

The Lamp Lighter
February 2018
The Newsletter of Living Lord Lutheran Church
Real God. Real Faith. Real Life.
www.LLLC.org

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays at 8:00 am & 10:30 am at Living Lord Lutheran Church
Sundays at 10:30 am at St. Paul Lutheran Church

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Living Lord Lutheran Church 9:15 am
St. Paul Lutheran Church 9:30 am

From Pastor William D. Leitch... *"Because the hand of the Lord my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me." Ezra 7:28*

In the book of the prophet Ezra, we hear the story of the Israelites returning to Jerusalem after a long exile. Remember, the exile started with Assyria defeating Israel, the northern kingdom. Then, Babylon defeated Assyria. Babylon then attacked Judea, destroyed the temple, took all the valuable worship items from the temple, and took the wealthy leaders into exile.

Now, in Ezra, Persia has defeated Babylon and King Cyrus is sending the Israelites home to Jerusalem. It's amazing, because Cyrus is providing everything they need to rebuild Jerusalem. He has even negotiated with the old Assyrians who knew where the temple worship items were and had them return them to the temple. I know. I said that Babylon attacked Jerusalem and stole the temple stuff, but somehow the old Assyrians had possession of the stuff.

Ezra notes that God's hand was on them and provided everything to make this happen. Just once, though, as they were traveling, there was some foreign military that showed up to escort them. Ezra turned it down, because God was watching over them. Later, Ezra confesses that, yes, God was watching over them. In fact, God provided this foreign military to escort them and protect them.

As we move forward in our ministry together with St. Paul, remember that God's hand is on us, too. We should not be afraid and we should not turn down any who offer to help us in this journey.

In Christ,
Pr. Bill

Joint Worship with Bishop Allende on Sunday, February 25... We have invited Bishop Abraham Allende to preside and preach at Living Lord Lutheran Church on Sunday, February 25. This will be a joint worship with St. Paul and there will only be one worship time that day at 10:30 am. Following worship, there will be a reception with hors d'oeuvres and a chance to speak to Bishop Allende. Bishop Allende has walked with us in our Shared Ministry – giving us guidance, encouragement, and resources. He is especially excited about

meeting all of you. Our Synod staff consists of five people: Bishop Allende; Rev. Bierman, Assistant to the Bishop; the Bishop's Secretary; and office manager, and the Resource Center manager. Bishop Allende is there to guide us and provide any resources he can provide, but we are the ones who know this community and our congregations. I always remind Bishop Allende that we are the Synod together and that we are in this mission and ministry together. We in the Eastern Conference have been a breath of fresh air, as our congregations have been intentional about working together when we can. This is our opportunity to give encouragement to our Bishop and Synod staff during these challenging and exciting times.

What do you expect from our church? My colleague, Pr. Sean Myers, wrote the following request. This question is exactly what keeps me awake at night. So if you would respond to this question, perhaps it would help open my eyes and the eyes of our Shared Ministry Team. I pray that everyone respond, not just those of you who participate in worship every Sunday.

The plea: What do you expect from your church? It is an honest question to ask and one that needs to be asked. There are plenty of times that expectations are not being met because no one knows that there are expectations. Or maybe you really don't expect much from your church or the church on a whole at all, but when there are no expectations, it can be really easy to fall into apathy. If there are no expectations, then there is really not much of a point.

To be clear, I am not asking in a consumeristic sense about the expectations, not about what are the things that would make you happy, regardless of whether it is best for the church or not. The question is what do you expect the church to be and to do? I have found that many congregations are in "survival mode", where the only expectation is to be able to keep the lights on and do whatever is necessary to make that happen. It is a depressing reality that brings no hope and gradually leads to death. Without a broader hope and expectation, the church is destined to fail because it is not living in the calling, purpose, and power of God. Surviving is not enough.

So what do you expect? What you expect will change your whole relationship with everyone you meet as part of the church, with worship, with what happens with you when you worship and take part in the church. Here is what I expect from the church, just off the top of my head. That there is a true effort to listen to God's call and to live it out, to bring healing to all who are in need, to create a positive change in the world in whatever way that God is calling, that lives will be transformed, mercy shown, and worship be done in a meaningful and quality way. How that is done may be lived out differently in each congregation, but as a whole, I expect at the very least that much from the church, whether we are talking about the whole greater church, regionally, congregationally, and each person of the church. All of us together are the church, the Body of Christ in the world. We should expect much from the church. So tell me, what is it that you expect?

Seeking the Fountain of Youth...It is no secret that the culture in North America is going through a massive shift, and it is no secret that this shift is having a tremendous impact on the church. With every major denomination (and churches in no denomination at all) in steady decline, churches are wondering about their ability to survive. In particular, churches long to see more young people walk through their doors, but young people today just don't seem interested, and most churches have no idea where to start. The future seems unsure, at best, and downright depressing, at worst.

Yet amid these grim statistics, there are churches that are beating the odds. That is why the folks at Fuller Theological Seminary decided to research churches that were "growing young" (that is, churches whose average age was decreasing or holding steady). They wanted to determine what, if anything, these churches had in common. Was it denominational affiliation (or lack thereof)? Was it location? A "contemporary" worship service? The size of the congregation? A young, hip pastor?

You might be surprised to learn that they found that none of these factors were particularly significant. In fact, time and again, they found churches of every denomination, size, geographic location, and worship style that were able to grow young. Through their research, the team identified six core commitments that every “growing young” church embodied.

During Wednesdays in Lent, we are going to examine each of these six commitments in the hopes of sparking some conversation about how we might begin to help young people discover and love our churches. The six strategies will be discussed as follows:

- February 14 - Unlocking Keychain Leadership for Youth
- February 21 - Empathizing with Today’s Young People
- February 28 - Taking Jesus’ Message Seriously
- March 7 - Fueling a Warm Community
- March 14 - Prioritizing Young People (and Families) Everywhere
- March 21 - Being the Best Neighbors

Please join us at St. Paul on each of these days. We will gather for a soup supper at 6:00 pm and then at 7:00 pm for a worship service where we will explore these themes.

Growing young can be a difficult process. It requires some change and a whole lot of faith to step out and embark on something new. But, it is necessary if the church is going to thrive amid the changing cultural tides. And, more importantly, it is necessary if we want a new generation to know and follow Jesus. While many things have changed, some things have not: Jesus is still the only one who has defeated sin and death, he is still calling his children to follow him, and he is still calling his church to go and make disciples. Join us as we talk about the ways in which we can embrace our role in God’s mission in the world – even if that world is a bit different than the one we used to know. *Andrea Ceplecci Hall (Andrea Ceplecci Hall was baptized, confirmed, and married at St. Paul. She has a Master’s degree in theology from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and a Doctorate in Educational Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary. She is married to Rev. Dr. Sean Hall, and they live in Greenville, PA, where Sean is the pastor at Hillside Presbyterian Church.)*

From Pastor Ann Marie Winters... Repentance for the Sake of Young People and Families

How often we hear the word REPENTANCE during Lent! What comes to mind?

- Is it saying sorry to God and promising to give up sin?
- Is it sacrificing something that you especially enjoy?
- Or is it more prayer and worship than usual?
- Perhaps giving to the poor and needy?

Repentance is any and all of these things. And REPENTANCE is always a matter of “changing directions”, moving closer to God and God’s ways.

With CHANGING DIRECTIONS in mind, we are embarking on a Lenten Journey together with St. Paul and Living Lord, taking action to grow younger. **This means that we are working more closely with God for the sake of young people and families.** We have been consulting with Dr. Andrea (Ceplecci) Hall (see her article entitled “Seeking the Fountain of Youth”), and we have formed a Youth Design Team. As we double our efforts to incorporate young people into our congregations, we need the support of every member.

- Come to St. Paul for the prayer services and “Growing Young” presentations on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 14) and Lenten Wednesdays (Feb. 21 to Mar. 21)
- Take an interest in one or two young people by talking to them, asking them about themselves, sharing your story, or a bit of wisdom perhaps.
- PRAY for God’s help that our children will change directions and GROW YOUNG!

(The book called “Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies” that is the basis for our discussion is written by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin, Baker Books; Grand Rapids, MI, 2016. It is available for about \$12.00 through Amazon.)

Repenting and growing with you,
Pastor Ann Marie Winters

Praying Together During Lent...Our PRAYER EMPHASIS for February and March is “Growing Young”. Will you pray for youth and young families, especially those in our churches?

ASH WEDNESDAY: For several years the TALC catechism students and teachers have been leading our Ash Wednesday Evening Prayer. It is a time for the youth to step up and respond in leadership, and to make their presence known and felt. (The youth should arrive at 5:30 pm for rehearsal.) All members of our TALC churches are invited to partake in a potluck supper at 6:00 pm at St. Paul (just bring a dish to share), followed by worship at 7:00 pm. During worship, we will have a presentation by Dr. Andrea (Ceplecchi) Hall on “Unlocking Keychain Leadership for Youth”, also the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. Bring your friends!

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS DURING LENT: Our Worship Committee at St. Paul is preparing a Service of Preaching and Teaching called “Growing Young Presentation and Prayer” (see the article called “Seeking the Fountain of Youth”.) The 7:00 pm prayer service will include song, scripture, prayers, and a key presentation. Come learn and worship! Everyone is also welcome to the Soup Suppers which begin at 6:00 pm each Wednesday.

From the Fellowship Committee Chairperson, Nancy Walters...

February Fellowship...We will have Fellowship on **Sunday, February 11**, after both services. On **Sunday, February 25**, we will be hosting a Joint Worship Service with St. Paul here at Living Lord at 10:30 am (there will be no 8:00 am service). Bishop Allende will be in attendance. We will also have Fellowship on **February 25** after the 10:30 am worship service. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for items that could be donated for the fellowships.

I will be posting other items needed for the kitchen and for future fellowships and funeral luncheons (see list on the bulletin board under Fellowship). Since we, as a church, are watching the budget, I am trying to save as much as I can by using donations. If anyone has any ideas for future fellowships, I am open for suggestions. Some ideas already presented could include a women’s luncheon around Mother’s Day, a men’s luncheon around Father’s Day, and supporting other committees with any of their functions. I would also like to explore the possibility of a long-term fundraiser to obtain a new refrigerator for the kitchen. If you have any input for this project, please let me know. I can be reached at home at 330-889-3382 or on my cell at 330-469-8838. If you don’t get an answer, please leave a message and I will return your call. Thank you in advance for your help. I will depend on you all to make my term as Fellowship Chairperson a successful one.

From the Finance Committee, Treasurer Dave Henderson... The books are closed for December 2017. Receipts for December were \$11,383.46 and expenses were \$12,302.17, resulting in a loss of \$918.71 for the month. For the year, through December 31, we had income of \$135,836.89 and expenses of \$146,074.76, for a loss of \$10,237.87 for 2017. We ended the year over \$23,000 below our budgeted giving of \$158,050.00. As always, we did a good job of controlling spending for the year, which kept our loss down. As we enter into 2018, please reflect on our mission here at Living Lord Lutheran Church and see if we can get back on a positive financial frame work.

From the Outreach Committee Chairperson, Judy Shaffer...

Bingo at NSOV...The Outreach Committee will be hosting Bingo at Niles Shepherd of the Valley on **Wednesday, February 7**, at 2:00 pm. We will meet at 1:30 pm to set up. Men and women both are invited to assist. Please see the sign-up sheet on the main bulletin board if you are able to help or bake cookies. We are asking for donations of square tissue boxes, hand lotion, and medium size gift bags to hold these two items (plain colors like red, green, blue, yellow, purple, etc.). If you have any questions, please contact Judy Shaffer at 330-856-3148. St. Paul members are welcome to join us – call Judy Shaffer for information.

From the Worship Committee Chairperson, Jan Was...

Ash Wednesday, February 14...There will be no noon Ash Wednesday worship service at Living Lord due to Pastor's vacation. There will be a potluck dinner at 6:00 pm and an Ash Wednesday worship service at 7:00 pm at St. Paul on **Wednesday, February 14**.

From the Parish Nurse, Dora Muller...*"It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has."* Hippocrates

Our bodies have the incredible ability of self-healing. We all have memories of cuts, bruises, and broken bones. However, when major health crises occur, how can we achieve a healthier lifestyle again? To maintain a goal of self-care we should individually accept ownership of our health. At the same time, let's not forget that the combination of advances in medical technology and new drugs often have, by various degrees, been successful in eradicating diseases, curing cancer, and prolonging and improving quality of life. Self-healing in some cultures explores the belief that the mind is a powerful tool to remove illnesses and improve health. Even today in rural areas of Latin America and Africa, complementary therapies are well received. The power of prayer is present in the healing process. I have memories of healing prayers from my childhood in Brazil and the use of healing oils which were administered by our pastor to protect us against disease. However, with our culture, more emphasis is on drugs and medical technology to cure and prevent diseases. I just came across a study that explores the notion of self-healing with emphasis on building a relationship between doctors and patients. Communication between health care providers and patients should be a priority and is essential to increase awareness and build trust, which should help activate one's power of self-healing. When a person assumes the responsibility for his or her own health, this will improve the process of self-healing. In his book *Saving Normal*, psychiatrist Allen Frances summed it up well: *"Being able to enlist the confidence and hope of the sick patient has always been and still is the most essential skill in a great shaman or a great modern doctor."* The human connection has often been lost due to the lack of the healing power of relationships in the sea of technology and pharmacology. We often place too much importance on technology. Personally, I am not against the advancements in medical technology and pharmacology. We are living longer and with the desire to have productive and happier lives and we demand the most recent technology to keep our bodies moving. By understanding the external stress that affects our health and learning to recognize the early signs that our bodies are in distress will help the process of healing. Accepting our limitations is the first step to self-healing, and hopefully our relationships with our faith, and cultivate our mindfulness by quieting down our worries which will lead us to a better state of health.

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Friday, February 2, 9:00 am – Council Retreat in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, February 4, 8:00 & 10:30 am – Installation of Council

Wednesday, February 7, 1:30 pm – Bingo at Niles Shepherd of the Valley

Sunday, February 11 – Fellowship after Both Services/**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

Sunday, February 25, 10:30 am – Joint Worship Service with Bishop Allende at Living Lord
with Fellowship after service

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

- 3 = Jake DeScenna
- 6 = Joel Johnson
- 7 = Zavier Prasky
- 8 = Frederick Peachman
- 10 = Michael Altieri, Brady Sheets, & Larry Wright
- 12 = Stacey Altieri & Rollie Walters
- 14 = Frank LaRock
- 18 = Anthony Brounce
- 19 = Bill Dillon, Carole Fedorchak, & Pegg Maloney
- 20 = Elaina Jamison
- 22 = Leona Harden
- 23 = Frank Roberts
- 25 = Cynthia Griffin
- 28 = Bonnie Smith

Anniversaries

- 8 = Lauka, Tom & Pat
- 16 = Offerdahl, Lee & Trish

NEWS FROM ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Paul Coffee Cup Greetings...Held on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month.

St. Paul Grief Ministry...Part of the Social Committee is Grief Ministry. Joyce Osborn (330-372-2136) is spearheading this ministry with Pr. Winters' and God's guidance and help. When a loved one dies, Joyce sends a set of four books called "Journeying Through Grief" throughout the first year. Each book describes the issues and feelings that a person tends to encounter at various points of grief and the books offer suggestions on handling them. If Pr. Winters or Joyce can be of any help or if you have any questions during a time of grief, please contact either of them.

St. Paul SPLASH TODAY...Donations are always warmly welcomed, and with your continued support, we will be able to sustain this valuable ministry to young families.