

The Messenger

A monthly publication of
St. Paul Lutheran Church
& Early Childhood Learning Center

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Gail Seyfarth is God's face in our community



Gail takes her volunteer work very seriously, and loves every minute of it. She takes her great faith and dedication to First Step of Sarasota where she is a *baby rocker* for mom's who are in drug or alcohol residential rehab. While she takes care of babies the moms take this opportunity to attend therapy and work on other needed skills. The shifts are several hours long and Gail is often called upon to cover other's shifts as well as her own.

Gail is proudly showing off her 2018 Certificate of Recognition for 15 years of service, including 88 hours of service in 2018 alone.

Well done Gail—you ARE the face of Christ to the moms and babies of First Step!

Our 65th Anniversary 1955—2020

Are you interested in helping plan a St. Paul Lutheran Church party? No, we're not retiring! Let's meet after worship on Sunday, May 12, in the Fellowship Hall to get the ball rolling on plans for a year-long series of celebratory events. We'd love your input on ideas. If you can't make it to the meeting, but are interested, please let Pr. Ashley know.

Narthex redecorating

Hopefully you have noticed the two new credenzas in the narthex. We have a goal to make our narthex more welcoming and pleasing to the eye to all who enter. If you have a passion or gift of decorating/designing or have ideas on how YOU would enhance the narthex, please meet after worship on Sunday, May 26, in the Fellowship Hall and we'll throw around ideas. If you can't make it to the meeting, but are interested, please let Pr. Ashley know.

Meet Florida-Bahamas Synod's Assistant to the Bishop, Director of Evangelical Mission

Pr. Khader El-Yateem will attend the St. Paul congregation council meeting on Thursday, May 16, at 6:30p. All are welcome and encouraged to attend the meeting to learn more about this vital ministry.

Music Notes

In less than seven months, we are saying good bye to another member of Worship and Music, Carol Zimmerman. Carol attended our last meeting on April 1 and entered her eternal life on April 11. Carol was a member of this committee in the early 2000's and rejoined us a couple of years ago. Although Carol was on the committee, we must thank her brother, Ron, who made certain to get her there and pick her up at the end of our business. We will miss her input and no-nonsense suggestions regarding worship and her unconditional support for the music program.

We are grateful to the Property Team for all the *extras* they do to enhance our worship experiences. They erect Christmas trees, put shelves up for the poinsettias and lilies, help put the plants on the shelves, put up the pew candle holders, etc. The Altar Guild members always share with the Worship and Music Committee how grateful they are to the property team.

Mike Scherr and John Beyer are the always reliable sound technicians for worship; we appreciate their commitment. We also thank John Beyer for trimming the palms and providing us with the palm branches, which added that special touch on Palm Sunday.



A special mention of appreciation to the ushers who are making every effort to make the serving of Holy Communion at the rail run smoothly. The congregants need to be applauded as well for following directions. The renewed attention for guiding guests and visitors to and from the rail is laudable.

John Ferreira continues to excite the congregation with his approach to the music at worship. In the two and a half months he has been on board, the bell ringers and the choir members are enjoying working with him and are hoping others will be motivated to join.

The Worship and Music Committee meets the first Monday of the month at 5:15p. If you are interested in joining us, please let me know. My email is sunraewitt@aol.com.

Sharon Wittren,
Worship and Music chair



The Messenger is the newsletter of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

Mailing address:
2256 Bahia Vista St.,
Sarasota FL 34239-2499

Telephone: 941-955-6479 Fax: 941-955-8600
ECLC Preschool 941-955-6480
Email: StPaul-Admin@verizon.net
Preschool email: StPaul-ECLC@verizon.net
Council email: StPaul-Council@verizon.net
Pastor email: prashley1010@gmail.com
Web site: www.StPaulSarasota.org
Editor: *Debi Rado*

St. Paul Lutheran Church is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Florida-Bahamas Synod, ELCA.

Pastor: Rev. Ashley Nicolls

Synod Parish Deacon: Michele Hilton

Executive Committee

George Hutfilz, president
Sandy Tull, vice president
Sharon Wittren, secretary
Marty Hillerich, treasurer

Congregation Council

Marty Hillerich, George Hutfilz, John McAuliffe,
Brian McCulley, JD Miller, Daniel Mills, Debi Rado,
Colleen Ryan, Gail Seyfarth, Sandy Tull,
Sharon Wittren, Pastor Ashley Nicolls

Ministry Team Leaders

Sharing & Caring – Betty Smowton
Christian Education – **Seeking volunteer leader**
Communications – Debi Rado
Early Childhood Learning Cntr – Marilyn Hutfilz
Evangelism – Marty Hillerich
Fellowship – **Seeking volunteer leader(s)**
Finance – John McAuliffe
Food Pantry – George Hutfilz
Outreach Ministry Fund – Curt Swenson
Property – **Seeking volunteer leader**
Social – Cindy Paxton
Stewardship – George & Marilyn Hutfilz
Worship and Music – Sharon Wittren
Parish Secretary – Dorrie Parsons
Director of Music – John Ferreira

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OUR MISSION AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH As a Holy Spirit-led family of God, we are called through Baptism to proclaim and bear witness to God's reconciling grace in Jesus Christ to all; so that by joyfully sharing God's Word and encouraging each other to service for the sake of others, our lives together make a difference for Christ and His kingdom.

Newly energized Evangelism Committee at work

May 1 at 1:30p in the Fellowship Hall

The Evangelism Committee at St. Paul had become a non-functioning entity, with no real direction or goals.

All that is now going to change and we are so very excited to announce the rebirth of this vital committee. After the congregational retreat of 2018, the Post Retreat Taskforce was born, with nine volunteers who were liaisons to established committees, and tasked with finding solutions to the areas of concern identified by congregation members at the retreat.

A lot of positive outcomes were accomplished in little over a year, some of them listed here:

- Showing what a balanced budget would look like and developing a three year plan to not rely on the OMF for every day expenses.
- Start of a Sunday School for all ages after worship
- Identifying and refreshing signage to enhance and make more welcoming the guest and visitor experience.
- The Praise & Pinch Form was created to give members a way to communicate with leadership.

At a recent congregation council meeting, the task force was told it needed to form a charter and become a legitimate committee (under the rules of the Constitution and Bylaws). At about the same time, it was noted the goals of the task force neatly aligned with the charter of the Evangelism Committee. *And voila!* The new Evangelism Team was formed. Below is the description of what the team will strive to accomplish:

This committee promotes the growth of membership, welcomes new members and integrates them into the life of the congregation; stimulates fellowship within the congregation; and shall also conduct programs of outreach to the community and seek to increase public awareness of this congregation.

A first focus of the team, identified from congregational input on the back of recent *Welcome to Worship* forms, is GROWTH. The first meeting(s) will be brainstorming and goal setting with a fresh set of ears and eyes.

Come to the first meeting and hear what is going on, come and add your ideas, come and see if YOU fit! For more information, talk to a current member of the new committee:

*John McAuliffe
Rick Barry
Ted Swartzbaugh
Brian McCulley
Debi Rado
PrAshley
Barry Smith
Gail Seyfarth*



Scene-it



Congrats Ethan Sykes on your baptism!
Shown here with his mom, Erin.

Amazon.Smile

Your purchases on Amazon help St. Paul Lutheran Church. We receive a small amount from the proceeds of all your purchases, and this money is free to us! It adds up over time. Below is how to sign up:

1. Visit smile.amazon.com.
2. Sign in with your Amazon.com credentials.
3. Select [St. Paul Sarasota](#) as your charitable organization to receive donations.
4. Start shopping!

Church Council Meeting
April

- Approved St. Paul Lutheran becoming a member of S.U.R.E. (Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity)
- Approved St. Paul Lutheran supporting the Synod Assembly service project by collecting (only) Walmart gift cards in any denomination. Deadline for the reception of cards is June 2.
- Approved canceling the July 18 Congregation Council meeting and rescheduling the August meeting to August 8, 2019.
- The March minutes, pastor's report, and financial information may be found in the binder in the narthex. The April minutes will be available after approval at the May 2019 meeting.

Special Congregational Meeting

All members of St. Paul are encouraged to be in worship on Sunday, May 5, in order to have a quorum. We will have a super quick meeting for the purpose of accepting the audit report. See you there!

SAVE THE DATE!



These children brought their Easter Rocks back for a special prize!

Children's Celebration & Easter Egg Hunt



Being the face of God
in the community.





Pr Ashley's Page

Greetings St. Paul Lutheran Church!

As I have mentioned before, I love the book series, *The Mitford Years*

by Jan Karon. I find the series (along with the new Father Tim series) to be encouraging and enlightening as I read about an Episcopalian priest, the congregation(s) he shepherds, and the town(s) in which he lives. I've read the whole Mitford Years series, including *The Mitford Bedside Companion*. It has the best quotes, prayers, stories, recipes, jokes, and trivia from the entire Mitford series all in one book. There is even a new book out full of just the prayers, reflections, and sermons from the series, called *Bathed in Prayer*. If I highlighted every eye-catching quote or heart-tugging story from these books, every page would be highlighted. With every turn of the page, I find something else I want to remember as a Christian and as a pastor. I want to share one story from *The Mitford Bedside Companion* that is very fitting for St. Paul and our mission together.

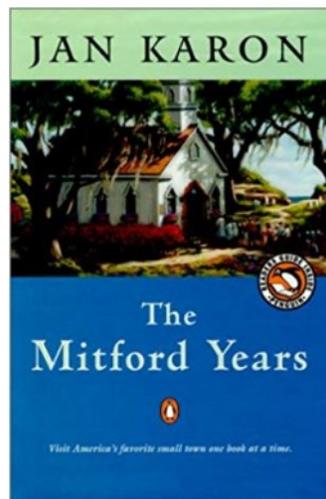
The conversation is between Father Tim and country preacher Absalom Greer. Father Tim (around 70 years old) goes to Absalom's store for dinner.

Absalom's father built the store when Absalom was six years old. Absalom runs the store during the week and preaches on Sunday. Absalom is an 86-year-old who hurries around like a 20-year-old. They greet each other warmly and sit down at the store counter. Absalom says, "You're looking at where I do my best preaching," slapping the worn wood of the old counter. "Right here is where the rubber hits the road. If they don't see Jesus behind this counter six days a week, we might as well throw my Sunday preaching out the window." He then asks Father Tim, "Where is your weekday pulpit, my friend?" And

Father Tim answers, "Main Street." Father Tim was known for not even driving a car, but walking all around Mitford and greeting all whom he met along the way.

Not only every pastor, but also every Christian, needs to ask her/himself that same question: Where is our weekday pulpit or pew? We show up on Sunday morning and that in itself is a testimony to our neighborhood, community, and world. It's a powerful witness that shows who we are in Christ, where our priorities are, where we gain our strength and ultimately in whom we put our trust. But if during the rest of the week people don't see Jesus, we are missing opportunities.

At our congregational retreat back in February of 2018, our number one goal was to grow in membership. The congregational council has taken



that seriously. The council met to discuss why and how we want to grow (thank you to those who gave us input). A consensus was made to focus on youth and families especially with our preschool, the neighborhood (especially using the asset of Arlington Park), and continue to attract retirees moving into the area. The post-retreat taskforce, after a year of hard work helping us get to a place where we now feel we can invite people to St. Paul, is transitioning into the Evangelism Committee (aka Evangelism Ministry Team). I'm excited

to see where the Holy Spirit is leading St. Paul. If this sounds exciting to you also, please join the Evangelism Team. Our first meeting is Wednesday, May 1, at 1:30p in the Fellowship Hall.

Take care and God bless each of you. And may Father Tim's prayer also be yours. "*Father, make me a blessing to someone today, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*"

~Pr Ashley

Property committee news...

The Property Committee and for that matter, many other ministries, do not take a summer vacation.

The work of God's church is 24/7-365. No one or any one group can accomplish all that is needed.

St. Paul is a strong community church that serves its congregation and greater Sarasota in many ways.

Please prayerfully consider joining the efforts of the few, with 1/2 day a month, or a week or

whatever your contribution of talents might give you a greater sense of your treasures meant to share. Choose a ministry that is meaningful to you, or a need of your St Paul family. And thanks to so many of you that already give in many ways. Perhaps you have an inactive family member or non-member friend or neighbor that enjoys giving time to community projects. We have several of these, or former active members that continue small but meaningful contributions of time and talents.

As for the Property committee, we strive to maintain and beautify the St. Paul campus regularly. Some people work independently of our Wednesday morning meetings. We are looking for spring and summer help in policing the areas of debris, leaves and weeds, both part-time

and full-time. The pay is great, as we offer free snacks to workers mid-shift on Wednesdays, if you are there on those days. It is much like a mini fellowship event or mini coffee hour. Some folks volunteer office help during that morning also. We can also use fixer-uppers or helpers for inside tasks in the ECLC, sanctuary and fellowship hall, as well as the kitchens. See *Rick Barry* or anyone on the committee (*John McAuliffe, John Beyer, Mike Scherr, Ted & Joyce Swartzbaugh, Pete & Evelyn Gulliksen*), or contact the office if you might be available and interested. Help St. Paul thrive!

Grace and peace,
Brian McCulley, member at large



*“Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”
John 11:25-26*

FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE
Report for year-to-date as of March 31, 2019

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income received:	\$ 71,657.34	\$ 69,534.15
Expenses:	\$ 66,081.70	74,817.06
St. Paul net	\$5,575.64	\$(5,282.91)
ECLC net position	\$ 41,453.99	\$ 23,550.90

SUSAN G BURMASTER
Realtor

CELL: (941) 266-3650
FAX: (941) 349-8090
susan.burmaster@floridamoves.com



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Brian's movie review

Our very own film critic, Brian McCulley, offers his review on the movie:

An Interview with God

This film is a faith based film starring David Strathairn and Brenton Thwaites, and begs the question, *is faith alone enough for salvation?*

That theology is the main premise of Lutheranism. We still find ourselves asking about works, love, hope, forgiveness, baptism, tithing, and other concerns. The answers may be different for everyone to some degree as we journey with God through Christ. Please note that the film is not an all ages movie.

It is not rated, and basically quite tame, but does touch on issues like PTSD, infidelity, and other adult struggles, as well as the focus on faith and free will. I would mention that theatre proceeds in 2018 showings all went to foster care organizations, as is a practice for this film maker.

The story centers around a reporter that has returned from being imbedded in Afghanistan, and his wrestling with his life and faith at that point. He has new questions, many and conflicting. He is granted the perfect chance to find answers in a short series of interviews with God, in human form. He is skeptical, as is the film audience, especially when the answers to his questions often raise personal questions that Christians proceed on a quest to define. However, he is encouraged by associates to continue to write his compelling story, which, like all journalism, has a deadline. And he does.

The film is very well acted, with God portrayed as challenging, direct, comforting and loving, while still having a sense of humor, not intending to confuse. We are the ones who must listen and learn.

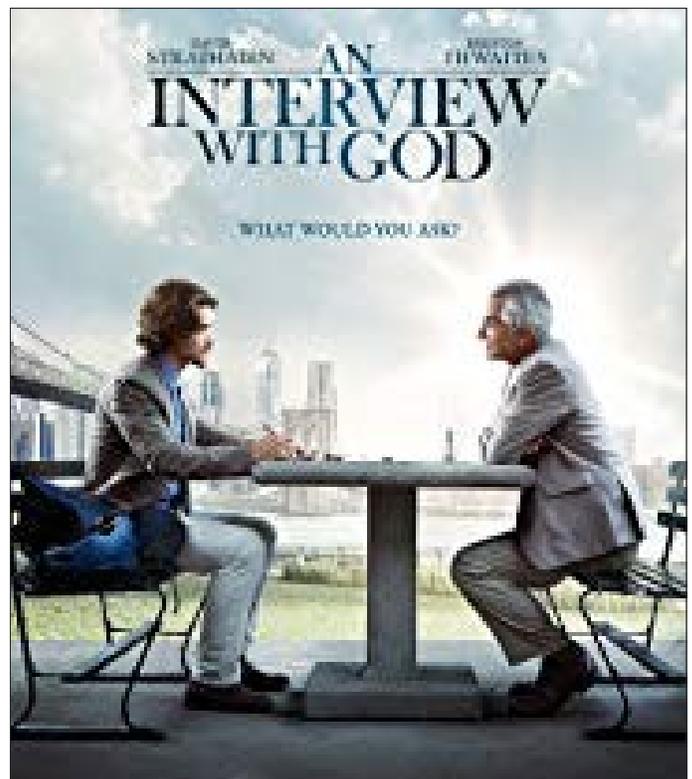
Like many Christian films in a hallmark style, it has its few moments that seem a little draggy or contrived, but they move past that to a thought provoking, enjoyable, even moving film. The movie is not perfect, or even totally resolved in the view of

some readings I have found, but it is man made, not God made, even if it is inspired by deeply caring Christian writers and actors. The best element is the style used that is modern and relevant for most generations, to supplement our bible study questions and discussions and just enjoy. I know I will watch it again, and recommend it.

Over the years I have watched a number of films in this category, and feel that they are part of the way of reaching the unchurched, the suffering, the troubled, the confused and the disheartened folks, all of which we can say we know someone, or have been ourselves.

If you do check it out, let me know if you like it.

~~ Brian McCulley ~~



2019 Synod Assembly service project

This year's service project at the Synod Assembly benefits *Community Hope Center of Osceola County*, a Homeless Outreach and Self-Sufficiency Center. This ministry serves working families that often find themselves in need of a hand out of some kind. If you would like to help a family in need, please buy a **Walmart gift card of any amount** and put into the offering plate, or give to Gail Seyfarth or Pastor Ashley, who will then take them to the Assembly. **The deadline for donating your gift cards is June 2.**

Easter Sunday



St. Paul Mission Prayer

Pray with us,

God of grace and love, you created us as your children and have brought us to St. Paul Lutheran Church. We are not perfect people, but this church is the perfect place for imperfect people. Thank you for your grace through Christ given to us. You call us to proclaim to everyone we meet that your grace is for them too. As a Holy Spirit-led family of God, we ask you to help us joyfully share your word and serve your people, so that together our lives make a difference in your kingdom here on earth. Strengthen us in our mission together; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. *Amen*

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS • MAY 2019

MAY 1 WED

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS
1:30P EVANGELISM COMMITTEE MTG

MAY 3 FRI

9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
1:00P MAH JONGG
6:30P DOMINOES NIGHT

MAY 4 SAT

9:00A FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION
10:00A MUSICIAN REHEARSAL

MAY 5 SUN

9:30A SPECIAL CONGREGATION MTG

MAY 6 MON

1:00P SHARING & CARING
5:00P GIRL SCOUT TROOP MEETS
5:15P WORSHIP & MUSIC MTG
6:30P YOUTH CONFIRMATION CLASS

MAY 7 TUES

10:00A PRESCHOOL CHAPEL
5:30P COMMUNITY MEAL
6:00P ST. PAUL RINGERS REHEARSE
7:00P CHOIR REHEARSE

MAY 8 WED

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS
5:00P FLORIDA POWER/LIGHT
5:30P FINANCE MEETS

MAY 9 THURS

3:30P EXECUTIVE TEAM MEETS

MAY 10 FRI

9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
1:00P MAH JONGG

MAY 11 SAT

9:00A FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION
10:00A MUSICIAN REHEARSAL

MAY 12 SUN

MOTHER'S DAY 

10:30A ANNIVERSARY PLANNING MTG

MAY 14 TUES

MINISTRY REPORTS DUE

10:00A PRESCHOOL CHAPEL
5:30P COMMUNITY MEAL
6:00P ST. PAUL RINGERS REHEARSE
7:00P CHOIR REHEARSE

MAY 15 WED

MESSENGER DEADLINE

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS

MAY 16 THURS

6:30P CHURCH COUNCIL MEETS

MAY 17 FRI

9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
1:00P MAH JONGG

MAY 18 SAT

9:00A FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION
10:00A MUSICIAN REHEARSAL

MAY 19 SUN

10:30A YOUTH CONFIRMATION CLASS

MAY 20 MON

5:00P GIRL SCOUT TROOP MEETS

MAY 21 TUES

5:30P COMMUNITY MEAL
6:00P ST. PAUL RINGERS REHEARSE
7:00P CHOIR REHEARSE

MAY 22 WED

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS

MAY 24 FRI

9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
12:00P VPK GRADUATION
1:00P MAH JONGG

MAY 25 SAT

9:00A FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION
10:00A MUSICIAN REHEARSAL

MAY 26 SUN

10:30A NARTHEX DECORATING
PLANNING - 1ST MEETING

MAY 27 MON

MEMORIAL DAY 
OFFICE CLOSED

MAY 28 TUES

5:30P COMMUNITY MEAL
6:00P ST. PAUL RINGERS REHEARSE
7:00P CHOIR REHEARSE

MAY 29 WED

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS

MAY 31 FRI

9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
1:00P MAH JONGG



Holy Wonderings Bible Study resumes



Bring your Bible and your questioning heart and mind and we'll share with each other! Each Wednesday at 6p in the Fellowship Hall, beginning April 24. We have a good group and all that's missing is YOU!

FASTER EGG HUNT WAS FABULOUS!

The Easter Saturday Children's Celebration was another big success. Thanks to everyone for their donations and help. We received many compliments and thanks for having the event. There were 113 registered youth brought by their many parents and grandparents observing the activities. There were 20 children that brought back their Easter Rocks from previous years, with a high of 15 rocks (*Sunshine Sanders, who collected her 1st rock at age 1*).



Thank you everyone!

Barry Smith, Easter Celebration Coordinator

Happy Birthday

- May 2 - Dorothy Boller
- May 4 - Gail Hodge
- May 11 - Kellen Masse
- May 13 - Michael Reiter **
- May 16 - Bruce Morvick
- May 19 - Sandy Tull
- May 27 - Kelley Eckert
- May 27 - Elizabeth Schwartz
- May 28 - Stella Reynolds

*** Homebound member*

Happy Anniversary

- May 23 - Miriam & Henry Blosser
- May 26 - Sue Goddard & Rick Barry
- May 27 - Kelley & Jay Eckert



St. Paul Lutheran Church

& Early Childhood Learning Center

2256 Bahia Vista Street, Sarasota FL 34239

Phone 941-955-6479 Fax 941-955-8600

Preschool 941-955-6480

Website www.StPaulSarasota.org

Rev. Ashley Nicolls, Pastor

Sunday Schedule

9:30a Service of Worship

with Children's Message

10:30a All-ages Bible Learning Games

& Coffee and Social Hour



Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

He is Risen!

