



St. Paul's Epistles

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St. Paul's Celebrates, Declares, and Demonstrates the Love of God in Jesus Christ to Sarver and Beyond.

The article below is going to be an emotionally tough reading. Two months ago, one of my favorite Lutheran authors Chad Bird tragically lost his 21 year-old son in a hiking accident. The article below is his reflection on his son's funeral. I share it with you because 1) it's a testimony of what faith looks like when life throws its literal worst at you and 2) it offers a good picture of what special about our Lutheran strand of the Christian faith—it acknowledges the unanswered whys, angers, and hurts without giving trite answers and it places hope squarely on what God has already done and will do Jesus Christ. So, grab a tissue or two and give it a read. May it bless you as it blessed me. -Pastor Shawn

"The Day We Buried Our Son" by Chad Bird *

On my desk in front of me is a snapshot of my son, Luke. It was taken two years ago. His hair cut short for Plebe Summer at the United States Naval Academy (USNA). His white T-shirt, emblazoned with the academy seal, drenched in sweat. His young, muscled arms upraised. And his face...oh, that face. It is the face that roars Victory. Brow furrowed, mouth open, in a full-throated shout of triumph. You can hear this picture.

Someone snapped the photo after he and his team had won a hard-fought competition, on a hot day, during a long summer, in the year 2020. Of the thousand images I have of Luke, this one has risen to the top. There's just something about it. It encapsulates his fighting spirit, his 100%-ness, and the thrill of sharing that esprit de corps, of being part of a team that pushed and struggled and fought to the very end, coming out victorious.

Seven days ago, we laid Luke's body to rest in a grave at the USNA. As I stared at the wooden coffin that cradled the mortal remains of our son, it was this picture that hovered at the forefront of my mind. Why? Because I know, one day, that same roar of triumph, those same upraised arms of victory, that same spirit of unity and life shared by those around him will glow from the face and body of Luke as he stands beside his empty, expired grave.

Thirty-three days passed between the death of Luke, during a hiking accident in Chile, and his funeral and burial at the USNA. Those days felt like an eternity, and they felt like a fleeting moment. We floated on a shoreless sea of emotion, beaten by waves of tears, pounded by winds of anger, and sometimes we just collapsed, numb all over, in the doldrums of sheer despair. It was hell.

Then the day came. Then the hour came. Then the moment, the dreadful moment, finally arrived. The door swung open at the funeral home and there lay my son, dressed immaculately in his white Navy uniform, hands folded, hair perfectly combed. I couldn't move. I had to force my feet forward, inch by inch, like I was wading upstream through fast-moving water. Every last

vestige of denial fell clattering silently to the floor as I touched his body. Then I knew. I knew it was all terribly and inescapably true. My child, my son, my beloved boy, was dead.

The military knows how to honor their own who have departed this vale of tears. The chapel at the USNA was awash in the white uniforms of Luke's fellow midshipmen. One of Luke's closest friends, Midshipman Ollen Brown, spoke of our son's fierce courage, relentless drive, and his selfless service to others. We joined our voices to fill the air with praises to the God of life. Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller boldly proclaimed the Good News of salvation and forgiveness in Jesus Christ, Luke's God and Lord. A chaplain told me afterward that it struck him that Luke had had one last gift to give to the Navy: that the Gospel was preached to all those at his funeral. What a gift to give.

The road from the chapel to the cemetery was lined on both sides by midshipmen, shoulder to shoulder, backs erect, arms upraised in salute, tears streaming from many of their faces. A marching band led the hearse and we, his family and friends, walked behind it, with solemn resignation, to Luke's final resting place. There were the Marines who bore his coffin. There was the 21-gun salute. There was the chilling sound of Taps.

And there, in a coffin emblazoned with the saving cross of Jesus, was Luke's body. Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust. Life to death in a span of only twenty-one years, eight months, twenty-six days. Not Goodbye But We'll See You Soon

The morning after his funeral, my wife and I retraced our steps from the day before. We walked through the beautiful campus. By the chapel. To the cemetery. The coffin was now beneath the ground. Earth now swaddled Luke's remains. And squares of green grass lay where tears had fallen not twenty-four hours before.

There I knelt. I stared up at the sky for a few moments. And despite the emptiness that filled my heart, I managed a few words. I looked into my wife's face and said, "We will see him again. We *will* see Luke again."

For we shall. As certain as spring follows winter, as certain as grass sprouts from the soil, as certain as the Savior Jesus stepped triumphantly alive again from his grave, even so certain is the resurrection of the body and life of the world to come.

We did not say "Goodbye" to our son on the day of his burial. We said, "Luke, we'll see you soon."

Our Christian cemeteries are sacred fields in which we sow the bodies of our loved ones. The church is a farmer. We do not sow wheat or barley or corn; we plant bodies in the earth. And, like all farmers, we wait for the harvest. When it will come, we do not know. But come it shall—this year, next year, a thousand years hence. Who knows? The Lord of the harvest knows.

On that day, like champagne corks, gravestones will pop from the earth. The soil will split, coffins burst open. Luke's grave will have reached its expiration date, as will all our graves, wherever

they may be. The trumpet will sound. Jesus will descend. And with upraised arms of victory, full-throated shouts of Hallelujah, and bodies radiant with the immortal life of the resurrected Jesus, we shall stand, an innumerable company of the redeemed.

Until that glorious day, we wait in faith, hope, and love. And as we do, limping down this dark and forlorn pathway of grief, we cling to the truth uttered by the mouth of the Lord in whom we believe, and with whom Luke now rests in peace: "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Indeed, Jesus, yes, you are.

Come quickly, O Lord, we are waiting.

* <https://www.1517.org/articles/the-day-we-buried-our-son>

For more articles from Chad Bird go to: <https://www.1517.org/contributors/chad-bird>

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this summers Vacation Bible School a success! We had an average of 55-60 children in attendance as well as 31 adult helpers. The donations from the congregation were a huge help and your prayers were also very much appreciated. Looking forward to another great year in 2023!



Luther's Corner



"The Gospel is a heavenly treasure which refuses to tolerate another treasure alongside it; it cannot get along with another earthly guest in the heart"

Martin Luther's Christmas Eve Service
1521

Children's Sunday School

Preschool-5th grade

Sundays @9:00am

beginning October 2

"Coffee Talk" with Pastor Shawn

Adult Sunday School with great coffee and conversation. Sundays from 9-9:45

Beginning October 2 in Heide Hall.

Confirmation Class

6th-8th grade

Sunday nights 6-7pm

Beginning September 25

Happy Birthday!

9/1 Brett Lux
Diana McGregor
9/9 Sue Anne Mariotti
9/10 Tina Creedon
Cole Lux
9/12 Marj Kojadinovich
9/13 Alyssa Snyder
9/15 Drew Fullerton
9/18 Jennifer Johnson
9/20 Michelle Hindman
Mackenzie Petras
9/23 Doug Donatelli
Gabe Johnson
9/24 Jean Jenkins-Dudas
9/27 Nick Kaminski
Isaiah Smith
9/29 Melissa Kenton
9/30 Elle Fleske
Oliver Siemer
Serina Wichrowski

Congratulations Jessica!

Your family at St. Paul's is proud of you.

Concordia Child Care Names New Director

Jessica Hudak of Freeport, Pa. was recently named Child Care Director for the Concordia at Cabot



Child Care Program. A graduate of Slippery Rock University with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, Jessica started her Concordia career in 2017 as Child Care Group Supervisor.

In her new role, Jessica will be responsible for overseeing the entire program and ensuring that each child enrolled has a safe and fun environment in which to learn and play with others.

"I am most looking forward to working with the parents in our program as well as continuing to help their children grow and learn," Jessica said. "I appreciate the opportunities I've had thus far and look forward to growing into my new role."

Preschool Donations Needed

Paper towels, liquid hand soap,

Clorox wipes,

Micro ban antibacterial spray,

napkins, Cheerios

Small bottles of water, glue sticks,

#2 yellow pencils (Ticonderoga)

Donations can be placed in the container in the narthex

Prayer Warriors Needed

If you would like to be informed via email or text of prayer needs throughout our congregation please contact the church office to be included on our list.
stpaulssarver@gmail.com

Ladies Guild

Tuesday, September 20

9:30am Bags

10:30am Meeting

All women of St. Paul's are invited to join us.

WELCOME

New Members

Will & Alessa Fleske

Otto & Elle Fleske

Bob & Angela Gasper

Karen Humes

Elaine Voke

Welcome to St. Paul's!



Cecelia DiSanti ~ June 26

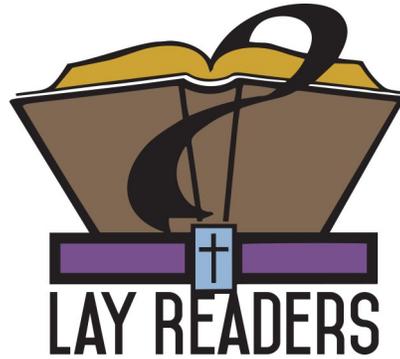
Otto Fleske ~ August 7

Elle Fleske ~ August 7



Bell rehearsal will resume on
Wednesday, September 7
@6:30pm.

New ringers from middle school through adult are welcome to join us. No experience is needed...we offer on the job training! Please contact Melissa Kenton before the first rehearsal if interested.



Readers are needed for Sunday mornings. If you are interested in serving as Lector please see Pastor Shawn or Melissa Kenton.

Keeping the Sabbath

Oh, what a blessing is Sunday, interposed between the waves of worldly business like the divine path of the Israelites through Jordan! There is nothing in which I would advise you to be more strictly conscientious than in keeping the Sabbath day holy. I can truly declare that to me the Sabbath has been invaluable.

—William Wilberforce

Offering Breakdown for Month of August

Category	August Total Received	YTD Received	Annual Budget
General	10,497.22	83,481.75	
Loose	100.00	4,134.85	
Flowers	80.00	487.50	
Memorials	-	3,905.00	
Initial	-	116.00	
Heide Hall	-	300.00	
Lenten	-	338.00	
Ash Wednesday	-	556.00	
kindermusik	-	448.00	
Maundy Thur.	-	488.00	
Good Friday	-	257.00	
Other	425.00	2,184.76	
Total Current	11,102.22	96,696.86	168,511.00
Benevolence	1,129.00	8,741.15	11,000.00
Total Received	12,231.22	105,438.01	179,511.00
New Building	2,967.20	25,208.35	

SEPTEMBER 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Worship & Music Meeting 10:00am	2	3
4 Worship Service 10:10am	5	6	7 Bell Choir 6:30pm	8	9	10
11 Worship Service 10:10am	12 Church Council Meeting 6:30pm	13	14 Bell Choir 6:30pm	15	16	17
18 Worship Service 10:10am	19	20 Ladies Guild 9:30am	21 Bell Choir 6:30pm	22	23	24
25 Worship Service 10:10am Confirmation Class 6-7pm	26 Quilt Guild	27	28 Bell Choir 6:30pm	29 TryLife 6-8pm	30	

You are invited to...

What: A blast from the past (a special Church History Social Hour)

When: October 23, 2022

When: Heide Hall following the Service

Why: Meridith McGinnis will MC this informative event which includes old church photos, memorabilia, and a "blast from the Past" (a 45 minute viewing of one of our previous Annual Talent Show)

Menu

Sandwiches

Chips

Fresh Vegetable Cups

Dessert

Refreshments

We would love for you to join us!

YOU CAN HELP.....



We are searching for any and all ideas, information, and items relevant to our church history that you might be willing to share with us that we do not already have. Our goal is finding old pictures, special stories, historic artifacts, or whatever else might be out there tucked away in attics, trunks or in your memories. Our church history team asks that you prayerfully consider giving or loaning any items which will be placed in a future exhibit in a designated area of the church lobby in special display cases commemorating the history of our church.

Please bring you items to be displayed by October 22nd.

Contact Meridith McGinnis 724-353-3042 or mcginnis@zbzoom.net with any questions.