

# Good News!

**St. Paul Lutheran Church**

**311 Marlboro St. Hamlet, NC 28345**

## DEEPENING FAITH

One of the goals of the congregation is to deepen faith. This has been challenging to do as a congregation since March of 2020.

Hopefully, the weekly devotions, Sunday virtual worship services, brief services of Holy Communion, Advent Devotions Kit, the Zoom conversations about prayer, and the Christmas Eve service have been meaningful to you.

As we begin 2021, we'll continue to look for ways to deepen faith even as we are unable to worship and learn in community. Each month, a variety of spiritual practices will be included in the newsletter for your use.

## BLESSING OF YOUR HOME

Matthew writes that when the magi saw the shining star stop overhead, they were filled with joy. "On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother" (Matt. 2:10-11). In the home, Christ is met in family and friends, in visitors and strangers. In the home, faith is shared, nurtured, and put into action. In the home, Christ is welcome. Blessing your home on the Day of the Epiphany (Jan. 6) or another day during the time after the Epiphany is a way to honor the magi and their visit to the Christ child.

## WORSHIP – DAY OF EPIPHANY

***Mark your calendar now for a special worship service on the Day of the Epiphany – Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 7:00 pm. This service will be held live on our Facebook page.***

The word Epiphany means "showing forth," and it names the day that the church tells Matthew's story of the magi from foreign lands who follow the light of the star and thus "see" Jesus as Christ. Their gifts are symbols: gold, because they honor Jesus as the king; frankincense, because they worship Jesus as divine; and myrrh, because they are readying for his death. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

## BIBLE STUDY – GOSPEL OF MARK

You're invited to join Pastor Pam on Zoom for Bible study on Wednesdays Jan. 13, 20, 27, Feb. 3 and 10. The study will be held at 10:00 am and at 6:30 p.m. We'll be studying the Gospel of Mark. This Gospel is the primary focus of our gospel readings during 2021. This 5-session study will explore the context and themes of this earliest and shortest of the four Gospels. 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>.

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## A NEW WAY TO GIVE

The council is pleased to announce an additional way 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+. This is also a Vanco giving option.

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 Churc." 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.

On the app, 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 to the app 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. 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 1.5% to your offering to offset processing fees.

### **You're ongoing financial support of the ministries of St. Paul**

#### **SERVICES OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Due to the status of COVID-19 cases in Richmond County, we will **not** be offering brief services of Holy Communion at this time. We do this out of an abundance of caution for both the pastor and worshippers. Once the status in Richmond County falls out of the Critical tier, we will reconsider this decision. 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 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@stpaul Lutheranhamlet.org](mailto:pastor@stpaul Lutheranhamlet.org))**

## EPIPHANY BLESSING YOUR HOUSE

Twelfth Night (January 5), Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6), or another day during the time after Epiphany offers an occasion for gathering with members of your household for a house blessing. Here is a liturgy that you can use.

### Greeting

May peace be to this house and to all who enter here. By wisdom a house is built and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures. (*Proverbs 24:3-4*)

### Reading

As we prepare to ask God's blessing on this household, let us listen to the words of scripture.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being, and the life was the light of all people. The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. (*John 1:1-4, 14, 16*)

### Inscription

*This inscription may be made with chalk above the entrance:*

20 ✠ C M B ✠ 21

*Write the appropriate character (left) while speaking the text (right).*

The magi of old, known as

C Caspar,

M Melchior, and

B Balthasar,

followed the star of God's Son who came to dwell among us

20 two thousand

21 and twenty-one years ago.

✠ Christ, bless this house,

✠ and remain with us throughout the new year.

### Prayer of Blessing

O God, you revealed your Son to all people by the shining light of a star. We pray that you bless this home and all who live here with your gracious presence. May your love be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide, your truth our light, and your peace our benediction; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*As you move from room to room you may use these prayers:*

#### **\*At the front door:**

Blessed are you, Welcoming God. As your people come and go from this door, be their constant companion on the way, and welcome them upon their return, so that coming and going they may be sustained by your presence. Amen.

## EPIPHANY BLESSING OF YOUR HOUSE *(continued)*

### **\*In the living room:**

Blessed are you, Gracious God, for you have provided this place for unwinding and relaxation. Give your blessing to all who share this room, that they may find joy in their relaxation, and always be generous toward one another. May all who gather here be knit together in fellowship on earth and find a first taste here of the communion of your saints in heaven. Amen.

### **\*In the kitchen:**

Blessed are you, Plentiful God, for you supply our every need according to your great riches. May this kitchen always be filled with the produce of the earth and may the preparations here be filled with pleasure and love. Bless the hands that work in this place and fill us with gratitude for your provision. Amen.

### **\*In the dining room or wherever you eat your meals:**

Blessed are you, Inviting God, for you welcome us at your table and call us to share in the banquet of life, giving us food and drink to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Fill us with gratitude for all you give us and with a hunger to hasten the day when all the world will enjoy such blessings. Amen.

### **\*In the bedroom:**

Blessed are you, Sheltering God, for you are the true rest of your people and you cover each person with the soft shelter of your wings. Bless your people with hours of rest and refreshment, that sleeping they might rest in peace, and waking they may rise to serve you all the days of their life. Amen.

### **\*In the bathroom:**

Blessed are you, Creating God, for you made us as whole persons — bodies, minds and spirits — and you called us good. Give us a proper respect and love for our bodies, keeping them clean and healthy, so that we may glorify you in them, as we confidently wait for you to clothe us in robes of righteousness. Amen.

### **\*In a child's bedroom:**

Blessed are you, Tender God, for your Son took young children into his arms and blessed them. Embrace the child/children whose room this is with your unfailing love, protect her/him/them from all danger, and bring her/him/them in safety to each new day, until she/he/they greets with joy the great day of your kingdom. Amen.

### **\*In a workroom of any kind:**

Blessed are you, Creator God, for your Son Jesus sanctified our labor as he crafted wood with his hands. Be present, we pray, with those who work in this place, that, laboring as workers together with you, they may share the joy of your creation. Amen.

### **Final Blessing:**

May the eye of God be dwelling with you; the foot of Christ in guidance with you; the shower of the Spirit pouring on you; and be the Sacred Three to save, to shield, to surround the hearth, the house, the household, this day, this night and every day and night. Amen.

(Traditional Celtic Blessing, published in *Human Rites: Worship Resources for an Age of Change* compiled by Hannah Ward and Jennifer Wild, London: Mowbray, 1995, p.78)

\*from <http://laughingbird.net/SeasonalPages/HouseBlessing.html>, accessed December 29, 2020.

## 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 1. Complete the form in its entirety so that we can have all of 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.

### 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.

### Baptisms

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.



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**311 Marlboro St.**  
**Hamlet, NC 28345**  
**910-582-0729**

[www.stpaullutheranhamlet.org](http://www.stpaullutheranhamlet.org)  
[www.facebook.com/stpaullutheranhamlet](https://www.facebook.com/stpaullutheranhamlet)

Contact Pastor Pam at  
[pastor@stpaullutheranhamlet.org](mailto: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.*

*Congregation Goals  
Deepen faith + Grow the  
church + Help others +  
Increase fellowship*

*How can we pursue these  
goals in the year 2021?  
Share your ideas with  
Pastor Pam.*