



“ST. PAUL’S IS A FAMILY OF BELIEVERS IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, COMMITTED TO THE FULFILLMENT OF THE WORD OF GOD”

Church Office....570-474-6616

Pastor - Rev. Michele Kaufman

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Secretary - Kelly Smolenak Phone: 570-474-6616

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Office Hours

Wednesday’s from 3:00-7:00 pm

Sexton – Kim Schuler – 570-332-8013



We are on Facebook! Visit us at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Mountain Top, PA and keep in touch with upcoming events.



Our Sunday Service Schedule:
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM outdoors (Drive-in)

*Pastor has been posting services from St. John's Nanticoke on our Facebook page for those who cannot attend in person. Same pastor, similar service, same sermon, different sanctuary. We are looking to split those services between St. John's and St. Paul's in the future. Recorded services are available on our Facebook page & website www.stpaulsmttop.com



Every Sunday we will have communion offered in the bags we hand out to the congregation.

Pastor's Message

How do you feel about the idea of dying? Is it something you think about often? Or do you prefer to put those thoughts on the back burner. Have you ever shut someone down when they said, "when I die..."? This pandemic has reminded us that death is always close by and is an event we will all face someday. But our reluctance to talk about death is often interpreted as evidence that we are afraid, and therefore suppress thoughts about it. More often than not we seem more bothered by the prospect of losing our loved ones than we do about dying ourselves. Studies also show that we worry more about the dying process – the pain and loneliness involved than about the end of

life itself. In general, when we are asked if we are afraid to die, most of us deny it.

Typically, I have found that individuals who survive accidents, serious illnesses and other close brushes with death look at the world with new eyes. They no longer take life and the people in their lives for granted. Encounters with death can wake us up. They snap us out of a trance-like state in which we are indifferent to life and unaware of the blessings in our lives. And yet I think we can gain some of that by simply contemplating death.

Becoming aware of our own mortality can be a liberating and awakening experience, which can paradoxically, help us to live authentically and fully. It can give us the ability to live in the present, with an appreciation for small and simple things, such as being in nature, looking at the sky and the stars, and spending time with family. It may also give us a broader perspective, so worries that weigh upon us no longer seem important. We become less materialistic and more altruistic and relationships become more genuine and authentic. Life is too short and fleeting to worry about other people or harbor resentment against other people.

Lent offers us an opportunity to contemplate life and death. It is an opportunity to contemplate our mortality. If ever there is a time that the Christian faith dwells on death, practices it, even celebrates it, surely it is Lent. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday with those solemn words of death: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." In the words of the Psalmist, "You turn us back to the dust and say, 'Go back, O child of earth.' " We receive the ashes of Ash Wednesday as a sign of our mortality: a precursor -of our own death and those final words: "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." As a Christian contemplating death, I realize that it is not something to be feared. I should not fear death because I know that the moment I die I will enter into eternal life with my Savior, Jesus Christ. I receive this gift of eternal life not because of my goodness, but because Christ died for my sins on the cross, paying the price of my sins, and offering a way for me to

be reconciled to God. Because of this, I take comfort in knowing that I will be with God when I die.

The prophet, Joel, reminds us to step into the presence of God by remembering our sins and bringing them to God with repentance.

Thus we are invited to step into a time of remembrance, reformation, and renewal, to actualize what the people of God have experienced in the past. Ash Wednesday is a time to remember (re-experience), be reformed (made over), and renewed (made new) by God. We are children of God, but we are sinful, lost like the prodigal son (in Luke 15). The prodigal son was called to return home to his father. Like him, we have gone astray and forgotten who we are.

But the message to us from the prophet Joel is not all darkness and gloom, for through his prophet, God utters that, "Yet even now." "Yet even now ... return to me ... return to the Lord." Even now, in the midst of our sinful ways, when we have been so busy with our own affairs that we have repeatedly neglected others; even when we have forgotten to rely on God and have counted on our own self-sufficiency; even when we have burdened our souls with pride and anger and guilt; even when we think we do not have a prayer with which to stand before the Lord, God spreads wide his arms of mercy on a cross and bids us return to him.

Pastor Michele



Congregational Meeting for the 2020

Annual Report will be on Sunday, Feb. 14th at 10:15 AM.

**Reports will be available Feb. 7th for you to review before
congragational meeting.**



Due to COVID numbers and the uncertainty of weather conditions in February will be postpone movie night until further notice.



Our next Healing Service will fall on Wednesday, February 3rd. The service will be indoors at 11:00 a.m. following socially distant guidelines. All are welcome to join us.



During the month of February, we will be collecting for Michalene's Mission.

Michalene's Mission is working with the growing homeless population in the Wilkes-Barre area. They are putting together care packages for the 14th of February. Please have your donations to the church by Feb. 13th by 12 PM if possible.

They are requesting the following items:

Back packs/ drawstring bags, Sweatshirts, Boots/shoes, Socks, Coats, Gloves, Masks, Blankets, Hand sanitizer, \$5 gift cards for McDonalds, \$5 gift cards for Turkey Hill, Candy & snacks...

***We will take items down for the 14th and continue to collect throughout the month.**

January Church Council Highlights

The council meeting was held on January 17th.

- We will look into having a Maundy Thursday dinner similar to the Christmas dinner.
- Envelopes for Sunday School children need to be distributed.
- Preschool is going to reopen in February 1st. They will have one class five days a week with twelve students. They will follow Covid guidelines.
- We are waiting a date from Monk Heating to install Air Scrubbers on our HVAC units and to replace the heating unit in the music room.
- The Finance Committee will meet with John Schwear to review our Janney Montgomery investment on January 20th.
- Our second Congregational Meeting will be held on February 14 @ 10:15am. We will distribute the information for the meeting the week before to allow people a chance to review the information.
- The roof on the Social Hall will need to be replaced this year. When we put the cross on the roof we discovered that the roof has dried out and some of the asphalt is missing from the shingles. I will be working to get price quotes to bring back to council for review. We will look to change the roof out to a metal roof. We will be asking for

help to repair the roof through donations from the congregation.

- We are going to look into doing a drive to help the homeless population in the area. More information to come once we determine what they can use.
- Pastor will look into holding a community service for those that have passed away from Covid this past year. More to come on this.
- Our next council meeting will be held on February 21st.

Kevin Scott, Church Council President



OUR NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Will be held on February 21st @ 6:30pm

A Word of Thanks...

**-The Renninger Family would like to thank everyone for your sympathy sent to us for the death of my wife and mother to our children, Teresa. Teresa battled cancer for two and a half years and is now no longer in pain in heaven. Our strength comes from Eternal life thru Jesus Christ!
Thank you, Terry, Michelle, Timmy**



-IF YOU DID NOT RECEIVE ENVELOPES,
PLEASE LET PASTOR KNOW OR CALL THE CHURCH
OFFICE, AND WE WILL CORRECT THE PROBLEM!



FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED IN
JOINING ST. PAUL'S. PLEASE BE IN CONTACT WITH PR.
KAUFMAN OR CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE TO FILL
OUT THE NECESSARY FORMS.

Children's Sunday School



**SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE-DURING THIS TIME WE REGRET IT'S
BEST THAT WE NOT MEET FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL.**

***MARK KASTER IS HOLDING ZOOM MEETINGS ON SUNDAYS AT
1PM. IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFO ON THIS AND TO BE
INCLUDED IN ZOOM MEETING, PLEASE CONTACT HIM VIA
EMAIL: MARK.KASTER@WILKES.EDU**



Feb. 7th- OPEN

Feb. 14th- Lois Scott

Feb. 21st- Lisa Napersky/Michele Kessler

Feb. 28th - OPEN

Flowers can be ordered if there are openings on the Flower Chart. Call the church office today and leave message if you are interested! The cost is \$32.

***A New Flower Chart is up for 2021! If you have a specific Sunday you're interested in, please call the church and leave a message for Secretary, or email info@stpaulsmttop.com**



**Our February Hostess will be Florence Drum
The meeting will be February 10th 2021 at 1pm
Please bring coupons and scissors.**

Coming up...



Ash Wednesday is the first day of the penitential season of Lent. Its true name is actually not "Ash Wednesday" but "The Day of Ashes." Whichever name is used, the reference to ashes comes from the ceremony of placing ashes on the forehead in the shape of the cross as a sign of penitence.

This custom was introduced by Pope Gregory I, who was Bishop of Rome from to 590 A.D. to 604 A.D. It was enacted as a universal practice in all of Western Christendom by the Synod of Benevento in 1091 A.D.

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17th begins the forty-day season of Lent: forty days which correspond to the time Jesus spent in the desert wilderness being tempted by Satan. It is not a season we should enter into unadvisedly or lightly, for this is the most important part of the Christian year. Here we encounter our faith in all its fullness: in all its depth and height, in all its darkness and light, in all its pain and glory.

Lent is a somber time, a time for reflection and growth, a time to change our ways and deepen our commitment. This year I will once again I plan to offer services at 11:00 a.m. every Wednesday. Those services will be held indoors. I will also offer videotaped services for those who prefer. We will also offer an evening outdoor service on Ash Wednesday at

6:00 p.m. You will hear more about Lent in the coming weeks.

Lenten Devotions

As in the past, you are invited to receive daily devotions that will help you reflect on God's role in your life and challenge you to follow in his example. Hard copies will be made available or you can receive them via email or on Pastor's personal or the church Facebook page. You are encouraged to share them as well.

THRIVENT MEMBERS

2020 Choice Dollars expire on 3/31/2021. Don't miss this opportunity to recommend where some of Thrivent Financials charitable outreach funds are distributed. Please consider sending your Thrivent dollars to St. Paul's Mountaintop.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CLASSES

Classes will be forming for those in 2nd grade or older who have yet to receive instruction for 1st Holy Communion. Because of Covid, we will hold off and complete classes in May when the service can be held outdoors and family and friends can gather with our young people and celebrate. Please contact Pastor Kaufman if you have a child eligible.



In anticipation of schools opening in the Crestwood district, St. Paul's Preschool will reopen February 1. There will only be one class five days a week for 4 year olds, allowing them time for socialization and learning skills before entering kindergarten in the fall.



The ELCA Youth Gathering is a national convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for high-school-age youth. It is held every 3 years in a different American city. The gathering lasts around 5 days and each day is focused on a form of service. Each convention also has a central theme to it. Each theme is focused on a certain scripture from the bible.

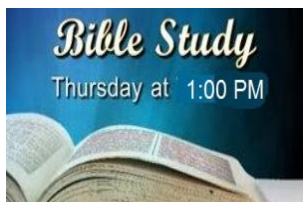
Regrettably because of COVID, the National Youth Gathering was postponed. While this event is a year and a half away. Because of this change, additional youth are eligible to attend who were not eligible before. In order to attend, youth must complete 8th grade in 2022 or older. Please let Pastor know if you are interested or if you have questions on what this event entails. We will do our best to ensure every child interested attends.



BEAR CREEK SUMMER CAMP 2021:

-Online registration for Summer Camp 2021 is open now! Over 200 campers have already registered and you don't want to miss out! Everyone who registers before April 1st will receive an EXCLUSIVE BCC Early Bird T-Shirt when they get to camp.

<https://bearcreekcamp.campbrainregistration.com/>



Who ever thought Bible Study could be fun???

This is Bible Study like you've never experienced! No homework, no tests, no previous knowledge. Have some fun with learning; only 2 hours a week with a knowledgeable teacher. Snacks provided! Come join in on the fun in our bible study group. Everyone is welcome! Thursdays at 1pm...We enjoy each other's company and great conversation. We will hold Bible Study in the Parish Hall at 1:00 p.m. Tables have been set up to allow for participants to "social distance."

Bible Trivia: How well do you know your bible?

(READ JONAH 1)

1. IN WHAT CITY DID JONAH CATCH THE SHIP?

2. WHOM DID EACH SAILOR CRY OUT TO WHEN THE STORM HIT THE SHOP JONAH HAD BOARDED?
3. WHAT DID THE SAILORS FIRST THROW INTO THE SEA TO LIGHTEN THE SHIP?
4. HOW DID THE SAILORS DETERMINE IT WAS JONAH'S FAULT FOR THE STORM?
5. WHAT DID JONAH SUGGEST THE SAILORS SHOULD DO TO CALM THE STORM?

(Answers are on the last page of the Newsletter)



Get your submissions into Kelly by February 17th. You can leave your information in her mailbox, call her at the office or email her at info@stpaulsmttop.com

ALUMINUM CANS

Please remember to deposit your aluminum cans in the bin behind the church. Monies collected from the sale go directly to where it's needed in our church.



YARN SPINNERS

We are currently working on lap robes for St. Luke's Marjorie Lou Anthony will take them over to St. Luke's for distribution. We will continue to work on the prayer shawls and baptismal blankets for Pastor.



COFFEE CANS FLOWERS

Please save your green plastic coffee cans (leave labels on) as we need these for the flowers that we use to take to the shut-ins. Please save them for now, and you can bring into the church once we can gather again inside.



Now you can support St. Paul's
when you shop on Amazon!

Go to www.smile.amazon.com and register!

We are listed as: St. Paul Lutheran Church
(this is not a typo)
Mountain Top, PA

Any questions, please ask Pastor.



FOOD BANK

The Mountain Top Food Bank continues to distribute food to clients every Friday using safe distance practices. If you would like to drop off donations at the church, please do so on Fridays 9am-noon. Donations are always welcome, and appreciated.

ITEMS THEY CURRENTLY NEED ARE: Coffee, Peanut Butter,

jelly, ketchup, dry soup, pudding, Jell-O mixes, popcorn, pork & beans, canned tomatoes, canned soup, mustard, mayonnaise, tuna, macaroni & cheese, pasta (ex. Spaghetti), peas, canned pasta, and noodles.



**A reminder we'd like your loose change!
Clean out your pockets and check under
your car seats! Please save your change
and donate it for our Sunday school!**

**SICK OR IN THE HOSPITAL?
WOULD YOU LIKE A VISIT FROM PASTOR?**

If you are in the hospital, please let us know. We care about you, and we would like to pray for you. If you would like Pastor to make a visit for any particular reason, please contact Pastor directly or leave a message with the church secretary and Pastor will contact you to schedule a time. **YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO US**, but we cannot address what we don't know.

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR: DJ Bianco, Franck Bielecki, Kari Stewart Bonczewski, Austin Bowman, Lois Burge, Kim Collum, Jay Crandall, Claire Daley, Al Drum, Florence Drum, Monica Hayward, Marion Hildebrand, Joyce Hocko, Matt Howton, Gaylene Hunter, Ian Hunter, Mary Beth Innamorati, Craig Jacobs, Alice Kershinski, Matthew Kostelec, Todd & Daphne Kretz, Janice Krzywicki, Amy Maher, Dale Major, Jon Martineau, Andrea Martz, Dolores Marzocco, Wayne Mast, Shari Meister, Mary Alice McCloskey, Cheryl Myers, Andrew Richner, Virginia (Ginger) Rinehimer, Steven Reeves, Michele

Reed, Cathy Ruitter, Bob Rushworth, Andrew Ruth, Dale Scott, Carl Schultz, Joe Seymour, Robert F. Shultz, Leona Stemrich, Bonnie Tomcho, Matthew Walker, Charlotte Weiss, granddaughter of Paul & Karen Ann Kowalczyk, Karen Wise, Loretta Z, Marian Zawilski, Ellwood Zimmerman

IN ADDITION TO THOSE HAVING HEALTH PROBLEMS we ask that you pray for all the men, and women who are serving in the Armed Forces. Matthew Hewson, Wayne Kaufman, Richard Mester, Patrick Murphy, Brandon Passman, Anthony Porrecha, Jr., Christian Yurkanin.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Helen Price	1 st
Michael Kennelly	2 nd
Joyce Hocko	3 rd
Margie Lou Anthony	4 th
Ted Hollock	6 th
Julie Ann Lawson	6 th
Molly Hyjurick	6 th
Paul Johns	7 th
Kayla Kennelly	7 th
Kelly Kennelly	7 th
Terry Renninger	9 th
Tanyia Reeves-Wendel	10 th
Jon Russell	13 th
Karen Wise	16 th
Etta Devens	17 th

Cindy Moffit	18 th
Annette Weiss	23 rd
Lois Yeager	23 rd
Tyler Johns	26 th
Kyle Hankinson	26 th
Virginia Hildebrand	28 th



Cindy & Brian Moffit 18th/'06

Answers to Bible Trivia:

1. JOPPA
2. HIS OWN GOD
3. CARGO
4. THEY CAST LOTS
5. PICK HIM UP AND CAST HIM INTO THE SEA