

PAUL'S PARISH NEWS



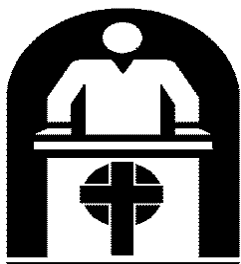
SAINT PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Breinigsville, PA

JANUARY 2021



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
8227 Hamilton Boulevard
Breinigsville, PA 18031
Telephone: 610-398-7000

PAUL'S PARISH NEWS is published by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church



Dear Members and Friends,

The season of Epiphany begins on January 6th (the day of Epiphany) and ends on Ash Wednesday. Although Epiphany is a holiday abandoned by popular culture, it has a very modern message for us today.

The Magi or “foreigners” opened the door to a surprise. In the Magi’s visit, the early Jewish church saw that the baby Jesus was King for all people from every country of the world!

Today the Magi’s visit shows us, too, who Jesus is and who we are. As Jesus is Lord of our daily life and our hope of the resurrection, so Jesus welcomes from every race and nation the lost and those searching for meaning.

The season of Epiphany is about you and me becoming enlightened, knowledgeable, and sensitive to God’s presence in us. It is also about being aware of the difference He makes in our lives and how He can make a difference in the lives of others.

Jesus is the Light, the Illumination, the Daylight that chases away the gloom and darkness from human life. In that Light we and all humankind can see clearly who we are intended to be – redeemed people of God.

But the season of Epiphany is also about the revelation of something else: God’s glory seen in Jesus.

In spite of the dazzling Transfiguration moment, God’s glory is not about a spectacular makeover. In the life and death of His Son, we see that God’s glory is about doing the right thing, getting His hands dirty keeping faith with His people.

God’s Son was born into relative poverty and died like a criminal. Hardly a glamorous career. But Jesus’ death for our sake revealed His Father’s glory – as the Savior of His people. In this time of pandemic, we can all look forward to God revealing His Light in the presence of His Son.

Blessings,
Pastor Miller

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

The Worship and Music Committee and the Back to Worship Committee have jointly decided to have three outdoor worship services at 3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. There will **not be any inside worship on Christmas Eve.**

The service will be approximately one-half hour. There will be the celebration of Holy Communion similar to our outside worship. Your singing will be led by recorded vocal and organ accompaniment.

Silent Night

When you drive in and park that evening, in addition to the bulletin, communion packet, and an opportunity to give your offering; you will be given a “glow stick” to light (for the 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. service) for the singing of Silent Night. However, if you wish to bring your own candle (and your own source of light to light it) for the singing of Silent Night, you may do so. If you remain in your car with the lighted candle, you do so at your own risk.

Sermon

Because of the shortened service there will be no sermon, but a Christmas sermon and children’s sermon will be posted on our website.

Exiting the parking lot

For the singing of Silent Night (at the 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. service) the parking lot lights will be turned off. They will be turned on immediately after Silent Night but they will take about 10 minutes to be fully lit, so, if the lights are not fully on when you leave, please be careful exiting the parking lot. Ushers will direct you as you leave.

PASTRAL ACT

BAPTISM

On Sunday, December 20 Pastor Miller performed the baptism of Emilia Jean Whitt who was made a child of God in this precious sacrament. Emilia is the daughter of Kelly & Rob Whitt. Charlie is the big sister of Emilia.

THE DAY OF EPIPHANY

The Day of Epiphany, once known as the “Christmas of the Gentiles,” and the Epiphany Season (between January 6 and Transfiguration Sunday) follow on the heels of the 12 days of Christmas. The Epiphany Season extends the spirit of Christmas for another four to six weeks. The Gospel readings we hear on the Sundays of those weeks expand our understanding of just what is being revealed in the appearance of Jesus Christ on earth. At Christmas we celebrate the day that God came to us in His Son. During Epiphany we celebrate the significance of God’s coming among us in the flesh.

REPORTS FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT

I know you are probably saying what reports. I know we have been closed since March 15th. Some committees have been meeting by zoom, in the church or in the parking lot. Anything you can give me for the annual report, even if it is just a few lines, is due in the office by December 30th.

SEMI-ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The semi-annual congregational meeting was held on December 13, 2020 following the 9:45 a.m. service in the parking lot. The 2021 budget was approved as presented. There were no nominations for council at this meeting.

Daisy Pearson has served for 6 years and will be leaving council.

Jeff Waltemyer has resigned as Church Treasurer after over 16 years.

SNOW/CANCELLATION INFORMATION



Winter advisory...Please be sure to check St. Paul’s website, www.stpaulsbbv.org or WFMZ storm center to see if any church service or event is cancelled due to snow or ice.

PARISH NURSE NOTES

Parish Nursing Notes

Peggy Saylor, RN

As you are reading this, we will hopefully be on the long road to ending the COVID-19 pandemic. On Dec. 11, 2020, the FDA approved a vaccine from Pfizer to be given to patients ages 16 and above. The vote passed and was approved by 17 members and rejected by four members. News reports seemed to believe that the four members who voted against approving the vaccine were worried about the lack of studies done on the 16 and 17 year olds. At the present time, there were not enough clinical trials done on children and pregnant women to approve the vaccine on those individuals.

This is truly a step in the right direction but the process could be long and involved until the vaccine is available to the general public and herd immunity is achieved. Those at high-risk such as front line health care workers, first responders and patients in nursing homes will be among the first to receive the vaccine. That being said, we will still likely need to continue with safe health measures such as wearing masks, washing our hands and maintaining social distancing for a while.

Another promising development is in the area of treatment for those patients who have contracted COVID-19 and are experiencing mild to moderate symptoms. It is aimed at keeping patients from needing to be on a ventilator or other advanced treatments. At the present time this drug, bamlanivimab, is in limited supply and is only used on those patients who are considered to be a higher risk than the general public. Both major hospitals in the Lehigh Valley are administering this medication on an outpatient basis as it is not presently authorized for patients who are already hospitalized. It is given intravenously and mimics the immune system's ability to fight the disease.

These are encouraging steps to ending the pandemic but patience and prayers will be required. Here's to a new and healthy New Year!

WHY ALL LIFE IS SACRED

Scripture does not know of any human life which is so commonplace that it is not valuable enough to become eternal, and this is its high optimism. Nothing is too much for Scripture. Since every person is known by God by name, and since every person exists in time in the presence of the God who is judgment and salvation, every person is a person of eternity, and not just the noble spirits of history.

—Karl Rahner



Even though we are not physically attending church, we are still taking care of sending cards to the members of the congregation. If you know of someone who is ill or hospitalized, please let the office know. Judy Szukics will be contacted and she will send a card signed from the congregation.

HOSPITALIZED?

Parish Code for hospitalized parishioners is 321. Please give this code when you are admitted to the hospital so the pastor can be made aware that you are a patient and can administer the pastoral care you require while you are hospitalized.

Please take note, that if you are admitted on a Thursday night, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, the pastor will not be aware that you are hospitalized until Monday mid-morning, since the church does not have office hours on Friday, and the hospital pastoral care office is not available on Saturday or Sunday.

This means, if you would like the Pastor to know you are hospitalized on the weekend, please call the church office or the Pastor.

SEXTON UPDATE

A cleaning service has been hired to do our church cleaning. A cleaning service was decided upon because of specialized cleaning due to Covid-19.



PRAYER CHAIN COMMITTEE



A note to let you know that if anyone is in need of additional prayers for someone in your family or someone you know, please call Judy Walker at 610-351-6040 or cell # 610-573-7117. She will start the prayer chain by calling the people who serve on that committee. They in turn will keep extra prayers going for that person. All we need is a name of someone in need of prayer; a reason does not have to be given as to why you want the extra

prayers.

If you would like to become a member of this committee, just let me know. I am contacting the Prayer Chain Committee electronically using text messages and email from my cell phone. If you do not have a cell phone or computer, we can still contact you by phone. So if you want to be of service to those who need extra prayers, just contact me using the numbers above or see me at Church. This only takes a brief amount of time and there are no meetings to attend! We all need extra prayers and they do not take a lot of time but are of great comfort.

LIVE IN THE LIGHT

Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, “How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or 10 years from now?” There are no answers to these questions. Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step — what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day. The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all our shadows away.

—Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*



3 Ina Knoll	14 Irene Wenz
3 Ken Ritter	17 Harrison Kirn
8 Florence Metzel	19 Gianna Caricari
9 John Caricari	19 Wells Rampen
10 Rosemary Lehman	22 Westley Mironov
12 Joe Mutis	27 Mark Grammes
12 Robert Pearson	31 Mary Gade
14 Jeremy Schmoeyer	



3 Joe & Allison Thompson

PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Carole Beck	Brooke Brumbach	Helen Kessler
Heather Sedlak	Larry Schneider	Warren Schlenker
John Thomas	Marilyn Thomas	Ginny Wingard

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The following memorial contributions have been received in memory of Roland Grammes:

Alethia N. Smith	Frank & Judy Szukics
Bruce & Sandra Wagaman	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas R. Stephens
Raymond & Marie Williams	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Geiger
Judy Walker	Mr. Michael Reimert
James & Ruth Klotz	Rosemary Lehman
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Eisenhard	Alice Bastian
Faye L. Billig	Carol Derr-Breinig
Lehigh Masonic Lodge #326	

The following Endowment Fund memorial contribution has been received in memory of Roland Grammes:

Mr. & Mrs. Keith Theodore

The following Endowment Fund memorial contribution has been received in memory of Owen Bastian & Doris Fenner and all other friends and members that passed in 2020 by:

Carole A. Beck

THE MAGI'S STORY — AND OURS



The story of the Magi is our story. God has used his supernatural means to draw us unto himself. ... On one glorious day, when we were exhausted and wearied in our sin, God led us to gaze upon Jesus just as the Magi did. We see the glory of God manifested through Jesus Christ in the internal work of the Holy Spirit. We see our utter sinfulness and God's abounding grace offered in the Messiah. We are filled with joy as this grace sinks into our hearts.

We fall down on our knees and confess our need of this Messiah. We worship him and offer up our lives as our greatest offering to him. Then we continue on in our lives, carrying the truth about the Messiah.

—Travis Cunningham, tvcresources.net

A WORD FOR THE YEAR

Every January, some people pray and ask God to provide a word for their year ahead. Friends have shared theirs with me, but I was hesitant to embrace the practice myself. I'd love to receive a word like *flourish*; then again, I might be like the friend who heard *health* and then faced many physical challenges that year.

But I tried it for 2020 and heard *prepare*. My first reaction was that the word wasn't very exciting, which possibly confirmed I hadn't orchestrated it. Indeed, 2020 ended up full of significant, unexpected change for our family, with careers, school, church and friends. *Prepare* reminded me that amid chaos, God had prepared me for each moment and continues to prepare me for what's next.

Give it a try! Regardless of the word you receive or what lies ahead, you can trust that God loves you and is ultimately in control for 2021 and beyond.

—Janna Firestone

CHRIST. LIKE

Still searching for a New Year’s resolution? None is more worthy than becoming Christ-like. In fact, 19th-century evangelist Henry Drummond calls it “the only thing in the whole world worth caring for.”

Two modern-day authors offer more insights. Stormie Omartian points out that we’re either making progress or backsliding on this goal. “There is no neutral position in the Lord,” she writes. “You are either becoming more like Christ every day or you’re becoming less like him.” And followers of Jesus must keep the goal always in focus. Christ-likeness is our “eventual destination,” writes Rick Warren, but the “journey will last a lifetime.”



ROCK OF AGES

On walks, I enjoy searching for heart-shaped rocks. One day in 2020, I spotted a broken heart, which seemed fitting as illness, racism and suffering dominated the headlines. I thought of Psalm 34:18, NIV: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Humans can be hard-hearted — pointing fingers, assuming the worst and failing to extend compassion. We often reject people who look, think or act differently from us. All these things break hearts, including God’s. Only with his help can we rise above hatred, learn to listen more than we speak, and express kindness, empathy and a willingness to learn.

Jesus, be our rock as we face life’s brokenness. Stay near and start the healing. Amen.

—Julie Lee

Puzzle!

Complete each saying below. Then place the words from those blanks in the correct order to complete Proverbs 23:4.

1. When the going gets tough, the tough _____ going.
2. People who live in glass houses should _____ throw stones.
3. If the shoe fits, _____ it.
4. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is _____ to enter the kingdom of God."
5. Good things come _____ those who wait.
6. When in Rome, _____ as the Romans do.
7. Don't wear _____ your welcome.
8. If you want something done right, do it _____ .

Write the unscrambled proverb here:

_____ PROVERBS 23:4

Answer: Do not wear yourself out to get rich. Proverbs 23:4

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
NEWSLETTER IS
JANUARY 17, 2021**

**PLEASE HAVE YOUR
ARTICLES SUBMITTED TO
THE CHURCH OFFICE
BY THIS DATE.**



CHURCH OFFICE: 610-398-7000

HOSPITAL CODE: #321

HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE


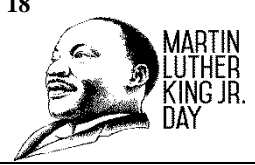
EMAIL: office@stpaulsbbv.org

Website: www.stpaulsbbv.org

STAFF

Pastor..... The Rev. Carey L. Miller
Organist/Choir Director Ms. Judy Noll
Handbell Director..... Mr. Richard Steltz
Parish Secretary Mrs. Cindy Krasnansky

January 2021 *St. Paul's Lutheran Church*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY																																										
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31 4th SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY 9:45 a.m.-Parking Lot Worship 10:30 a.m.-Parking Lot Worship																																																

PARKING LOT WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

January 2021

If you cannot fulfill an assigned duty, please call the church office at 610-398-7000.

Sunday, January 3, 2021 – PARKING LOT

9:45AM

Frank Bennighoff
Jennifer Bentsen
Sharon Bortz
Janine Ritter
Ken Ritter

10:30AM

Frank Bennighoff
Jennifer Bentsen
Sharon Bortz
Janine Ritter
Ken Ritter

Sunday, January 17, 2021 – PARKING LOT

9:45AM

Frank Bennighoff
Tom Kellogg
Bob Nickisher
Peggy Saylor
Carl Seibert

10:30AM

Frank Bennighoff
Tom Kellogg
Bob Nickisher
Peggy Saylor
Carl Seibert

Sunday, January 10, 2021 – PARKING LOT

9:45AM

Anita Eisenhard
Calvin Fetherolf
Richard Hartley
Angie Kropf
Daisy Pearson

10:30AM

Anita Eisenhard
Calvin Fetherolf
Richard Hartley
Angie Kropf
Daisy Pearson

Sunday, January 24, 2021 – PARKING LOT

9:45AM

Jennifer Bentsen
Sharon Bortz
Richard Hartley
Janine Ritter
Ken Ritter

10:30AM

Jennifer Bentsen
Sharon Bortz
Richard Hartley
Janine Ritter
Ken Ritter

Sunday, January 31, 2021 – PARKING LOT

9:45AM

Anita Eisenhard
Calvin Fetherolf
Bob Nickisher
Daisy Pearson
Carl Seibert

10:30AM

Anita Eisenhard
Calvin Fetherolf
Bob Nickisher
Daisy Pearson
Carl Seibert

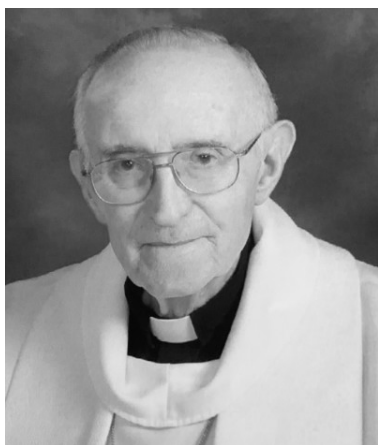
SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

A Note from the Bishop Elect

Dear Friends in Christ - The Seasons of Christmas and Epiphany proclaim the good news: "Christ with us" and "Christ revealed to us!" I cling to these words. I long to hold tight, loved ones who must stay apart for a time: my parents, siblings, nephews and nieces. And I grieve for those we have lost, cry out for an end to this present suffering. But I also hear this great promise with new ears and insights: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2 NIV). Let us trust that the Light of the World is here already, and yet his coming is on the cusp, ready to start making all things new. In the coming days, I so look forward to sharing the vision that God is ready to reveal, for new life and renewed purpose across our Synod. More to come: keep watch! - Chris deForest, Bishop Elect

The Rev. Richard H. Stough Honored for Navy Chaplaincy



The Rev. Richard H. Stough was recently recognized for 30 years of service as a U.S. Navy Chaplain with a \$1,000 contribution to the ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministry Fund for Leaders Scholarship Endowment Fund in honor of his service. The Endowment supports word and sacrament ministry candidates who will minister to military service members, and those who will serve as Veteran's Administration Chaplains or as Federal Prison Chaplains.

Because of its role in lifting up the Endowment Fund, this synod is designated an "ELCA Medallion Synod." Congregations can become "ELCA Medallion Congregations" by similarly supporting the Endowment Fund. Contact the synod office for more information.

Learning Ministries Day 2021 - Registration Deadline is Jan. 15

On Saturday, January 23, Learning Ministries Day will be held via Zoom for the first time ever; and you are invited! We will offer three one-hour workshop sessions with over 15 workshop options total. Our keynote speaker will be Barbara Rossing, professor of New Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, where she has taught since 1994. She will be speaking on "Journeys through Revelation: Apocalyptic Hope for Today."

A \$25 fee will be charged for each participant which will include the keynote, three workshops of their choice, and a goodie bag mailed directly to their home. Online registration will be open until the end of the day on January 15, 2021. Checks must be received to the Synod Office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 15. Workshop descriptions and the registration link can be found on the synod website at godslove.org.

Hope, Reading Receives NAACP Community Impact Award



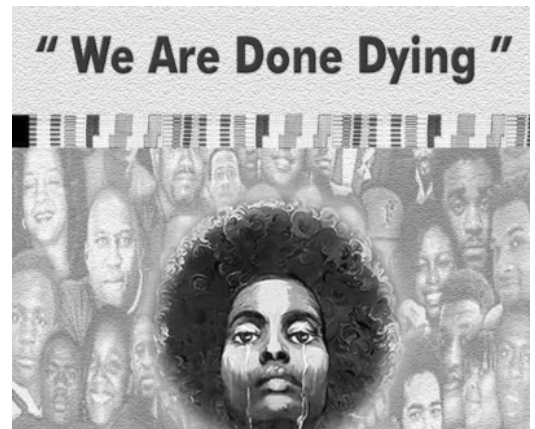
Food distribution staff at Hope

On Saturday, November 14, the Reading Chapter of the NAACP met for its 33rd annual Freedom Fund Gala - virtually, of course. Meals from "Grill Then Chill" were delivered to the homes of attendees. Following the meal, awards were presented to local organizations for their racial justice efforts. The Gala theme was, "We Are Done Dying."

Among the recipients of the 2020 Community Impact Award is a congregation of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod - Hope Lutheran Church in the Northwest section of the City of Reading. The award citation reads, in part, "We are thrilled to honor the church's dedication and commitment to making a difference with programs supporting the fullness of life for the residents living in our community."

Hope hosts the largest food pantry in the Helping Harvest Food Bank service area. Additionally, Hope's Table community outreach ministry provides a weekly meal for area residents; and Hope sponsors Café Esperanza, a One World Everybody Eat affiliate. The congregation has also offered summer and after-school programs for the multicultural children and youth who live in the neighborhood.

Pastor Mary Wolfe, who accepted the award on behalf of the congregation, commented, "We are so honored to be considered for this award. Hope has been enriched in many ways through the relationships we have been privileged to form with all of our neighbors."



Synod News is published monthly by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
2354 Grove Road, Allentown PA 18109; 610-266-5101. nepsinfo1988@gmail.com.
View the full color edition online at <http://nepasynod.org>.

The Rev. Nelson Quinones, Dean 610-653-5858
The Rev. Kurt E. Garbe, Assoc. of the Bishop 610-266-5101

Elizabeth Leibenguth, Mission District Chair 484-550-0057
Mrs. Linda Smith, Newsletter Editor 610-437-9927

February 2021 LMD NL news will be due January 14, 2021. E-Mail any information to me at lmd.newslettereditor@gmail.com.

St John's Lutheran Church in Emmaus has 32 gently used black and white choir gowns that are available free to a good home. If anyone is interested, please contact the church office at [610-965-9885](tel:610-965-9885) or email to officemanager@stjohnsemmaus.org.

Clothes Closet - In NEED of Volunteers – St. Luke's, 417 N 7th Street, Allentown, PA 18103. They have gradually lost all their volunteers since they have had to close for Covid. Volunteers needed to come in **1 or 2 mornings a week for two hours** to help sort and organize the backlog of clothing for its upcoming reopening this fall. And also, **volunteers to staff it on Thursday mornings** when they open to the public. There is a great need for at least one bi-lingual volunteer. For more information please contact Leslie Talago at [610-434-3943](tel:610-434-3943).

COME AWAY TO A QUIET PLACE... A Brief Pause for Prayerful Renewal in Centering Prayer. Centering Prayer is a particular form of quiet, receptive prayer as taught by Father Thomas Keating and Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault. A portion of each one-hour gathering will include some discussion about centering prayer. So, whether you never heard of centering prayer, are a beginner, or an experienced pray-er, All Are Welcome. **First Friday of each month** led by Ferd Piccuiro and hosted by Pastor Maritza Dolich via Zoom, **10:30 - 11:30 AM** (Sessions held via **Zoom** temporarily until we can all meet together again in person at the Center for Spiritual Awakening). **Please contact Ferd to be placed on the email list with the Zoom information.** ferdpiccuiro@ptd.net / Cell: [908-310-4228](tel:908-310-4228), Home: [610-737-7871](tel:610-737-7871)

SUSPENDED - St. Luke's ELL and Naturalization Test Study groups have been **SUSPENDED** due to cautions regarding large gatherings during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Please contact Leslie Talago at [610-434-3943](tel:610-434-3943) for more information.

*May our Precious Lord bring
peace, love, joy, happiness, and
good health to
His children in 2021*

OPERATION SUNSHINE

1933 Hanover Ave.

Allentown, PA 18109

Phone: 610-435-9155

Open: Mon 11-3 and Wed. 11-3

E-mail: LMDopsunshine@aol.com

Web site: www.LMDopsunshine.com

Paula & Dick Skelly Co-Trip Coordinators

Operation Sunshine is a non-profit fellowship opportunity within our Mission District, run solely by volunteers. Please join us and invite your friends as we enjoy a variety of venues together.

WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT DUE TO CANCELLATIONS OF PERFORMANCES BY OUR VENUES, AND FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR TRAVELERS, ALL OPERATION SUNSHINE DAY TRIPS FOR 2020 HAVE BEEN CANCELED.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO TRAVELING WITH YOU AGAIN IN 2021. LOOK FOR NEXT YEAR'S SCHEDULE EARLY 4TH QUARTER OF 2020.

SAVE THE DATES!

MAINE – JUNE 7-10, 2021

Includes Kennebunkport and the Portland Lighthouse 3 Nights lodging, 3 full course dinners including a "Downeast" Lobster Bake, Narrated Harbor Cruise of Casco Bay, Boothbay Harbor Tour, Eartha Revolving Globe, Maine Narrow Gauge Railway, LL Bean and Dexter Factory Outlets, Nubble Lighthouse, taxes, and gratuities included.

Call the Skelly's at [610-433-6878](tel:610-433-6878) for a complete itinerary and pricing.

WELCOME TO 2021 CREATIVE REFLECTIONS

These are indeed very difficult times in which we are living. Obviously, there are a number among us who can remember our parents and grandparents sharing their memories of the Influenza Epidemic of the early part of the last century but, contrary to initial expectations, concerns surrounding COVID-19 have superseded those experiences. Indeed, as we move into a new year, the number of people from all over the world who are involved with this pandemic is staggering. Hospitals are overwhelmed and the world's medical staff is exhausted. Hopefully, even as this piece is being released, the vaccines designed to offset this dilemma are being released. Unfortunately, however, it is known that it will be as late as mid-year before they will have had a significant impact. Furthermore, we are all well aware that there are significant financial issues associated with this concern. Obviously, our thoughts and prayers are concentrated on facilitating a positive response to this dilemma.

And, even as we have been dealing with this overwhelming concern, we have necessarily had to work our way through a change of leadership in our Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Following two terms as our Bishop, The Rev. Dr. Samuel Zeiser has reached the point where he needs to respond positively to the retirement invitation. There is no question that we are very grateful for the genuine and dedicated service which he has provided, and we wish him release and satisfaction in the foreseeable future. Now, obviously, the process of selecting a new Bishop was much more complicated than had ever previously been experienced. It would normally have involved a series of elections in the context of a Synod Assembly, but obviously no such event could happen while the COVID issue is overwhelming us. So, our very skilled synod leadership took the

steps to develop a very appropriate Virtual Assembly which included, of course, a virtual election process. During the course of two weekends in mid-October a virtual assembly transacted the normal synod business. And through that process The Rev. Christopher deForest was elected our new Bishop. He will begin serving at the turn of the year but, due to the continuing issues with the virus, his official installation has been postponed to the future.

Obviously, we are all involved in bringing these two worlds together in our congregations. We give thanks for the leadership of our dedicated Dean, The Rev. Nelson Quinones, and for the pastoral and lay leadership which have partnered to maintain some semblance of life in our congregations since almost a year ago. At this point there are those congregations which are involved in some level of indoor worship which involves very restricted seating and the absence of such things as singing and responsive readings which, unfortunately, facilitate the spread of the virus. In other cases, at least up until now, there have been various forms of outdoor worship. This will certainly need to be re-evaluated as we move into the heart of winter. Please be reminded that there is material available on line at [Http://nepasynod.org/virus-resources/](http://nepasynod.org/virus-resources/) which serves as a resource to providing worship involvements under these restricted circumstances.

Welcome to 2021! Obviously, we are hoping, indeed expecting, that our worlds will improve dramatically as we move on into the new year. Meanwhile, we grateful to all those who have dedicated themselves to helping us get through this crisis. We thank God for all of your loving efforts.

God Bless!
Pastor Stough