

SAINT PAUL'S EPISTLE



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

371 Wolcott Hill Road,
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MINISTRY LEADERSHIP & STAFF SUPPORT

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pastorh@stpaulswethersfield.org

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karen@stpaulswethersfield.org

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Brian Beckwith
rbbeckwith55@gmail.com

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT

Debbie Viola
debviola@stpaulswethersfield.org

COUNCIL SECRETARY

Debbie Howe

TREASURER

Roy Lewis
roy@roylewiscpa.com

FINANCIAL SECRETARY/

BOOKKEEPER

Mary Procyk
mprocyk@stpaulswethersfield.org

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Melissa Cheyney

SUPERINTENDENT OF SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL

Cathy Evans

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount:

A Four-Week Journey to Grace

Our four Sundays in February offer us an opportunity to explore one of the richest parts of the Bible, Matthew chapter 5, where we find the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. While the Sermon on the Mount actually includes chapters 5 through 7, our readings contain some of the most challenging insights into what true Christian discipleship is all about. It is here that we encounter the Beatitudes (the "blessed are the . . . poor in spirit, meek, peace makers, etc." sayings of Jesus). Here, too, we learn what carrying out God's law really entails: we are to shine out with the love of Christ for all the world to see (not keeping our talents to ourselves out of fear); we are actually guilty of a kind of murder when we even think ill of another person; if we expect God to accept our thank offerings we must first be reconciled with one another; adultery is more than technically cheating on a spouse, it includes the "secret cheating" that occurs within the hidden places of our hearts; our morally binding promises shouldn't need complicated and wordy oaths, but a mere "yes" or "no" should suffice; true Christian love never desires getting even, but inspires us to offer our other cheek when, in an effort to publicly shame us, the first has been struck; and that same love should be big enough to embrace our enemies and offer prayers even for our persecutors. Wow, tough stuff.

The message of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount has often been discounted or even dismissed by some Lutheran theologians as being too "works" oriented and not to be taken literally. It's as if Jesus tried to out do Moses, the first Law Giver, by making his laws impossible to follow. After all, who hasn't thought ill of another person or even lusted secretly in one's heart from time to time? Am I really guilty of murder simply because I get angry with someone now and then? And what about that "loving the enemy" thing? Do I really have to pray for the wellbeing of someone who seems intent on

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destroying me? Can't I just try to avoid them? Let's be reasonable, Jesus!

To duck the difficulty of these "commandments on steroids", we often say that they are there to accuse us, exposing our sin, and drive us to the foot of the Cross of Christ where we encounter God's grace. Jesus died, we are told, because we simply *can't* fulfill the law on our own. All true. But if we then continue with "so why even bother?" we have failed to grasp both Jesus' point and grace itself.

Grace, *true* grace, isn't cheap. Forgiveness does not set us free to live disobediently. Just because I wear my seat belt and have comprehensive automobile insurance, doesn't mean that I get to drive my car recklessly. Jesus may have been overstating a few things—after all, I don't *really* think God wants me to gouge out my eyes each time a Victoria's Secret ad comes on television; he just wants me to *divert* them. But if they are overstated, it's because the state of our relationship with God and our neighbor (the quality of our love) is *really* important to God.

Following Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount may seem like trying to scale an impossibly tall mountain; and it is. But . . . climb we must! There is no alternative. But there is a promise, the Good News, that as we obediently climb, inevitably stumbling as we do, we will also be picked up, dusted off, and then carried feet-dangling along the way. And *that*, dear folks, is called "grace."

Pastor Hugh Haffenreffer



SUNDAY SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

February Curriculum

We will be mixing things up in Sunday School through the end of February. We will be meeting as one large group. Each Sunday, the Sunday School teachers will plan a lesson incorporating some fun crafts and activities such as light cooking. In March through the end of May, we will return to our split classes and the Spark curriculum.

Family Sunday, February 2nd

The children will be singing a song with the choir on this Sunday! Parents should bring their children to church by 10:00 a.m. to practice with the choir.

Sunday, February 16th

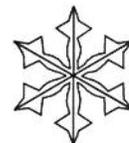
NO Sunday School due to the start of February School vacation and the fact that it is the weekend before Presidents' Day.

Looking Ahead to March

March 16 will be "Bring a Friend" Sunday. Invite your family and friends to worship and enjoy refreshments and fellowship afterwards.



CHURCH CHAPTERS



Church Chapters will meet on Tuesday, February 11 at 6:30 PM at the home of Sue and Dick Agne. This month the book club will be reading *Heaven is for Real*, by Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent. As in the past, books are available for pick up at the Wethersfield Public Library under St. Paul's Book Club. Please give Sue a call (860-563-0776) if you are able to come!

NEWS & NOTES

2014 HOLIDAY FAIR - PLANNING MEETING



Sunday February 23, 2014 @12:15 PM

St. Paul's Holiday Fair is a highly anticipated annual event for both our congregation and the community that supports this event. Last year through the efforts of our congregation and the community's support, the Fair garnered over \$5,000 dollars to further ministries here at St. Paul's. To continue making the Fair a success, planning needs to begin as early as possible.

We petition all congregants to prayerfully consider supporting this year's event with their God given; time, talent(s), and treasure(s).

Please schedule Saturday November 22, 2014 as St. Paul's Holiday Fair Day on your calendar.

50% of all proceeds from this year's fair will be donated to charities and 50% will go to continuing ministries here at St. Paul's.



If you would like to learn more about the Fair, participate on Fair day, share your time, talent(s), and treasure(s), or help with nominating and choosing this year's charities, please considering joining us on Sunday, February 23rd as we prepare for this year's fair.

All Are Welcome!

Thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration,
Wm. Fischer, Jr. – 2014 Fair Chair



A BELATED CHRISTMAS THANK YOU

Dear Family at St. Paul's,

While I included a "thank you" note in the Dec. 29th Sunday Epistle, I realize that some of you who contributed anonymously to my Christmas gift may not have been there to read it. So, on behalf of my wife, Debbie, and me, **thank you for your generosity.** (And to the giver of the anonymous cash gift that showed up on my desk one Thursday morning: thank *you* for your generous gift, too!) While the monetary and other gifts themselves are deeply appreciated, the love and support they represent is the greatest gift of all. I am humbled and most grateful for *that* gift.

With all our love and gratitude,

Pastor Hugh and Debbie

etcetera...



FIRST COMMUNION CLASSES THURSDAYS, FEB. 6 AND 13, FROM 5 TO 6 PM

First Communion is an important rite of passage for children growing up in the Christian faith. At St. Paul's, we tend to prepare our children to receive Communion either starting in the 3rd grade, or whenever their parents feel they are ready after that.

Typically First Communion instruction is offered on a Sunday after the late service. This, however, doesn't always work for some families. In listening to the needs of some of our families, we are proposing to have First Communion instruction take place on Thursday, February 6, from 5 to 6pm, and again on Thursday, February 13, from 5 to 6 pm. It is our hope that the children will be able to attend both classes.

At our first class, we will explore the origin of Communion, where it comes from, and why we receive it. At our second class, we will review the main points from the previous week, and then go over the various ways that Christians receive Communion, especially at St. Paul's. The children will have an opportunity to "practice" receiving Communion so that they will know how to when the appropriate time comes.

First Communion Sunday will be the first Sunday in March, March 2nd. This is a Family Sunday (when there will be no Sunday School). It is also the last Sunday after the Epiphany, also known as Transfiguration Sunday. It is our hope to make this service a special one for the children receiving their First Communion.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Hugh.





SUNDAY HEALING SERVICES

FIRST SUNDAYS FROM FEBRUARY THROUGH JUNE

Starting in February, and taking place on the first Sunday of each month through June, St. Paul's will be offering a time of healing after each service. Using the Lutheran "Service of Healing," we invite you to experience the power of healing in your life: the freeing of the heart, the healing of relationships, the promise of God's forgiveness for you. While healing can take many shapes and be experienced in a number of ways, it is ultimately a gift from God.

For more information or to express your interest in participating, please contact or speak with Pastor Hugh.

LENT (IT'S NOT TOO SOON TO PREPARE) AND, I REALLY NEED YOUR HELP!



Each year St. Paul's offers opportunities during Lent for our people to deepen their faith. Typically this involves a Sunday afternoon series of 5 to 6 weeks, a thematic Wednesday night worship experience (usually Evening Prayer), and a Bible Study on Wednesday mornings that coincides in some way with the other offerings. Each year we try to pick some topic, some area of concentration, or a published series that will speak to the greatest number of our people. We wish to do so again this year. But . . . we need your help.

Given the extraordinary busyness of our lives (of most of your lives, especially), what might we offer that would help you in your faith journey? And when during the week, or weekend, would be best? What about location? Would having something in various people's homes be best? Or something at Church? What topic would you want us to explore? What needs do people have that we might all focus on?

While I can come up with something that is of interest to me, I want to make sure we do something that will best address the spiritual needs of the most people. To help with this decision, I would like to invite as many people as might have interest to one of two Lenten Brain-Storming sessions: Wednesday, February 5, from 6 to 7PM (choir practice is at 7:30, fyi), and again on Sunday, February 9, at 9:00 AM, between the two worship services. I especially would like to invite our young people to consider one of these meeting times. What would *you* like to do during Lent?

For my part, I promise to come with a lot of ideas and options: topics, times, activities, etc. The more people who do the same, the better for us all.

Let's make this the best Lenten experience ever!

— Pr. Hugh

St. Paul's MEMBERS IN SERVICE for
February 2014



ACOLYTES:

Feb 2 - Max Gentino
9 - Evan Bernard
16 - Cameron Cheyney
23 - Bryce Gentino

ALTAR GUILD:

Debbie Howe, Coordinator, 860-529-8583

Feb 2 - Deb Howe & Donna Camillo
9 - Mary Procyk
16 - Winnie Sawrun & Ann French
23 - Bob Bowman & Bill Fischer, Jr.

ASSISTING MINISTERS:

Feb 2 - Debbie Viola.....8:00 AM
Jerry Vaillancourt.....10:30 AM
9 - Jim Newmark.....8:00 AM
William Fischer, Jr.10:30 AM
16 - Patty Bengtson.....8:00 AM
Mary Procyk10:30 AM
23 - Art Bruce8:00 AM
William Fischer, Jr.10:30 AM

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:

Sue Agne, Coordinator, 860-563-0776

Feb 2 - Sue Agne
9 - Mary Procyk
16 - Joan Kratzer
23 - Patty Bengtson



TAPING:

Jan Pergande, Coordinator, 860-644-2888

Feb - George Howe

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS:

Winnie Sawrun, Coordinator, 860-529-7588

Feb 2 - Mary Procyk
9 - Alan Niederfringer & Pat Granger
16 - Debbie & George Howe
23 - Heidi Boutin & Winnie Sawrun

FINANCE:

Mary Procyk, Coordinator, 860-257-4793

Feb 2 - George Howe
9 - Kathy DiMartino & Mary Procyk
16 - Heather Christensen
23 - Art Bruce



LECTORS:

Lillian Doerschler, Coordinator, 860-529-1939

Feb 2 - Carol Bruce
9 - Dave Bayek
16 - George Howe
23 - Jeanette Serafine

USHERS:

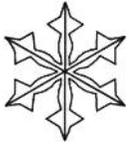
Brian Beckwith, Coordinator; 8:00AM, 860-563-4066

Feb - Brian Beckwith

Louise Lostocco, Coordinator, 10:30AM, 860-529-3079

Feb 2 - Waltar Ruppap & Art/Carol Bruce
9 - Waltar Ruppap & William Fischer, Sr.
16 - Waltar Ruppap & Dick Kratzer
23 - Waltar Ruppap & Dick Kratzer





FEBRUARY 2014 | EVENT CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Highlights this month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Time of Healing: February 2 following each service. • Lenten "brainstorming" planning sessions: Wednesday, Feb. 5 @ 6 PM; Sunday, Feb. 9 @ 9 AM. • Holiday Fair 2014 planning meeting: Sunday, Feb. 23 @ 12:15 PM. 						
2 4th Sunday After Epiphany Holy Comm. 8 AM Holy Comm. 10:30 AM Family Sunday: No Sun. Sch. A Time of Healing shall follow each worship service.	3 Outreach 7 PM	4 AA 10 AM Lenten Prep. Meeting 6 PM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	5 AA 10 AM Recovery Bible Study 10AM ThursdayGroup 10 AM First Comm. Class 5 PM	6 AA 10 AM AA 7:30 PM	7 AA 10 AM	8 Math School 11 AM AA 7:30 PM
9 5th Sunday After Epiphany Holy Comm. 8 AM Lenten Brainstorming Mtg. 9 AM Holy Comm. 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM	10 Cub Scouts 6 PM	11 Church Chapters 6:30 PM	12 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	13 Recovery Bible Study 10AM ThursdayGroup 10 AM First Comm. Class 5 PM	14 AA 10 AM	15 Epistle Deadline Math School 11 AM Rupper event 11 AM - 5 PM AA 7:30 PM
16 6th Sunday After Epiphany Holy Comm. 8 AM Holy Comm. 10:30 AM No Sunday School	17 Presidents' Day	18	19 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	20 Men's Breakfast 7:30 AM Recovery Bible Study 10AM ThursdayGroup 10 AM	21 AA 10 AM	22 Math School 11 AM AA 7:30 PM
23 7th Sunday After Epiphany Holy Comm. 8 AM Holy Comm. 10:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Holiday Fair planning meeting 12:15 PM	24	25 Parish Admin 6:30 PM Council 7:30 PM	26 AA 10 AM AA 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	27 Recovery Bible Study 10AM ThursdayGroup 10 AM	28 AA 10 AM	

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