

The Epistle

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 117 East Arch Street, Fleetwood, PA

Lenten Reflection

By Gretchen Mertz

We are truly blessed and grateful to Roger Bowman for sharing his spiritual guidance for our Holy Lament Service. We found that God takes our grief and disappointment and transforms them into holy joy and renewed hope. Thank you to Donna Ahrens and Martin Hinkley for leading our weekly hymn.

The first week we reflected about “**What is Lament?**” We shared our emotions and thoughts that come to mind when we hear the world lament. The Bible is filled with examples of faithful people offering up sorrowful or even angry prayers to God. During Lent we explored some laments found in scripture and relearned the discipline and the gift of holy lament.

Our second week we turn to the so called “**Little Laments**”, those things that we grieve which, in the grand scheme of life, may feel small but hurt. These little laments can start to add up and no longer be so little. When we offer our little griefs to God, we can discover that He has space even for the non-earth-shattering hurts and prepares us to turn over the big laments to Him,

Then we turned our attention to the “**Big Laments**” or “**Laments from the Depths**” that are a part of every believer's life. No grief or sorrow is too great for our God who so loved this world. We reflected on what helpful thing that someone has said or done for us when we were facing a time of deep grief and mourning and how we felt or experienced God's presence in these times of lament and sorrow.

April 2024

Up Coming Events:

Cultural Series Events

A Tribute to Elvis, Jeff Krick
Gospel & Country Show
April 28 - 3 PM

Hoagie Sale

Mar. 30 – May 4th
Call the office for tickets

Volunteers Need

The Potato Project

Potatoes are IN! Come help cut potatoes for Spring planting April 20th at 1:00pm

** Details on page 9.*



(Continued from page 1)

Week four, we shared our “**Individual Laments**”. If a loss is deeply personal, those around us may be touched by the sadness, disappointment, or loss. Sharing our laments in a Christian community, helps to drive away fear and sorrow as it strengthens our hope. And during our Lenten “fasting” we should:

- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Our final devotion focused on “**Communal Laments**”. Meaning grief encountered by a group of people. Sometimes disasters strike not just one person or household, but a whole community or even an entire nation. At such times we can find strength in coming together to mourn, raising our collective voices in a loud cry to God. Communal lamenting can help us work our way through time of natural disasters or destruction due to human violence.

So, what is Lament?

A lament is a prayer expressing sorrow, pain or confusion. It is the way Christians process grief in God’s presence. When we bring our laments to God and ask, even beg Him to intervene, because He is just, faithful and keeps His promises and we turn to hope. During Lent, we must remember Jesus. He is not only a model of lament but our greatest joy that one day lament will be no more. “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain.” Revelation 21:4

He has risen, He has risen indeed!

Thank You!

Thank you to all the Wednesday Lenten Soup Supper Chefs and their helpers! It was wonderful to share a delicious meal together followed by a time of reflection in an informal and welcoming setting!



Where are We Going?

At our second gathering of “Where are we going?”, Tim Heffner, Council President said the Bishop had a possible candidate to serve as interim pastor, but we have to wait until he/she is finished with his/her current assignment as interim pastor. So far, we haven’t had any problems with setting up supply pastors for our services. Many members are stepping up to help the church run smoothly, by sharing their time, talents, and resources.

We have formed a committee to plan our Mission Site profile. We’re trying to be proactive in organizing information for our member survey. This group will meet to create the questionnaire. We welcome anyone who would like to join this committee, let any council member know.

The questionnaire will be distributed to all members. It will provide the committee a foundation as to what “you” are looking for in a pastor and in what direction “you” would like our church to go.

Everyone felt very strongly that we needed to find ways to bring younger people into our church. Carol Cox and Erin Martin will be doing a Bible study, followed by some fun events with our youth.

Please join Coffee and Conversation, “Growing Young” where older and younger members of our church get together and exchange ideas and conversation about growing spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and numerically.

Welcome to Worship

We want everyone to feel comfortable worshipping with us and realize that some people are still anxious when gathering in groups of people. For your convenience and safety, consider the following: Hand sanitizer will continue to be available as you enter worship. There is also masks available for anyone choosing to wear one. Please be aware: If you test positive for COVID-19 within five days of worshipping with us, we kindly ask that you follow proper quarantine protocols and contact the church office as soon as possible. Please do not come to worship or other activities if you are not feeling well, even if you think it’s just a cold. If at any time you have concerns, please contact the office or a member of the Worship & Music Team. Members of the team are: Gretchen Mertz, Marla Gieringer, Cindy Borrell, Donna Fick, Nancy Bowman, Donna Ahrens, and Martin Hinkley. Our team listens carefully to your comments, making adjustments to our services as necessary, and delights in new ideas!

Council Corner

- The meeting was held on March 19, 2024.
- Jenn Davis, Preschool Director reported that the Art Show and Open House was a great success. They have several new enrollees for the coming school year.
- They are starting a new class for the 2024-25 school year, “Mommy and Me”.
- Also discussed was the need for volunteers for many areas of ministry outreach.
- Next monthly meeting will be held on April 16, 2024.

Special Monthly Offering



Located on nearly 3,000 acres in the beauty of the Pocono Mountains, Bear Creek Camp is a ministry of the Southeastern and Northeastern Pennsylvania Synods of the ELCA. Bear Creek offers year-round opportunities, including summer residential youth camp, nature day camp, environmental education programs, weekend camp retreats, and group rentals. Bear Creek Camp is a sustaining member of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries and is an accredited member of the American Camp Association.

Learn more about the camp, register for 2024 summer camps, learn about this year's family camps, and more at bearcreekcamp.org

Photo from the website.

Prayer List

The prayer list is an instrument to remind us of our responsibility to intercessory prayer for our community, world, and church. To add a name to the prayer list, call the church office. Names will be removed after four weeks, unless otherwise advised. Prayer makes a difference!

Pray for those serving in the military:

Connor Geer, Rob Geer, Daniel Keller, Brayden Kiebach, Travis Meck, Lauren Moyer, Sydney Plucker, Matt Roberts, Ryan Stitzel, Colin Walbert.

Pray for those in need of ongoing, long term prayer:

Andrew Beerer, Kathy Boalton, Marion Boyer, The Davies Family, June Derr, Essie & Barney

Dietrich, Maggie Emerick, Barbara Faust, Mary Ann Ferretti, Dennis Gillner, Betty Gruber, Marie Hawkins, Cindy Burke-Hearter, Nancy Heffner, Juanita Heist, Jane Hill, Martin Keller, Don Kirby, Sharon Kirkhoff, Elizabeth Kohler, Betty Kurzweg, Joyce Miller, Steve Miller, The Neff Family, Ruth Oxenreider, Desmond Parker, Khloe Perkins, Charles Pinter, Bruce Remmel, Peggy Reppert, Joyce Schittler, Viola Snyder, Lori Spatz, Richard Spatz, Mabel Stopp, Kenneth Tanis, Frank Vroman, Daisy Wahl, Marie Wessner.

If you placed a name on our prayer list and that person is now recovered and able to be removed from the list, please call the church office or Betty Buss (610-944-8445) Thank

A Note about Pastoral Care

Please contact us if you or another member of your family enters the hospital or experiences a significant illness, trauma, or need.

Pr. David Blich at 484-663-4911

Pr. Allen Forsman at 610-682-7028

Pr. Marty Milne, 610.682.7664 (church)



Food Collections are ongoing!

Kindly remember the many families and individuals who are struggling to afford food. Simply drop your non-perishable donations in the food bin in the lobby.



"And this is my prayer: That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight." (Philippians 1:9)

Paul wrote this knowing that only through the power of God living in our lives can we really

love. Cultural differences shouldn't be obstacles, but rather opportunities to demonstrate the same radical welcome Jesus extends to us. We are called to accept one another.

Tips That Can Help You, Your Family and Your Friends To Be Healthy

1. Protect your family and community through efforts to reduce air pollution.
2. Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke.
3. Avoid lung health hazards as protection if you work around hazardous chemicals. Don't allow the use of tobacco in your home.
4. Test your home for radon. This colorless, odorless gas is a cause of lung cancer.
5. Recognize warning signs of disease. Practice preventive health.
6. Be compliant with your doctor to manage any health condition.
7. Stay up to date on vaccinations, as COVID, flu,

pneumonia, shingles, as recommended by your doctor.

8. If you have a high-risk history, be firm with your doctor about early screening.
9. Live a healthy lifestyle and be a role model for your children.
10. Recognize the signs of stress and mental instability, seeking prompt treatment.

Review of a recent newspaper article

Ground cinnamon sold by U.S. discount retailers is contaminated with high levels of lead and should be discarded, including those sold by Dollar Tree and Family Dollar. Cinnamon brands include: La Superior, Super Mercados, Marcum sold by Save A Lot, MK brands sold by SF Supermarkets, Swad sold by Patel Brothers, Supreme Tradition sold by Dollar Tree and Family Dollar stores. Earlier, lead-tainted cinnamon applesauce pouches were recalled. See Parish Nurse bulletin board for the entire article.



Let Us Pray Together

Are you interested in providing a prayer petition as we await our new pastor? Adults, youth and families are welcome to submit 2-3 sentence petitions.

Petitions can focus on prayers for our supply pastors, prayers for the pastor and his/her family who will come to us and prayers for our congregation during this time of transition.

Email to office@spelcfleetwood.com.



Make a Joyful Noise

Share your musical gifts with us. Whether you're just starting to learn an instrument or have years of experience, we welcome your talents to make our worship more meaningful.

Contact Martin Hinkely at mhinkley@ptd.net

Coffee & Conversation

Coffee and Conversation Needs You!

Cindy Borrell and Betty Buss will be retiring as Coffee & Conversation (C&C) coordinators!



We are grateful to Cindy and Betty for their leadership. We have had many interesting and thought-provoking presentations. Our members and guests have enjoyed hearing and learning about programs and services in our community and beyond. We are looking for a team to continue C&C.

“Our team” would welcome suggestions for topics from the congregation. Then they can brainstorm ideas and schedule them throughout the year. We will continue with “Where are we Going?” and the “Growing Young” conversations!

With the big screen and internet access, we can get speakers from anywhere in the country or in the world. The possibilities are endless.

If you're interested in being part of Coffee and Conversation--we need your help! Volunteer to schedule speakers for one month or several months. It's up to you. If you're interested in learning more, contact Holly Wolf at gensemer331@gmail.com.

Make a Big Splash VBS 2024

Children age 4 (as of 9/1/24) through grade 6 are invited to VBS June 10-13, 6:00 PM-8:00 PM. Children will dive deep into an amazing undersea adventure where they'll build a friendship with God and experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. Register online or registration forms are located at the display near the parking lot doors beginning April 1. Contact Carol Cox with any questions. carolc314@gmail.com



VBS Volunteers Needed

It takes many people to offer a successful VBS program. VBS is June 10-13, , 6:00 PM-8:00 PM We need group leaders, Bible story leader, games leaders, snack helpers, and science station helpers to name a few. I am also looking for people to help create decorations before VBS begins. If you can help in any way, please contact Carol Cox at

carolc314@gmail.com or 717-808-4642.

APRIL WORSHIP HAPPENINGS

WORSHIP AT 8:30 AM EACH SUNDAY

SUNDAY SCHOOL, CATECHISM AND COFFEE & CONVERSATION WILL BE HELD AT
9:45 – 10:30 AM

Sunday, April 7 - 2nd Sunday of Easter

Pr. David Blich will be our Supply Pastor

Today as we gather with the disciples the Easter story continues and Jesus breathes the Spirit on us. With Thomas we ask for a sign, and Jesus offers us his wounded self in the broken bread.



Sunday, April 14 - 3rd Sunday of Easter

Pr. David Blich will be our Supply Pastor

The risen Christ shares food with the disciples, meals that are the Easter template for the meal we share each Sunday. In today's gospel, Jesus both shares the disciples' food and shows them the meaning of his suffering, death, and resurrection through the scriptures, the two main elements of our Sunday worship.

Sunday, April 21 - 4th Sunday of Easter

TBA

The image of the good shepherd shows us how the risen Christ brings us to life. It is the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, one of mutual knowledge and love, that gives the shepherd authority. The shepherd's willingness to lay down his life for the sheep shows his love.

Sunday, April 28—5th Sunday of Easter

Pr. David Rowe will be our Supply Pastor



The risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

Lift Up Your Voice and Sing

Share your favorite hymn or song during our worship service. We want voice of all ages--children and youth, adults and seniors are encouraged to participate. Do you prefer more contemporary songs? Great. We need voices to join us in the praise choir throughout the year.

(You do not need to read music.)

Contact Martin Hinkely at mhinkley@ptd.net



Cultural Series Team

Jeff Krick's Elvis Tribute Local Artist & Vocalist



Tickets are now available for the Jeff Krick as "Elvis" Gospel and Country Show. It will be held here at St. Paul's in the sanctuary on Sunday afternoon, April 28, at 3:00 PM.

Tickets will be \$10.00 for adults in advance and \$15.00 at the door. Children ages 5 to 12 will be \$5.00.

Tickets will be sold at church before and after the 8:30 service, or you can call Sharon Neff at 610-657-8727 and 610-944-9820. Donna will also have tickets in the office during office hours.

Get your tickets early and tell your friends and neighbors to join us for a great afternoon.

If anyone can help hang posters in different places, please contact Sharon Neff.



In April, the Cultural Series Team will be having a hoagie fundraiser with The Shop Eatery, 29 E. Main Street in Fleetwood.

Tickets can be purchased and then redeemed at The Shop from March 30 to May 4.

The hoagies are \$7.50 each and you have your choice of a Ham, Turkey, Italian, Roast Beef or Tuna Hoagie. You can order them and pick them up or have them made while you wait.

We will be selling them before and after the church services in or you can get them any team member, from Donna Locke



April
from
and
dur-

Please help to support this ministry.



I Hart Harvest, Inc.

A CHRISTIAN FOOD MINISTRY

<http://www.IHartHarvest.org>

Ph: 484-648-0381 eMail: IHH@IHartHarvest.org

A Unique Christian Ministry out reach addressing local hunger issues. All volunteers, growing and producing free food for local hungry neighbors in need.

We NEED Volunteer HELP!

Potatoes donated by Ed Shenk of Weaver's Ace Hardware! 300, 50lb bags, weighing 15,000 pounds — need to be cut for Spring planting. Come help cut April 20 & 21st 1:00pm at **Becker's St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Fleetwood (Molltown), PA 19522.**

Spring Cleaning On Purpose



The Opportunity House bin located at the rear of our parking lot is ready for your spring cleaning.

Whether you're looking to donate winter clothing or spring items, Opportunity House needs your items. They accept donations of men's, women's, and children's clothing in all sizes. Shoes, belts and purses, too.

Furniture, books and larger items can be donated at OppShop at 3045 5th Street Highway in Muhlenberg from 10-7 Monday through Thursday.

Thank you for helping those in need.



Opportunity
House

Scholarship Season is Here



Volunteers are needed to help with the scholarship program.

We need several people to review the one-page scholarship application for both the St. Paul's college scholarships and the Lucille Hawkin's Nursing Scholarships.

The review and recommendation are done through email and requires about 2 hours of your time. If you're interested, please email office@spelc.org.

CARE PACKAGES FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

In an effort to show our love and support for our college members who are away from home or commuting from home, we will be sending care packages to them during their spring finals week. You can help with this ministry by:

- Providing us with the name and address of your student/loved one who is a member of St. Paul's and the dates of their finals week to Michelle at mbroberts5@verizon.net.
- Writing a note of encouragement including a favorite inspirational quote or Bible verse and an invitation to join us for church services during their summer break.

We received so many generous donations during our last collection that we have enough for our spring care packages. Addresses and notes of encouragement are needed by April 21st. Please contact Michelle Roberts at mbroberts5@verizon.net with questions.

Thank you in advance for supporting our students!

Finances at St. Paul's

ELCA Federal Credit Union: A financial partner that shares its profits and shares your values

ELCA members and employees of congregations and ministries are eligible to join the ELCA Federal Credit Union and take advantage of membership benefits, including:

No-fee checking accounts, with no monthly maintenance, minimum balance or overdraft fees.*

Auto loan rates for up to 50% less than the national average.**

And, for a limited time, no payments for up to 60 days and rates as low as 5.99% on personal loans for home improvement projects, repairs and other expenses.

The ELCA Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial cooperative that shares its profits in the form of lower fees and better rates — helping you and the ministries you love do more with your money.



Update

	<u>Feb-24</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actual</u>
Income		
Non-Preschool M&M	\$ 15,179	\$ 33,050
Preschool M&M	\$ 10,555	\$ 21,750
Total	\$ 25,734	\$ 54,800
Expense		
Non-Preschool	\$ 16,967	\$ 40,385
Preschool	\$ 11,575	\$ 18,098
Total	\$ 28,542	\$ 58,483
Income Less Expenses - Non-Preschool	\$ (1,789)	\$ (7,335)
Income Less Expenses - Preschool	\$ (1,020)	\$ 3,652
Total Income Less Expenses	\$ (2,809)	\$ (3,683)

Simply

giving®

Did you know that you can now manage your giving to St. Paul's online? Simply

Giving is an easy, secure, and convenient way to have your weekly, monthly, or yearly offering transferred directly to St. Paul's from your checking or savings account. No more writing checks and searching for that offering envelope. It just takes a few minutes to enroll and you are on your way to Simply Giving! Enrollment forms are available in the church office or visit www.spelcfleetwood.com/give-online

April Mystery Members

By Melissa Neff

This month's mystery family is newer to our church. They joined at the end of 2019. Mrs. is on church council, and her son and daughter are in catechetical class.

Mrs. grew up in Kutztown but has lived in Fleetwood since July 4, 2003. Her husband grew up in the Mertztown area and went to the Brandywine School District. They met each other while working at Weis Markets in Kutztown as teenagers.

Mrs. went to massage school in Pottstown. She has given massages since 2020. Since April of this past year, she has owned her own massage business in Fleetwood called Heating Elements Massage and Reflexology. Mr. works as a diesel mechanic.

Mr. and Mrs. have twin children, a son and a daughter. They are both in eighth grade at Fleetwood Middle School. Their daughter is involved with yearbook and softball at the school. Their family has a Great Dane named Mable and a Burmese cat named Jelly.

Their family has varied interests. They like to go camping and fishing together. They don't like to travel very far, but they have been to Tennessee to visit friends and family. Mrs. likes to make crafts, such as candles, soaps, and room sprays. Their son enjoys taekwondo, and their daughter loves to bake. Mr. hunts and then makes bacon, meat sticks, and beef jerky from what he harvests.

Perhaps you know enough now to know who this family is. If not, find out in the next edition of the *Epistle*.

The mystery family for March was Katie Riley and her family, Brian, Levon and Hannah.



St. Paul's Evangelical
Lutheran Church



117 East Arch Street
Fleetwood, PA 19522

Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday 9am to 3pm
(except the 3rd Tuesday 2-5pm)



Purpose

*Filled with the Holy Spirit
We inspire Spiritual Growth in the Community of
Christ by striving to ...*

Guiding Principles

- ◆ *Welcome All People*
- ◆ *Pray Daily*
- ◆ *Worship Weekly*
- ◆ *Read, Listen, Reflect and Share the Word of God*
- ◆ *Serve at and beyond St. Paul's*
- ◆ *Encourage Spiritual Friendships*
- ◆ *Share God's Blessings Generously through the Giving of Our Time, Talents and Resources*

Contact Us

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/spelcfleetwood

The church office will be open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am—3:00 pm (except the 3rd Tues. 2-5pm) You are welcome to call with questions or concerns or to stop in to discuss your needs in person. Please ring the doorbell and Donna L. will meet you at the door for admittance into the building.



WELCOME

April 2024

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

	1	2	3	4	5	6
		6:30 Girl Scouts loft	10:30 GWBU library 6:00pm Girl Scouts loft 7:00pm Choir	6:00pm Girl Scouts Loft 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H.		9-4pm Girl Scouts Babysitting Class Loft 4-6pm Stump Lunch- eon Soc. Hall
7 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat.Class,C & C 10:30am Music/ Worship 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon	8 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H	9 7:00pm Preschool Zoom Meeting	10 10:30 GWBU library 7:00pm Choir	11 6:00pm Daisy's Loft 7:00pm Cultural Series	12	13
14 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat. Class, Sam Borrell Men in Mission 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon	15 Epistle Deadline 5-9pm Girl Scouts End Of Year Mtg	16 6:30pm Girl Scouts S.H. 7:00pm Council Meets	17 10:30 GWBU library 6:00pm Girl Scouts loft 7:00pm Choir	18 6pm Girl Scouts Loft 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H. 7:00pm AA Dist. Meets	19	20
21 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat.Class, C & C 10:45am Hand Bell re- hearsal 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon	22 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H	23	24 10:30 GWBU library 7:00pm Choir	25 6:00pm Daisy's Loft	26	27 11am-2pm AA District 33 meeting
28 Food on Fourth 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat.Class, C & C 10:45am Hand Bell re- hearsal 3:00pm Elvis 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon	29	30				