

THE EPISTLE

The St. Paul's Lutheran Magazine | Fall 2023
Where all really does mean all.



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Postlude back cover

St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church
12 N. Sixth Street
Wilmington, NC 28401
910-762-4882
www.stpaulswilmington.org

Senior Pastor Jonathan P. Conrad
Associate Pastor Mark A. Opgrand
Deacon Susan A. Jackson

Special thanks to Margaret and David Lyerly whose kind gift helped make this issue possible.

STEWARDSHIP

Don Erickson
Stewardship Chair

St. Paul’s Fall Stewardship Campaign is gearing up for a September 10, 2023 kick-off with a theme centered around “Blessings,” both personal and spiritual. Our fall campaign is a time to reflect on what a good steward is and how to be one. There are five key ways we can serve as a good steward: Serving Others, Serving God, Serving with our Financial Resources, Serving with our Other Resources and Talents, and finally, Serving with a Purpose.

SERVING OTHERS

As it says in 1 Peter 4:10-11, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” In this example good stewardship means using your gifts to serve others.

SERVING GOD

In the parable of talents found in Matthew 25:14-30, we find a lesson on serving God. In this parable, each servant is given an amount of talents, or gold, based on his ability. The servants who used their talents to produce more were praised, and the one who buried his talents was criticized. The message is clear — don’t waste the talents given to you by the master.

SERVING WITH OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

As believers, we are called to have one master because we can’t love both God and money. This doesn’t mean that money can’t be a useful tool. There are a lot of people



SERVING WITH OUR OTHER RESOURCES AND TALENTS

who could use help and many times that help comes in the form of food, water, or shelter, all of which can be bought. Since all our money and resources come from God in the first place, giving it back can be an act of worship. Giving back can be a real source of joy and with a proper budget plan anyone can give what they can.

It doesn’t matter how much talent you have. All that matters is that you use it. Again, this looks different for each of us, but if you’ve been given a certain skill then there’s probably an area where that skill can be used.

SERVING WITH PURPOSE

Most of us want to find our purpose and know why we’re here on this planet. I think the best way to find that purpose is by serving with intention. Good stewardship can lead to benefits in all areas of your life. It helps those around you, strengthens your relationship with God and helps St. Paul’s family along the way.

BLESSINGS!

Please join us on September 10th to celebrate our individual and congregational “Blessings” as we enter into a new church calendar year. Look for more information about ways you can serve as the new church year unfolds.

We will be serving breakfast that day and we look forward to seeing you there.

KICK-OFF



Pastor Jonathan Conrad

Welcome to the fourth edition of *The Epistle* magazine. We have an exciting issue filled with news, events, pictures, inspiration, and information that spotlight all the wonderful activities happening here at St. Paul's.

As you read this issue, I am eagerly awaiting the start of a new football season. A new season brings a renewed sense of hope for teams and fans alike. As a Carolina Panthers fan, I know I am filled with anticipation as a new coaching staff begins the hard work of rebuilding.

Here at St. Paul's, church members have come back from vacation, school has resumed, and people are generally settling back into routines. With all those things we have a renewed sense of hope, excitement, and anticipation. That is why we have Kick-off Sunday on September 10th, to help us "kick off" a new season of ministry.

Kick-off Sunday will feature our 9AM and 11AM services that will include the return of our Children's Church at both services. We will also have a special "First Sunday" Breakfast put together by our wonderful Breakfast Boys.

Kick-off will continue throughout the rest of September with the return of Sunday School (for children) and Wired Word (for Adults), Thursday Night Women's Bible Study, and Confirmation classes.

And this is just what is happening in September! Over the next few months, we will celebrate special events such as Oktoberfest, The Blessing of the Animals, Quilt Sunday, Fall Stewardship, and Reformation Sunday, as well as another New Members Class.

As we kick off the Fall, I want you to feel the same excitement and hope as I do as we continue to do God's work here in our community.

NEW MEMBERS

As we celebrate a new season, just like sports teams welcome new players to the roster, I want to welcome these new members who have joined our church over the past six months. Many have already found ministries and groups to be a part of, but if you have not met them yet, check out their pictures and then introduce yourself.



Gisela Augustin



Jennifer Behun



Gary and Beth Cummings



Pat Finger



Linda Giersher



Allen Lamb



Mindy LeBeau



George and Marie Millington



Tricia Nace



Holly Wendt and Larry Nobles



Nicole Pipitone



Andy, Liz, Riley, and Claire Rappold



Henry and Diane Rehder



Dale Russell



Allison, Elena, Isabel, and Matt Scalora



Terri Smith



Damon Surratt

SAVE THESE DATES

First Sunday Breakfast October 1 November 5	Oktoberfest October 22
Mother Hubbard's Cupboard September 10 October 8 November 12	Annual Meeting November 19
Family Promise September 10-16	WELCA Circle 4 September 5 October 3 November 7
Kick-off Sunday September 10 (with breakfast)	Bible Journey Continues on Wednesdays
Shrimp Boil September 17	
Women's Bible Study September 21 (first of seven sessions)	

God's Peace to You from Your Congregation Council

As we begin our fall season of renewal, I wanted to share news of your Council's activities in recent weeks. All of us on Council are most grateful for the opportunity to serve the Lord and St. Paul's faithful people in this role. St. Paul's is such a vibrant place of faith, fellowship and learning! As expressed by other articles in this edition, there is a lot planned for our fall season.

As most know, the church sustained a direct hit from a lightning storm in late March that damaged our livestream video and audio systems. Many people depend upon this connection to St. Paul's and there has been an outpouring of financial support to repair and replace the system. At this writing, we have received close to \$30,000 for this purpose — truly a testimony of our congregation's love for 'Hearing God's Word'. We give thanks for this support! When you read this, all repairs should be completed.

During June, your Council appointed a small committee to explore holding a Capital Campaign to improve our facilities and to discern how St. Paul's can best serve its mission over the next 20 years and beyond. This group will be seeking input from the congregation over the coming months as it works on their recommendations about holding such a campaign. This type of campaign takes a lot of planning, and would not get underway until 2024 or beyond. Be on the lookout for further information in the coming months.

Also during June, the Council adopted a new Safety Procedures Policy that we sent out by email to all members. This policy outlines steps recommended by local Wilmington officials to deal with unauthorized people entering our buildings or having mental health challenges.

St. Paul's has joined with other area churches to launch a new Ecumenical Campus Ministry at UNCW. This effort is designed to give college students opportunities to grow their faith and share it with fellow students. Pastor Elizabeth Villegas has begun her new ministry at UNCW. The ELCA North Carolina Synod has joined other denominations to help fund this program and our own Deacon Susan Jackson serves on the board overseeing this outreach.

So, as you can see, there is a lot going on at St. Paul's! Thank you for your support of all our varied ministries as we seek to proclaim God's saving love to all.

Rick Struck
2023 Congregation Council President



Children's Ministry

Youth Ministry

IMPORTANT DATES

Nursery

The St. Paul's nursery is open during both worship services. The nursery is staffed by a paid attendant who has undergone a background check. Children are invited to visit the nursery or remain in worship.

Children's Worship Bags

Children's Worship Bags are available during both services. Bags are filled with items to help children grow, play, and worship with your family. You will find them by Kevin the Lamb in our church narthex.

Sunday School

Children's Sunday School for Grades K-5 is held during the 2nd through 4th Sundays of the month in the Church Sanctuary basement. Interested in volunteering to teach once a month, or be a sub or an assistant? Speak to Deacon Susan.

Children's Church

Children's Church for Grades K-5 takes place during both worship services beginning September 10. We will follow the Lectionary using the Spark and Whirl curricula. Children's Church has a Bible story and activity. We would love volunteers and substitute leaders, so speak to Deacon Susan if interested.

October 21 | Youthquake

Youthquake is a gathering for students in grades 3-5 from across the North Carolina Synod for fellowship, learning, service, and worship. The East Carolina Gathering will be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Raleigh from 10AM to 3PM.

October 22 | Oktoberfest & Pumpkin Decorating Contest

During this year's Oktoberfest, children will be invited to decorate a pumpkin! Pumpkins will be judged and prizes will be awarded.

Confirmation Classes

September 10

October 1

November 5

Confirmation classes are for middle school students in grades 6-8. We will meet in the St. Paul's Youth Room.

Youth Group

September 24

October 29

November 12

Grades 6-12 will meet for fellowship, Youth Gathering preparation, and scheduled outings.

October 6-8 | High School Youth Retreat

Grades 9-12 will head to Camp Agape for a weekend full of activities and fun!

July 16-20, 2024 | ELCA Youth Gathering — New Orleans

Students currently in grades 8-12 are eligible to attend. The Youth Gathering, held every three years, is a faith formation event to learn, grow, worship, and play with other ELCA Lutherans from around the world! Registration deadline is October 22 with a \$150 nonrefundable deposit. Total trip cost is \$400.

Youth Group Fundraisers!

Cocoa Cones will be available before Thanksgiving this year! It is our hope to have them available during the Annual Meeting.

The 2024 Attractions & Value Guide books are available. This year, they are \$30 — it's the 25th Anniversary Edition! See Deacon Susan to purchase a book.

St. Paul's T-Shirts More information will come soon!



Deacon Susan Jackson

October 22 | ELCA Youth Gathering Registration Deadline

\$150 non-refundable deposit must be received by October 22.

WORSHIP TECHNOLOGY

“And to all of you who are worshipping with us online, a warm welcome.”

AH, the technology . . . how far we’ve come.

Associate Pastor
Mark Opgrand



Years ago, I wonder how many people would have imagined these words being a regular part of future pastoral greetings at the beginning of Sunday worship. Advancing technology now enables us to reach people unable to worship in person. Such activity has become normal, even expected. When Palm Sunday 2023’s major thunderstorm damaged our cameras and sound equipment, people immediately affirmed the value of this ministry by giving generously to restore the operation.

As someone interested in St. Paul’s one hundred sixty-five year history, I’ve been thinking about other technological advances that have had also had an impact on how we worship and attend church. Let’s review a few of them.

Indoor plumbing

Perhaps it sounds silly to start here, but from 1858 until the 1910’s, If someone wished to make a “bathroom stop” before worship, it would be in the church out-house (for you “young” readers, imagine stationery wooden “Port-a-potties” over a big hole in the ground). Because many people lived much closer to the church during those years, I suspect most “went” before leaving home. Did you know that the City of Wilmington mandated converting to indoor plumbing between 1910 and 1920? I don’t believe many were resistant to this changing technology.



Air conditioning

It wasn’t until 1956 that St. Paul’s got air conditioning. Many residents didn’t get it in their homes until the 1960’s. To provide ventilation, our stained-glass windows opened not only at the bottom, but also at the top. One “fun fact” is that with the windows open, the preachers had to compete with very loud

crowding roosters next door. Those who remember those days love telling that story. To help “beat the heat,” hand-held fans were donated by local mortuaries or businesses (early “product placement”). However, no matter how hot it was, for many years men wore coats and ties while women wore dresses, gloves, hats, hose, and high heels. Shorts would have been scandalous. After air conditioning was installed, the windows were re-leaded to seal them and make them stronger and more secure.

Mimeos, stencils, and copiers (oh my) and computers and smart phones, and tablets (oh my oh my)

When we look just to the left of the organ, we still see a wooden panel displaying hymn numbers. This old “technology” remains from days before weekly bulletins and when hymns were announced on that board. During St. Paul’s first eighty years, people worshipped without any bulletin aids. That changed during the 1940’s when mimeograph machines became more widely affordable. Bulletins were typed on special film stencils that were attached to a hand-cranked drum. The bulletins became a little fancier when pre-printed outside sheets were purchased from local printers. The outside cover featured the ink drawing of the Church we still use today. National church publishers later marketed thematic covers on one side and brief devotions on the other. The service order with hymns and readings were reproduced on the inside page and printed in our office.

The technology that produced photocopiers was a huge leap forward in ease of bulletin and newsletter preparation. The availability of computers in the 1980’s and 1990’s advanced even more flexibility and creativity. When our Office Administrator Kathleen Kalish joined our staff in 2001, she took all this a step further by laying out the bulletins with the full service and hymns so that visitors could easily follow. Kathleen also was the first administrator to put together attractive funeral bulletins with photos of our deceased members on the cover. Our current copiers can print in color, fold, and staple.

The ramp

Let’s not forget about “building technology.” Many are unaware that plans for a ramp were first proposed nearly 40 years before the ramp was finally approved and built in 2006. There were always two arguments against building the ramp. 1. “What do we need a ramp for? We don’t have any ‘handicapped’ people.” 2. “It will ruin the historic beauty and aesthetic balance of the church.” It should not surprise us that we didn’t have any “handicapped” people, though there were times during

funerals when ushers lifted persons in wheelchairs up the narrow front steps. What finally tipped the vote during that 2005 Annual Meeting? Could it be that more and more people with disabilities were requiring wheel chairs or walkers? We know the “Knee and Hip Replacement Club” was a growing segment of our population. Perhaps it was finally realizing that an active functioning house of worship must be accessible and welcoming. Many were glad to observe that, when finished, the worst thing ever heard from previous naysayers was “It’s not that bad.” Amen.



The sound systems

For many years before our first Public Address system was installed, preachers had to be strong orators, able to loudly project their voices so all could hear. For young children, this probably sounded like the pastor was yelling. It is interesting to note that one of the unintended consequences in installing air conditioning was that when it “kicked in,” the preacher now had competing air handler noise (still noticeable today). The various generations of sound systems have enabled the preachers to be heard in a much more friendly and conversational tone.

The internet and online worship

For St. Paul’s first 100+ years, all this technology would have seemed like science fiction, just as fanciful as the 1940’s comic character Dick Tracy’s two-way wrist radio. With email, advancing internet technology and Sunday worship now streaming to phones, tablets, or “smart” TV’s, much has changed for everyone. Livestreaming, particularly, has made it possible to share worship and ministry far beyond our walls. “Online” attendance regularly exceeds 150, including homebound, former members who have moved away, and others who are “shopping” for a new church home. Worshipping in person and sharing with each other face to face will always be most valued, but when that is not possible, it is wonderful that we can remain connected this way. As we

wave to our online worshippers at the end of the service, we acknowledge and celebrate they are with us in spirit.



Electronic giving

Many people still share in the time-honored practice of placing cash or checks in envelopes in offering plates during worship, but more and more carry little cash, and most do their transactions with credit or debit cards. This has encouraged people to consider giving their offerings through automatic bank drafts or through a phone app called "Tithely." In the old days, when someone passed along a plate during the offering without putting something in it, people might have assumed they either weren't giving or forgot their envelopes at home. Now-

days, only God, the bank, and Financial Secretary Lynda Shell know for sure.

What's next?

In a word, who knows? So many things were unimaginable to those who worshipped during St. Paul's first century (and well into the second). Who would have thought that we would someday be able to load dozens of Bible translations on our phones or electronic reading devices? Who would have imagined we could call forth a Bible verse by speaking to our phone, "Hey Siri, where are those verses that talk about Jesus as the light of the world?" Who would have thought that during a pandemic shutdown we could still have council meetings through Zoom calls? Who would have imagined we could introduce a new anthem to the choir by watching a choir perform it on YouTube? Who would have thought?

What we do know is that the same God who created this marvelous universe and came first to a chosen people, and then to us all in Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. This God, through Jesus Christ, remains with us as, in our own way, we create and invent innovative ways to be the people we have always been called to be. Thanks be to God.



For ninety-five years Al and Anna Cheatham enjoyed life without the technology of computers, smartphones, or the internet. They weren't against it, they just didn't feel they needed it. That changed when for the first time in all those years, Anna developed some mobility challenges that made it difficult to worship in person. As "every Sunday" worshippers all their lives, not coming to church was a very unwelcome change. Al remembered during the pandemic shutdown going to his son Tom's house to watch services

"I have really missed attending in person. I'm glad we have this for when I can't get there."

— Anna Cheatham

online. That planted the seed to do something this past summer that no one ever imagined they would do: install the internet at home and connect to their new "smart TV." With Tom a forty-five year technology veteran of producing local TV news, they had good help setting it up. It has worked splendidly and now they are grateful to be on the receiving end of that end-of-service waving to those worshipping with us online.

Birthdays

September

- 1 Louise Perkins
Tara Law
- 2 Mary Martin
Erik Paulson
- 3 Cameron VandeVeer
Mason Bruton
- 5 Ron Jamieson
Paul Parish
- 7 Paul Whitham
Brent Kitchens
Tommy Cheatham
Anna Dixon
- 8 John Pendley
- 9 Maria McLeroy
David Haskins
- 11 Nick Stephanos
- 12 Margaret Baily
Andy Kubicek
- 13 Saylor Carriker
- 14 Irma Forger
- 15 Miriam Marlar
Marin Askwith
- 17 Carol Whitham
Michael Seifert
- 18 Jennifer Kitchens
- 20 Katie Medina
Maddie Conrad
- 21 Fred Bratteson
Nicky Grubbs
Kathy Allen
Tom Mills
Megan Vogel
Jake Fleming
- 23 Jill Cummings
- 24 Kristine Guthrie

- 25 Carolyn Augustine
- 26 Jess Parker
Quinn Dearie
- 28 Judith Benson
Teresa Rager
- 27 Billy Mason
- 30 Cathy Cummins
Patrick Bradshaw
Peter Miars

October

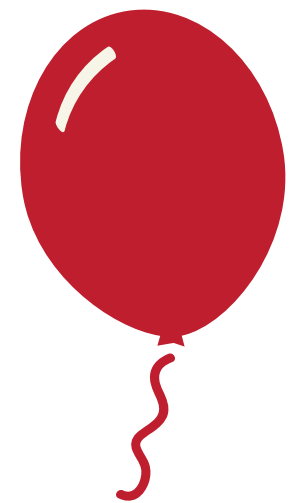
- 2 Betty Black
Carl Cerniglia
Jeanne Struck
Keith Queen
David Squires
Tiffany Friedl
- 5 Kitty Jamieson
Lillian Kelley
- 6 Merton Vance
Dan Dresher
- 9 Joseph Sisk
- 10 Barry Acker
Zachary Dixon
- 11 Gary Marinko
- 12 Christa Gerfelder
Herbie Walton
Margaret Musacchio
- 13 Pam Kubicek
David Trapp
- 14 Doreen Acker
- 15 Sharon Smith
- 16 Julian Burnett
Gregg Surratt
Nate Askwith
- 18 Bev Franciosa

- 19 Michelle Coleman
Kate Pottle
- 21 Jack Wilson
- 22 Jim Evans
Brian Cox
- 24 Lori Vidmar
Mike Mason
- 26 Lon Ostby
Lisa Seifert
- 27 Linda Clark
- 28 Kyle Rehder
- 30 Kathryn Crutchfield
Mercedes Ludlum
Voncile Echevarria
Liz Rappold
Charlotte Farr
Anniston VandeVeer
- 31 Jean Wooley
Shirley Koenig
Kirk Brown
Debra Hadding

November

- 1 Brea Kelley
- 2 Kitty Solomita
- 3 Rev. Mark Opgrand
- 4 Kathy Blair
- 6 Robert Allen
Karin Mills
- 9 Elaine Walton
- 10 Barbara Ackerly
- 11 Ruth Farabee
Carol Miller
- 14 Andy Krukltis
Kegan Cox
- 15 Delilah Mills
- 16 Gisela Augustin
Davis Fox
- 17 George Russ
- 18 Melissa Talley
Nels Lindquist
- 21 Mike Flack

- 22 Breck Newber
Meagan Kasczak
- 22 Griffin Hales
Richard Walters
- 23 Julie Dixon
August Mills
- 24 Connie Batchelder
Olivia Darzano
- 26 Arlene Boscarino
Diane Leiser
- 27 Caryway Robeson
- 28 Margaret Lyerly
Jim Blair
- 29 Gloria Garrett
Cindy Lindquist
Bill Heston
Dave Cummins
- 30 Bill King
Ed Ezekian
Carol Ann Bauman





Clothes Closet volunteers Linda Evans, Craig Batchelder, Sarah Arnold and Connie Batchelder

A huge *thank you* to those of you who have donated to our Clothes Closet ministry! Each week we serve 30 to 40 displaced people — men, women and children of all ages — trying to provide them with items they need to get by on the streets. Many have lost jobs during the pandemic, lost everything during a divorce, or are unable to receive disability. Several of our displaced are LGBTQ and their families have disowned them. There are many reasons people are displaced without being “bad” or “deserving” to be this way, and they are grateful for everything St. Paul’s does to help them.

The Clothes Closet is located in the basement of Keever Hall and is open from 12PM to 3PM each Saturday. If you would like to donate clothing, shoes, tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, unopened hygiene products or snacks for our clientele, please contact Connie Batchelder, Linda Evans, or Diane Erickson. We will meet you at your convenience at the church to accept your donations, or you may bring your donations and leave them on the pews in the

hallway going to Keever Hall on Sundays or when it is convenient for you. We will also pick up your donations if needed.

The proceeds from our spring yard sale and cash gifts enable us to “fill in the gaps” and purchase hygiene products, diapers and other items our clients need.

The Closet is operated by members of St. Paul’s on a weekly rotating basis. If you are interested in being a volunteer, please contact Connie Batchelder at connie.batchelder3@gmail.com. We would love to have you join us!

At this time, we are in need of individual snacks and bottled water for our customers. You can also make a monetary donation by writing a check to St. Paul’s and in the memo line write Clothes Closet. You will receive your receipt at the end of the year on your “giving letter” from St. Paul’s. Again, we thank you for supporting our Closet!



St. Paul's Life

POSTLUDE

STEWARDSHIP

Thank you for your financial gifts. Your gracious giving enables us to provide pastoral care, excellent worship, formative faith education, outreach, and fellowship events that are making an impact each and every day.

Your continued financial support can be provided in the following ways:

online <http://stpaulswilmington.org/donate>

text "Give" to 984-203-6953

mail 12 N. 6th St. Wilmington, NC 28401

bank draft E-bill payment through your online banking

FIND US! LIKE US! FOLLOW US!



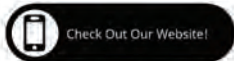
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@STPaulsLutheran
WilmingtonNC



EDITOR'S NOTE

The dates, times, and events in this magazine were correct at the time of publishing but are **subject to change**. Stay informed of any changes by following us on social media, and subscribing to our weekly email Epistle at info@stpaulswilmington.org.



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS!

Bill Remele was honored for his 30 years of service at St. Paul's on August 6 with Pastor Mark's tribute song "Mr. Remele's Organ Pipe Hearts Band" (with apologies to the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper!) The celebration continued at the monthly breakfast with a sheet cake, and a plaque commemorating the occasion has been ordered. Thank you Bill for all you do for St. Paul's!

OUR CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Want to reach out to any of our council members? Just send an email to info@stpaulswilmington.org and they will get in touch with you.

Jody Pfeffer
Evangelism liaison

Carla Wiechman
Fellowship Committee
liaison

Paul Whitham
Finance Committee
liaison

(Vacant)
Landscape Committee
liaison

Nate Askwith
Property Committee
liaison

Lynne Ashcraft
Service Committee
liaison

Dan Brennan
Stewardship Committee
liaison

Sandy Carlson
Worship & Music
Committee liaison

Susan Dresher
Youth & Family
Committee liaison