

Good News!

St. Paul Lutheran Church

311 Marlboro St. Hamlet, NC 28345

Ash Wednesday – February 17, 2021

On Ash Wednesday, millions of people are reminded of death's inevitability as they line up to hear the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." I've often wondered why people would intentionally subject themselves to a painful reminder of their own mortality.

Is it possible that ashes to ashes and dust to dust is actually good news?

As a society, we spend most of this life fighting against the forces of death. We seek good medical care, and we go to extraordinary measures to keep ourselves and our loved ones alive.

But in the end, isn't it a relief to know that life isn't ultimately about the things that we can see, touch and taste? Isn't it a relief to know that the ultimate things in this life are not dependent on our bodies -- but rather on God's goodness?

So even though we die -- we live. We live in faith so strong it can move mountains; hope so sure it can bring life from death; and love so deep it has no end.

Please gather with St. Paul on Facebook live (facebook.com/stpaullutheranhamlet) on **Feb 17 at 6:30 pm** for the Ash Wednesday service and be reminded that in life and in death we belong to God. This is Good News!

The service will be recorded and placed on our Facebook page, our website, and our YouTube channel.

Imposition of Ashes

One of the hallmarks of the Ash Wednesday service is the imposition of ashes. Unfortunately, with the COVID-19 restrictions and precautions in place we are not able to do this in a traditional way this year.

Just like everything this year, we've needed to rethink how to offer this significant faith practice in a safe manner.

Pastor Pam has prepared a charcoal cross on an index card which will be sent to every household in the congregation. We'll use this during the Ash Wednesday service on Feb. 17 at 6:30 pm.

If you are unable to participate in the worship service, you're invited to rub your finger across the charcoal cross and then use your finger to place as "ashen" cross on your forehead or hand at any time during that day.

February 2021
Volume 21
Issue 2

Inside this issue:

Unpacking Lent	2
Midweek worship	3
Bible Study	3
Holy Communion	3
Giving Options	4
Seeking Information	5
Mission & Goals	5

Unpacking the Season of Lent

What is this season all about? The color of this season is purple. Lent is a time of preparation before the Easter celebration. The principal themes of the season include simplicity, somberness, repentance, the renewal of baptism, prayer, fasting, and service.

What does the word “Lent” mean? In Latin the word *Quadragesima*, which means “fortieth” was used to refer to the fortieth day before Easter. This word is preserved in many other languages. In the Middle Ages, as sermons were given in the language of the people instead of Latin, the English word “lent” was adopted. The word “lent” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, or spring, the time of year when the days begin to lengthen.

Why 40 days and how are they counted? The forty days of Lent recall the 40 day fast of Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism (Matthew 4:2, Luke 4:1-2) and Moses' 40 day fast on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28). Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Maundy Thursday. Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter" celebration of the Jesus' victory over sin and death.

Why don't we use Alleluias during Lent? Because of the penitential character of the season of Lent, singing or saying the word "alleluia" has historically been suspended during the Lenten season. This period of individual and congregational reflection on the condition of our faith and life suggests that the joyful nature of alleluia is more appropriately reserved for our Easter celebrations when it is given full and jubilant voice.

What about the rest of Holy Week? Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are known as The Triduum or The Three Days. We look at the Triduum as one single experience that lasts for three days. We cannot separate the death of Jesus from his resurrection, so each day of the Triduum is important in showing us the fullness of what Jesus has done for us and for our salvation. You are encouraged to make every effort to participate in worship on each day of The Triduum.

How do I choose what to give up for Lent? The practice of giving something up for Lent is connected to the spiritual discipline of fasting. People who choose to give something up often do so as a sign of their repentance and sacrifice.

Are you looking for another way to mark the season of Lent? Instead of giving something up for Lent, consider adding something that will deepen your faith and enrich your relationship with God. This could be adding intentional time for prayer and reading your Bible, reading a devotional book, spending more time in nature giving thanks for God's creation, writing in a journal, drawing or other art projects, sending notes or making phone calls to people you haven't seen in a while. The options are limitless.

You're invited to use this prayer during the season of Lent:

O Lord my/our God, show me/us your everlasting love, that I/we may serve you from the obedience of my/our heart(s). Lead me/us in the way of your peace, that my/our soul(s) may be restored. Fill my/our imagination(s) with the wonders of your creation, that my/our mind(s) may reflect your glory. Guide me/us in the way of the cross, that I/we might proclaim the strength of your love. O Lord, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant in steadfast love with your servant(s) who walk before you with all my/their heart. Hear me/us, O God, and let your light shine upon me/us. In the name of Jesus I/we pray. Amen.

Midweek Worship During Lent

Join Pastor Pam on Facebook Live ([facebook.com/stpaullutheranhamlet](https://www.facebook.com/stpaullutheranhamlet)) on Wednesday evenings – Feb. 24, Mar 3, Mar 10, Mar 17, and Mar 24 at 6:30 pm for our Lenten worship services.

Though many common Lenten practices rightly invite us to individual acts of “repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love,” Lent is also a time for the deepening of community.

Our midweek services will focus on the theme Created for Community. Using readings from Mark’s gospel, this series invites us to reflect on what it means to be in community with one another, with the world, with creation, and with God.

Feb. 24 - In community with creation - Mark 4:35-41 - *Jesus calms a storm*

Mar. 3 - In community with all the saints - Mark 9:2-8 - *Jesus is in conversation with those who have gone before him*

Mar. 10 - In community with our neighbor - Mark 2:1-12 - *A community comes together to bring a neighbor to Jesus*

Mar. 17 - In community with those on the margins - Mark 5:1-20 - *Jesus crosses barriers to attend to those on the margins*

Mar. 24 - In community with Christ - Mark 10:32-45 - *Jesus reminds us that we are walking the way of the cross*

BIBLE STUDY – GOSPEL OF MARK

You’re invited to join Pastor Pam on Zoom for Bible study on Wednesdays Jan. 27, Feb. 3 and 10. The study meets on Zoom at 10:00 am and at 6:30 p.m. All you need is your Bible. Bring your enthusiasm, insights, and questions to this Bible study.

The link to the Zoom study at **10:00 am** is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82946130048>

The link to the Zoom study at **6:30 pm** is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87935617200>.

If you’ve missed earlier sessions, you can watch them on our website and YouTube channel.

SERVICES OF HOLY COMMUNION

Due to the status of COVID-19 cases in Richmond County, we will **not** be offering services of Holy Communion at this time. We do this out of an abundance of caution for both the pastor and worshippers. You can monitor the prevalence of COVID-19 in Richmond County by visiting <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/>. Please do your part to stop the spread of the virus by wearing your mask, waiting 6 feet apart, and washing your hands.

Because of this concern, Pastor Pam will be working from home for now.
You can continue to reach her by phone (919-987-0102) or email
(pastor@stpaullutheranhamlet.org)



NEW WAYS TO GIVE

The council is pleased to announce additional ways for you to give in support of the ministries of St. Paul. In addition to giving by check, electronic funds transfer from your bank or electronic giving through Vanco, you can now give using a mobile app called GivePlus+ and on-line. These are also giving options through Vanco Payment Solutions.

Through a mobile app:

GivePlus+ is a free app that you will need to download from Apple's App Store or Google's Play Store. You can search for the app using the words "GivePlus Church." There are no fees associated with using the app. After you've downloaded the app, you'll need to search for the church. St. Paul is identified as "Saint Paul Lutheran Church." Then you can set-up your account. Once you've linked your account to the church, you'll not need to do this step again.

Online through the website:

Visit our website (<http://stpaul Lutheranhamlet.org>) where you can click on the words Give Now at the top of every page of the website or go to the Giving Options page and click on the Give Now button in the middle of the page.

After clicking on Give Now, you'll be redirected to a safe and secure page associated with our account at Vanco Payment Solutions. You'll need to create an account the first time you use the site.

You can go directly to the online giving page with Vanco Payment Solutions at this address:
<https://secure.myvanco.com/YHHE/home>

You're able to designate your donation for the General Fund, Feed My Sheep, and the Building Fund.

With both giving options:

You can set-up a one-time gift or recurring donations in a frequency that works best for you. Your donation can be made immediately or scheduled for a later date.

You'll have the option to connect your checking or saving account or give by credit card. Once you've established these giving preferences, they will be ready for you the next time you log into the app or the online giving page. You can change your password, frequency, and giving method at any time.

Please note that if you're giving by credit card, you'll have the option to add 2.75% to your offering to offset processing fees.

You can also make your contribution by writing and sending a check to St. Paul!

**You're ongoing financial support of the ministries of St. Paul Lutheran Church
are deeply appreciated!**

PASTOR PAM IS LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

Our congregation membership records are missing a lot of information!

Membership Information Forms

A membership information form is included with this newsletter. Please complete the form and either return it by email to Pastor Pam or mail it to her (439 Cedar Pond Ct., Knightdale, NC 27545) by February 15. Complete the form in its entirety so that we can have your information in one place. A separate form is needed for each member of your family who claims St. Paul Lutheran Church as their church home. *Many thanks to those who have already completed and submitted their forms!*

Faith Formation for Children

We're exploring ways to provide faith formation for the children in the congregation. If you are an expectant parent or the parent of a baby, toddler, preschooler, elementary, middle, or high schooler, please send an email to Pastor Pam indicating how the congregation can best provide faith formation that will be meaningful to them and helpful for you.

Calling All Parents Who Would Like Their Child Baptized

Since the pandemic started, there have been no baptisms, confirmations, or other rites of the church in the sanctuary. Are you the parent of a child you'd like to have baptized? If so, please contact Pastor Pam so that we can explore options and make plans.



St. Paul Lutheran Church
311 Marlboro St.
Hamlet, NC 28345
910-582-0729

www.stpaullutheranhamlet.org
www.facebook.com/stpaullutheranhamlet

Contact Pastor Pam at
pastor@stpaullutheranhamlet.org
or 919-987-0102

*St. Paul's mission is to
Proclaim the Good News
of Jesus Christ to our
community and the
world.*

Help us reach our goal of 100 subscribers by subscribing to our YouTube channel at

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQb2u9w4_4SXdwFZ90BxfiQ

Once we reach this goal, we can modify our YouTube address so people can find us more easily.

**Please invite your neighbors,
friends, and family!**