



The Epistle

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

PT's Provocations

"Uncertainty"

This Sunday through Sunday, February 27th comprises the season of Epiphany. Picking up from the Christmas theme of God becoming human and dwelling among us, Epiphany becomes a journey of revelations of the wonder and mystery of this God whom we know as Jesus. The word "Epiphany" means the manifestation of God in the flesh. Other words for Epiphany include discovery, vision, flash, and demonstration.

I like to think of Epiphany as a time for flashes of discovery and insight regarding the wisdom and work of God in the world. Imagine the sky on a long, cold, winter night. You see a zillion stars far up in a clear, dark sky. Each one you see is like a new discovery, a new revelation of light. Epiphany is like this because during this season we hear stories of how God through Jesus demonstrates his awesome power and mystery made known through human bodies and minds.

Not only do we hear and discover new things about God's incarnation in the world but these very discoveries impact how we use our bodies and minds to further grow, learn, and serve Christ. It is no coincidence that Epiphany begins with the Baptism of Our Lord. In baptism we bodily experience the light of God's grace as the water is poured over us and as the sign of the cross is made on our foreheads. In using our bodies to proclaim Christ, we then become like new stars to be discovered and known by other people who see and hear us and then experience Epiphany in themselves.

Aware of the many events that have made the last few years a time of intense darkness for the entire world, I urge you to spend a lot of time stargazing, even in the cold and darkness. Use this time as a vivid reminder that even on the darkest of nights, the stars are shining. Just as our eyes cannot take in the whole sky at once, neither can we see or understand the fullness of God at once. And yet, "***the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it***" (John 1:5).

(Continued on page 2)

January 2022

Up Coming Events:

Monday, January 3:
Office Closed

Sunday, January 9:
Baptism of Our Lord
Installation of New Council Members

Monday, January 17:
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Office Closed





(Continued from page 1)

The epiphanies of God's power and presence in the midst of the darkness is like one ongoing revelation that Jesus Christ is among us, saving us from all things on earth and in heaven that might threaten us.

Seeing this we also become Christ's epiphanies to a world that so easily allows despair to dominate us. Epiphany ignites us to live as if despair has been defeated once and for all!



Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17

Dates to Remember:

Sunday, January 2nd

Second Sunday After Christmas

ONE SERVICE ONLY AT 9:30 AM

Pr. Bruce Potteiger will return as our Guest Preacher while Pr. Lang is on vacation

Monday, January 3rd

Office Closed

Sunday, January 9th

Baptism of Our Lord

We return to our regular Sunday morning schedule with worship at 8 and 10:30 AM & 9:15 AM Sunday School, Catechism Class, God's Word Blesses Us, and Coffee and Conversation

Theme: "Living Wet"

As we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord and Savior we will be blessed to baptize with water and the Holy Spirit Aubrey Emerson Beidler who is the little brother to one of our preschool children! The Congregation Council members will be installed at both

services. And, we invite you to join us as we lead worship with the residents of the Fleetwood Villa at 3 PM.

Sunday, January 16th

Second Sunday After Epiphany

Theme: "Life Together"

Monday, January 17th

Office Closed

Sunday, January 23rd

Third Sunday After Epiphany

Theme: "Nourishing Words"

Sunday, January 30th

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

Theme: "Scripture, Like An Onion"

God's Global Barnyard

If you participated in the God's Global Barnyard collection during the season of Advent, we encourage you to return the coins to the barn as soon as you are able. The last day to return coin boxes to the barn in the narthex will be **January 9th**. The money we collect will be used to purchase animals through ELCA Good Gifts for a family in need. An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need. It can provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops, and milk, honey or eggs to sell at a market. If you prefer to write a check, please make it payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and write *global barnyard* in the memo line.



Prayer List

The prayer list is an instrument to remind us of our responsibility to intercessory prayer (prayer for our community, world, church, etc.). To add a name to the prayer list, call the church office. All of us are encouraged to keep the weekly bulletins and monthly *Epistle* so we can refer to the prayer requests. Prayer makes a difference!

Pray for those serving in the military: Katie Buss, Connor Geer, Rob Geer, Daniel Keller, Travis Meck, Lauren Moyer Schukis, Matt Roberts, Ryan Stitzel, Colin Walbert, Emma Wright.

Pray for those in need of ongoing, long term prayer: Ray Ahrens, Baby Hannah, Grace Balthaser, Nancy Bennecoff, Kathryn Boalton, Nancy Cawley, The Davies Family, June Derr, Terry Derr, Ethan Ernst, Dariano Fick, Joanne Fink, Joseph Grady, Betty Gruber, Ruth Haring, Steven Harrison, Jerry Hartman,

Juanita Heist, Nita Hess, Donald Kirby, Forrest Mengel, Thelma Moyer, Larry Neff, Melissa Neff, Doug Nemeth, Barbara Oswald, Florence Palmore, Doug Pike, Joel Raifsnider, Ruth Rhoads, Leilani Rodriguez, Jack Schittler, Ken Schlegel, Bryan Sprecher, Mary Smith, Jack Snyder, Billy Sunday, Alan Stone, Frank Vroman.

St. Paul's Prayer Circle is always ready to help. To request prayers in time of special need, call the office at 610-944-8388.

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 Kathy Pike, the church office, or Betty Buss (610-944-8445) Thank you.



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.

You may call Pr. Tom at either 610-944-8388 (office) or 215-527-4213 (cell).

Council Corner

- Six of our youth are signed up for the ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis in 2022!
- Discussion on replacement lighting and carpet on the first floor/office hallway
- Beginning to plan Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter—it will be here before we know it!
- New Council members will be installed at both services on Sunday, January 9



The students attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis this summer will be selling Salino's fresh pizza kits which will be available for pick up on Superbowl Sunday, February 13, 2022. Pizza kits will be on sale between worship services throughout the month of January. Each kit contains 2 fresh pizza crusts (your choice of round or Sicilian), sauce, cheese, and a choice of pepperoni. Enjoy a fresh pizza on game day without leaving your house or waiting on delivery, while helping our youth at the same time!

Friendly Reminder:

Offering Envelope Pick-Up

Offering envelopes for 2022 are available for pick-up in the lobby. Please grab your box for this year.



Learning Ministry



January 2 – No C & C

January 9 – Judge Jeff Sprecher

How many can you answer correctly? True or False:

1. Amendments 1 through 10 to the United States Constitution were all enacted in the 1800s.
2. The constitutional right to a trial by jury and the right to legal representation by counsel are fundamental rights that only became

applicable to all state prosecutions in the 20th century.

3. The burden of proof requires that the person who sues meet his burden beyond a reasonable doubt in order to win damages.
4. Judge Judy gets paid, per year, 160 times more than the current United States Supreme Court Chief Justice.

5. The district justice position became a part of the unified judicial system by constitutional amendment, approved by the voters of Pennsylvania in 1968.

The speaker may have forgotten more than he ever learned but he knows the answers to these questions and a little more. Come and hear the answers as we briefly cover the authority of a trial court judge in Pennsylvania.

January 16 – American Cancer Society and Relay for Life

January 23 – Alyssa Damiani; “Real Estate in 2022”

Join the discussion with St. Paul’s member and REALTOR/Home Stager, Alyssa, and learn how to take the stress out of buying and selling Real Estate. Will include tips for preparing your home for the market and ways to net the most money off your sale, along with strategies for buying in competitive buyer conditions.

January 30 – Men in Mission Breakfast



“Dear Members of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous support. Combined with donations and monetary gifts from your congregation, Becker’s St. Peters Lutheran Church, and Thrivent...15 buckets were completed and delivered to Zion Blue Mountain UCC. These will be distributed locally as needed. A cash donation was also sent to Lutheran Disaster Relief. What a success in helping our fellow man! Blessed beyond!

Sincerely,
Michele Lenhart”



Happy New Year! We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. During the month of December, we spent time learning about the true meaning of Christmas and how other cultures celebrate the holiday. We were also busy crafting special gifts for our families and the special people in our lives. The preschoolers enjoyed our Polar Express Day and Secret Santa Exchange. All the preschoolers and teachers came to school in their pajamas and listened to the Polar Express Story. We enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies and exchanged our Secret Santa gifts. It was so cute watching the preschoolers try to guess which classmate was their Secret Santa before the secret was told. They could not contain their excitement! It warmed our hearts to see the joy of the season in these little ones.

The weather is reminding us that Winter is here with the cold temperatures and the possibility of snow. Just a reminder, St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool follows the Fleetwood Area School District's guidelines for delays and closings. We will also make announcements on ClassTag.

Registration for the 2021-2022 school year will begin on February 1, 2022 for our current students. It is highly recommended that you register as early as possible, as spaces will be reserved on a first come-first served basis. There will be a \$50.00 non-refundable fee to hold your spot and the first month's payment will be due by May 3, 2022.

Join us for some fun and fellowship! Claude and Cindy Oesterle are hosting a game night on **Friday, January 14** from **6PM-9PM** in the **Social Room**. We will bring some of our favorite board games and we ask you to bring along any board/card games you would like to play with others as well! It's always fun to learn a new game.

We are hoping this can become a monthly event as a way to connect and have fun with others. Pizza and drinks will be provided. Feel free to bring a dessert or a side item to share. Please email cindy@ptd.net or call 610-944-7077 if you would like to join us!



Worship & Music Ministry

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 and we also have 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 Pastor Tom 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 Pr. Lang or a member of the Worship & Music Team. Members of the team are: Gretchen Mertz, Linda Coutts, John Bessey, Cindy Borrell, Donna Fick, Nancy Bowman, Kelsey Sammartino, Donna Ahrens, and Pr. Tom. Our team listens carefully to your comments, making adjustments to our services as necessary, and delights in new ideas!

Let us pray. Gracious and mothering God, as you so greatly blessed and gently cared for Mary in her pregnancy with the Savior of the world, so care for each one of us in our time of trial. Keep each of us safe from this persistent and deadly virus and fill us with both the wisdom and the will to care gently for one another. Amen.



Inclement Weather Cancellations

Cold weather is here and with that, the possibility of snow and ice storms. If we need to cancel church services, we will be listed on WFMZ, Channel 69 and their website. We will also send out a notification by email. Please be safe when traveling this winter; you can always tune in via Facebook Live if you are unsure about road conditions!



To the Congregation of St. Paul's,

The members of the Reading Philharmonic Orchestra would like to thank St. Paul's again for hosting our Christmas concert in December. We have enjoyed bringing our love of music to this holiday season; it was especially meaningful this year.

The Reading Philharmonic Orchestra



Cleaning Your Glasses

Cleaning your eyeglasses daily is the best way to prevent lens scratches and other damage to your eyewear. Glasses can be very expensive, and these tips apply to sunglasses, safety glasses, and sports eyewear.

Rinse glasses under a gentle stream of lukewarm tap water. Apply a small drop of lotion-free dishwashing liquid to each lens, gently rub both sides of the lenses, and then rinse both sides of the lenses and frames thoroughly. Dry with a lint-free towel, a cotton towel, or clean T-shirt material. Do not use your shirt on dry lenses, or saliva, household glass, or surface cleaners. Only use specific cleaner for eye wear. Do not use paper towels, napkins, or tissues as these can scratch or leave lint.

If you are in need of a vision exam or glasses, contact Vision Resource Center of Berks County at 610-375-8407, if you have no means to obtain essential vision care and/or glasses, have a low household income (and ability to supply proof of such), have proof that your last eye exam was at least 24 months ago for adults and 12 months ago for children or adults with diabetes.

Help Raise Awareness

Talk to your family about glaucoma.

In the United States, approximately 120,000 are blind from glaucoma, accounting for 9% to 12% of all cases of blindness. Here are some ways you can help raise awareness:

Talk to friends and family about glaucoma. If you have glaucoma, don't keep it a secret. Let your family members know.

Refer a friend to the website, www.glaucoma.org

Request to have a free educational booklet sent to you or a friend.

Get involved in your community through fundraisers, online information sessions or group discussions, etc.

Connect with Glaucoma Research Foundation on Facebook or follow on Twitter and Instagram for regular updates on glaucoma research, treatments, news, and information.

Share information about glaucoma with your friends and family.

Wellness Council of America



Special Monthly Offering

Our January offering will support City Light Ministries in Reading, PA. If you attended our Coffee and Conversations session last fall, Pastor Joe spoke about the ministry of City Light and their outreach to the unhoused and at-risk populations of Reading. They describe themselves as an urban, mission outreach center that meets people down in the trenches to share the good news of Jesus Christ. You can learn more about City Light and the ministry that Pastor Joe is so passionate about by going to citylightministry.com.



Mystery Members

By Melissa Neff

The mystery family to start the New Year of 2022 is a couple who met each other at a school dance at Southwest Junior High in the Reading School District during the ninth grade. Mrs. lived in the inner city of Reading and Mr. lived in the outskirts of Reading. Both of them walked to school. They graduated from high school in May of 1962 and got married in January of 1963.

They both had at least one sibling. Mr. had one sister who currently lives in Muhlenberg Township. Mrs. had one sister who has passed away and a brother who is still living.

Mr. and Mrs. have three grown children, all sons. The son who lives the farthest away lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan. One lived in Washington, D.C. and moved to this area quite recently and the third son lives on Brookfield Drive in Fleetwood.

The couple previously attended St. Paul's U.C.C in Fleetwood before joining St. Paul's. They had belonged to St. Paul's for seventeen or eighteen years. They were in the first group of new members to join our church after Pastor Bob was called to St. Paul's. They like the friendly people at our church and the music and they like Pastor Tom.

Mr. spent thirty-two years working in appliance sales. His career started at Sears in Wyomissing. Mrs. spent the last twenty years of her career working for the PA Dept. of Welfare. She said it was a fascinating job! She was a caseworker and was later promoted to supervisor. She helped write training books and had to go to Harrisburg at times.

They have some interesting things that they like to do in their spare time. Mr. used to hunt and run when he was able. He has always liked to fly radio control airplanes: otherwise referred to as RC airplanes and still does this.

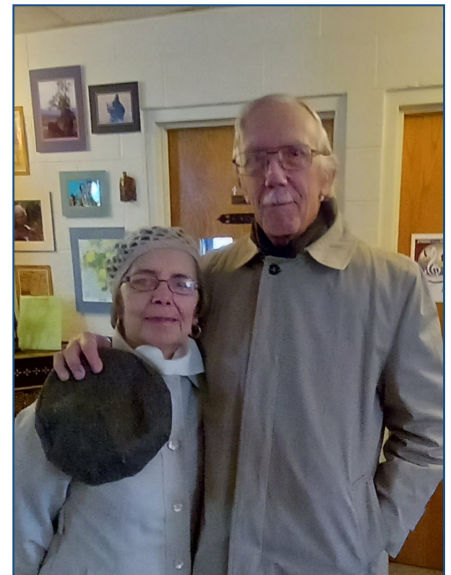
Mrs. enjoys writing. She has had some poetry published that she wrote as well as two short stories. She recently finished writing a book for her brother about their childhood.

I talked with them a little about Christmas since the day was quickly approaching! Their favorite part of Christmas is getting together with family. They usually go to their son's in Fleetwood for dinner but they spend the day with whatever family they can. They are not sure yet about this year's plans since another son also resides in the area now. How they have spent Christmas day has changed over the years as their children grew.

They have done much traveling throughout the years. They have visited friends in Florida whom Mr. has known since kindergarten. A few other places they have visited include Hawaii, Alaska, and Jamaica, in addition to others. They usually liked to travel somewhere over their anniversary in January but they do not get to travel much anymore.

Do you think you know who this couple is? Find out in February!

The mystery couple for January was Beverly and Dale Conrad.



Finances at St. Paul's

	<u>Nov-21</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actual</u>
Income		
Non-Preschool M&M	\$ 22,156	\$ 229,601
Preschool M&M	\$ 9,254	\$ 81,333
Total	\$ 31,411	\$ 310,933
Expense		
Non-Preschool	\$ 18,374	\$ 215,211
Preschool	\$ 8,996	\$ 64,368
Total	\$ 27,370	\$ 279,579
Income Less Expenses - Non-Preschool	\$ 3,782	\$ 14,390
Income Less Expenses - Preschool	\$ 258	\$ 16,965
Total Income Less Expenses	\$ 4,041	\$ 31,354

Did you know that you can make a bequest to St. Paul's by naming our congregation in your will or trust?

We kindly request that in considering bequests or gifts left to St. Paul's that individuals and families meet with the Pastor and/or Council President to determine where the needs of our current ministries are greatest.

We ask members contributing to the memorial fund in memory of someone to not designate their gift to a specific purpose. The Worship and Music Team in partnership with the Council will make the decisions as to how memorial contributions are designated.

The reason for this is so that contributions to the memorial fund do not end up with designations for which we have no current purpose.



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



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*

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The church office will be open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am—3:30 pm. You are welcome to call with questions or concerns or to stop in to discuss your needs in person. Please ring the doorbell and Kelsey will meet you at the door for admittance into the building.

If you wish to meet with or speak with Pastor Tom, it is best to call ahead to set up a meeting before stopping by.

GLOBAL LINKS



Thrive
Your Impact on Lutheran Disaster Response

“Thrive: Your Impact on Lutheran Disaster Response” is a brand-new publication that shares stories about people around the world accompanied by Lutheran Disaster Response. Through companion churches, ELCA synods, and ecumenical partners, Lutheran Disaster Response shares God’s hope, healing, and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters. From sponsoring asylum-seekers in Wisconsin to promoting disaster risk reduction in Nepal, the stories told here represent just a fraction of Lutheran Disaster Response’s work. “Thrive” serves as a reminder that Lutheran Disaster Response remains in communities long after the headlines change. Read the first report here: https://www.elca.org/assets/Thrive2021/LDR_Thrive_2021.html



As Afghan evacuees arrive in the United States, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) is resettling Afghan families.

In addition to supplementing the work of LIRS, Lutheran Disaster Response is reaching out to synods, congregations and affiliates that are welcoming Afghan refugees. In Afghanistan, the increase in conflict is forcing people to flee their homes. Community World Service Asia (CWSA) is assisting internally displaced Afghan families through food security and cash assistance. Lutheran Disaster Response contributed to ACT Alliance’s Rapid Response Fund, which is funding CWSA’s work in Afghanistan. Learn

Since 1994, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have cooperated to welcome volunteer

teachers to Central Europe. The program welcomes 12-20 new and returning volunteer teachers to serve in Lutheran schools in several towns and cities. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on borders and travel, the ELCA was unable to send any new volunteer teachers in the 2020-2021 academic year. However, this August we were able to welcome new volunteer teachers, who joined those about to return. At the end of their in-country orientation in Bratislava, Slovakia, the teachers were blessed for their year of ministry by the Rev. Kyle Svenningsen, pastor of Bratislava International Church.



Learn more about international aid with the most recent episode of ELCA World Hunger’s Hunger Policy Podcast. You can find the episode and more information here: <https://blogs.elca.org/worldhunger/>

January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						¹ Happy New Year
² 9:30 am Sanctuary Service 7:00 pm AI-Anon	³ Office Closed	⁴ 6:30-8:00pm Girl Scouts	⁵ 6:00-7:00pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	⁶ Epiphany 6:00-7:30pm Girl Scouts	⁷ 6:45 am Men's Small Group	⁸
⁹ 8:00 am Sanctuary Service 9:15 am Sunday School, GWBU, Cat Class, Coffee & Convo 10:30 am Sanctuary Service 11:30 am Worship & Music 7:00 pm AI-Anon	¹⁰ 5:30-9:00pm Girl Scouts 6:00-7:30pm Girl Scouts 6:00-8:00pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Mutual Ministry	¹¹	¹² Epistle Dead- line 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	¹³ 6-7:15 pm Girl Scouts	¹⁴ 6:45 am Men's Small Group 6:00 pm Family Game Night	¹⁵
¹⁶ 8:00 am Sanctuary Service 9:15 am Sunday School, GWBU, Cat Class, Coffee & Convo 10:30 am Sanctuary Service 7:00 pm AI-Anon	¹⁷ Office Closed MLK Birthday	¹⁸ 6:30-8:00pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Congregation Council	¹⁹ 6:00-7:00pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	²⁰ 6:00-7:30pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm AA Directors	²¹ Annual Reports Due 6:45 am Men's Small Group	²²
²³ Food on the Fourth 8:00 am Sanctuary Service 9:15 am Sunday School, GWBU, Cat Class, Coffee & Convo 10:30 am Sanctuary Service 7:00 pm AI-Anon	²⁴ 6:00-7:30pm Girl Scouts 6:00-8:00pm Girl Scouts	²⁵	²⁶ 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	²⁷ 6-7:15 pm Girl Scouts	²⁸ 6:45 am Men's Small Group	²⁹ 9:00 am Girl Scouts
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