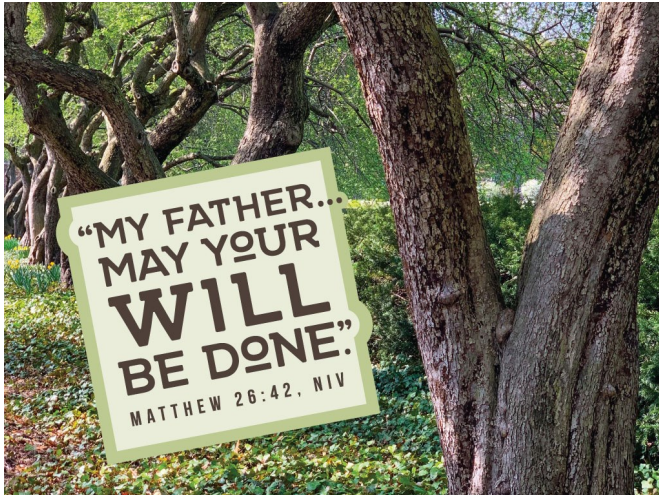


The Epistle

Volume 22 Issue 3 March 2023



St. Paul Lutheran Church
MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA
FOUNDED 1897



In sha'Allah, In Gethsemane

You may have heard the phrase “*in sha'Allah*.” I was reminded of it by a member during our Sunday morning Bible study on Matthew. It’s an Arabic phrase which translates as, “if God has willed” or “God willing.” You may hear or say “God willing” every now and again as a western Christian, but it tends to be more of an occasional utterance for us. Not so for Muslims worldwide or anyone from predominantly Muslim countries. Exp. Q: “Can we meet for dinner at 6?” A: “Yes, *in sha'Allah*.” It’s ubiquitous and usually sincere -- although comically most will say growing up their parents used it at some point to deflect. Exp. Q: “Can we go to the toy store?” A: “*In sha'Allah*, we’ll see.” – Translation: “No, not unless God makes me.” There is a story from the life of Islam’s prophet, Muhammed; a group of people came to him asking a question. He said he would ask God for the answer and respond tomorrow. The men returned, he had no answer as he promised. In the account, it took 15 days for the answer to be made known to him. The take away: we work on God’s schedule and not the other way around.

In our Bible study, the words of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel elicited a similar revelation in the form of a question: what do we, as followers of Jesus, make of God’s will? Much ink has been spilled by theologians over this question. Some say God controls everything by way of everything and that nothing happens that God does not direct or intend. This view can be a comfort or a curse depending on what is happening. Conversely, others see a God who permits a great deal of choice and happenings outside what we might call God’s direct control. This view too can be a comfort or a curse depending on what is happening. Often this is more a question on the topic of God’s sovereignty than it is on what might be classified God’s will...but let’s not get too deep into the weeds on this right now.

In Matthew’s Gospel, the lessons Jesus offers through his teaching and life seem to relate, less to answering these questions, as they do to trusting the one who is more powerful than we are with the process and the results. Jesus seems to pick up and pass on the lesson of Job. After Job finally reaches a ‘breaking point’ God explains to Job that he does not need to understand why everything happens, he should really just accept it. God is bigger than Job – God is God and Job is not. As a mere mortal, “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt?!” (Jb 38.31), doesn’t always satisfy as an answer, at least not when you’re the one covered with sores. But I suppose greater truths aren’t dependent on my liking what they are anyway.

Even though Jesus doesn’t offer a deep theological answer (perhaps a satisfactory one does not exist?), he does manage to offer a taught and exercised disposition to the question

that is ultimately more beneficial. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches the disciples that trusting God's will saves from succumbing to fear. Consider the birds of the air and the grass, neither worry about their clothes or food day to day – trust that God will provide for you as God does for God's creation. Knowing that he and his followers will face persecution he teaches them that, even when they face a time of trial or death itself, take heart - God is still in control. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father." (Mt. 10.29) And, when

pressed to practice as he preaches, we find Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane praying this, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want...if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." (Mt. 26) All-in-all it's just a longer way of saying and living *in sha'Allah*. **And** ultimately, recognizing the inevitable *in sha'Allah*-ness of everything is a matter of trust and trust is a matter of faith – and faith ain't always easy.

See you in church (of course - *in sha'Allah*),

Pastor Tony

Church COUNCIL

St. Paul Church Council met on Thursday, February 16th. Here are some highlights of the meeting:

- Officers were elected: Joanne Seasholtz, President; Lindsey Naumann, Vice President; Lillian Stevens, secretary.
- Vacation Bible School will be held this summer. Joanne Seasholtz and Lindsey Naumann will be the coordinators.
- We will have one service at 10 AM on Easter morning. There will be a breakfast; timing is TBD.
- The solar panels are now operational. We will be watching the power bills.
- Revisions to the policy for use of the church building are in process.



Join us for lunch!

New & Prospective
Members

"Old" members welcome

March 5th

Those interested in joining the congregation, new members who joined during covid, and anyone else who wants to stick around after worship for food and fellowship, are invited to stay for our first, bi-annual new & prospective members lunch on March 5th. We'll talk about St. Paul, the work of our ELCA Synod, and get a brief introduction to Lutheranism broadly. And, of course, get to know one another better too!



Wednesdays in Lent

March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th

Soup and bread supper 6:00 PM in the fellowship hall

If you wish, bring a side dish or dessert to share

Vespers (Evening Prayer) 6:45-



7:15 PM in the sanctuary

Sponsors for Lenten Soup and Bread Suppers

March 1 st	Council
March 8 th	Council
March 15 th	Choir
March 22 nd	LMM
March 29 th	

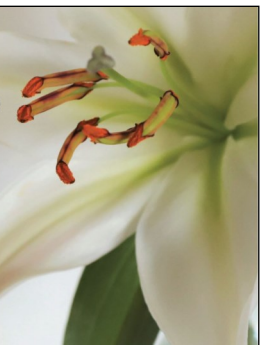
Assistants for Lenten Vespers

March 1 st	M. Haas
March 8 th	S. Woodruff
March 15 th	S. Setley
March 22 nd	S. Woodruff
March 29 th	M. Haas

Easter Sunday Service

10:00 AM

Easter Breakfast TBD





We're forming a team! We just need five players. Proceeds benefit NCWV veterans' groups. See Stephanie Setley to sign up



**Get your tickets (\$60 each)
today at**

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/5744870>.

2023 WVU Medicine Children's Walk for Wishes Morgantown, WV

April 23, 2023 | Presented by Subaru of

Morgantown

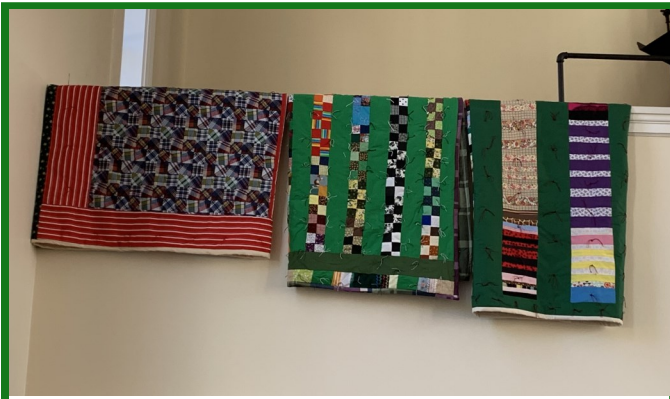
WVU Recreation Center

St. Paul Morgantown is forming a team for the Walk for Wishes, in support of the Make A Wish Foundation, on Sunday, April 23, 2023.

The event is right across the street at the WVU Rec Center and starts right after church. It supports local kids' wishes made through Make-A-Wish Greater PA and WV.

Sign up for the team or donate at church Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, or find the link posted on The Epistle Online Facebook group.

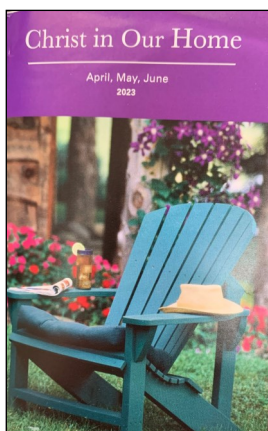




From the Piece Makers

March is Lent and the quilters are busy preparing quilts for shipment to the warehouse. Many of these are hanging from the choir loft and the railings in the narthex. We are also making a quilt for a spring/summer raffle. We also hope that you enjoyed viewing the Jesus ascending banner displayed last week and which will be displayed again in May. The Jesus banner is machine embroidered and kept in the Pastor's office when not on display in the sanctuary.

In the Narthex is a chart that displays the locations where Lutheran World Relief shipped and distributed quilts during 2022. As we learn more about the situation in Eastern Europe, the needs of the Ukraine are in the headlines. However, we must not forget the needs of others throughout the world, especially those in our "Sister Synod" in Madagascar. Join us on Fridays 10-2 and help to make quilts for the world.



Christ In Our Home devotional books for April/May/June are now available. If you wish to have a copy mailed to you, please contact the church office



Sunday School Classes for:

Young children (preschool—grade 1), every Sunday in the nursery room

Older children (grade 2 and up), 2nd and 4th Sundays in the fellowship hall

Adult study of the Gospel of Matthew, every Sunday except the 2nd Sunday, in the lounge





Everyone enjoyed the pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday. Thanks, Lutheran Men in Mission!



March 12



Sunday, March 5th
is the first Sunday of
the month

All who wish may come up to the rail
after the service for prayers and

MARCH — please help!

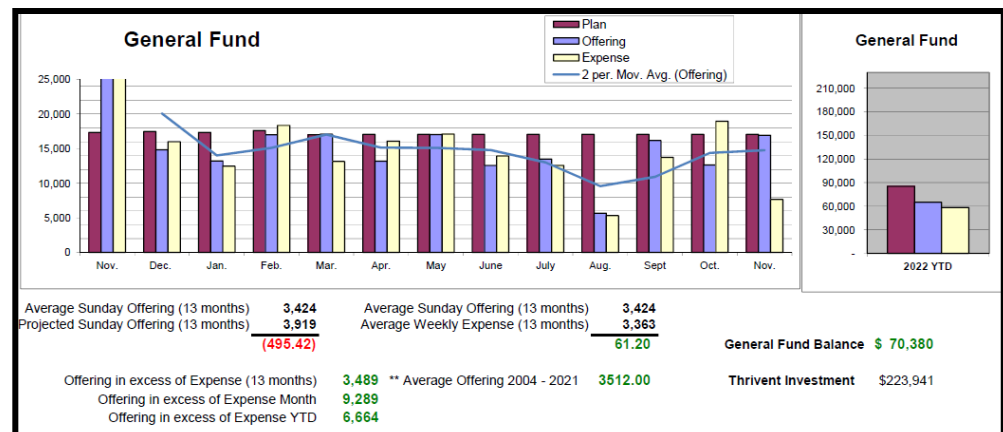
Bathrooms	B. Parsons
Kitchen	
Stairwells	
Vacuum and Sweep Up-stairs	
Sweep Downstairs	S. McEwuen

Serving in



SERVING ST PAUL March 2023	LAY ASSISTANT	LECTOR	USHERS	ACOLYTE	COUNTERS	BROADCAST
5th 10:00 AM	M Haas	M. Boroff	D. Custer	E. Naumann	L. Naumann M. Boroff	S. Setley
12th 10:00 AM	S. Setley	L. Naumann	L. Springer	Sandolini	D. Stiles B. Graham	C. Werntz
19th 10:00 AM	S. McEwuen	S. Kirkpatrick	B. Graham	Setley	J. Bouquet L. Stevens	M. Boroff
26th 10:00 AM	M. Sampson	S. McEwuen	S. McEwuen	E. Naumann	C, Henry M. Peters	Peters

Treasurer's report for December 2022





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 6:00 PM Soup Supper 6:45 PM Vespers	2 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers	3 10:00 AM Piecemakers	4
5 9:00 AM Choir, and Young Children's and Adult Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service New/Prospective Members Lunch After worship	6	7 10:00 AM Bible Study	8 6:00 PM Soup Supper 6:45 PM Vespers	9 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers	10 10:00 AM Piecemakers	11
12 9:00 AM Choir, and All Chil- dren's Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service	13	14 10:00 AM Bible Study	15 6:00 PM Soup Supper 6:45 PM Vespers	16 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers 7:00 PM Council	17 10:00 AM Piecemakers	18
19 9:00 AM Choir, and Young Children's and Adult Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service	20	21 10:00 AM Bible Study	22 6:00 PM Soup Supper 6:45 PM Vespers	23 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers	24 10:00 AM Piecemakers	25 8:00 AM Lutheran Men in Mission @ Eat'n Park
26 9:00 AM Choir, and Sunday School for all ages 10:00 AM Worship Service 3:30 PM Circle of Friends	27	28 10:00 AM Bible Study	29 6:00 PM Soup Supper 6:45 PM Vespers	30 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers	31 10:00 AM Piecemakers	

To add a name to the prayer list, please call the office at 304-599-0620.

There is also a book for prayer requests in the narthex (entry).

Please check the prayer list for names which you have submitted, and let the church office know if a person can be taken off the list. Names will be removed after they have been on the list for 90 days. Please contact the church office to reinstate a name.

Reminder: Deadline for March newsletter is February 20th!!!



St. Paul Lutheran Church

MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA
FOUNDED 1897

The **Epistle** is a publication from:

St. Paul Lutheran Church,
Morgantown, WV

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Pastor's cell (text or call): 681-209-6192

Email: pastor@stpaulmorgantown.org

Officers Of The Congregation

President: Joanne Seasholtz

Vice President: Lindsey Naumann

Secretary: Lillian Stevens

Treasurer: Steve Woodruff

Financial Secretary: Jeanne Lemasters

Council Members

Mary Haas

Grethe Myles

Lillian Stevens

Lindsey Naumann

Steve Woodruff

Joanne Seasholtz

Julie Sandolini

Bill Graham

Mike Peters