew from nowhere that brought you these five amazing young people and their families. Your love for neighbor was the catalyst! Keep doing what you do for the Lord. I can foresee many more young people coming to Immanuel because of these 5 new members. Remember that your work of love and ministry of nurture with these young people has just begun. The way you will impact their faith by living and modeling your faith before them will determine how long, and how well they will remain in the life of your community. PLUM is proud of your ministry and stewardship.

It is time to start something immediately with these new members. Maybe we can begin with a ministry of nurture and love by starting a small group fellowship every Saturday – where we can share meals and discuss issues of faith, or a youth Bible study once a month – where we will study the Bible, watch movies, and share meals.... When you keep young people engaged positively or ‘enjoyably’ they will tell their friends and soon you will have no space to host the many friends they will invite. Thank God for our noisy-offering, we can use it to make this happen.

Bible study is a great way to start a ministry of nurture and love with youths. The truth of the Bible is the greatest foundation for setting young people on the path of greatness and success in

life, and that's where I believe the church is called to lead.

A preacher was once asked which translation of the Bible was the best. His answer was quite fascinating. He fathomed that the best translation of the Bible is when it is translated in the way we live. In other words, our daily lives as believers must be influenced or transformed by our belief. That's what Bible study is all about. In fact, that's what our life of faith is meant to be. If you're not translating God's Word into your daily life, you're not studying the Bible the way God intended or you are not being Christian as you ought to be.

God gave us the Bible to **transform us**, not simply to **inform us**. It should give us a bigger heart, not a bigger head. In the book of James, we're told, *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says"* (James 1:22 NIV).

In other words, God wants your **beliefs** turned into **behavior**.

God makes his purpose for the Bible even more explicit in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work"* (NLT).

The purpose of the Bible is more than just showing us what is wrong in our lives or how we should live. God gave us his Word to radically transform our lives. When we set young people on the path of biblical knowledge, we set them up

on a footing that will change the world and sustain the life of the church.

The Bible describes itself in different ways. For example, it calls itself a hammer, a sword, and a scalpel. All of those are tools designed to make radical changes. God intends for the Bible to dramatically change our lives. Equipping young people with its teachings sets them up for divine encounters. It is a firm and better foundation for nurturing children, especially new members in the faith.

The Bible also describes God's truth as milk, water, bread, and meat. What do all those things have in common? If you don't eat or drink regularly, then you'll die. In the same way, we were never meant to live without the Bible. The Bible is essential to our lives because it gives us life. A youth Bible study with meals around the table can be a great way to enrich our young people in the church.

We call the Bible "God's Word," but the Bible also talks about Jesus as the Word of God. John 1:14 says, *"So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son"* (NLT). God gave you the Living Word, Jesus, to be the Author and Finisher of your faith. And he gave you the written Word, the Bible, to prepare you to live out your faith.

The Bible can transform our lives today—but we must open it up and start reading, learning, and teaching it! It can impact and model the lives of young people but we must teach it to them.

Pastor Alex on behalf of the PLUM Pastoral Team

Pastor's Article – September

13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. (Matthew 14: 13-14)

The vocation of being a pastor comes with many opportunities for growth and beautiful moments of joy and witnessing the Holy Spirit at work. In this journey of being your pastor for almost 4 years (can you believe that?) I have certainly experienced those growth, joy, and Holy Spirit moments. However, over time, there is one thing I have encountered that I must admit makes me sad. It is the phrase “Pastor, I know you have a lot on your plate, or I know you are really busy” as the opening to a conversation. As your pastor, I want to be there with you and for you; especially in those moments when you are at a crossroads, experiencing a difficult time, as well as to share in your celebrations and joys. However, what makes me even sadder is to learn afterwards that someone chose not to reach out because of concern for “bothering” me. There is an old saying “what you don’t know can’t hurt you.” I have come to realize that is not a true statement. Lack of information only prevents one from extending care and support at best and serves to create division and harm at worst.

As your pastoral team we recognize and acknowledge that caring for 10 congregations carries with it a lot of responsibility, the need to prioritize our tasks, and to have flexibility in our schedule to adjust to the unexpected. We are constantly learning the importance of balancing the care for our congregations, with care for our

families and for ourselves. However, what we have learned and what remains true is we cannot be present for you if we are unaware there is a need or want.

In the gospel of Matthew chapter 14 we read the story of the beheading of John the Baptist, cousin of Jesus. Upon learning of the death of his cousin, Jesus naturally wanted to take a moment to grieve. However, the crowd followed Jesus. What was Jesus’ response to the crowd? He had compassion on them. He stopped and he cared for them.

Being present to care for the crowd was an important part of the interaction between Jesus and the crowd. The crowd making known their concerns was also necessary. We as your pastors fully acknowledge that for us to be *better together* we must rely on each other...our shared partnership. Caring for our community is not an exact science. It is relational. And relationships are messy. Even the best efforts to care for one another will result in missing cues, misreading signs. The most helpful way to maintain healthy relationships is by transparent conversations. Sometimes those conversations are not easy and may not provide the desired outcome for everyone; however, we cannot learn what is needed without open dialog. This dialog helps us to faithfully respond to what we are commanded to do – love our neighbor.

The grace filled portion of the story however does not end at the compassion and caring. As we look further in the narrative of Matthew chapter 14 we see that this was the beginning. This narrative also contains the feeding of the 5000 by Jesus. So often we see this as a miraculous moment where Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fishes. However, it is more. This miracle is also the result of team effort. The disciples had to make known their concerns for the crowd to Jesus. They had to search for a means to feed

the people. The loaves and fishes came from someone (a little boy we are told in the gospel of John 6:1-15). Could Jesus have done the miracle without the aid of the disciples and the little boy? I believe so. And yet, Jesus' actions remind us that God works through us and with us.

Let us continue to care for one another by being present for each another. The next time a concern comes up know that you may reach out to us – ***we are not too busy to stop and care.*** AND, trusting the presence of God to work in us and through us, we will be the family that God has called us to be.

In community together,
Pr. Brenda on behalf of PLUM Pastoral Team

Rev.John.Gropp@plumofpa.com

Rev.Brenda.Henry@plumofpa.com

Rev.Sue.Devine@plumofpa.com

Rev.Dr.Alex.Sumo@plumofpa.com



- **Wildthings Faith & Family Night**, September 2, 2023, 7:05 PM, Section 210. See or call Carol Ferens, 724-986-6331 for tickets.
- **PLUM Taize service**, September 6, 2023, 7PM, zoom, and will continue every month, first Wednesday of each month, 7PM, zoom.
- **Rise for Hunger**, September 9, 2023, Christ Lutheran, Duquesne, 9:00 AM.

- **Synod Stewardship From Scratch** training event, September 9, 2023, 9:30 AM – 2PM, Hope Lutheran Church (8070 Rowan Road, Cranberry Twp PA 16066). RSVP by September 1, 2023, \$15 registration fee includes lunch. Website swpasynod.org/calendar/stewardship23.
- **St. Paul's Council/PLUM Pastor's Meeting, September 7, 2023, 7PM, zoom.** This is a formal conversation/meeting about our options about exiting PLUM.
- **St. Paul's Congregational Meeting**, September 10, 2023, after 11:15AM service. This is a formal conversation /meeting about the future of St. Paul's while exploring our options and our options about exiting PLUM.
- **St Paul's 125th Anniversary** will be celebrated on September 10, 2023 with a potluck lunch after 11:15AM service. Pastor John Gropp will be us.
- **PLUM Worship meeting**, September 13, 2023, 7PM, zoom.
- **PLUM Bible Study**, beginning September 14, through November 17, 2023, 7PM, zoom. This Bible Study will be shared by all pastors.
 - September 14 and 21: Justice for Creation
 - September 28 and October 5: Racial Justice
 - October 12 and 19: Gender Justice
 - October 26 and November 2: LGBTQIA+ Justice
 - November 9 and 16: Justice for Immigrants
- **PLUM What's Next** meeting, September 20, 2023, 7PM, zoom.
- **PLUM Board meeting**, September 25, 2023, 7PM, zoom.

- **St. Paul's Pet Blessing** rescheduled to September 30, 2023, 3PM, Hot Dogs & Fellowship for Community.
- **PLUM Reformation Joint Worship Service**, October 29, 2023, location is Lutheran Church Our Savior, 3PM, in person and zoom. Anyone interested in joining the choir for this event, contact Deann George, , 412-951-0466.l
- **PLUM Worship Services and meetings**, www.plumofpa.com, <https://zoon.us/j401596541>, phone: (646) 876-9923, meeting ID: 401 596 541, zoom. PLUM website now has **CLOSED OPTIONS** available for people with hearing disabilities.
- **St. Paul's** constitution is in the process of being updated.
- **Agape Tree Fundraiser:** St. Paul Council approved the funds to plant a tree at Agape in memory of Jill Shook.
- **Resurrection Lutheran, Hanky Farms**, will celebrate their 60th Anniversary in November 2023. Bishop Kussero will attend and preach at the 9:15 AM service. Details to be announced as soon as finalized.



At this time, we offer ourselves to God—our physical resources and our whole life—recognizing that all we are and all we have are God's given to us and for which we are stewards. If you have a monetary offering for our congregation, please place it in the designated area either before or after the worship service or mail to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 210 North Jefferson Avenue, Canonsburg, PA 15317-3828.



Eternal Candle

September – Jim & Donna Filby

October – Karen & Logan Billingham

November – Mike, Carol, Corey Ferens

December – Ann Morrocco

If you would like to sponsor the eternal candle in 2024, please notify Ann Morrocco, amorrocco1@gmail.com. Donation is \$25.00. Please put your name on the envelope, month, along with your check/money, place in the collection plate or mail to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 210 N. Jefferson Ave., Canonsburg, PA 15317.

HOW MISSION SUPPORT WORKS



Council approved the following list of missions for 2023.

JANUARY – Mission Support (5 Sunday Month)

FEBRUARY – Camp Agape

MARCH – ELCA Disaster Relief

APRIL – Mission Support (5 Sunday Month)

MAY – Lutheran SeniorLife

JUNE – World Hunger

JULY – Mission Support (5 Sunday Month)

AUGUST – Meals on Wheels

SEPTEMBER – Washington City Mission

OCTOBER – Mission Support (5 Sunday Month)

NOVEMBER – Anonymous Christmas Family

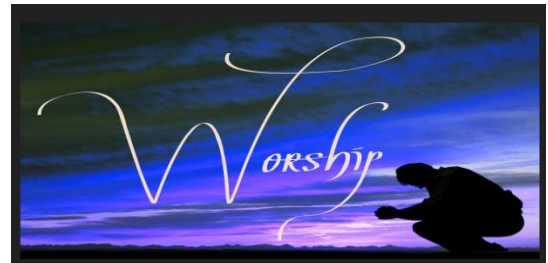
DECEMBER – Mission Support (5 Sunday Month)

Lenten Folders – Money is split between Meals on Wheels and Chaplaincy.

Advent Folders - Money is split between Meals on Wheels and Chaplaincy.

The monthly mission for the month of September for St. Paul's Lutheran Church is the Washington City Mission.

The missions for each month in 2024 are now being considered. Please notify Ann Morrocco, 724-746-5897 or amorrocco1@gmail.com if you would like to recommend a mission for a particular month. All months that have 5 Sundays automatically become Mission Support.



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

September 3 – Pastor Elizabeth Mayforth

September 10- Pastor John Gropp

September 17 – Pastor Alexander Sumo

September 24 – Pastor Brenda Henry

PLUM zoom service, every Sunday, 3PM,
<https://zoon.us/j/401596541> or go to
Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries on
internet and hit the click button for the
service.



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Corey Ferens

August 9

Nancy Pollo

August 25

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Carol Cramer

September 14

Josh Porter, Jr.

September 27





Assistants

September 3 – Martha Randolph

September 10 – Shawndel Kelley

September 17 – Scott Cregut

September 24 – Laurie Nickels

Lectors

September 3 – Mike Ferens

September 10 – Scott Cregut

September 17 – Mark Pollo

September 24 – Carol Ferens

Usher: Scott Latta

If you are interested in serving as an assistant/lector/usher, please notify Ann Morrocco; 724-746-5897; email:

amorocco1@gmail.com.



Will you please consider saving your pop can rings? These rings are given to Bethany Evangelical Lutheran, Dormont, to help someone with cancer treatments.



September 3 – Drinks/cookies

September 10 – Potluck Dinner – St. Paul's Anniversary

September 17 – The Randolfs & Nickels

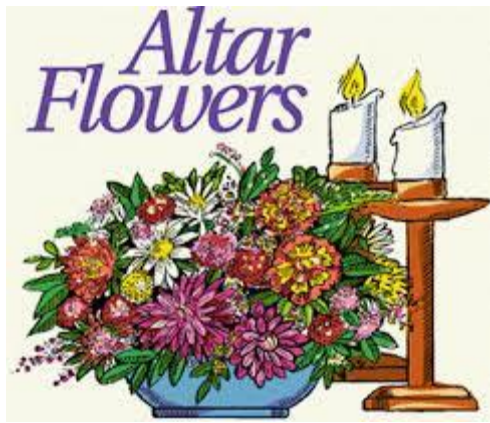
September 24 – The McGrail Family

If you are interested in sponsoring Fellowship for one of the Sundays in October, please sign the signup sheets on the bulletin board in Eberle Hall or notify Ann Morrocco; 724-746-5897; email:

amorocco1@gmail.com



Will you please consider saving your prescription bottles? These bottles can help people in third world countries.



FLOWER CHART

If you are interested in placing flowers on the altar for a special occasion during the months of September, October, November, December, 2023, please notify Ann Morrocco; 724-746-5897; email: amorocco1@gmail.com.

STEWARDSHIP

Have you ever stopped to consider that talents include many more abilities than merely arthetic, artistic or musical? In God's Kingdom, each of us is given a talent according to our ability and the opportunity to use and develop that talent. Jesus does not pass judgement on how many talents we have. He holds us accountable to using the one we have to his glory. Charge then to do good, to be ricxh in good words and generous, sharing what they have. 1 Timothy 6: 18
The church is here to share the love of Jesus Christ himself. Our money goes to serve him. The church continues to provide ministry in Jesus name to everyone, whether they can afford to contribute or not. Isn't that something you would like to be a part of?

ST PAUL'S PRAYER LIST

Please notify **Ann Morrocco**, amorocco1@gmail.com if someone should be added or deleted from our prayer lists.



You know our needs and you know our every pain, O Jesus. Surround those who need you with your care, comfort, and healing especially...**Pastor John** Gropp, **Logan, Charlotte, Milt, Steve, Barbara, Lee, Dom, Gabe, Marcy, Ann, Sammie Jo, Tracie, Pastor Sue** Devine, **Carol** Cramer, **Zach** Layton (PTSD exacerbation), **Tom & Diann Roman, the Porter Family, Pastor Paul, The Richmond Family, our Bishops, our Synod, our PLUM pastors,** God, Three-in-One, **C: In mercy, hear our prayer.**

God of all good gifts, your Son gathered children into his arms and blessed them. Help us to understand our youth as they grow in years and in knowledge of your world. Teach us to encourage their search for truth and value in their lives. Protect and bless all of our young people, especially....Hazel Julia Mae Cregut, Eleanor Marie Cregut, Joelle Filby, Clarke Johnson, Larry Ryan Johnson, Gregory McGrail, Makenna Ann McGrail, Josh Porter, Jaxon Porter, Jordyn Porter, Adalae Carmichael, Stephanie Richmond, Sydney Richmond, Sammie Jo Richmond, and Skylar Richmond.
God, Three-in-One,
C: In mercy, hear our prayer.



A monetary donation has been made to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in memory of Irma and Frank Wasky, and Loretta and Paul Roman by Tom and Diann Roman.



MAKENNA ANN MCGRAIL
Sunday, September 24, 2023
Gregory and Deann McGrail – Parents
Gregory McGrail - Brother

Please join us as we celebrate welcoming Makenna into our family.

