



St. Paul Lutheran Church

November 2020

The Epistle



Find Love

What would you give to ensure that the mature members in our congregation are honored and nurtured in faith?

What would you do to introduce young people to Jesus so that they could develop a life-giving relationship with Him?

How important is it to you that we care for and maintain St. Paul Lutheran Church as a beautiful house of worship?

How would you respond if you could help others find love in Jesus Christ even those who haven't stepped into a church in years or ever?

Your offerings in 2021 will help us do all these and more.

We are planning new initiatives so that we can do powerful ministry in the name of Jesus together! Our Stewardship Team and Council believe in the ministry that we can do together in Jesus' name in 2021 that are outlined in the proposed 2021 Budget and Appeal Brochure which you have received or will receive shortly in the mail.

You may have noticed that we are running our Fall Steward-

(Continued on page 2)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Social Concerns.....2

Celebrations.....3

Thanksgiving3

Operation CC.....3

Prayer Requests.....4

Prayer Ventures5

Special Events8



SOCIAL CONCERN'S STILL COLLECTING ITEMS

Just a reminder that the Social

Find Love

(Continued from page 1)

ship Drive a little differently this year. We are doing things a bit differently this year so that we can do more together!

One of those differences is that we are each being asked in a personalized letter to prayerfully consider increasing our offering in 2021. This request is based on your giving in the most recent years. Please know that this invitation was developed prayerfully and in strict confidence – and is provided as a suggestion as you consider how God is leading you to respond. This invitation to grow in generosity is extended so that we can grow our impact in the community and in one

Intent Card Challenge: If 60 households return a Statement of Intent card, one unnamed St. Paul member will give an extra \$2000 in 2021!

Concerns Committee is still collecting items for Ronald McDonald House and Matthew 25: Ministries. Pop can tabs, empty prescription bottles, and toiletries may be placed in the labeled donation containers in the closet opposite the library. Thank you for your generosity!

another's lives as well as work toward a sustainable future for our church.

Please prayerfully consider the invitation you receive and return your Statement of Intent during worship on Sunday, November 15—Appeal Commitment Sunday. You may also email your card to the Financial Secretary at FinancialSecretary@stpaulreading.org or mail your card to the church office.

Know that whatever amount you decide to give in offerings in 2021 will be appreciated and that both your offerings and your returned Statement of Intent card will profoundly shape our shared ministry in 2021.

Thank you for partnering together so that others may Find Love in Jesus.

In Christ,

Pastor Emily Beckering

Returning your card in itself will increase your impact in our church and community! A member of the congregation has generously issued a challenge: if 60 households return a Statement of Intent Card, an additional \$2000 will be given over and above this member's intended giving in 2021! Help us reach this goal!

Thanksgiving Worship Service

WITH READING COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



With the world as it is, the Reading Council of Churches felt that it is an especially important time to gather together and worship God and pray for our community and country. In light of Covid-19, we have planned a Drive-in wor-

ship service for Tuesday, November 24, at 7:00 pm in the parking lot of Reading Community School (810 E. Columbia Ave. Reading, 45215). We will do a food drive and also a blessing of Thanksgiving dinners! Bring some non-perishable food items for donation and your frozen turkey (or other parts of your Thanksgiving meal) in the comfort of your car to experience worship with the fuller body of Christ!

Celebrations in November



- 1 Kathy Pirrmann
- 3 Susan Harris,
Joyce Seals
- 4 Edward Bardes
- 7 Holly Ford
- 8 Chris Conner
- 9 Steve Headley
- 10 Desiree Riddle,
Kate Wollenburg

- 12 Matthew McDowell,
Korben Seals
- 13 Grace Herringer
- 17 Jason Dageforde
- 19 Austin Bronner
- 21 Elinor Schieman,
Bea Sturgill
- 23 Jennifer Reimer
- 25 Anne Rolfs
- 27 Shannon Reimer
- 29 Don & Vicki Grau**



**OPERATION
CHRISTMAS
CHILD: NOV 22
DEADLINE**

Thanks to all those who have picked up shoeboxes to fill for Operation Christmas Child! Please bring filled boxes back to church by Nov. 22 so that they can be mailed overseas and distributed in time for Christmas. Please see Kathy Hirt with any questions or for more info about the project.

Our Life Together

For emergency pastoral care, please call the after-hours line at 513-760-5884.

If you have requests for the Prayer Chain, call Penny Huber, 513-931-6420. To remove people from the list, contact the office.

We pray for **Mary and her granddaughter Kyra** (friend of Paul Pieper); **Berkeley** (Carol Curless's great-grandson); **Pr. Lisa Bernheisel; Louise Barry; Teresa Bell** (former member); **Stephen Black** (Kim Coulehan's nephew); **Bobby** (Christian Lohmeier's friend); **Nancy Bose** (Kathy Hirt's friend); **Brett** (Kings' step-nephew); **Jodie Calhoun; Christian; Frances Clemons** (Portmanns' friend); **Kathy Curless; Katie Demopoulos** (Diana Hawkins's niece); **Dick** (Linda Miller's brother); **Jeremy Doan** (Jean Winkle's grandson); **Jerry Doan** (Jean Winkle's son-in-law); **Eckerle and Wuestefeld families; Lee Erbeck; Larry Faulkner** (Freda's son); **Justin Feldman** (Bess Sturgill's father); **Ben Ferguson** (Les Eckerle's cousin); **Michigan Ford** (Fords' niece); **Jeanne Fuller; Scarlett Gally** (Beth Wernery's great-niece); **Clara Garcia** (Cindy Mayhugh's sister); **George and Sherry** (Shirley Harbaugh's cousins); **Nathaniel Gibson** (Les Eckerle's step-nephew); **Hannah; Matthew Harrison** (Seals' neighbor); **Sandy Hatcher** (Linda Holt's sister); **Elain Heskamp; Richard Hoffman** (Cindy Mayhugh's brother); **Andrew Horton; Mary Ann Hudecki** (Linda Miller's sister), **Ellen Hunter** (Jeni Cathcart's grandmother); **Jo and her daughter** (Jeanne Fuller's friends); **Joan** (Penny Huber's friend); **Kate** (granddaughter of Dennis King's friend); **Dennis King; Jay King** (son of Jamie King); **Loretta Kombrink** (Marilyn Portmann's aunt); **Lewis Laine** (Chet Laine's brother); **Richard Lane** (Elinor Schieman's nephew); **Nelson Langefeld; Yvonne Lowery** (St. Paul Players); **Carroll Mayhugh Sr.** (Carroll Mayhugh's father); **Samantha Mersch** (Mayhughs' daughter, Sarah Papin's sister); **Jessica Mink** (Donald Harris's cousin); **Doris Minton; Barbara and Jack Moorhouse; Jean Nolte; Ervin Oerther** (Portmanns' brother-in-law); **Ann Ohr** (Barbara Moorhouse's cousin); **Richard Osborn** (Betty Pack's brother); **Rosie Osborn** (Betty Pack's sister); **Eric Papin**;

Christian & Suzie Pereira (Carolyn Koehl's granddaughter & grandson-in-law); **Richard Peterson** (Shirley Harbaugh's brothers); **Don Pflieger** (Kings' brother-in-law); **Ginny Pape; Linda Perin** (Moorhouses' cousin); **Paul Pieper; Faith Piemann; Pat Popplewell** (Dennis King's friend); **James Savoy** (Jean Winkle's great-grandson); **Shawn Schnetzer** (Sturgills' cousin); **Sheila Schultz** (Betty Pack's friend); **Brenda Schumacher** (Marilyn Portmann's friend); **Shannon and Dane** (friends of Riddle family); **Keith Shupe** (father of Kelly Shupe); **Jason Simpson** (Freda Faulkner's grand-nephew); **Patricia Smith** (Teresa Bell's mother); **Scott Songer; Judy Songer** (friends of Jean Winkle); **Crosley Spelman** (Spelmans' grandson); **Frank Sturgill** (Jim's dad); **Britney Jean Teems** (Jean Winkle's granddaughter); **Teresa** (friend of Marty Lohmeier); **Randy Thaman** (friend of Marie Calhoun); **Michael Theiss** (Cindy Mayhugh's cousin); **Geri Toland** (Carole Repogle's neighbor); **Treasure** (Les Eckerle's cousin); **Ralph Turner** (friend of Dennis King); **Teresa Vogel** (Freda Faulkner's friend); **Jack Wagner; Jeanne Wagner; Daryl Wesselman** (Betty Pack's granddaughter); **Jean Winkle; Susan Winkle** (Jean Winkle's daughter-in-law).

At the death of: **Jack Spelman**.

We pray for those with ongoing health concerns who are unable to come to church every week:
Louise Barry, Jack and Barbara Moorhouse, Jean Nolte, Heather Segar.

We pray for our armed forces members: **Graham Barton** (Fords' neighbor); **Paul Cordes** (Elinor Schieman's grandson); **Victoria Derry** (Elinor Schieman's great-granddaughter); **Jared Forst** (Jim and Loretta's grandson); **Beau Glenn** (Karen Koehl's son-in-law); **Kylie Hahn** (Gretta Hahn's granddaughter); **Donald Hosea** (Karen Koehl's son); **Samuel McLoughlin** (friend of Cindy Sieckman); **Scott Minton** (Doris Minton's son); **Jobeth Ramirez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Joshua Rodriguez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Trent Schwegman** (cousin to the Erbecks and Fords); **Dustin Silvey; Mack Thompson** (Freda Faulkner's grandson); **Alex Wisecup** (son of Nadine and Barry Wisecup).

6 Praise God for leading us and renewing us with light and truth throughout our baptismal journey.

7 Continue to pray for our global companions as some countries experience a new wave of COVID-19 infections. Pray for those countries most affected, that we might share physical and spiritual support and resources, mutually encourage leaders and congregations, and wait patiently for the day when we can celebrate our unity and work together in person.

8 Pray for insight and wisdom from the Spirit that will help us lead lives pleasing to God and glimpse the kingdom of heaven.

9 Give thanks to God for Augsburg Fortress, the publishing ministry of the ELCA. Ask God to bless and further its work creating resources and partnerships “to support the ministries of faith communities in communicating the good news of God’s liberating grace.”

10 Pause, reflect and pray for God’s help with whatever is most troubling or perplexing in your life right now – that thing that keeps you awake at night.

11 *Veterans Day* Remember and give thanks for the service and personal sacrifice of women and men who have served our nation in times of peace and war. Pray for those currently serving in the military and for their families, especially during times of separation, that they will know they are remembered, valued and cared for by their faith community and siblings in Christ.

12 Pray for people who are recovering from hurricanes, storms and flooding here and in other countries. Ask God to displace their grief and despair with hope, their feelings of loss with comfort and wholeness, and their isolation and loneliness with the reassurance that people, congregations and ministries such as Lutheran Disaster Response will stand with them now and for the long haul of recovery and healing.

13 Give praise and glory to God! We are alive and free because Jesus died and rose again for the sake of all humankind, that when we pass from this life, we will enjoy life together with God forever.

14 Pray for pastors and Christian education leaders who are working through the challenges of confirmation instruction in a time when most congregations are still unable to meet in person. Ask God to lead them toward creative, effective solutions that will nurture and strengthen faith in young people, share the teachings of the church and affirm their roles and gifts as members of the body of Christ.

15 Pray that we might trust in God’s promises and in the certainty of our salvation through Jesus Christ, and not fret or speculate about when Christ will come again. Ask God to help us live in the present as children of God who share the good news of Jesus Christ, grow the church, strengthen one another and serve their neighbor.

16 Give thanks for the people in our daily lives who lift our spirits, inspire our faith, renew our hope and equip us for serving our neighbor.

17 Ask God to guide us through the span of our lives and focus us on learning God’s ways, commandments, teachings and priorities along the way.

18 Pray for federal chaplains serving in the U.S. military and Veterans Affairs hospitals as they minister to military members and their families here and around the world. Give thanks for how they touch the lives of young adults, encourage their faith, connect them with faith communities, and provide care and counseling in unique contexts.

19 Some students find studying from home more difficult than others, especially those who live with learning disabilities, have special needs or experience the learning environment best when interacting with peers, teachers and counselors in person. Pray that these students will find the care and attention they need – in person and online – to learn, mature and grow strong in their self-esteem.

20 We direct our attention to God and pray for mercy; we humble ourselves and trust in God’s promise of love, forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ.

21 Pray for those working through the sometimes long and emotional process of becoming foster or adoptive parents. Pray that we might find ways to support and care for them and to celebrate with them the joys of family and parenthood.

22 Ask for God’s mercy and forgiveness when we fail to respect our neighbor, care for their needs and love them as Jesus loves us. Pray that our faith will shine in the world through bold yet humble acts of justice, mercy, empathy, advocacy, care and love.

23 Pray that, as followers of Christ who treasure life as a gift from God, we will exercise patience, caution and concern for our neighbor as the COVID-19 pandemic continues long past our expectations and assumptions.

24 Give thanks for followers of Christ and children of God who gather in faith communities everywhere to praise God, grow in faith and celebrate the unity we have in Christ. Pray that we might never show bias toward or rebuff people who are curious and seek the good news we have received.

25 Praise God for our creative siblings in Christ whose hymns stir our faith, inspire us, speak of God's work and express our joy and gratitude to God.

26 Thanksgiving Day As we celebrate Thanksgiving, lift up prayers of gratitude for the blessings and abundant resources we enjoy, and remember the people in our communities and world who suffer food insecurity, hunger and poverty. Ask the Spirit to increase our generosity and engagement with our neighbors in need and to help our communities become more just, generous, compassionate and committed to addressing difficult social issues.

27 Pray that we will be humble but not shy about praying in private or with others, trusting that God understands us even when our words – spoken or silent – feel awkward or inadequate.

28 "O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!" Like the immense, complex and awesome universe, we are God's handiwork. Raise up prayers of glory and thanksgiving to God!

29 First Sunday of Advent This is a year of hope, yearning and anticipation, when we cry out for relief, healing, positive signs of change in the world and reassurance that we'll all be OK. Pray that we will trust in God's promises and presence through faith in Jesus Christ – son of man and son of God, our hope, security and salvation in all times and circumstances.

30 In the course of your day, envision the people who, working behind the scenes in service industries, attend to our needs, ease our stresses, make our lives more enjoyable, help us manage each day and attend to the little things we take for granted. Pray that we will open our eyes and see them, valuing their work, advocating for their fair wages and benefits, and expressing our gratitude for their hard work serving others.

1 All Saints Day Give thanks for everyone God has gathered in the body of Christ – those who are living and those who have passed. Praise God for the diverse talents given to us that the Spirit uses to encourage faith in others, strengthen the community of believers and do God's work in the world.

2 Native American Heritage Month Lutheran witness of the gospel with American Indian and Alaska Native people stretches back more than 350 years. The ELCA's American Indian and Alaska Native membership is around 4,850, and American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries works with 30 native congregations around the country. Pray for the ministry and witness of native congregations and the work of the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association, that they might flourish and grow.

3 Pray for the Spirit to grant us wisdom and courage in our discernment and decisions as we elect leaders for our nation, states and communities. Pray that those chosen to serve will do so with compassion, justice, concern for people with critical needs and a commitment to the well-being of all people and communities.

4 We are called to be disciples and students of Jesus, to study Scripture and to learn from the bearers of faith who live by what they teach. Pray that the Spirit will open our hearts and sharpen our minds to distinguish between those who are trustworthy and those who use their position and powers of persuasion to tempt us from the truth and ways of God.

5 Pray for people and communities in the western states that are fighting wildfires, recovering from the devastation left by recent fires and worrying about the increased threat of wildfires and longer fire seasons. Ask God to protect the firefighters, emergency responders and volunteers who work tirelessly and at great personal risk to protect lives and property.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

PRAYER VENTURES

NOVEMBER 2020

From the Presiding Bishop: “Set Free”



This article originally appeared in the October 2020 issue of Living Lutheran magazine.

A colleague of mine once pointed out that Martin Luther wrote far more about freedom than he did about reform or reformation. Liberation in

Christ through faith was the freedom that transformed Luther. This freedom is what he wrote about most frequently and most passionately. In *The Freedom of a Christian*, Luther makes the case that liberation in Christ is both a freedom *from* and a freedom *for*.

Freedom *from* is liberation from all spiritual bondage. We are set free from being trapped in ourselves, consumed by ourselves, from the belief and terror that we can and must save ourselves. That our *self* is the center of the universe. Life in Christ is not an inward-dwelling experience. We are free to get over ourselves.

Freedom *from* is liberation from the law’s accusation and judgment. We are liberated from terror and despair, which are soul crushing. We are liberated from the incessant and impossible task of measuring up.

Freedom *from* liberates us from estrangement from God and God’s creation. Caught in sin and standing before a God who demands righteousness when we believe that we are either responsible for or capable of affecting our own salvation, breeds resentment toward God and the objectification of others.

Luther says it simply in his Small Catechism: Jesus Christ “is my Lord ... he has redeemed me ... purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil.”

Freedom *for* means that in Christ we are set free to love and serve others. Freedom is a relationship, not a new set of activities or the demand of a new law. Many activists and pietists move immediately to a set of activities to define freedom, but Luther stayed with relation-

ships. In Christ the faithful are new creatures who are opened into newly reconciled and liberated relationships with God, with other creatures and even with oneself.

Luther put it this way: “Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O, it is a living, busy, active thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. And this is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God who has shown them this grace” (*Luther’s Works*, 35:370-1).

I believe that Luther turned the argument that freedom is the problem and that our free will is what got us expelled from the garden and into this world of hurt on its head. The argument goes that we have been given free will, we misuse or abuse that gift, and in this freedom we make poor choices. Our only hope is that we give up or renounce this freedom and submit ourselves to the rule of God. Only when we are captive to God’s will, will we find redemption.

This argument assumes that we are free and that we can will ourselves into cooperating with God’s saving work. Once again it becomes about us and about what we must do in order to be saved. Luther makes the shift that we start out captive to sin and, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we are set free.

The problem isn’t too much freedom, it’s that we are not free. When we confess that “we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, page 95), it should be with a sense of relief!

Reformation scholar Timothy Wengert posed the question, “What am I going to do now that I don’t have to do anything?” Serve God and neighbor in beautiful freedom.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop

St. Paul
Lutheran Church

As a community of Christian believers, we are called by God to use the many gifts He has given us, within the church and the community, so others may come to know Him.

Upcoming Special Celebrations

- Oct. 25** Reception of New Members and Installation of New Council Members with Cake!
- Nov. 1** Two baptisms with Cupcakes!
- Nov. 8** Installation of Custodian with Strong's Pizzeria Dessert Pizza and Sase Bean Coffee!
- Nov. 15** Appeal Commitment Sunday
- Nov. 22** Celebration Sunday (Announcing Appeal Results) with Cupcakes!
- Nov. 29** Thanksgiving for Capital Campaign Committee and Blessing of Organ, Boiler, Flooring

St. Paul
Lutheran Church
106 Maple St.
Reading, OH 45215

Phone:
513-821-0987
E-mail:
mail@stpaulreading.org
Web:
stpaulreading.org

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

