

The Messenger

March 2018

St. Paul Lutheran Church and PreSchool
1327 Vaughn Road, Wood River, IL 62095
Dr. George J. Gude, Vacancy Pastor



Pastor's Page

At the end of March the church observes Good Friday, the most somber day of the entire church year.

The focus is on Jesus being killed on the cross, and we reflect on who killed Jesus. Surprisingly, the answer is not quite as simple as we might think. In the most literal sense the answer would be the few Roman soldiers, led by a centurion, who actually drove in the nails and hoisted Jesus up on the cross to die.

However, they were simply acting on orders. Even though Pilate acknowledged Jesus had done nothing to deserve death, and he desired to release him, the execution was a result of a trial. Pilate condemned Jesus and ordered his crucifixion. So we continue to trace the responsibility. We discover that the only reason Jesus was on trial before Pilate was because the Jewish political and religious leaders wanted him dead. They had already conducted a trial of their own and had pronounced him worthy of death. It was only then that they brought Jesus before Pilate, and insisted that he be executed, which Pilate did rather than risk a riot.

So, do we conclude that the Jews killed Jesus. Well no, not really. The political and religious leaders who were responsible were certainly Jewish, but then so were all of the disciples of Jesus as well as the crowds who followed him. As we read the book of Acts it is clear that the early Christians were virtually all Jewish. Peter and John preached in the temple and exhorted those very religious leaders to confess that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Paul, as he went from city to city proclaiming the message of salvation in Jesus, would begin by going to the Synagogue to proclaim Jesus as the Christ in the hope that the Jews of that city would confess Jesus.

Sadly, we know that eventually Judaism as a religion refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, the promised Savior. And we know that the result of that rejection was that they lost their place as the chosen people of God. Since the coming of Jesus who was the Messiah, the chosen people of God are those who confess him. That is the church.

Then do we say that the reason Jesus died is because the Jewish religious and political leaders wanted him dead? In one sense it is true that they were responsible for his death, but the reason Jesus was killed goes far beyond that.

At the time of his baptism, Jesus was proclaimed the Lamb of God, signaling that he came to sacrifice himself for sinners, for those who had made themselves enemies of God. We

are those sinners. So, do we conclude that we were the ones who caused Jesus to be killed. Again, in a sense this is true as well.

However, the real reason that Jesus died was because this was God's plan from the beginning. At the arrest of Jesus, when one of his disciples started to fight with his sword, Jesus told him to put away his sword and indicated that if he requested it, the Father would send twelve legions of angels to defend him. Time and again Jesus had told his disciples he was going to Jerusalem to be killed. When his enemies taunted him, "Come down from the cross," Jesus could have. He chose not to. As he dies, Jesus cries out, "It is finished!" Jesus death was the completion of the plan of salvation, which had been God's plan all along. The reason Jesus died was because God intended for it to be that way so that the sin of the world could be forgiven.

And we ask, why did God do it? We have no answer, for the answer lies in the mystery of God's love, which is fully revealed on Good Friday.

Call Committee Report

The call committee has met many times and spent many hours reviewing the names of men submitted by the congregation and by President Scharr. This review involved reading many pages of Self Evaluation Tool and the Personal Information Form documents supplied by the district. After this thorough review, the committee determined to interview eight individuals, one of whom requested not to be interviewed. The seven interviewed were Rev. Paul Crollius, Rev. Stephen Krenz, Rev. Herbert Mueller III, Rev. Timothy Mueller, Rev. Mark Nebel, Rev. David Schultz, and Rev. John Schultz. The call committee presents these seven individuals as the slate for the call meeting.

The call committee has prepared a "Summary Report" reflecting the answers to the interview questions for each of the individuals who was interviewed. This document of approximately 28 pages has been printed and is available to the members of the congregation. Unless you need more, we ask that you take only one set of documents per family.

The call committee has also prepared a list of a few observations for each of the individuals, based on the "Summary Reports" from the interview, which include both an indication of a reason the congregation might want to call a particular individual, plus items of which the congregation should be mindful. This eight page document will also be available to the members of the congregation, beginning Wednesday, February 28. Unless you need more, we ask that you take only one set of documents per family.

The Self Evaluation Tool, and the Personal Information Form for the seven candidates, which were provided by the district, are available for members of the congregation to read. We did not receive all of the above for each of the candidates. These documents, however, are the property of the district, and cannot be taken home. They are available in the church office for those who wish to read them.

Call Meeting

The meeting for calling the next pastor of St. Paul has been set for Sunday, March 11, 2018, at 2:00.

A congregation does not “hire” a pastor. The goal of the call process is to prayerfully seek God’s guidance as He leads the congregation to elect the individual who will be best able to shepherd the congregation, nurture the members, and equip them to live their faith.

At times we wish God would just send us an angel with the new pastor’s name written on a piece of paper, which would make it really simple, and then all we have to do is issue the call. Instead God has chosen to use our intellect as we collectively reflect and evaluate the various candidates and the needs of the congregation, even as we trust that He is the one guiding and leading to the decision. This makes the call process time consuming, but it also enables us to focus on the strengths and needs of the congregation. Then, after we have evaluated our current situation, we prayerfully consider each of the individuals so that through God’s guidance we ascertain which of these men might best further God’s Kingdom here at St. Paul.

To enter the call process with a predetermined conclusion regarding who we think is the best candidate and who we intend to vote for, or on the other hand who we think should not become the pastor at St. Paul, effectively short circuits the entire process and raises the issue as to whether or not we are actually seeking God’s guidance as we go through the call process.

The goal of our process and meeting must be to humbly seek God’s guidance regarding who He sees as the individual to call as the next pastor of St. Paul.



The following are prayer suggestions to assist you in your personal prayer and devotional life.

BRETHREN PRAY FOR US

Mar 4 For families of our Church - that God would bless them with love and faithfulness
For our congregation and Pastor George Gude.
For our Armed Forces, and the blessing they are to our Nation

Mar 11 For members who have not worshiped at St. Paul this year
For those who suffer the loss of loved ones that they may find comfort in the message of the cross
and empty tomb

Mar 18 For our church that we may grow spiritually through Word and Sacraments
For our Board of Education and Stewardship.
For our Donald Trump and Mike Pence, the cabinet and all federal officials

Mar 25 For faithfulness as we enter Holy Week and blessings as we worship
That we may receive the blessings of our God in our witness to Him.

Apr 2 For the celebration of Easter and the joy of that new life in Christ
For our worship assembly that we may grow spiritually through Word and Sacraments

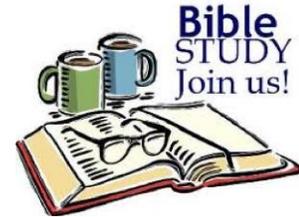
Wednesdays of Lent: March 7, 14, 21
Soup & Sandwiches
This is served at 5:30 by the Youth!
Hymn sing from 6:45 to 7:00pm in Church



Join us each evening at 7:00pm for Lenten Meditation. Note: These services are being planned with children in mind and will be only 45 minutes We hope that this will assist your family in worship.

Please Join Us Every Wednesday!
(Confirmation classes will be held on Mondays at 7p)

Lenten Bible Breakfast: Join our local Lutheran Churches on Wednesday mornings during Lent for breakfast and devotions at the **Eagle's Nest Restaurant in Bethalto at 9am.** The devotional studies will focus on "*The Salutory Gift*". Bible Study Leaders: March 7 - Rev. Kale Hanson - *Blest Communion*; March 14 - Rev. Dale Skeesick - *Rest for the Weary*; March 21 - Seminarian Tim Roggow - *Nuptial Feast*



Plan now to join your friends from Concordia, Cottage Hills; St. Peter, Prairietown; St. Paul, Wood River. Hope to see you there!

(Wednesday Devotions will be held on Thursday mornings at 8am during Lent)



Membership Changes

Ms. Emily Bold & Paige, Sophia, 309 State St., Edwardsville 62025 618-410-7904

Jacob & Rebecca Schultz & Isaiah, Unit 17C Founders Way, St. Louis, MO 63105 Jacob: 618-972-1292; Rebecca: 920-980-6687

Mike Bold & Paige, Sophia, 941 Glen Crossing Rd., Glen Carbon, IL

62034 618-531-2908

Jerry Bort, 401 S. Moreland Rd, Unit 113, Bethalto, IL 62010 618-792-0197

Glen & Dollie Kalagian, 101 Surrey Lane, Bethalto, IL 62010 Glen: 618-578-8791; Dollie: 618-910-9156

Funeral

Viola Mosby, +Entered Life Eternal 2/15/18+; Funeral 2/19/18



Passion Sunday: March 25

8:00 -- Procession of Palms
10:30 -- Procession of Palms

Maundy Thursday: March 29

1:30 -- An abbreviated service for those who cannot attend in the evening
7:00 -- Regular Service

Good Friday: March 30

12:00 -- Also for those on their lunch hour
7:00 -- Regular Service

Holy Saturday: March 31

7:00 -- Easter Vigil Celebration

Easter: April 1

6:30 -- Early Service Celebration
8:00ish- Breakfast - Everyone is invited (freewill offering)
9:15 -- Sunday School & Easter Egg Hunt & Adult Bible Study
10:30 -- 2nd Service Celebration



PreSchool Registrations are accepted on a first come, first serve basis. There is a \$25 registration fee which is to be paid at the time of registration. Children must be 3 or 4 years old on or before September 1, 2018. Please pass the word to anyone who may be interested in registering a child in St. Paul Pre-School. Registration papers may be picked up either in the church secretary's office or the classrooms



Calendar Reminders:

March 17 Chili/Dessert Cook-off & Auction at 5p
April 1 - Easter Sunday
May 6 - Confirmation Sunday
May 13 - Mother's Day
May 14 - Spring PreSchool Program at 7p

- Chili Cook-off & Dessert Bake-off

Saturday, March 17



HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

- Sign-up to bring chili and/or dessert
- ✓ Donate a Silent or Oral Auction item or Group Gift Basket.
(Items can be dropped off at church anytime)
 - ✓ Buy Early Bird tickets to avoid the line
 - \$20 = 40 tickets pre-sale or 35 at the door
 - \$10 = 18 tickets pre-sale or 15 at the door
 - \$5 = 8 tickets pre-sale or 6 at the door
- ✓ Plan to attend for an evening of fun & fellowship

EVENING'S SCHEDULE

- 4:30 pm - Doors open, chili & desserts delivered
- 5:00 pm - Opening prayer, sampling begins
- 6:00 pm - Voting ends. Preschool BMX Bike winner announced.
Golden Ladle, Golden Spatula awarded.
- 6:30 pm - Heads Or Tails, Silent Auction ends
- 7:00 pm - Oral Auction

Accepting Cash, check or plastic

QUESTIONS?

Contact Bob & Myra Farrell at 971-6644 or myfarrell@ymail.com



Older Adult Ministry for March

As I write this, we had our second meeting of the Older Adult planning group the previous week, (although two members didn't attend because of the understandable fear of expected icy roads). Part of our discussion focused on the survey that was distributed last year. Unfortunately the results were not very encouraging (at least not to me), with only 17 received out of 245 sent. Admittedly that is not a very high return. However, we are hoping that doesn't indicate a corresponding lack of interest. Rather, it does seem to suggest that an emphasis needs to be on creating opportunities for socializing, service, participation in current congregation activities and possibly addressing various issues that challenge those of us who are experiencing the life of a "senior". (Frankly I am not a fan of the "senior" or "older adult" designation, so looking for a better title will be a goal of our planning discussion.)

So here is a question – **“Can you teach an old dog new tricks?”** My granddaughters and I often tell each other “It's fun to try new things”, which is usually focused on trying new foods, and frankly not one of my strengths. However, learning something new does feel good, plus as older adults, learning is good for our brains, too. But now, living longer has been accompanied by expanded learning opportunities for older adults, and trying unfamiliar tasks means we don't want to limit ourselves only within our comfort zone. Then, what does this have to do with Older Adult Ministry here at St. Paul? Simply that hopefully there are activities, interests and areas of involvement that can be suggested and provided that will give us reasons to feel like we are still contributing to the overall ministry of our congregation. Senior ministry can take many forms. Some ministries are designed primarily for members of the congregation and some are outreach ministries. They can be by, for, with and through seniors. Which programs get implemented will depend on the needs of the congregation and the interests, abilities, and availability of senior volunteers.

Feel free to share any thoughts and ideas to the members of the planning team, including, Don Halbe, Mary Heron, Diana McMahan, Anita Seehausen and me. In fact, our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 21st at 4:30 (we will be finished by 5:30 to enjoy the meal prior to the Lenten service at 7:00). I am sure anyone interested would be more than welcome to share comments and suggestions. Remember, there is no biblical teaching about retirement from involvement in the ministry of God's church. We wish you His rich blessings even if you are still growing into your senior level of maturity.

Bob List - 314-488-8997 or Robert.List@att.net



Online giving is now here!

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (NIV, Romans 12:6-8)

You can now manage your giving online. Go to the St. Paul webpage, www.stpaulwoodriver.com and click on the EasyTithe link at the bottom left just above Email Church Office. Click the link and it will take you to our login page. Follow the instructions to set up your account. Once your account has been set up, you can choose how you give. The choices are Give by echeck or give by credit/debit card.

You also have two ways to plan your giving. Give Now is where you control when the offerings can be made. They can be managed weekly, biweekly, monthly offering or whenever it fits your schedule. Scheduled Giving takes out all the guesswork. You will be able to set your account for automatic recurring donations even if you are away on vacation!

You will be able to go to your account and review your offerings to make sure you are on target for your planned giving.

In addition to the webpage, you can go to your App store and download the EasyTithe Giving app for your mobile device. It works on Apple as well as Android systems.

If you have any questions about the program, please contact me at laura_sammons@yahoo.com. I will do my best to help you.

In Christ,
Laura Sammons

St. Paul's Braille Team



The Braille Team needs a few extra hands to help out occasionally to create books for the blind. We currently have 14 volunteers to call to come to Zion Lutheran in Bethalto on the 2nd Tuesday of the month to make books for the blind. It takes an assembly line of 10 to fill the various jobs and sometimes we can't get enough to get the job done. Everyone on our list wants and likes to come. BUT, sometimes there are conflicts with our calendars or our health, and just can't do it that month.

When you are called, you are allowed to say "NO, I'm busy. Maybe next time will work out."

We're just looking for someone who would be willing to come and join us. The jobs are easy, and it's a very rewarding task to see the stack of books we've created after just two hours.

(includes coffee, hot chocolate, fun and a joke-of-the-day)

Call or talk to Wayne or Elaine Poenitske – 254-3653

(Editor's note: it's a fun group of people to work with and the job is not difficult)



Easter Lilies

It has been tradition here at St. Paul for members to furnish Easter Lilies for our use at the Easter services. Orders are now being taken. Deadline: **Sunday, March 18**. Cost: \$9. If you would like to bring your own Easter Lily to the church, you may do so the week of March 25th.

Also, if you would like to have this in honor of a special event, please mark the bottom of this sheet and place it in the offering plate, or call the church office at 259-0257

Please order for me/ How Many?

I will purchase my own

My Easter lily is given in thankfulness for (use lines below)

My Easter lily is being given in memory of (use lines below)

NAME

PHONE