



The Circuit

The Newsletter of St. Paul's United Church of Christ



Phone: 540-459-3643

235 South Main Street, Woodstock, Virginia 22664

Rev. Peter Mitchell, Interim Pastor

February 2012

Dear People of St. Paul's:

One of my very closest friends recently wrote and passed along to me the following reflection. My prayer is that as you read you will be encouraged in your walk with the Lord Jesus. I know mine is.

Yours in Christ
Peter+

Psalm 1:1-3 (New American Standard Bible)

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Do you, or perhaps do you know people who, have a "quiet time"? I remember learning about this back in college. I was experiencing a fresh awakening to the reality of Jesus Christ in my life and feeling like a babe in the things of the Word of God. I had those around me willing to encourage me through campus groups such as Intervarsity and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. These groups offered smaller group Bible studies, and there was much talk in them of having a daily "quiet time".

Now many years, small children and cares of this world later, I still find myself often feeling like I am falling short of this Christian discipline. I have recently been challenged by the example of an unaware family member who, seemingly having fewer distractions at this time in her life than I, daily reads her Bible and prays. Her life reflects that of a person solid in her faith and emanating the peace of God.

So, I took a little time yesterday to have a quiet time for the first time in years. I forced myself to make the morning paper and checking of Facebook wait while I googled a daily reading. A couple clicks on the iPad and there were the verses for that day - I could even have "the computer" read them out loud to me if I wanted! Isn't technology cool..

As I read, I became aware of the reason for my hiatus from quiet times. In the past I had put an expectation that all would be sweetness and light from that moment forth if I would but give that time to the Lord first each day. However, over time I came to experience that often my peaceful euphoria would be quickly interrupted by some chaotic event that would emerge and I would think, "What's the use? That didn't help matters at all!", and then I would go forth just muddling through with my faith.

Well, we really DO have more to learn even as the years pass. My revelation is that it is not so the Lord will make my troubles disappear as I punch the "quiet time button" - but that I will face my daily trials (and joys) from a full tank of His truth, rather than grasping for it from an empty well in my time of need. Once again, it has to do with not striving, not having to do something in order to obtain a result, but in receiving a gift of love from my Lord who wants to give me abundant life. This world's philosophies, our attitudes and "laws" so often are very different from the way of the Lord. I need that daily reminder of how He does and sees things so that I can enter my day and things I must face from His loving perspective.

Yesterday morning I felt so overwhelmed with what had to be done, deadlines I had to meet, etc. By spending that time being filled with God's word, I discovered that though I still had to face those things and get them done, I was filled with a peace to go forth and do them. Praise the Lord, Oh how He loves you and me!



Editor – Jane Miller Contributors St. Paul’s – Ministry Chairpersons and others Production Coordinators Margaret Cook & Becky Lytton
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ST. PAUL'S NEWS

CONSISTORY MEETING UPDATES

December 2011 and January 2012

The Consistory met on December 1 with 12 members and Pastor Mitchell present. Trudy Rauch was welcomed as a new member replacing Jim Trott. Minutes of the November meeting and the treasurer's report were approved. Motions and approvals for the following correspondences: \$100.00 donation to be made to the After Prom Committee. A \$100.00 donation will be made to the Woodstock Rescue Squad for their annual fund drive. Other correspondences and updates: Ellen Markel will be sending information on the history of our church to the Shenandoah County Historical Society. A thank you note was received from Homewood Foundation for the donation of \$38.00. A letter was received stating the Central Atlantic Conference has grants for improvements to churches with less than 150 members; these improvements can be used for the kitchen. Committee reports and the pastor's report were given.

Due to the regular January meeting's being cancelled, a special meeting was held on January 8, 2012 following the worship service. Present were nine members, Pastor Mitchell, Ellen Markel and Betty Lambert. A proposal to purchase 2 new stoves and a commercial dishwasher for the kitchen was given by the Kitchen Committee (Betty Lambert, Ellen Markel and Peggy Hollar). Specifications for both gas and electric stoves and the commercial dishwasher were given. Motions were made and approved by all to purchase 2 new electric stoves with self-cleaning ovens and a commercial dishwasher. No other business was discussed during this special meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Hollar, secretary



"FOOD FOR FRIENDS"

We have been asked to organize a meal supply program for members of the congregation who may need meals due to illness, treatments, accidents, etc.....As names are submitted to us we will contact those members who have agreed to provide meals and set up delivery. If you would be willing to add your name to the list of providers or have a family member that may need help, please contact Robin Grubbs to be added to the list. Robin will be coordinating for the months of January-June and MaryEllen Rudy will take over this service for July-December. There may be times when we will be filling in for each other so please don't hesitate to call either of us. There will also be a form in the church office that will list the information that we need to start the delivery. Contact numbers for Robin are 459-2638 (H), 459-2125 (W), 335-6384 (C) and email rsgrubbs@shentel.net. MaryEllen's numbers are 459-4594 (W), 331-1161 (C), and email tqotv33@gmail.com. This ministry has proven to be extremely valuable in the past, and our wish is to continue to provide for our friends. Working together we can accomplish so much.

Robin Grubbs

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The Senior Youth group had a great time duckpin bowling on Saturday, January 14th in Mt. Jackson. We were missing some of our members but were happy that Pastor Mitchell and his family joined us for the event. We ate a lot of food and chocolate chip ice cream cake (yum!) and had a fun time together. Our next event will be on February 11th when we will gather to pack cookies for our college students and folks in the military.

We'd also like to thank the congregation for your support of our soup luncheon in December and hope you enjoyed all the delicious food!



Craig and Alberta Smith

EVANGELISM MINISTRY MEETING

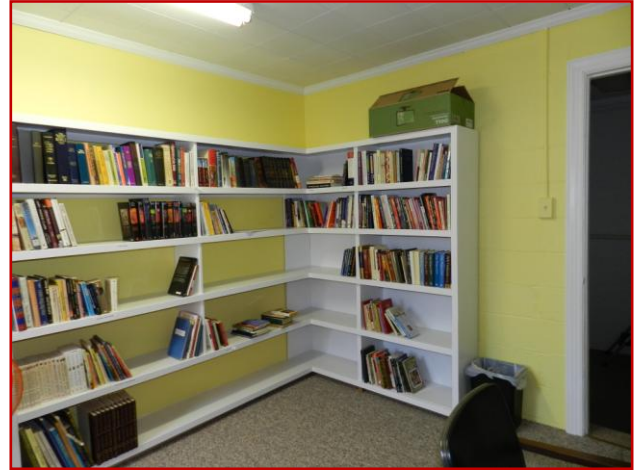
December 5, 2011

Members Present: Trudy Rauch, Beverly Dahlgren, Craig Smith, Pastor Mitchell, Susan Brill
The Evangelism Ministry met in the KOLA classroom on Monday, December 5, 2011. Pastor Mitchell led us in prayer.

Christmas postcards will go out to residents on the three Woodstock mailing routes. These postcards will designate special Christmas services as well as regular Sunday school and worship times. The cost of the mailing is \$350. \$250 has been contributed by individuals; the Evangelism Ministry will donate the remaining \$100. Anne Holland will complete the work on this project.

The praise reports/prayer requests chain has been updated to include all congregation members who have provided their email addresses as well as those who have added their names to the current call circle. Our next item of discussion involved an additional way to care for our members. Two people suggested by our ministry will be approached by Pastor Mitchell about organizing meals for any family in the congregation when there is a need. The congregation can participate in this by volunteering to prepare a needed meal, and also by communicating needs to Margie Cook or to one of the two designated people. The role of chairperson of the Evangelism Ministry will rotate; Craig Smith will serve at our next meeting on Monday, January 9th at 7:00 in the KOLA classroom.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Brill



THE NEW CHURCH LIBRARY

The new church library is now open and ready for you to use! I want to thank the Building and Maintenance ministry for obtaining the shelving and carpet and to William Andrews and crew for the new paint job. A special thank you to Carroll Lambert for donating a computer (which we hope to have connected to the web soon) also. The room looks so bright and inviting, and I hope that you will spend some time there soon. There is no check-out process...simply borrow the book and return it for others to use. There are DVDs, VHS tapes, books on tape and even some old vinyl records there too. We are currently asking everyone if they would be willing to donate a book (new or used) or other item to the library to help build the collection. Thanks to those of you who have already done so - I think we will have a nice selection if everyone pitches in just a little. Guiding Light Christian bookstore has a nice selection of books to choose from if you would like to support a local business. If you'd rather order from the internet, christianbook.com has an enormous selection as well.

Please take some time to come visit the library - it belongs to all of you!

Alberta Smith

FROM CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Hey kids! Don't forget to bring your canned and non-perishable food donations to Sunday school each week. We're still collecting each week and will deliver to the food pantry in the spring!

All Sunday school classes will have a Valentine celebration on Sunday, February 12 at 9:45 in Fellowship Hall. This is in recognition of filling up our gumball machine by attending classes each week! We hope all students can attend this fun get-together!

Our thanks to Shelly Eye and Pam Baker for planning the party.

It's the time of year when we start planning Community Vacation Bible School, believe it or not! St. Paul's is the host church this year and the theme is "Operation Overboard: Dare to Go Deep with God". The week will take place on a coral reef motif and feature Bible stories to teach us to depend on God, dare to care, claim Jesus, choose to follow and to change the world. We are looking for all those interested in helping in any capacity. Here is a sampling of the types of help we need and the number of people for each:

- safety street patrol (2 each night)
- registration table (2)

- center leaders and helpers (1 for storytelling, 1 for discovery, 4-5 for crafts and 2 for recreation)
- snack coordinator (1)
- music leader (1)
- Opening and closing assembly leaders (3)
- Preschool class leader and helpers (1 leader, 1-2 helpers)
- Volunteers to stay with each class and take them to each center (2 volunteers per class: classes for grades 1 and 2, 3rd through 5th, and 6th through 8th).
- Adult Class leader (1)
- Decorating committee leader and volunteers (as many as possible!)
- Media Leader (1 to run the computer during opening and closing assembly)



We are having a planning meeting on Thursday, February 9th at 6:30 p.m. for St. Paul's folks to set a date, see the materials, ask questions and hopefully see who is able to help. A week or two later, we'll have a meeting with the rest of the churches involved (Emanuel Lutheran, Woodstock Presbyterian, Woodstock Christian and Emanuel Episcopal). If you'd like to help but cannot attend the meeting, please speak with me and we'll find the right fit for you. We need all hands on deck to pull off a successful VBS and we're counting on St. Paul's to answer the call!

Alberta Smith
Christian Education Ministry

STEWARDSHIP & MISSIONS MINISTRY
Big Plans for 2012!



The Stewardship & Missions Ministry recently met at Paisano's restaurant to do some future planning so that we can share the caring love of our St. Paul's family with folks locally, regionally and even around the world. Those of us on the Stewardship & Missions ministry are so pleased to be serving such a wonderful group of people who have the continuing desire to help others. Your love and caring was once again displayed during this past Christmas season when as a congregation we were able to help six local families have a better, more secure Christmas season!

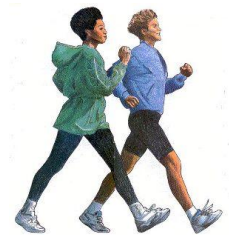
Thanks to Melissa Andrews and Robin Grubbs, we will be participating (with Consistory's blessing) in the Community Meals project that is being coordinated by the First Baptist Church in Woodstock. The meals are provided to needy folks every Monday night, most Mondays seeing up to 300 meals being prepared/assembled. The meals are available on a dine-in or take-out basis. St. Paul's commitment to the program would be on the fifth Monday of the month. In 2012 there are four, 5th Mondays: January, April, July and October. Details will follow as we approach each of these meal dates.

Our "Gifts of Love" program for 2012 will be a Shopping Bag Sunday scheduled for February 12, 2012. The congregation will be supplied with red Kellogg's bags which are reusable by the folks at the Woodstock Food Pantry for food distribution to those in need.

Looking forward a bit, The Stewardship & Missions ministry will sponsor a "Beautiful Bouncing Babies" program, a Mother's Day gift to the Shenandoah County Pregnancy Center in the form of diapers,

teething rings, baby wipes, etc. The B-B-B program will be announced in church on April 29th with supplies due back in church on Mother's Day May 13th. More details to follow.

Joe Lehnen



"HEALTHY BONES" EXERCISE CLASSES

Classes will be held on the following dates. This class is a 6 week program (non-aerobic) for people with osteopenia and osteoporosis. It will address what you can do to improve your posture and bone density. Topics include body alignment, strengthening the postural muscles, stretching areas of tightness, weight bearing exercise and avoiding movements that could harm the spine. Learn SAFE Exercise!! The classes in Woodstock are taught by Suzanne Loveland, PT.

Thursdays March 8 - April 12, 9:00 - 10:15 a.m. at Anytime Fitness (next to Food Lion)

"More Healthy Bones" is an advanced class offered from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. There is a fee with both classes offered through Valley Health.

There are also classes available in the evening in Strasburg. Call Suzanne at 984-8130 or e-mail at sartz@shentel.net for more info. Please spread the word about the importance of learning SAFE exercise!

Thanks,
Suzanne

ASH WEDNESDAY

St. Paul's will observe Ash Wednesday services on February 22 at 12:00 noon and 7:00 P.M. The evening service at 7 will include the adult choir. These services will launch the Lenten period. More information about Lenten services will be forthcoming.



Birthdays for St. Paul's

- February 1 – Pam Bray, Jon Foltz, Bob Goodier
2 – Nick Holsinger, Sarah Swan,
Marsha Cooper
5 – Mason Sheetz
6 – Patty Snarr, Mary Catlett
8 – Eric Dalke
10 – Beverly Dahlgren, Carol Spring
12 – Susan Fream, Sam Mitchell,
Fiona Mitchell
13 – Desiree Williams
16 – Jacob Dirting
19 – Margaret Wilkins
20 – Sophia Palatnick
21 – Jim Trott
22 – Dennis Thomas, Gordon Seibert
26 – Brittany Lambert
27 – Rose Holland
28 – Dawn Stoneburner
- March 1 – Makenna Painter
2 – Barbara Johnson
3 – Lucas Robinson
4 – Debra Swecker
5 – Jonathan Koontz
7 – Seth Gardner
10 – Brian Loveland, John Lambert
12 – Regan Kain
13 – Jessie McIntosh
14 – Rev. James Smith, Stephanie Litten
15 – Stuart Sheetz
16 – Bill Holsinger
17 – Adam Beasley, Doug Linaweaver
18 – Casey Walton
19 – Jake Johnson, Beth Dirting
22 – Dan Bowman
23 – Dot Heishman
28 – Kim Shrum, Mike Sibert,
Chuck Berchdorf
30 – Nadine DeHaven
31 – Richard Linaweaver, Helen Harrison



Anniversaries for St. Paul's

- February 3 – Allen and Margie Cook
12 – Jerry and Betty Lambert
13 – Jon and Maddy Foltz
22 – Fred and Mary Lou Odum
- March 10 – Robert and Pam Bray
12 – Jack and Linda Sheetz
22 – Spencer and Jessie McIntosh
30 – Glenn and Kay Wetzel

Acolytes

- February 5 – Desiree Williams
12 – Bobby Loveland
19 – Rose Holland
26 – Anna Smith
- March 4 – Layla Baker
11 – Jason Holland
18 – T. J. Williams
25 – Jonathan Koontz

Scripture Readers

- February 5 – Rick Koontz
12 – Linda Sheetz
19 – Dawn Stoneburner
26 – Craig Smith
- March 4 – Karen Walton
11 – Desiree Williams
18 – Dot Lambert
25 – Abbe Kennedy

Greeters

- February – Jack and Linda Sheetz
March – Trudy Rauch and Beverly Dahlgren

Nursery

- February 5 – Alberta Smith
12 – Alisha Williams
19 – Allison Gregg
26 – Faye Cullers
- March 4 – Susan Fream
11 – Pam Baker
18 – Beth Dirting
25 – Stephanie Dysart

Service Assistants

- February – David and Susan Brill
March – Rick and Michelle Koontz





THE PAUSE FOR APPLAUSE AND A PAT-ON-THE-BACK

Dear Pat,

Here we are in the early days of a new year. Pat, I wish you a peaceful mind, good health, and joy in 2012. We have not had much snow this winter (unless you count the 6 inches we got in the fall.) As I write this on January 20th, there are rumblings of a bit of snow in the forecast.

Since I haven't written since November, I can only hit the highlights of December and early January. I must congratulate Debbie Swecker and her helpers on decorating my abode so beautifully. You may have a Christmas tree in your home, Pat, but I have a Chrismon tree, lovely garlands, and wreaths here at the church where I live – thanks to Debbie and her crew.

December 4 brought us the marvelous “Hanging of the Greens”. It is my favorite service of the year. It never disappoints – the young people dressed in red and green robes. (Thanks to William Andrews, who ironed all the robes, the young people looked amazing.) I don't know what we would do if we didn't have that “big kid”, Craig Orndorff, to hang the star each year. However, some of our youth are growing like weeds and may take Craig's job away soon. The youngest of the group place the figures in the manger scene. This year the Mitchell children did a very meticulous job- slow, careful, and perfect placement.

December 18 was the time of two favorite events – the Youth Choir charmed us with their rendition of “Mary, Mary” in the morning service and, in the evening, Family Night. (I must confess to have missed Family Night. The Family Night doings were covered by my cute little mouse reporter who shall remain nameless but not paperless. She posts all her reportings outside my mouse home on post-its!) She reports that the Fellowship Hall was full of good food and good friends. Even though the tables were set for 80 people, some people still had to stand to eat. After dinner the older youth read the Christmas Story in wonderful reading voices. The younger children, dressed in costume, processed up the center aisle as the congregation sang much-loved carols. At the end of the program, my reporter states that the young people formed a tableau in which they looked like angels. (Of course, looks can be deceiving.) Angels or not, the youth of our church are terrific.

The Christmas Eve Service was well attended as always. When Amy Mitchell sang her solo, the congregation held its breath – so magnificent. With both choirs singing and marvelous carols sung gustily by the congregation, joyful music rang from St. Paul's. On New Year's Day, the choir sang “Some Children See Him”- a favorite of this old mouse that he doesn't get to hear often enough. Thank you, adult choir.

Well, dear Pat, I've had to omit some things as there was just too much to cover over this period. Time permits only a mention of the fabulous children's sermons rendered by Rev. Mitchell. Also I can't forget the humorous stories publication by the Kola class – such fun stories to read.

As always, I remain your loving brother,
Paws, the church mouse (*jcm*)

