

The Epistle

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
JANUARY 2019

Happy New Year!

A priest was once dispatched to pick up Mother Theresa from the airport while she was touring one of the mission houses of the *Little Sisters of the Poor* (the order that Theresa had founded in Calcutta, India) in Brazil. He greeted the elderly and now famous nun at the airport, picked up her meager luggage, walked her to his car, and proceeded to drive her into the busy city. While he drove, he talked to his guest who sat quietly and listened. He told her about the many social projects he and his parish led, how many hungry people they fed each day, how many poor children they clothed and educated. This one-sided conversation went on for a while as the priest attempted to persuade his guest of his worthiness and impress her. Finally, after a time of listening to his many activities, the elderly nun asked a single, simple question. "Fine, fine Father," she said, "but when do you pray?" Pray? Pray? Out of all the many things that one could be doing to help the poor, this woman so noted for helping others wanted to know about when the priest prayed??? The priest was taken aback and exclaimed, "Well, you see all that I am doing... I am too busy to pray." "Father," the nun kindly said, "If you are too busy to pray, then you are too busy!"

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Congregational Meeting—January 27th

Please plan on staying after the worship service on January 27th as we conduct the necessary annual business of the church. We will be addressing questions and approving the budget as well as affirming the new council members for 2019. Annual Reports will be distributed which includes each committee's report. Don't worry coffee will be provided!

The Frederick School of Religion convenes for its 36th consecutive year of classes on **February 25, 2019**. The School is an ecumenical teaching organization that provides a '**Learning for Life**' experience for both laity and clergy. The 6-week series of classes includes a broad range of topics appealing to diverse faith groups. The **location** this year is First Baptist Church, 7040 Bowers Rd., Frederick, MD 21702. **Courses** will be offered on consecutive Mondays & Tuesdays from Feb. 25th to April 2nd, with courses each afternoon (1 to 3pm), & two each evening (7 – 9pm). These **9 courses cover** a broad range of topics: *No Fortune Cookies, Just Chinese Philosophy* with Raymond Moreland; *Building Your Own Ethics: What's Fair? Who Decides?* Taught by Carl Gregg; *Henri Nouwen: A Spirituality of Living* with Ray Glennon; *Stress-proofing Your Mind: Meditation* with Beth O'Malley; *Concepts of Jewish Theology, Practice and History* taught by Jordan Hersh; *Warrior God and Prince of Peace?* Taught by Larry Eubanks; *The Magnificat* with Wayne L. Wold; *Geography: A Lens for Interpreting Jesus' Teachings* led by David Cooney; *Islam? Your Questions* with Sayed Haque and members of the Frederick Islamic community. All courses are eligible for up to 1.2 Continuing Education Units. For more information or registration forms, call 240-651-1865 or 203-918-5554, or visit our website www.frederickschoolofreligion.org.

CHRISTKINDL MARKET SUCCESS!!

The 2018 Christkindl Mart was a fun and rewarding event. We grossed over \$2000.00! Thank you to everyone who worked and purchased. The St. Paul's Congregation is always so supportive and generous of their time, talents and money. The weather was not co-operative so the events late in the day had to be cancelled. But we still had a good turn out and most people were in a festive mood so the rain did not dampen anyone's spirit. I believe this event will be held annually by the town of Walkersville so keep tuned to see what the plans will be for next year.

Again, thank you - you are the best!

A FRESH START in 2019!

During 2019, we would like to keep St. Paul's "chat" going for the 2nd & 4th Sundays, and any special Sundays, so we have those few moments to welcome visitors and friends and catch up with news of the day.

To make it successful, we would like to encourage a small gift of food for the table; nothing elaborate to make clean up easier! The focus is the "gathering of friends."

There is a sign-up sheet on the side bulletin board starting in January for your gift.....it may be some fruit, cookies, donut holes, a simple cake, etc. Whatever you share will be welcome, we just ask that you sign up. If no one has signed up, we will just have coffee, tea, children's drinks.

If you have a question, please email Marie Purswell at workaholic521@gmail.com or call 240-446-1641.

Sing to the LORD, a new song...

Psalms 98:1

THANK YOU

Pastor Ron & Congregation-

I have been on a long journey to many nursing homes. I am sure Pastor Ron thought, "Where is Florence now?" He always found me!! Pastor's visits and prayers lifted my spirit and kept me fighting on.

Thanks to the members of the congregation for flowers from the altar, cards, visits and prayers. And especially Margaret for the numerous pill runs to Safeway.

So happy to be back at St. Paul's, my church for 70 years.

Happy New Year to all,
Florence Denn Schell

Thanks to St. Paul's Quilting Angels

To All of You: Compliments for this year's work with St. Paul's quilting project. Though we are small in numbers, we have made it possible to finish 23 quilts this year. Eighteen (18) were sent to Homestead, Florida and the other five (5) were chosen through the year by members with contribution to be used for supplies or monetary gift to other charitable groups.

Betty Schubert and Lillian Foucart contributed material and cut out many, many squares; Sherley Moss sewed the largest number of tops together, while Dianne Port was our ironing specialist. Ellen Bucheimer enjoyed sewing batting strips to make use of leftover batting pieces and Pat Fellows sewed tops as time allowed with extra care in joining the squares. Most folks joined in knotting when available when the finished item was scheduled. Margaret Powers did all of the above, in addition to sewing the three (3) pieces together and doing the top machine hemming.

We are certainly not professionals but our bright and colorful covers have found appreciative homes.

QUILTING ANGELS — YOU ARE A BLESSING! THANKS!

Margaret Powers—Quilting Coordinator

Pastor's Corner

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Prayer demands that we put ourselves aside. Often, we tend to think that we are “putting ourselves aside” when we are working or when we are “helping” someone, but in truth we make choices to do these things. It is so easy to make an idol out of our own activities, to totally submerge ourselves in what we are doing, that we in fact make “what we are doing” to be one continuous activity to serve ourselves. So, for example, if we identify ourselves with our success at work, we might think that we are “setting ourselves aside” while in fact, we are serving ourselves. Prayer, on the other hand, truly demands that we “set ourselves aside” because prayer is not focused upon us, but is wholly focused upon God. Think I’m wrong on this? Ask yourself which is the more offensive statement to you: “*I will go to work for my company for eight hours,*” or “*I will spend eight hours praying today.*” Even if you had all the money in the world, to spend eight hours in prayer seems far more difficult, far more absurd than the notion that we could spend eight hours toiling away some task or another.

It’s like the old question: “Which weighs more, a ton of rocks or a ton of feathers?” Of course, a ton is a ton regardless of what material is being weighed. But most of us tend to think that a ton of feathers is somehow “friendlier” or somehow more appealing. In the same way, the idea of “working” for eight hours somehow seems less onerous or more appealing to us. Even the fact that time is a constant (that is, there are only 24 hours in a day no matter how you divide them) eight hours, no matter how you spend them is exactly the same quantity. The question is how you will spend them, and that gets to the issue of “quality”. And in doing so, we tend to favor those things which place us at the center of things, rather than those activities that ask us to “set ourselves aside.”

The priest in the story had made a conscious choice to spend his time in a certain way so that he might help others but also so that he might impress someone else; maybe even himself. When one keeps a detailed list of what they have done, it often has a motive of justification about it; a desire to “prove” one’s own worthiness. Prayer works against this motive, because at the end of the day we have little tangible evidence of our worth. An old church joke goes something like this: A church secretary barges in on the pastor while he is deep in prayer and remarks, “Oh good. I didn’t want to interrupt something important”. Pastors too are good at being busy, thinking that that our work, “justifies” our pay, and forgetting to pray.

The Benedictine monastic order has a motto: ***Ora et Labora – Prayer and Work.*** This is the governing philosophy of the monks - prayer and work. Neither task should prevent the other, but the order is crucial: **Prayer**, then work. For the monks, the day is begun and ended with prayer. We are not monks, but we can learn something important from them. Prayer and work in balance, and prayer first and foremost in our priorities. If we are so busy that we find ourselves not praying, then we must trim something out instead of trimming prayer out to squeeze yet another activity in.

In his **Small Catechism** Luther gives the following instruction for daily prayer: “*In the morning, as soon as your get out of bed, you are to make the sign of the Holy Cross and say the ‘Gloria Patri’, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer*”. Luther gives the same instructions for prayer in the evening, as we prepare for sleep. Prayer is to be the first words and the last words out of our mouths. **Ora et Labora – prayer and work.** And in doing this, we find that we are not too busy to pray, but rather, in the words of Martin Luther, “I am too busy not to pray.”



by heart

Thank you to the congregation for your enthusiastic participation in the Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program for 2019. We had over 39 giving units/households complete their *Estimate of Giving Cards on Consecration Sunday (October 28th) committing a total of \$2,215 per week*. After the worship service, we enjoyed a delicious meal that was catered by Mar-Lu-Ridge.

Statistical Report from Consecration Sunday:

- Of the 39 pledges; 26 increased their financial commitment above their last year's amount.
- Based on last year's giving records, we can expect to receive \$813 per week in 2019 from people who have consistent giving patterns during the past 12 months but were not present on October 28th.
- Based on the average total of loose offerings during the past 3 years, we can expect to receive \$636 during the coming year from that source.
- This gives us a grand total of \$14,656 anticipated for the next 12 months.
- This is a 6% increase in total giving above last year.

You can still turn in your Estimate of Giving Card for 2019. Please mail it to Artie Fauble, Financial Secretary % St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 19 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Walkersville, MD 21793.

For 2019, don't forget your pledge of moving toward your goal of stepping up. Your generous giving will do so much more than balance our budget for the coming year. It helps make us financially secure and we can grow both new and existing areas of ministry in our church.

Once again, thank you for being a responsible steward by sharing what you have to further the mission of our church.

And thanks to the Consecration Sunday Team for all their help in making Year 1 of this stewardship program a success: Pastor Ron, Troy Keeney, Amy Mildenstein, Artie Fauble, Jim Titmas, Ed Chaney and our guest speaker, Pastor Robert Lewis.

Sheila Kahler

Consecration Sunday Chairperson

Interested in Electronic Giving?

Please see Amy Mildenstein or Troy Keeney for instructions on how to sign up. It's easy!

Upcoming Events

January 8th

Committee reports due for the annual report

January 27th

Annual Congregational Meeting
(right after worship service)

Mar Lu Ridge Celebrating 60 years: 1959-2019

It may be cold outside right now, but the warmth of summer is right around the corner and so is Summer Camp at Mar-Lu-Ridge. Camp brochures can be found on the side bulletin board in the church. Why wait, check it out online today at www.mar-lu-ridge.org Register before February 18th and get \$35 off total camp cost! Camperships will also be available through St. Paul's, applications will be available with camp brochures. We are so blessed to be able to celebrate with them as they mark 60 years in outdoor ministry. An anniversary celebration is planned for the weekend of June 8th & 9th, mark your calendars.