



The Epistle

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

Where are We Going?

Submitted by Holly Wolf

At Coffee & Conversation on Sunday, February 18, the question was asked "Where are we going?" led by our council president Tim Heffner.

Highlights of the discussion:

- Church Council had an extensive discussion with Pastor Lang at his exit interview. He highlighted the strengths and weakness of our congregation from his perspective. The strengths and weaknesses he identified were consistent and in agreement with Church Council.
- Information in the exit interview will be validated or changed based on information collected in the Mission Site profile.
- Pastor Lang also commented that seeing every comment in the Mission Site profile, when he arrived, helped him be prepared to minister to our congregation and address concerns proactively.

Current Status of Pastors

- Donna Locke has worked with the Synod staff to schedule pastors in place for worship. The synod allows us to work up to 6 weeks ahead of our need. Donna is being proactive and several pastors have willingly agreed to serve, including pastors in our congregation.
- The Synod Coordinator implied that she had 2 good candidates for the interim position. Both declined. She has moved to a new role in the synod.

(Continued on page 2)

March 2024

Up Coming Events

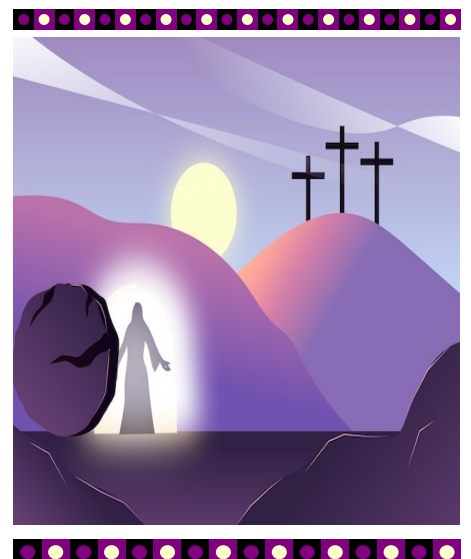
March 6, 13, 20
5:30PM Wed. Soup Suppers
6:30PM Service of Lament

March 24 - Palm Sunday
8:30 AM - First Communion

March 28 Maundy Thursday
7 PM Service

March 29 - Good Friday
7 PM Service

March 31 - Easter Day
8:30 AM Service



(Continued from page 1)

- Drew Neidig was also recommended as a potential interim pastor. He has taken on a new role with the synod and will be assisting us in finding an interim pastor. Tim will be in communication with him to discuss our vacancy.
- We must be actively involved in the process and reach out to other synods to fill both the interim role and the permanent role. We need to be the advocates for our congregation and market ourselves to potential pastors.

What can we do as a congregation to find get an interim and permanent pastor?

- **Proactively market our congregation.** Everything we do needs to show we are ready, willing, and highly attractive to a candidate. We must document all the things we are doing, showcase the involvement of the congregation and consider every interaction with a supply pastor as an opportunity to attract a permanent pastor. Our supply pastors are communicating with the synod and other pastors and can help us attract a permanent candidate.
- With many congregations looking for a pastor, we must be more active and involved in the process to become more visible. The synod has indicated that finding a permanent pastor may be a long process.
- We will need to fill out a Mission Site Profile and it was decided it would be good to put a team into place to accomplish the profile. In order to accomplish this profile, a survey will be sent to all our members. It will ask what you are looking for in a pastor and what are the needs of our church and its members.

Communication is the key! Keeping the congregation informed throughout the process. Be persistent with the synod. And pray!

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 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 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 February 20, 2024.
- Next meeting is March 19, 2024.
- Mission Site Profile committee was formed with Elaine Becker, Charles Mohn & Holly Wolf serving.

Special Monthly Offering

Relay for Life

We continue our Support of the good work done by our local Relay for Life Chapter. Not only are loved ones honored and remembered but monies raised through RFL for the American Cancer Society fund cancer research, improve cancer survival, support cancer patients and their caregivers, and much more.



Teen Challenge Men's Clothing

A huge thank you to all who contributed to this most successful clothing drive! Teen Challenge staff was extremely grateful as they received and unloaded a car full of clothing. I plan to organize an annual clothing drive for this very special organization.

With appreciation, Rebecca Shade



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, The Davies Family, June Derr, Essie & Barney Dietrich, Maggie Emerick,

Barbara Faust, Mary Ann Ferretti, Dennis Gillner, Betty Gruber, Joyce Hawkins, 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 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.

Pr. David Blitch 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.



Launched in 2003, National MS Education and Awareness Month is observed in March of each year, a nationwide effort by MS Focus: The Multiple Sclerosis Foundation and

affiliated groups to raise the public's awareness of multiple sclerosis. The vital goals of this campaign are to promote an understanding of the scope of this disease, and to assist those with MS in making educated decisions about their healthcare.

Multiple sclerosis is a disease that impacts the brain and spinal cord which make up the central nervous system and controls everything we do.

MS is an autoimmune inflammatory condition affecting approximately 400,000 in the United States and two and a half million people worldwide.

MS symptoms can range from mild to severe, since MS is unpredictable and often varies from person to person. Symptoms may include numbness to the limbs, paralysis or loss of vision.

Today, there have been great advances in MS research and new treatment options that provide hope to those with this disease.

Maintaining good health is important for people with MS. This includes proper nutrition, exercise, emotional health.

There are many ways to support MS research and awareness like MS events, and staying informed.



Ask and It Shall Be Given

We invite you to submit prayer petitions to be included in our weekly prayers. The prayer petitions can include asking God to guide us during the transition, praying for the supply pastors and our future pastor.

Please submit your prayer petitions to:

office@spelcfleetwood.com

Make a Joyful Noise

Your musical talents are a wonderful way to worship our Creator. We invite children (and adults) who are budding musicians to share their talents in worship. Whether you play piano, guitar, saxophone, trumpet or any instrument, we would love to have you share your gifts with us. Solo musicians, duets and small groups, vocalists are welcome.

Contact Martin Hinkley at mhinkley@ptd.net



Coffee & Conversation

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March 3 - "Ask the General Contractor" with Merlin Miller

March 10 - Sam Borrell's Men in Mission Breakfast

March 17 - Palm Sunday - "Where are we going?" - Led by Tim Heffner

March 24 - Growing Young - Gretchen Mertz, Bruce Roberts & Cat Class!

March 31 - Easter Sunday - No C & C



One of the ways our congregation fulfills the promises we make at the baptism of an infant or child is to partner with their parents/guardians in raising the child in the Christian faith. Along with Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and Confirmation the First Communion both instructs the child in the teachings of our faith and also helps to draw them to a closer relationship with Jesus through their participation in receiving the bread and wine, Jesus' body and blood, at the Lord's Table.



We will be holding our next **First Communion Instruction** for children grades 2 through 6 on Sunday **March 17th from 12:00 until 2:00 PM**. If you would like to have your child participate in this session, please call the church office at 610-944

-8388 or email office@spelcfleetwood.com by **March 3rd**.

Special March Birthdays

Wayne Hamm, will turn 94 on March 27th. Please send a birthday greeting to him at 325 Spring Street, Fleetwood, PA 19522



All the tickets have been sold!

Thanks to everyone that has signed up. See you on Friday, July 26, 2024; we will leave the church parking lot at 2:30 PM to travel to the home of the Phillies!

MARCH WORSHIP HAPPENINGS

8:30 AM — WORSHIP EACH SUNDAY

9:45 to 10:30 AM — SUNDAY SCHOOL, CATECHISM AND COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Sunday, March 3 - 3rd Sunday in Lent

Pr. David Blitch will be our Supply Pastor

Sunday, March 10 - 4th Sunday in Lent

Pr. David Werley will be our Supply Pastor

Sunday, March 17 - 5th Sunday in Lent

Pr. David Blitch will be our Supply Pastor



Sunday, March 24 - Palm Sunday

Pr. Susan Fox will be our Supply Pastor

The great and holy week leading up to Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, his arrest and betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection (all within a week!) begins here. Our service will begin with the waving of palms as we remember Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem where all these events marking Christ's glorification through humiliation begin to take place. Then we will turn to the events of Jesus' passion, suffering and death .



Thursday, March 28 - Maundy Thursday at 7:00 PM

Pr. David Werley will be our Supply Pastor

The service begins with our grasping the true benefit of repentance – **the absolute forgiveness of all our sins!** – then we will be led into moments of intense remembrance of Jesus' compassionate hospitality at the Last Supper and to witness the solemn preparation for the Good Friday service – the stripping of the altar.

Friday, March 29- Good Friday at 7:00 PM, Tenebrae

We gather in an unadorned sanctuary to focus on nothing, but the story of God's ultimate will being played out through Jesus' suffering and death and the pain of human betrayal. The service ends with the glorification of the Cross upon which Christ died for our sins!

Sunday, March 31 - RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD/EASTER!!! At 8:30 AM

Pr. David Blitch will be our Supply Pastor

Today we shout, "Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Christ is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!" to the sounds of organ, choir, bells and brass!!!



Wednesday, March 6, 13 and 20

Midweek Lenten Service of Lament at 6:30 in the Social Room

At 5:30 we will gather around the tables in our Social Room for a Soup and Sandwich Supper immediately followed by a short Lenten Devotional Service. Skip the cooking at home and come anytime between 5:30 and 6:30! Bring your family! Bring a neighbor!

Cultural Series Team

ELVIS THE KING IS BACK!!!

Well almost!

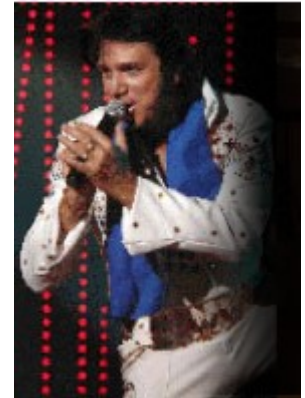
On Sunday, April 28 at 3:00 PM, Jeff Krick, as Elvis, will be bringing back the music and memories of Elvis Presley!

Mark your calendar and buy your tickets early for this Gospel and Country music tribute show.

The Cultural Series Team will be selling tickets; \$10.00 for adults in advance and \$15.00 at the door. Children ages 5 to 12 will be \$5.00.

You can get your tickets from Donna in the church office. Tickets will be sold at church before and after the 8:30 service for the month of April, or you can call Sharon Neff at 610-657-8727 and 610-944-9820.

Tell your friends and neighbors and join us for a rocking afternoon!



Hoagie Fundraiser!

In April, the Cultural Series Team will sponsor a hoagie sale in partnership with with The Shop

Eatery, 29 E. Main Street in Fleetwood.

Tickets will be available for purchase the entire month of April and can be redeemed at The Shop from April 1 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 tickets before and after the church services in April or you can get them from any team member, and from Donna Locke during office hours. Please support our ministry.



Seniors & Friends Luncheon

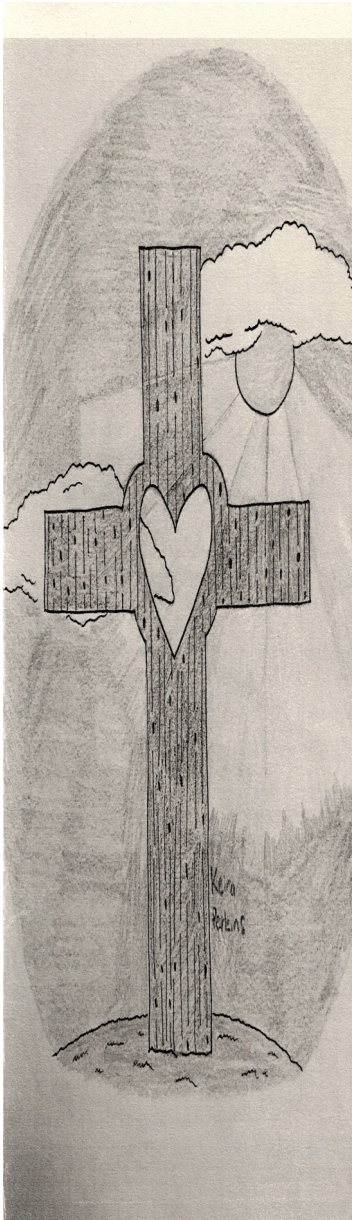
On Thursday, March 28 at 11:30 we will meet at the Crossroads Family Restaurant, located on Route 61 (Pottsville Pike, next to the Savage Dealership) for food and fellowship.

You can order breakfast, lunch, or dinner. There are senior specials and a nice salad bar.

If anyone does not want to drive to this area, please let me know. I will try and get transportation for you depending on where you live.

Please sign up at the kiosk at church or call Sharon Neff at 610-657-8727 or 610-944-9820.





Dear Leaders and Members of St. Paul's,

I could not be more pleased and delighted by everything you did over the last several months to show your appreciation for the ministry we have carried out over the last seven years!

The worship service, special guests and luncheon far, far exceeded my highest expectations. Thank you !!!

And thank you to Tim, Donna F, Donna L, Tracey, Sue R and Cindy O. Also, Donna A and Martin ! And to Sally and Freddie for an excellent meal!

Thank you for the very generous check for \$2,000. Sue and I are hoping to use it for a special time away.

My prayers for all of you, the congregation and leaders as you set sail into a new future. May God bless you with peace, love and in the fruitfulness of your mission in Christ.

With Love,

†Pr. Tom Lang

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.

	<u>Jan-24</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actual</u>
Income		
Non-Preschool M&M	\$ 17,871	\$ 17,871
Preschool M&M	\$ 11,195	\$ 11,195
Total	\$ 29,066	\$ 29,066
Expense		
Non-Preschool	\$ 23,417	\$ 23,417
Preschool	\$ 6,523	\$ 6,523
Total	\$ 29,940	\$ 29,940
Income Less Expenses - Non-Preschool	\$ (5,546)	\$ (5,546)
Income Less Expenses - Preschool	\$ 4,672	\$ 4,672
Total Income Less Expenses	\$ (874)	\$ (874)

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

March Mystery Members

By Melissa Neff

The parents in this month's mystery family met in an interesting way. They actually met on an Internet dating site called eharmoney.com. They chatted back and forth a while before they went on their first date, and then they dated for approximately three years. Mrs. was from Fleetwood, and Mr. was from Sinking Spring, and neither knew of the other's existence until meeting on the Internet. This year they will be married for ten years.

Mrs. has belonged to St. Paul's from the time she was born thirty-eight years ago. She attends church with their two children. You probably have seen her kids up front during the children's sermon. Their son is seven years old, and their daughter is four.

Mrs. went to Elizabethtown College where she received a degree in elementary education and special education. She is a learning support teacher at Fleetwood High School. It is a challenge to motivate the students, and there is a lot of paperwork involved. When she isn't teaching, she coaches her son's baseball team, is an assistant den leader for cub scouts, plays with her kids, and watches sports. Her husband went to Wilkes University for pharmacy and works for Tower Health.

The family has one pet. It is a rag doll cat named Olivia. She is eleven and lives underneath the sofa.

Their son is in first grade at Willow Creek Elementary School. He likes to play soccer and baseball, goes to cub scouts, likes Pokémon, plays video games, and likes to play with his friends and use his scooter outside.

His sister attends preschool at our church. She takes tennis lessons, likes to play with her baby dolls, and likes to play with her friends and ride her scooter outside.

As a family they like to spend time outside. They also like to watch a lot of Reading Phillies games and go to Knoebels and Dorney Park. Their vacation destination is Ocean City, MD.

If you haven't guessed who this family is, find out in the April issue of the Epistle.

*Last month's mystery members were
Holly and Gary Wolf*





January 26, 2024

Gretchen Mertz
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
117 East Arch Street
Fleetwood, PA 19522

Dear Friends,

Thank you for participating in our 2023 Christmas gift-giving program for the children in our care. Your gift of 35 gifts most certainly brightened the children's Christmas morning. It is gratifying when members of the community recognize the needs of these children and help us in our mission to support them as they grow into healthy, responsible community members.

By helping us this holiday season, you not only gave a child some happiness Christmas morning, but also allowed them to experience all the joys of the season: hope, caring, generosity and love.

We encourage you to follow CONCERN on social media, visit our website for more information www.concern4kids.org, or watch our latest videos on our You Tube channel <https://bit.ly/3CuUsWw>.

Again, thank you for remembering CONCERN's children during the busy holiday season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Crum".

Kelly Crum
Region Director

KC/kd

The official registration and financial information of CONCERN - Professional Services for Children, Youth, and Families may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. In accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations, this acknowledgment also certifies that no goods or services were exchanged in return for this contribution.



St. Paul's
Evangelical
Lutheran Church



117 East Arch Street
Fleetwood, PA 19522

Office Hours

Monday—Thursday 9am to 3pm



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

Donna Locke

Parish Administrator 610-944-8388

Email: office@spelcfleetwood.com

Cindy Oesterle

Treasurer 610-944-8388

Sue Remmel

Financial Secretary 610-944-8388

Donna Ahrens

Organist,

Director of Handbells 610-944-8388

Martin Hinkley

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Email: office@spelcfleetwood.com

Website: www.spelcfleetwood.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/spelcfleetwood

The church office will be open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am—3:00 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 Donna L. will meet you at the door for admittance into the building.



WELCOME

MARCH 2024

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

					1 6:45am Men's Group	2
3 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat.Class, C & C 10:30am Music/ Worship 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon	4 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H.	5 6:30 – 8pm Girl Scouts S.H	6 10:30 GWBU library 5:30pm (S.H.) Supper 6:30 (S.H.) Lament Service Following Ser- vice Choir	7 6-7:30pm Girl Scouts Loft 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H.	8 6:45am Men's Group	9
10 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat. Class, Sam Borrell's Men in Mission 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon	11 Epistle Deadline 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H	12 7:00pm Preschool Zoom Meeting	13 10:30 GWBU library 5:30pm (S.H.) Supper 6:30 (S.H.) Lament Service Following Ser- vice Choir	14 6:00pm Daisy's Loft 7:00pm Cultural Series	15 6:45am Men's Group	16
17 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat.Class, C & C 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon	18 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H.	19 6:30 Girl Scouts S.H. 7:00pm Council Meets	20 10:30 GWBU library 5:30pm (S.H.) Supper (S.H.) 6:30 Lament Service Following Ser- vice Choir	21 6-7:30pm Girl Scouts Loft 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H.	22 6:45am Men's Group	23
24 Food on Fourth 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat.Class, C & C 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon	25 6:00pm Girl Scouts S.H.	26	27 10:30 GWBU library 7:00pm Choir	28 6:00pm Daisy's Loft	29 Good Friday 6:45am Men's Group	30
31 8:30am Service 9:45am SS, Cat.Class 7:00pm AA/Al-Anon						
S.H.= SOCIAL HALL LOFT= UPSTAIRS CAT CLASS						