

January 2012

The St. Paul Epistle

A Newsletter of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Bellville, Ohio

Special Interest Articles:

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Newsletter Distribution Changes

For some time now the office staff has been contemplating changing how the newsletter might better be distributed. Recent changes by the United States Post Office have made it advisable that we do so in January with the February mailing. The January newsletter, mailed on December 21, 2011, will be mailed as usual.

Traditionally *The St. Paul Epistle* has been mailed to every member and interested guests through our bulk mailing permit. In recent years we have emailed a PDF copy to those households who requested it. The bulk permit, however, requires that we send out a minimum of 200

identical copies even though our actual mailing list is less than that due to the number of households who get an electronic version. In 2012 we are required to use the Loudonville Post Office for all bulk mailings, and this is simply not cost nor time efficient.

We also know that more and more people get their news through the internet. We need to adapt to the changing way people receive their information. So we are offering the following means by which you can receive news about what is happening here at St. Paul Lutheran Church.

A **black and white copy** will be available for pick up on the usher

stands the last and first Sundays of the month.

A **color copy** of *The St. Paul Epistle* will be mailed free by first class mail to all home bound members and first time guests.

A **color copy** of *The St. Paul Epistle* will be mailed by first class mail to everyone who pays \$15.00 per year.

An **electronic version** in color in PDF format will be sent by email once a month.

Weekly news and items of current interest will be emailed to those who desire more frequent contact.

The **website** will have electronic copies available.

Distribution Choice for the 2012 Church Newsletter

Household Name _____

Method of Delivery Desired: *Please check all that apply.*

- I will pick it up at the church.
- Please mail me a color copy.
 - I am home bound. Please mail it for free.
 - Please find \$15.00 attached.
- Please send me an electronic copy.
 - I desire to receive a monthly PDF file I can download.
 - I desire to receive weekly email updates.

Thank You Notes

Dear Members of St. Paul Lutheran Church,

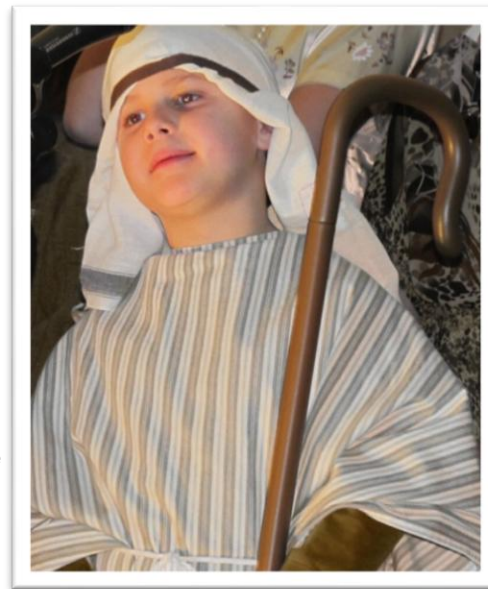
We would like to thank you for your generous donations to the BNOG on behalf of our "Feed a Family at Thanksgiving" Campaign. This gift allowed our families to enjoy a meal at Dutch Heritage as well as boosted our local economy! Thank you for helping us care for our community.

The Bellville Neighborhood Outreach Center

Thank you for the different and temporary schedule of the December worship services. I really enjoyed this brief departure from routine which enabled us to meet and greet members we do not normally see, and the joint congregation sang really well together!

Pam Hartley

Ian Price was a shepherd in the Christmas Musical, *I Believe*.
Photo by Bob Coppersmith



Fellowship Days

The Women of the Church will be having their Fellowship Days from 9:30 to 3:00 all the Wednesdays in January and February beginning with January 4th. During these days the women put together Quilts for Lutheran World Relief, make Cheer Baskets, finger puppets, Linus blankets, and do other projects to aid the needy. A Hot Soup Lunch is served at noon! It is a great time of fellowship and service. Come join the ladies.



Date Night Service Project

Parents, do you need an evening out? On February 4, 2012 the St. Paul Youth Groups will be offering free babysitting. Drop off your little ones and go enjoy a dinner or a movie. The community room will be open for babysitting from 4 – 7. There will be games, crafts, and stories read during this time. Samantha Laux will also be visiting with her dog, Dillon, and reading one of her books. We would like to open this event up to our members as well as any friends or family that you may feel could use this opportunity for a date. Please register for this event by calling the church at 419-886-3521.



3rd – 5th Grade Youth Event



The 3rd – 5th Grade Youth Group will meet on Saturday, January 21st from 3 pm to 5 pm in the social room. We will be playing games and making homemade pretzels. Come join the fun!

Dear Friends at Saint Paul,

I want to thank all of you for supporting me in Pelotonia 2011. The ride for Pelotonia was a few months ago however donations were accepted until late October and the final total for donations was released just recently. There were almost 5000 riders and the event raised \$13,108,639 which is donated 100% to cancer research at the James Cancer Center in Columbus. I was excited to be able to contribute to such a wonderful cause and with your help I was able to raise \$1,925 dollars for Pelotonia. The 102 mile ride from Columbus to

Athens was one of the most physically challenging things I have ever done but I managed to finish the ride in a little over 6 hours. Raising money for such a great cause and knowing that the money raised will help the lives of many made Pelotonia one of the most rewarding things I have ever been a part of. Without all of your help it would not have been possible.

Thanks again for your support,

Mark Worner

Christmas Cards

The Christmas Card box is located in the lobby for church members to exchange Christmas Greetings. Check the box to see if anyone has given one to you.



6th- 12th grade Youth Group Tubing Outing

Friday, January 27th – Save the Date!

The youth group from Second Presbyterian Church from Newark, Ohio, will be joining our 6th-12th grade youth groups for an outing at Snow Trails on the evening of January 27th. Stay tuned for more details to come about this fun and exciting event!

Children's Ministry Coordinator Letter

Just a Penny

As a teenager I heard a sermon from a pastor that made a big impact on my life. The title of the sermon was called, "Just a Penny." The pastor discussed how a penny, just a little copper coin, could represent Jesus in a major way. The pastor was brought to tears during the sermon when he discussed his comparison between Jesus and a penny. This comparison has never been far from my thoughts, even years after hearing the message.

The pastor described how he had gone to a mall on a busy shopping day. He laid a penny right out in the open and sat down where he could still see the penny. He sat there for quite some time as busy shoppers walked around and over the penny. Some people were too busy to see the penny, but others who may have noticed it kept on walking by. After a few

hours of watching, the penny still sat on the floor. The goal for the pastor was to have somebody pick up the penny, but no one had the time to stop and pick it up.

The pastor explained how Jesus is like that penny laying on the ground. How many of us don't have time for Jesus. We are caught up with our daily schedule and the hustle and bustle of life. We tend to leave Jesus out of our lives far too often. We have a choice; we can either simply walk over Jesus, or invite him to be with us at all times.

When I come along a penny lying on the ground I always stop to pick it up. Never do I worry about the superstition if the penny is "heads up" or "tails up." I only think about Jesus and how I will never allow myself to walk over him. I bend down and pick

up the penny. I think about how Jesus is always with me, no matter where I may be. I then say a prayer and I thank Jesus for being a part of my life.

The sermon, "Just a Penny" impacted my life so that I no longer think of a penny in the same way. The penny is a ritual I like to use in my life to remember Jesus. It's a special day when I find a penny, because I am reminded of Jesus and the sacrifices he made for me. It's funny how many pennies I do find, and how I watch others pass them by. I gladly pick them up with a smile. What is it that you do to see Jesus in your everyday life? I encourage you to pick up a penny when you find one. Then you can tell Jesus, thank you, for being a part of your life.

Peace,

Ashley DeFrancisco

Work Camp 2012

Planning for the 2012 work camp has already begun. John Harsh and Lindsey Brokaw will be attending the event with our youth in Rushville, Indiana, this July. Youth 14 years old or entering the 9th grade in the fall of 2012 are eligible to go. If you are interested in attending work camp the first deposit of \$100 is due on January 1, 2012.

Youth Quake 2nd Deposit Due

We are so excited that we have 12 youth signed up to go to the 2012 Youth Quake in Toledo on February 10, 11, and 12. The second deposit of \$50.00 is due on January 15th.



Cast of *Just Believe*, the 2011 Christmas Musical. Photo by Bob Coppersmith

Nursery Volunteers Needed

Can you serve God by serving the smallest? Can you give one Sunday service every three or four months to be in the nursery? Grandpas and Teens and Moms and Singles and Grandmas and Dads are invited to care for children during the worship services. We'd like two people each time, preferably unrelated, with

at least one adult. This is NOT to say that little ones don't belong in the sanctuary; Pastor Doug makes it clear that all babies and children are welcome there. But sometimes parents want to take their child to the nursery. Please call the church office if you are willing to give the gift of your service in the nursery to God and the Ministry Body.

Simply Giving Cards

The Bellville Neighborhood Outreach Center (BNOC) is requesting your help. For every *Simply Give* card purchased at the Mansfield Meijer Store the BNOC will receive credit to purchase items

for the food pantry. For every donation received Meijer's will match it, up to \$100,000. You can give your donation through the church, Pam Van Horn, Jeff Wright, the BNOC or your Mansfield Meijer Store. Deadline is January 7th.

Help **Lois McCullough** celebrate her 90th birthday with an Open House in the Community Room on Saturday, January 7th.
No gifts please.

Work Camp Rummage Sale

The Rummage Sale for the workcamp trip to Rushville, IN., will be early this year. The rummage sale will be March 28 - 31. We will begin to collect your donations starting on Sunday, March 25, 2012. So as you begin to think about all those Christmas items that you no longer need or want, and reorganize your

closets because Santa was sooooo good to you, remember that we will need your support and donation to make this a successful event. The youth are counting on us to help them get there. Don't throw it away unless you think it won't sell. We need it! Questions??? See Carol Cornell

Stewardship Sunday Report

Thanks to all who turned in Estimate of Giving Cards

For General Fund \$239,275.49 up \$17,739.49 from 2011
 For Building Fund \$70,585.00 up \$10,432.10 from 2011
 For World Hunger \$17,706.38 down \$1,029.91 from 2011
 For Love Fund \$13,484.00 up \$2,233.64 from 2011
 For Scholarship Fund \$3,975.00 up \$1,110.5 from 2011

These numbers are as of 12-12-11

	-----November-----			----January 1 through November 30, 2011----			Annual Budget	Remaining Budget	December Budget
	Actual	Budget	Over (Under)	Actual	Budget	Over (Under)			
Giving									
General Fund	\$ 20,779.55	\$ 20,854.67	\$ (75.12)	\$ 202,382.10	\$207,375.45	\$ (4,993.35)	\$ 230,974.33	\$ 28,598.57	\$ 23,598.88
Building Fund	\$ 6,378.40	\$ 5,752.31	\$ 626.09	\$ 60,057.10	\$ 64,216.73	\$ (4,159.63)	\$ 70,466.40	\$ 10,409.30	\$ 6,249.67
World Hunger Fund	\$ 1,891.39	\$ 1,468.00	\$ 423.39	\$ 16,037.69	\$ 16,148.00	\$ (110.31)	\$ 17,616.00	\$ 1,578.31	\$ 1,468.00
Love Fund	\$ 2,177.52	\$ 1,388.87	\$ 788.65	\$ 13,045.77	\$ 15,277.53	\$ (2,231.76)	\$ 16,666.40	\$ 3,962.63	\$ 1,388.87
Scholarship Fund	\$ 643.00	\$ 425.67	\$ 217.33	\$ 3,423.00	\$ 4,682.33	\$ (1,259.33)	\$ 5,108.00	\$ 1,685.00	\$ 425.67
Endowment Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 170.00	\$ -	\$ 170.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total*	\$31,869.86	\$29,889.52	\$ 1,980.34	\$ 295,115.66	\$307,700.05	\$ (12,584.39)	\$ 340,831.13	\$ 46,233.81	\$ 33,131.08
Expenses									
General Fund	\$18,212.40	\$18,126.57	\$ 85.83	\$ 206,356.27	\$210,472.64	\$ (4,116.37)	\$ 230,951.33	\$ 24,595.06	\$ 18,219.51
Building Fund	\$ 4,578.87	\$ 4,293.20	\$ 285.67	\$ 60,367.57	\$ 47,225.22	\$ 13,142.35	\$ 51,518.42	\$ (8,849.15)	\$ 2,051.45
World Hunger Fund	\$ 1,891.39	\$ 1,468.00	\$ 423.39	\$ 16,037.69	\$ 16,148.00	\$ (110.31)	\$ 17,616.00	\$ 1,578.31	\$ 1,468.00
Love Fund	\$ 2,391.89	\$ 1,388.87	\$ 1,003.02	\$ 10,937.69	\$ 15,277.53	\$ (4,344.66)	\$ 16,666.40	\$ 6,171.53	\$ 1,388.87
Scholarship Fund	\$ -	\$ 425.67	\$ (425.67)	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 4,682.33	\$ (3,182.33)	\$ 5,108.00	\$ 3,608.00	\$ 425.67
Endowment Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total*	\$27,074.55	\$25,702.30	\$ 1,372.25	\$ 295,194.40	\$293,805.72	\$ 1,388.68	\$ 321,860.15	\$ 27,103.75	\$ 23,553.48
Fund Summary									
	Beginning Balance	Income	Expenses	Ending Balance	Projected Income	December Expense	Month Ending		
General Fund	\$ 15,050.30	\$ 20,966.45	\$ 18,502.86	\$ 17,513.89	\$ 23,598.88	\$ 18,219.51	\$ 22,893.26		
Building Fund	\$ 23,651.48	\$ 6,378.40	\$ 4,578.87	\$ 25,451.01	\$ 6,249.67	\$ 2,051.45	\$ 29,649.23		
World Hunger Fund	\$ -	\$ 1,891.39	\$ 1,891.39	\$ -	\$ 1,468.00	\$ 1,468.00	\$ -		
Love Fund	\$ 3,862.16	\$ 2,667.98	\$ 2,391.89	\$ 4,138.25	\$ 1,388.87	\$ 1,388.87	\$ 4,138.25		
Scholarship Fund	\$ 2,867.03	\$ 1,643.00	\$ -	\$ 4,510.03	\$ 425.67	\$ 425.67	\$ 4,510.03		
Endowment Fund	\$ 192.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 192.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 192.00		
Designated Funds	\$ 15,905.17	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,236.23	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,236.23		
Total	\$ 61,528.14	\$ 32,547.22	\$ 27,365.01	\$ 68,041.41	\$ 33,131.08	\$ 23,553.48	\$ 72,916.97		
		Income	Expense	Difference	Income	Expenses	Difference		
General Fund Nov. 2011		\$ 20,779.55	\$ 18,212.40	\$ 2,567.15	YTD \$ 202,382.10	\$ 206,356.27	\$ (3,974.17)		
Building Fund Nov. 2011		\$ 6,378.40	\$ 4,578.87	\$ 1,799.53	YTD \$ 60,057.10	\$ 60,367.57	\$ (310.47)		

*Total Does not Include Designated Funds; Scholarship Fund Summary Income includes a transfer of \$1,000.00 from LCM.

Worship Services for January

January 1 First Sunday of Christmas 10:00 only! A Service of Lessons and Carols, No Holy Communion
Luke 1 and 2,

On this first day of the year on which we think of beginnings, and new opportunities, and resolutions to be new people, we hear the first two chapters of Luke. These stories tell of the birth of Jesus as recounted by his mother. Luke weaves her reminiscences around the themes of God beginning a new work, angels presenting new opportunities, and culminating with the fulfillment of the resolutions of two people who stayed faithful to God their entire life.



January 8 Baptism of Our Lord Pastor Robin McCullough Preaching, Affirmation of Baptism
Genesis 1:1-5 Psalm 29 Acts 19:1-7 Mark 1:4-11

You Are My Beloved

Baptism is the beginning of a new story. It was for Jesus; it is for us. God claims us as sons and daughters, fills us with the Holy Spirit, and promises to travel through life with us. In baptism, God proclaims, "You are My Beloved!"



Our preacher today is Pastor Robin McCullough-Bade, daughter of Lois McCullough. She is the Executive Director of the Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge. This ministry cultivates unity, justice, and peace through feeding the hungry, arranging transportation for the elderly, and promoting inter-faith dialogues. She is married to Pastor John Bade who will be giving a multimedia presentation on Baptism.

January 15 Second Sunday after Epiphany
1 Samuel 3:1-14 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51
Speak Lord, for Your Servant is Listening.

God speaks. Sometimes God speaks with an audible voice, like he spoke to Samuel. Sometimes it is a word of Scripture that speaks to us, like God speaks today about our sexual relations in the letter to the church at Corinth. Sometimes it is Jesus himself who appears, like the experience of Nathaniel. God speaks. The invitation to us is to listen.



January 22 Third Sunday after Epiphany
Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Psalm 62:5-12 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20
Proclaiming the Good News of God: Naming God

Jesus called Peter and Andrew and James and John too. They followed him and became his disciples. After Jesus ascended into heaven, the four of them became the ones who called others to follow. We are part of the great tradition of calling others to follow Jesus. This is both easier, and harder, than you think.



January 29 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany Prayers for Healing, Children's Choir,
Deuteronomy 18:15-20 Psalm 111 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 Mark 1:21-28
Proclaiming the Good News of God: Our Authority

We are called to proclaim the Good News of God in the midst of every circumstance in which we find ourselves. Every disciple of Christ has been placed where God can use you for the most good. Even if you find yourself in the midst of great evil, do not fear. You have authority over evil.



Poinsettia Donations

Our thanks to the following persons & families who donated poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

Edward & Pam Hartley, in memory of Diana Clarke.

Fred & Alwine Stull, in memory of their parents.

Dick & Bonnie Brenneman, in memory of Harold Brenneman, Owen & Marjorie Gallaway.

Charles & Julie Dome, in honor of Madelyn, Meghan and Molly.

Pastor Doug & Carol, in memory of our family members who died.

Marilyn Baker, in thanks to God for a blessed family.

The Family of DeLee McNaul, in honor of a loving mother.

Gene & Gerri Leedy, in memory of their parents.

Families of Lynne Walters and Dan & Laurie Boone, in memory of Charles & Marjorie Schrack and Mike Schrack.

Lois Oyster, in memory of Carroll Oyster, Olive Darling and Tim Tilton.

Bob, Judy & John Coppersmith, in memory of John & Hildegard Werner and Carl & Ardella Coppersmith.

Mark, Linda, Jonah & Abbie Albert, in memory of Linda's mother, Janice Bryson.

Bob, Judy & John Coppersmith, in honor of Jim Coppersmith and his family.

Pastor Doug & Carol, in honor of our wonderful church family.

Mark, Linda, Jonah & Abbie Albert, in honor of Mark's father, Pastor Donald Albert.

Judy Adams, in memory of Bob & Mary Clever, Lori Adams and Michelle Megger.

Jeff, Stacy, Jenny & Danielle Wright, in memory of loved ones.

Amos, Beth, Ethan & Emily Fry, in memory of Linda Steel and Bonnie Palmer.

Steve, Laurie, Lane, Allyson & Ryan Leedy, in memory of Rosemary Shasky.

Gary & Connie Barr, in memory of Eugene 'Diz' Wise.

Lois McCullough, in memory of Harry H. McCullough.

Sabrina & Callan Pugh, in memory of Caitlin Pugh.

Lois McCullough, in honor of Sara, Andy, Jessica, Rex and Michael.

Carolyn Stoner, in memory of Leonard Stoner and loved ones.

Gary & Cheryl Lantz, in honor of the Christ Child.

Larry & Luanne Dill, in memory of Ray & Evelyn Barr and George & Bertha Dill.

Pastor Doug & Carol, in celebration of the birth of Jesus.



Special Thanks to **Wade & Gatton Nurseries** for donating the trees, the roping, and the wreaths. Thank you to Van and Shirley Wade, Brian and Cheryl Wade, Danny and Annie Wade, their boys, Mason and Grant and Riley (and Carson on the way), Doug and Rosemary Shirk, and Rod and Cindy Pearce for doing the decorating.

Pastor Doug's Letter: December 14, 2011

Greetings, Beloved,
Blessed be your Christmas;

As we enter this season of Christmas I give thanks for all the gifts that God has brought to the world through you. Your love, generosity and sharing are the work of the Holy Spirit within you. You remind me of Mary and her encounter with Gabriel. The angel told Mary that she was greatly favored, that she would bear a son, and that his name is Jesus. Mary replied, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Now Mary's reply did not come immediately after the angel's announcement. Mary was troubled by Gabriel's greeting, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." Undoubtedly Mary, like us, did not feel like the favored one of God. Perhaps God might love us, like he loves the other seven billion people in the world, but perhaps it is a diluted kind of love that spreads itself thin as it ranges far and wide. For we know, from the rock bottom reality of our experience, that we love deeply only a very few persons, a family member or two, somewhat less our extended family, our best friend slightly less, and even lesser, friends, acquaintances, and neighbors. As humans we are limited in time and attention, kindness and patience, and compassion and giving. So we, like Mary, measure the capacity for God to favor us against our ability to give favor.

God is God. God's grandeur, God's majesty, and God's power is greater than the distance from here to the furthest star. So God's greeting to you this Christmas is "Greetings, favored one of mine, my most special

child, the one I celebrate with hugs and kisses." The exuberance for you personally is not diminished by his exhilaration over every other.

To experience this, remember a time when you were celebrated, when you were greeted with enthusiasm and warmth, and when you were showered with affection. The greatest you have ever been celebrated is the smallest measure of the celebration that God gives you.

You are Mary. That is the joy and the message of Christmas. The miracle God worked in her works in you. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." Experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit within you is the norm and the reality for all who are in Christ Jesus.

The image that we use for little children is really not helpful here. We tell them, "Jesus is in your heart." While there is truth in that statement, the image that is conveyed is that, out of the whole of our body, in only one part of it, way deep down inside, too small to be seen and too hidden to be accessed, in there, a little tiny Jesus the size of a pebble lives. We are big and God is small. This is what we feel about God. Our thoughts and understandings of God are different but feelings and images triumph knowledge and thinking.

Let's try a different image. Instead of saying, "Jesus lives in my heart," say, "I live in the heart of God." Visualize Jesus as a Being vast enough to cradle the whole earth against his bosom. His heart is the size of a whole mountain and entering into it is like entering a monstrous cavern, filled with pulsating light reflecting off

crystals the size of girders and jewels larger than cars. The crystals under your feet are softer than cashmere, and to recline on diamonds is to relax on the most luxurious of recliners.

This image is what it means to be "overshadowed" by God.

However, Mary is troubled by what she is not. Not married. Not pregnant. Incomplete. A virgin.

We too are troubled by what we are not, what we lack, our incompleteness. That lack is different for you than for me. It is different from your sister's lack and your brother's incompleteness.

God's word to Mary, given by the angel Gabriel, is this:

"My power, my presence, my spirit is within you. It is working out the salvation of the world. Receive and believe. I choose to use you to be the cup of blessing coming forth from within you. So that you might have the confidence and faith to receive this, I point you to the sign of another upon whom I have poured out my favor. For you it is your relative Elizabeth, pregnant after menopause."

This Christmas may you see the sign that the Lord has prepared for you that you too might see and believe and respond, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Peace,

Pastor Doug

Bishop's Letter *December 8, 2011*



As I was leafing through a church product catalogue recently (not Augsburg Fortress) I was struck by how far we have fallen from any sense of awe. This catalogue offered 42 pages of Christmas merchandise. I could get past the full-size nativity cardboard cut-out, the nativity bingo game, even the nativity Rubik's cube. But I was absolutely arrested when I came across the nativity rubber ducky set. The sheer cheesiness of depicting the Holy Family as a set of rubber ducks was breathtaking.

I have often said that we are surrounded by a culture of glory. Now I fear that it is much worse than that. Glory assumes some kind of greatness. What I see now is the presumption of an ever accessible domesticated deity about as warm and powerful as a hot cup of cocoa. Yes, I am grateful for Emmanuel, God with us, but I am deeply concerned that in our eagerness to celebrate the Incarnation we miss the radical condescension of the Eternal squeezing in to the finite. We dash past Philippians 2:6 and land on Philippians 2:7. We skip lines 2 - 8 of the second article of the Nicene Creed and hold on to lines 9 - 12.

I think that this, in part, is what the Christmas-Carols-During-Advent argument is about. We all want the comfort of our imperfectly remembered childhood Christmas. We want the peace and

resolution achieved in every made-for-TV Christmas special. We do hope, even yearn for peace in our lives, in our families, in our country and in our world. Christmas carols, Christmas decorations, Christmas celebrations all bring some cheer, but the promise of peace on earth that brought the reconciliation of the creation with the Creator through the Word-made-flesh is robbed of its power if we pass over Advent too quickly. Theologian Alan Lewis defined optimism as the hope that everything is going to turn out all right but hope is the conviction that everything that now exists will be destroyed so that something new can come into being.

Advent lections that announce the great and terrible day of the Lord, rending heavens, the axe at the root of the tree, even putting down the mighty from their thrones are not heralds of optimism. Things are not going to turn out all right; they are going to be destroyed. Walter Brueggemann in his commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel writes that "every new beginning means the terrible end to some previous arrangement". In Advent we mark the end of the world. The Word kills and the Word makes alive. Wonder and awe can be restored to the holy seasons of Advent and Christmas, to our communities of faith and to our lives when we forego optimism for hope. The gift of the Incarnation is more precious and powerful when we remember who became incarnate.

☐ If you or someone in your congregation is sensing a call to rostered ministry and are willing to engage in some serious Jacob-like wrestling please consider the Region 6 Discernment Retreat March 2 & 3 at Camp Mowana. See details in the flyer included in this month's unified mailing. ☐

Another big thank you goes out to the synod's Lutheran Men in Mission group for their recent work day at the synod office. A crew of 10 volunteers replaced the roof on the synod storage garage, removing the leaking, moss-laden shingle roof and installing a new brick-red metal roof. A dead tree was also removed from behind the

office building. Particular thanks go out to Bernie Bresson, Tom Green, and Larry Zank (Israel's, Paris), Jamie Savarin (Kountze Memorial, Louisville), Ken Reinhoehl (St. Jacob, N. Canton), Mark Spademan (St. Paul, Smithville), Jerry Wiedmann (Trinity, Madison), Geoff Whidden (St. John/St. Paul, Akron), Willis McGeorge (Salvation Army, Canton), and Jerry Snyder (Good Shepherd, Canton) for a great job. The LMM group also purchased and donated the materials needed for the roof repair. We are very grateful for this group of generous volunteers who have "adopted" the synod office and grounds to receive their time, talents, and treasures to help maintain the property.

We also thank Pastor Clyde and Peggy McGee for another year of beautifying the landscaping at the synod office by planting blooming flowers and maintaining several mulched areas on the grounds. Other projects will be necessary in the coming year. Some items needed are carpet cleaning, building painting, garage siding and door replacement. The LMM challenge other groups or individuals in the synod to share their talents and further stretch the limited financial reserves available to the synod office for operations. If you or your group would like to become involved, please contact Judi Wise at the synod office at 330-929-9022 or jwise@neos-elca.org.

Peace,

Elizabeth A. Eaton, Bishop

January Celebrations

Happy Birthday

3 Debbie Jolin
 3 Trey Boyd
 4 Lois McCullough
 5 Tara Teeter
 6 Tom Boyd (Sr)
 6 Morgan Klenk
 7 Jeff Wright
 7 Cody Teeter
 8 Ed Mazur

8 Clare Clemens
 9 Jeffrey Brokaw
 10 Marsades Mast
 11 Jacob Helinski
 11 Jordyne Helinski
 13 Laurie Boone
 13 Danielle Wright
 13 Andrew Garn
 14 Adrienne Hoover

14 Steven Broeske
 17 Erin Craw
 17 Shirley Wade
 18 Stephenie Beal
 19 Steve Beal
 22 Donald Harding
 22 Matt Craw
 26 Geraldine Leedy
 27 Cheryl Lantz
 30 Nick Hammett
 31 Brent White

Happy Anniversary

January 2, 1993 Rod & Cindy Pearce
 January 11, 1947 Eugene & Geraldine Leedy
 January 20, 1951 Loren & Madge Peters
 January 25, 1992 Tom & Darcy Boyd

Please Pray for and Remember Our Shut-Ins

Please remember people in our congregation who have not been able to worship with us. Your cards, letters, and visits give them much joy. It is important that we help them remember they are part of our church family.

If you know of someone who needs added to the list, please contact the church office

Country Meadow Care Center
 4910 Algire Rd., Bellville, OH 44813
 Ed Mazur, Ethel Dudley

Lexington Court Care Center
 250 Delaware Ave., Lexington, OH 44904
 Marsades Mast

Mansfield Memorial Home
 50 Blymyer Ave., Mansfield, OH 44903
 George Ridenour, 330-601-4771

Homebound Church Family:
 Rubert Hill

Guardian's Minutes: December 1, 2011

Present for the meeting were: Lisa Brooks, Chris Laux, Michael Murray, Stacy Wright, Mindy Wood and Pastor Doug.

Stacy Wright opened the meeting with devotions from Psalm 18: 16-19. After reflection and discussion, the devotional time was ended with prayer.

REPORTS:

- The Treasurer's report for the period ending November 30, 2011 was reviewed via an e-mail from Paul Martin. He reported that the General and Building funds were up, slightly under budget and "the good news is that if we meet December's budget we can end the year with an ending balance slightly greater than where we started. That is good since 2012 appears to be challenging," Paul wrote.

OLD BUSINESS:

- The sound system policy was tabled until further notice.
- Status of the roof and kitchen projects: The small dishwasher has been replaced; the large dishwasher has been fixed. The roof has been determined to be good for at least another year; review of the roof status is diverted until next year.
- Marilyn Baker is currently meeting to determine nominations for the Guardian position/ Lay Leader position now held by Chris Laux. Nominations will be forthcoming.
- Pastor Doug moved that Judy Coppersmith be appointed to be the Ministry Guide, replacing Marilyn Baker, starting January 31, 2012 for a 3 year term. All were in favor.
- Nancy Martin, Ashley DeFransisco and Chris Laux are working on a Nursery Team to staff the Sunday morning nursery.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Changes will be taking place in the delivery of the church's monthly newsletter. Due to the high cost of postage, the following changes will take place: in lieu of mailing them to all households, copies will be available for pick-up in the back of the sanctuary and members will receive e-mail copies of the pastor's letter and other pertinent information. Shut-ins will continue to receive a copy in the mail. Other members could receive a color copy in the mail via a subscription if they so choose. More information will be forthcoming.
- Pastor Doug's evaluation took place with the Guardians' completing a checklist of his priorities and skills and discussing what went well, not so well and changes that need to be made. From the discussion, the Guardians will be formulating areas that the Pastor and Guardians will be devoting special attention to in 2012. All agreed that Pastor Doug's exemplary worship leadership, ministry and spiritual direction of our congregation are invaluable and he was commended for his good service.
- Status of the Tech Team project: phase one has been completed and they are working on phase two. The new computers should be in place by December 15.
- Staff evaluations have been completed by Chris Laux and Pastor Doug. They reported that they all went well and that everyone is interested in coming back. "All of the staff were commended for their good service and none of them reported any major difficulties."
- The Guardians prepared a ranking of budget categories for the Budget Committee to prioritize for setting budget requests and for payment, if money runs short. Mike Murray moved that the guardians direct the Budget committee to prepare a 2012 Budget according to the following priorities:
 1. 10% Mission Support, 2. All contracted expenses, 3. Programming expenses, a. Outreach, b. Children's c. Youth, d. Adult
 2. Staff salaries, operating expenses that are not contracted, and the Pastor's salary.

Mindy Wood seconded and the motion was approved.

Staff salary recommendations will be decided by the Guardians at their next meeting on December 12, after the 'Estimates of Giving' have been tabulated.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Mindy Wood

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2012</h1>						
1 Christmas 1 10:00 Worship	2 5:30 Weight Watchers 6:30 Reunion Group 7:00 Reunion Group 7:00 Bible Study 7:00 D. View Bingo 8:00 AA	3 7:00 Reunion Group	4 6:00 Children's Choir 6:15 Catechism 7 th 7:00 Arise! Praise Team 7:30 Choir 7:30 Catechism 8 th	5 4:00 Painter's Alive 5:00 Community Dinner	6 1:30 Bible Study	7 CR In Use
8 Baptism of Jesus 8:15 Arise! Worship 9:30 Generations Alive! 10:30 Rejoice! Worship	9 5:30 Weight Watchers 6:30 Reunion Group 7:00 Reunion Group 7:00 Bible Study 8:00 AA	10 7:00 Reunion Group 7:00 Budget Team	11 10:00 Elderberries 6:00 Children's Choir 6:15 Catechism 7 th 7:00 Arise! Praise Team 7:30 Choir 7:30 Catechism 8 th	12 4:00 Painter's Alive 7:00 Guardians	13 1:30 Bible Study	14 6:30 Men's Breakfast - V&M
15 Epiphany 2 8:15 Arise! Worship 9:30 Generations Alive! 10:30 Rejoice! Worship	16 5:30 Weight Watchers 6:30 Reunion Group 7:00 Reunion Group 7:00 Bible Study 8:00 AA	17 7:00 Reunion Group	18 6:00 Children's Choir 6:15 Catechism 7 th 7:00 Arise! Praise Team 7:30 Choir 7:30 Catechism 8 th	19 4:00 Painter's Alive 7:00 Worship Planning	20 1:30 Bible Study	21 4 th & 5 th Grade Youth - SR
22 Epiphany 3 8:15 Arise! Worship 9:30 Generations Alive! 10:30 Rejoice! Worship	23 5:30 Weight Watchers 6:30 Reunion Group 7:00 Reunion Group 7:00 Bible Study 8:00 AA	24 7:00 Reunion Group	25 6:00 Children's Choir 6:15 Catechism 7 th 7:00 Arise! Praise Team 7:30 Choir 7:30 Catechism 8 th	26 4:00 Painter's Alive 7:00 Ministry Leaders	27 1:30 Bible Study 7:00 Youth Ski Trip	28 6:30 Men's Breakfast - V&M
29 Epiphany 4 8:15 Arise! Worship 9:30 Annual Meeting 10:30 Rejoice! Worship CR In Use Annual Meeting	30 5:30 Weight Watchers 6:30 Reunion Group 7:00 Reunion Group 7:00 Bible Study 8:00 AA	31 7:00 Reunion Group				

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Church Street
Bellville, OH 44813

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Bellville, Ohio
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Mailed: DECEMBER 16, 2012
Address Service Requested



St. Paul Lutheran Church

48 Church Street
Bellville, Ohio 44813

Pastor Doug Pretorius

CHURCH PHONE:
419-886-3521

FAX: 419-886-2584

E-MAIL:
StPaulBell@aol.com

PRAYER REQUEST:
419-886-3987

We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.splc-bellville.org

Christmas Eve Services

7:30 p.m. Kid Friendly Candle
Light and Communion
Christmas Eve Worship

WORSHIP CHANGE:
December 25 10:00 a.m.
Christmas Day Worship

10:30 p.m. Traditional
Candle Light and Communion
Christmas Eve Worship

January 1 10:00 a.m.
New Year's Day Worship

Sunday Worship Services ...

8:15 AM
Arise! Worship Service
Acoustical Guitar Music

Holy Communion
Weekly
Handicapped Accessible

9:30 AM
Adult & Kids Learning

10:30 AM
Rejoice! Worship Service
Organ Music
Nursery Available

OUR MISSION:
Living & Sharing God's
Love

OUR VISION:
We live & share our faith
in Jesus Christ by:

Trusting God with all our heart.
Learning God's desire for us.
Telling others about God's love,
Caring for others using the gifts
God gives us.