

The Epistle

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Volume 21 Issue 6 June 2022

How should Christians respond to incomprehensible evil?

May was a month of devastating public tragedies in our country. On May 24th, a day when I was happily recalling my one year anniversary of being called to St. Paul, I saw a Facebook post from a someone I went to elementary school through high school with. Chris is a native of Uvalde, TX and still has family there. His young niece was a student at Robb Elementary School. She was among those murdered.

On that Tuesday, a young man, and barely that at 18, with what should have been his whole life ahead of him, entered an elementary school in Texas full of the devil. He murdered Chris' niece, Elhiana, and at least 18 other innocent, young children, who should have had their whole life ahead of them, along with 2 of their teachers, who should have had their whole lives ahead of them.

Ten days before that day a young man, and barely that at 18, with what should have been his whole life ahead of him, entered a grocery store in Buffalo, NY full of bigotry and evil. He murdered 10 innocent people, who should have had their whole lives ahead of them.

And there are many more examples. Lord, have mercy!

We live in a fallen world. A broken world. This is not new yet the gut-wrenching reminder of public tragedies can still make it feel unexpected, and fresh, and real. We are prone to forgetting at times. Worse, we can be dismissive of the "expected" pains of the world and lulled into accepting some of the horrors and sin we see daily.

How do we as Christians understand and respond to such evil in the world? We listen to God. We look to the Word. 1 Peter 5:6-10 guides us in our response.

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Always remember: God cares. For the slain. For their families. For their community. For us and the whole world. Jesus weeps. When the weight of sin is unbearable, Jesus who bore it on the Cross once and for all, will carry what we cannot.

"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

The work of Satan continues. He breaks our bodies, our minds, and our hearts if he can. Sin and evil are present in this reality. Let us not shy away from calling a thing what it is.



“Resist him, standing firm in the faith”

How do we resist the works of the devil? God has given us in His Word things we need to resist. Do not harden your hearts! Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. We must love God by repenting of our error and corruption, our embrace of evil (both passive and active) that is for our own good and no one else. And we must not do this only after Sin bleeds us (or so that it doesn't) but before it destroys our neighbor.

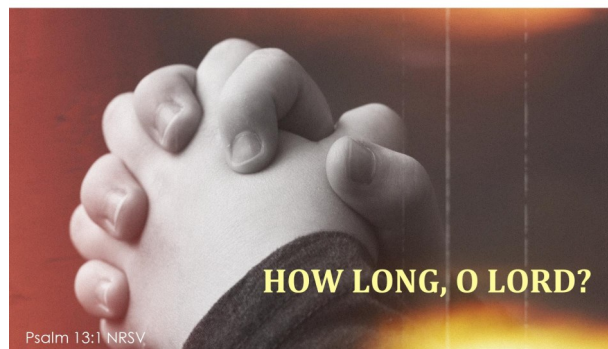
We must look into our own hearts and lives and seek God's help to trade our selfishness for our neighbor's reward. We must ask a most unimaginable question: how am I complicit in fostering more Sin in the world? How many ways did prior acts of selfishness and self-excusing cause what happened today, what happened last week, what happens tomorrow? Lord, forgive us so that we may follow you by loving neighbor. This act of contrition and repentance is not an act of simple piety, rather it is active, forceful piety: what is it that you and our church can do to resist the devil by loving our neighbor, i.e. shielding our neighbor from evil?

“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”

We hear, believe, and preach the Gospel. We cannot hope to truly resist the evil in ourselves nor in the world unless by faith through grace we believe what the Word says: your sins are forgiven. Christ died for the World. Sin, death and the devil with all their power cannot stand against the Love of God. And even the gates of Hell cannot overcome the Christ's Church living in faith.

Let us pray,

Almighty God, you sent your only Son to redeem the world in which the same evil, by our hands, that killed Him in his innocence continues to kill our sons and daughters in theirs. Send the Spirit of our Lord to those who grieve and receive the souls of the dead into your Heavenly Kingdom. Father, we admit our failures and we believe in your forgiveness. We pray for the Holy Spirit to give us faith and strength to resist the devil, worship you, and love our neighbor. Help us to bind the wounds of those who are shattered and prevent us from equipping others to fall into the hands of the devil. We pray in the name of our Lord, Jesus, who welcomes the children, who crushes Hell underfoot, and who will come again. Amen.





The Church Council met on May 19th. Here are some highlights of the meeting:

- 1) Bell clapper bolt was replaced
- 2) Looking for volunteers to attend Synod Assembly June 4th; one male and one female.
- 3) Grethe Myles presented drafts of ideas for church communications and logos. Council is reviewing list to decrease to 1-2 for further work.
- 4) Parking committee approved \$1500 for the Shack towards a new bus.
- 5) Council received thanks from Rock Forge Food Pantry and Rina Fay.
- 6) Church will continue with COVID precautions:
 - every other pew to allow spacing
 - masks are encouraged but remain optional
 - Pastor and lay assistant will mask during communion
- 7) May 29th is the congregational meeting with two topics: solar panels and selection of two members for Synod meeting.
- 8) Information on table in back of church in regards to the solar panels for review prior to congregational meeting.
- 9) Council reviewed policies and procedures for use of church. We will restart requirement for all requests to be made on paper request form and given to Tamara. Council will review monthly or if necessary earlier. There is also a contract explaining expectations which will be required to be signed prior to use of the building.
- 10) Summer picnics scheduled for June 15, July 13, and July 28.
- 11) Rally Day will be Sunday, August 21, with blessing of the backpacks. Weekly Sunday School for pre-K through elementary will begin. Adult classes may be introduced.
- 12) God's Work Our Hands is Sunday, September 11. This will be led by the confirmands.
- 13) Octoberfest and 125th anniversary celebration will be October 8th. This is still being developed.
- 14) Council thanks everyone for signing up and helping to clean the church. The sign up sheet is in the narthex/entryway.



From the Piece Makers

Spring brings the return of many things, and one of them is Garage Sales. As driving home last weekend, I saw three signs announcing, "Garage Sale". The Piece Makers hope that as you visit a garage sale you keep an eye out for sheets. Any size sheet will work for us.

We were recently asked if people who do not belong to St. Paul can come and work with the Piece Makers. YES, our only criteria is if you want to work with us and can come on Friday's between 10 and 2. We have many jobs in making a quilt and will teach volunteers what is need. Youth and teens are welcome to join us and summer is a good time get started in helping other by making quilts.

We will have summer social cookouts on June 15th (rain date the 16th) and July 13th (rain date the 14th), and July 28th (coordinating with Vacation Bible School).



Meats and drinks will be provided. Bring a side dish or dessert if you wish.



JUNE	
Bathrooms	
Kitchen	McEwuen
Stairwells	Seasholtz
Vacuum and Sweep Upstairs	Sandolini
Sweep Downstairs	Naumann

There are many open spaces on the calendar for flowers! Consider signing up to give flowers in honor of loved ones for a Sunday service.



Christian Formation



Vacation Bible School for children aged 4 through 5th grade will be held July 24-28. Registration forms are available at the church.

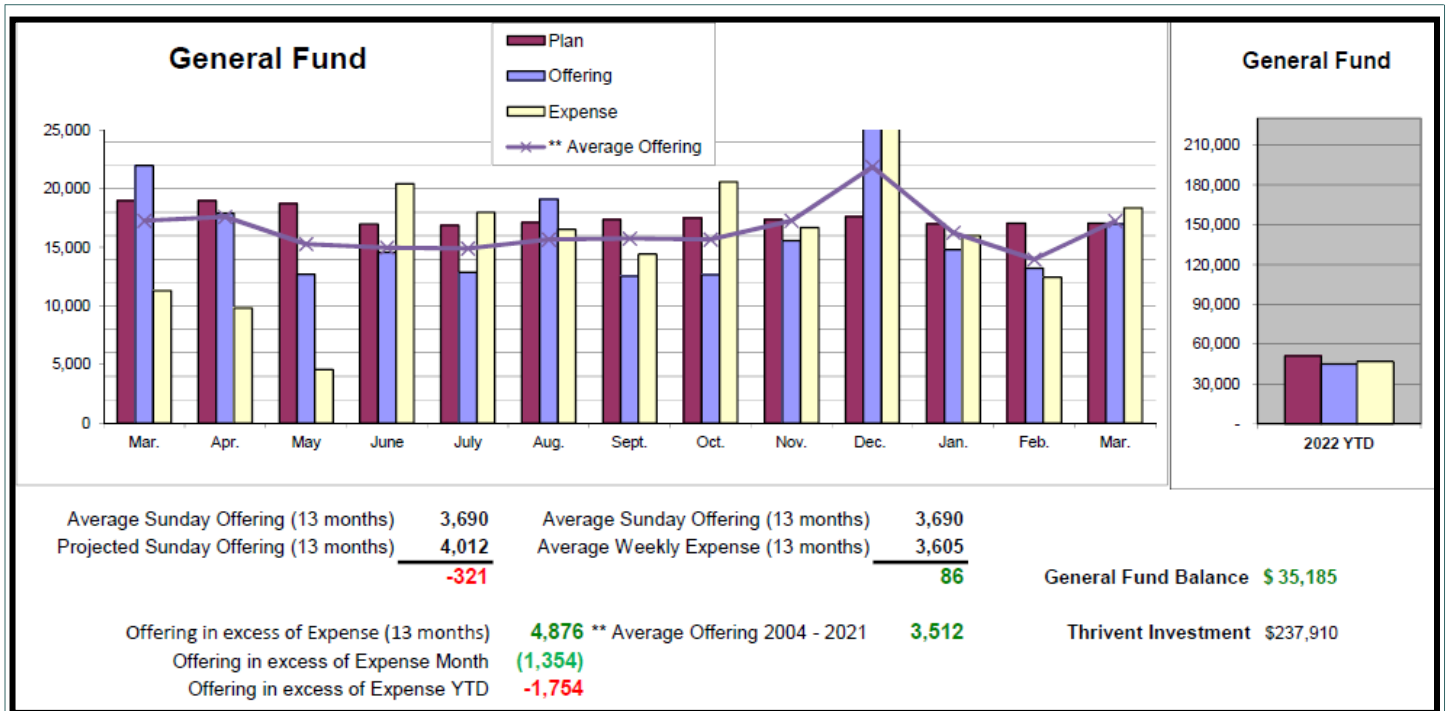
Fun with Ascension Day crafts!



For All Elementary Age Students
9:00 AM
June 5—Theme: Pentecost



Tuesday Prayer Walks and Bible Study will be suspended in June and July for summer break/pastor's Army leave.



Online Offering: You can give securely online at your convenience with a debit/credit card or checking account.

Visit www.stpaulmorgantown.org/giving.

Thank you!

Thanks to everyone who faithfully sends in contributions even while absent from in person worship!

thank you



Date	
June 5	J. Lemasters
June 12	M. Cushing
June 19	T. Riegel
June 26	M. Haas

Serving in

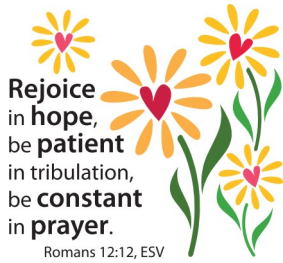


SERVING ST PAUL June 2022	LAY ASSISTANT	LECTOR	USHERS	ACOLYTES	COUNTERS	ZOOM
5th 10:00 AM	M. Sampson	J. Lemasters	D. Custer	G. Riegel E. Naumann	****	C. Wertz
12th 10:00 AM	S. McEwuen	T. Riegel	T. Riegel	G. Riegel Sandolfini	K. Shockley C. Henry	M. Boroff
19th 10:00 AM	S. Woodruff	M. Boroff	L. Springer	Sandolfini	****	S.Setley
26th 10:00 AM	J. Lemasters	S. Kirkpatrick	W. Graham	Sandolfini	S. Kirkpatrick M. Peters	Peters

Reminder: Deadline for July newsletter is June 22nd!!!



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
WEAR RED FOR <i>Pentecost</i>			1	2	3 10:00 AM Piecemakers	4 WV-WMD Synod Assembly @ Mylan Park
5 Pentecost 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Service	6	7	8	9	10 10:00 AM Piecemakers	11
12 Holy Trinity 10:00 AM Worship Service	13	14	15 6:00 PM Cookout Social	16 Rain date for Social 7:00 PM Council	17 10:00 AM Piecemakers	18
19 10:00 AM Worship Service	20	21	22	23	24 10:00 AM Piecemakers	25
26 10:00 AM Worship Service 3:30 PM Circle of Friends	27 8:00 AM Lutheran Men in Mission	28	29	30		



To add a name to the prayer list, please call the office at 304-599-0620.

There is also a book for prayer requests in the narthex (entry).

Please check the prayer list for names which you have submitted, and let the church office know if a person can be taken off the list.

Thank you!



Tuesday — Thursday 10am - 12pm
 Pastor's office phone: (304) 212-5116
 Pastor's cell (text or call): 681-209-6192
 Email: pastor@stpaulmorgantown.org

The **Epistle** is a publication from:
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 Vice President: Lindsey Naumann
 Secretary: Mary Haas
 Treasurer: Steve Woodruff
 Financial Secretary: Jeanne Lemasters

Council Members

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Lindsey Naumann	Steve Woodruff	Joanne Seasholtz
Julie Sandolfini	Jerry Bouquot	Mike Peters