

SAINT PAUL'S EPISTLE



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Cathy Evans

WHAT DOES THE EASTER MESSAGE MEAN TO US, ANYWAY?

DEAR SAINTS:

On page two of this *Epistle* is an important message from our brother, Russ Bengtson. Russ writes his letter in response to some challenging, but not unexpected news that one part of our total endowment, the part defined as "General Endowment," has been used up. It has been spent over the past number of years to cover the "gap" in our budgets. As I look over my annual reports to the congregation from the past five years, I, and every president we have had during these years, have pointed out this inevitability. To keep our ministries going we have consistently spent more than our members have given. We made the point time and again that without "turning things around," reversing this trend, we would eventually exhaust these funds. What was predicted has happened.

Now the question is . . . how will we respond to this "challenge"? I encourage you to take Russ's message to heart. We can no longer rest comfortably on the giving of others from previous generations. It is now our time to make a choice. And this is where the reality of the Easter message comes in. In the face of any of life's challenges we must ask ourselves a question, "What does the Easter message mean to us, anyway?" (That message is, of course, "The Lord is risen!")

If we choose to respond to the present challenge with fear and worry, as if our best days are behind us, then we have simply forgotten (or, possibly have never really heard) those Easter words, "The Lord is risen!" Fear and worry, while they may be natural, are an indication that our trust has been located in the wrong place or the wrong "things." No matter how much of a cushion we might have in a financial endowment, it can *never* be the source of our vitality as a community of faith.

But if those words of the Easter proclamation *have* taken root in us, if we believe in the resurrection of Christ and seek to follow our resurrected and *living* Lord, then we have all the resources necessary to face any challenge in life. If we as a congregation choose to approach this momentary challenge in faith, then our best days are indeed *before* us.

What exactly will our response be? The bottom line is—and this is true of every church, organization, or business—you cannot cut your way toward

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health. Slashing our budget to fit our present resources might buy us a bit more time, but it will not lead to a stronger, healthier congregation. Likewise, patching a few holes in the budget through creative fundraisers, or asking our people to dig a little deeper into our pockets, can also help in the short run, but it's not a long-term solution.

The bottom line is that we can't keep what we don't give away. We can't grow as a congregation (more accurately, as the *Body of Christ*) if we are not each passionate about sharing the good news with others. We must renew our efforts to "Go and make disciples of all people." We must reach out to those who are hungering for hope. We must *dare to share*—even if it stretches some of us beyond our comfort zones.

Over the course of the next few months our Council (and any who would like to join us) will explore solid, doable steps we can take to grow in our reaching out. We will share with you what we learn as soon as possible.

Are we facing a threatening challenge or an exciting opportunity? Our response will answer that question.

Pastor Hugh

AN IMPORTANT LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION from Russ Bengtson

I'm writing on behalf of our church council to help everyone be aware of some circumstances which have arisen in the past few months. As Brian Beckwith, our council president, mentioned in his report at our annual meeting, the money that we have relied on for the past several years to balance our budget is drying up. In fact, as of this writing, it is gone. Most of these funds were donated to St. Paul's by Harold and Vernal Schnabel on their passing. They were extraordinarily generous in their gift to St. Paul's and we are eternally grateful. We were allowed to use these funds to continue our work at St. Paul's.

Our financial secretary, Mary Procyk, has been extremely frugal in dipping into these funds, but the bills must be paid and too often there is no other choice. Now the choice is in our hands. Do we want to see St. Paul's flourish in the coming years, or do we want to see it flounder and fail? I think we all know the answer to that. I have been coming to St. Paul's for most of my life.... I went to Sunday school in the house that was our first chapel which stood where our Parish Education building is now.

Pastor Hugh has told us at recent council meetings that one of the challenges of churches in modern times is that parishioners don't tend to give in the way that our parents or grandparents gave years ago. The pressures on us in this day and age are tremendous, but the realization that we have a safe and secure place to bring our kids to

for Christian Education is priceless.

As of the end of the first quarter, March 31, we are down nearly \$5,000 in total projected income. (This includes offerings plus other sources of revenue.) Multiply that times 4 and you will know where we will be at the end of the year. Of course, we had a hard winter so utilities and snow removal took a bigger bite. Talking about money is always difficult in these situations. We tend to think that things will always work out. They will work out if we make them work out. This means growing our church family first of all. We all can work harder at bringing new faces into St. Paul's to share with them our mission because we do tremendous work here at St' Paul's. It also means taking a hard look at what we spend our money on in our personal lives and how we can maybe put a little more of that into our church. I would never tell anyone what they should give to their church. That is a private conversation we all need to have with ourselves.

Talk to yourself and see what you find in your life that has more importance than your faith and your church and the family that you belong to here at St. Paul's. Increasing our pledges by five or ten dollars a week could also be the difference in our success or our failure. Thanks for your attention on this important matter. In Christ,

Russ Bengtson

Offerings [†] received through March 2014			
Actual	Budget	Over/Under Budget	Annual Budget
30,715	34,833	-4,118	139,350
† Offerings include Weekly offerings, special offerings, loose plate, and Sunday School			

NEWS & NOTES

COLLECTION OF NEW BOOKS AND TOYS FOR LAKOTA CHILDREN

On March 9th, Rochelle Ripley visited our Sunday School Class to share her heritage as a Lakota Indian. She told a story to the children about Mother Earth, explained instruments that the Lakota Indians use in ceremonies, shared how the Lakota Indians hunt different animals using the entire animal for either food, clothing and instruments. She also sang a native song with the kids. Rochelle spoke about the Reservation and the children in South Dakota, sharing with us how a lot of the children don't have school supplies, art supplies, books, clothing and toys.

For our Sunday School Service Project this year we will be collecting new books and new toys for the children on the Reservation. The toys should not require batteries. Rochelle will be delivering the items the children collect when she travels out to South Dakota in June. Please place any donations in the collection boxes in Fellowship Hall.



VACATION BIBLE CAMP

Sunday, June 22nd – Thursday, June 26th

5:30 p.m. Dinner

6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Camp

Music, Games, Experiments, Bible Adventures
and More!

Join us for the most fun event of the year!

- VBC is available for children Preschool – Grade 5.
- Registration deadline is Sunday, June 1st.
- Registration Forms are available in Fellowship Hall

Older children can volunteer as group leaders! Volunteers of all ages needed for decorating committee and week of camp!

See sign up sheet in fellowship hall or contact Cathy Evans.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

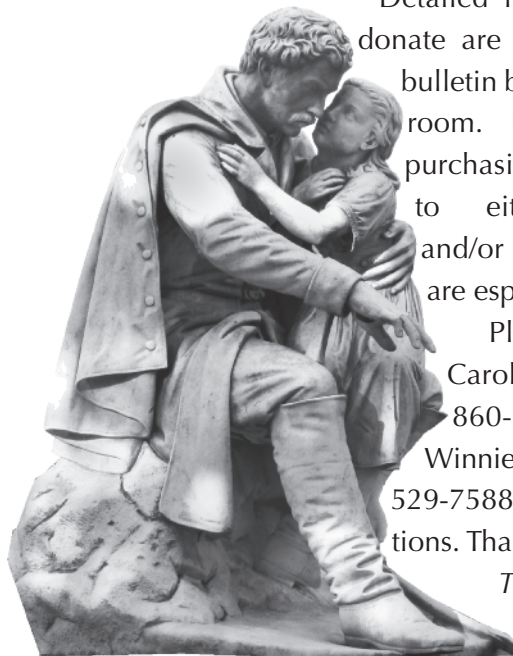
This spring the Thursday Group will be collecting items for the wounded VETS at the Dept. of Veterans Affairs in Rocky hill.

There is a red box in the coat area it will remain there until June 15, which will be the last day to drop off items.

Detailed lists of items to donate are located on the bulletin board in the coat room. Please consider purchasing SCRIP cards to either WalMart and/or Target as they are especially helpful.

Please contact Carole Hughes at 860-529-8550 or Winnie Sawrun at 860-529-7588 with any questions. Thanks!

Thursday Group



RETURNING SOLDIER MONUMENT

An 1867 marble statue depicting a Civil War cavalry officer being greeted by a young girl stands outside Connecticut's home for veterans in Rocky Hill.

etcetera...

ST. PAUL'S GIVING TREE

Our Giving Tree focus for the month of May is the Synod Convention. The assembly will be held June 5-7th in Worcester, MA. St. Paul's will send Pastor and two voting members of the congregation to the convention. There is no money allocated in our budget this year to cover the cost of registration and lodging. Contributions made for this month's focus will allow St. Paul's to be represented and information learned and shared will benefit our congregation.

Giving Tree envelopes have been placed in the pews in church to make it easier to place in the offering plate during Sunday Worship.

As always, the Giving Tree remains in the Fellowship Hall with many leaves to choose that include other areas of our Ministry that will be a focus in the upcoming months. Any amount will be greatly appreciated! THANK YOU!!

If you have any questions, please give Sue Agne a call (860-563-0776)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Opportunities to volunteer

May 24 and June 14

Highlights include:

- The Thrivent House is located at 17 Bernie Ave in Bristol, CT
- 15 building volunteers are required per build day—other volunteers are needed to provide lunch and snacks.
- Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age
- Each volunteer coming onto the build site must complete a release of liability waiver online prior to their build day
- Volunteers must arrive on the build site by 7:45 am for the safety talk and expect to be there until 4 pm
- Wear appropriate clothing. T-shirts, rugged pants/shorts. No loose clothing that cannot be tucked into outerwear such as scarves, etc. Be prepared that clothes can be ruined while volunteering. Working with construction materials can destroy clothing
- Dress in Layers; be sure to dress appropriately according to the weather
- Wear protective footwear (solid soles, covered toes)
- Please bring construction gloves if you have your own pair. If you have your own tool belt, hammer or safety glasses bring them as well.
- If we have to cancel due to weather/emergency Habitat will make the cancellation call by 6:30 AM to the group's leader.

For more information, talk to Jim Newmark. Have a GREAT TIME and thank you for volunteering!

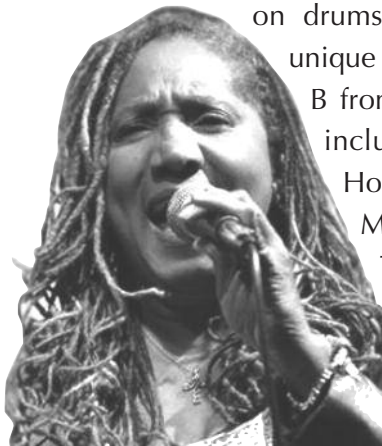
ELCA
NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING
DETROIT, MICHIGAN
JULY 2015

July 2015 is quickly approaching and the Youth Gathering will be happening in Detroit, Michigan. Any youth between graduating 8th grade and graduating 12th grade in 2015 can attend. If interested please contact Missy Cheyney (860-257-4558) or Margaret DeBlois (860-665-0428) as soon as possible. We need to get together to plan and organize fundraising for the event.



CONCERT REMINDER
SUNDAY, MAY 18 AT 3PM

Theresa Wright and The Distinguished Gentlemen (Brad Rickert on keyboards, Steve Clarke on bass, Dexter Pettaway on drums) will be performing their unique blend of Jazz, Blues, and R & B from the 30's through the 60's including works by Billie Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald, and Marvin Gaye.



The concert will be held on Sunday, May 18th at 3pm at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 371 Wolcott Hill Rd. in Wethersfield.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children under 16 and are available at the door or by calling the church office at 860-529-5397.

This is an event you don't want to miss! 25% of proceeds will be donated to charity.

CHURCH



CHAPTERS

St. Paul's Book Club will meet on Tuesday, May 13th to discuss the book, *The Lacemakers of Glenmara* by Heather Barberi. It is the story of Kate Robinson's move to Ireland, following her mother's advice that "you can always start over again". Kate develops a bond with the town's lace maker society. The society helps its members to develop the strength to face their fears and desires. Books are made available for check out at the Wethersfield Public Library a few weeks before our meeting. We will meet this month at the home of Carole Hughes at 6:30 on the 13th. Please give Carole a call if you can make it. We would love to have you come!!

St. Paul's MEMBERS IN SERVICE for
May 2014

ACOLYTES:

May 4 - Collin Grottke
11 - Jared Christensen
18 - Max Gentino
25 - Megan Creevy

ALTAR GUILD:

Debbie Howe, Coordinator, 860-529-8583

May 4 - Tracy Newmark & Mary Procyk
11 - Bob Bowman & Bill Fischer Jr.
18 - Tracy Newmark & Patty Bengtson
25 - Jennie Dotts & Deb Howe

ASSISTING MINISTERS:

May 4 - Art Bruce8:00 AM
Mary Procyk.....10:30 AM
11 - Patty Bengtson8:00AM
William Fischer Jr.10:30AM
18 - Jim Newmark8:00AM
Mike Coyle10:30AM
25 - Art Bruce8:00AM
Kathy Coyle10:30AM

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:

Sue Agne, Coordinator, 860-563-0776

May 4 - Walter Ruppap
11 - Curt Leonard
18 - Sue Agne
25 - Carol Hughes

TAPING:

Jan Pergande, Coordinator, 860-644-2888

May 4 - Deb Howe
11 - Jan Pergande
18 - Jan Pergande
25 - Deb Howe

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS:

Winnie Sawrun, Coordinator, 860-529-7588

May 4 - Mike & Kathy Coyle
11 - Deb & George Howe
18 - Amanda & Deb Viola
25 - Mary Procyk

FINANCE:

Mary Procyk, Coordinator, 860-257-4793

May 4 - Mike Coyle
11 - Heather Christensen
18 - Art Bruce
27 - Lillian Doerschler

LECTORS:

Lillian Doerschler, Coordinator, 860-529-1939

May 4 - Jeanette Serafine
11 - Winnie Sawrun
18 - Carol Bruce
25 - Lillian Doerschler

USHERS:

Brian Beckwith, Coordinator; 8:00AM, 860-563-4066

May - Brian Beckwith
Louise Lostocco, Coordinator, 10:30AM, 860-529-3079
May - Carol Farley & Jan Pergande

MAY 2014 | EVENT CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<p>Notes for May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mother's Day is May 11th. Bring your mother, or accompany her, to Church on Mother's Day!</i> • <i>Theresa and the Distinguished Gentlemen Concert: Sunday, May 18 at 3PM</i> • <i>Pastor Hugh will be away on vacation from May 28 to June 3.</i> 						
<p>4 Third Sun. of Easter Family Sunday Holy Comm. 8 & 10:30 AM No Sunday School Healing Time to follow both services</p>	<p>5 Cub Scouts 8 PM</p>	<p>6 Outreach 7PM</p>	<p>7 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM</p>	<p>8 Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM Thrivent Event 6 PM</p>	<p>9 AA 10 AM</p>	<p>10 AA 7:30 PM</p>
<p>11 Fourth Sun. of Easter Mother's Day Holy Comm. 8 & 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM</p>	<p>12 Cub Scouts 6 PM</p>	<p>13 Church Chapters 7PM</p>	<p>14 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM</p>	<p>15 Men's Breakfast 7:30 AM Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM</p>	<p>16 AA 10 AM</p>	<p>17 AA 7:30 PM</p>
<p>18 Fifth Sun. of Easter Holy Comm. 8 & 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Last Day of Sunday School Spring Concert 3 PM</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM</p>	<p>22 Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM</p>	<p>23 AA 10 AM</p>	<p>24 Habitat for Humanity AA 7:30 PM</p>
<p>25 Sixth Sun. of Easter Holy Comm. 8 & 10:30 AM</p>	<p>26 Memorial Day</p>	<p>27 Parish Admin. 6:30 PM Ch. Council 7:30 PM</p>	<p>28 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM</p>	<p>29 Recovery Bible Study 10 AM Thursday Group 10 AM</p>	<p>30 AA 10 AM</p>	<p>31 AA 7:30 PM</p>

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May 2014

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