



ST. PAUL VISITOR SEPTEMBER 2022

The mission of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church is to CELEBRATE and PROCLAIM to all the saving grace of JESUS CHRIST in word and deed.



We pray for...

LaDonna, Anne, Judy, Debbie, Al, Dave, Elizabeth, Jon, Abby, Tom, Helen, Ernie, Patty, Corissa, Alyssa, Myles, Jerome, Charles, Bryan, and Arlene.

Shepherding God, you are the source of life and health. Surround those who struggle with illness or other difficulties of life and bring them to wholeness and healing. Amen.



Sunday, September 11

10:00am

See page 6 for more information

If you would like to add someone to the prayer list or have a "prayer email" sent out please call Kathy at 304-525-9630.



Congratulations to (Left to right) Cameron May, Owen Murray, and Jacob Hale on being confirmed in the faith on August 21.

Pastor's Reflections

I have been reading a book by Judith Valente entitled: "How to Live – What the rule of St. Benedict Teaches Us About Happiness, Meaning and Community." Ms. Valente has an impressive resume. She has worked for the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post. But this book is much different than any of her other readings. She has taken St. Benedict's Rule and applied it to living in the 21st century.

A brief word about St. Benedict. Many historians have given credit to Benedict for what is now modern monasticism, although, I believe that may be a bit overstated. Benedict was living in a time very much like our own. The culture around him was very individualistic in nature. It was about who you knew and how they could repay you back for what you gave to them. It was all so frustrating for Benedict who wanted to follow the precepts of scripture and God. He decided to go off as a hermit. That did not work too well. After coming back into the community that he abhorred he then decided to go off again into the hills but this time to write a "rule" that would govern the community he was seeking to establish. What he found out was that there were others who wanted to live the way he sought to live. Here is what one author says about The Rule of Benedict.

The Rule of St. Benedict is still the most foundational piece of monastic spirituality in the Western world. The Rule (as it is usually called) is about community living—a day-to-day basic guide originally written for Christian men (in 2022 there are also women monasteries who practice/ live by the Rule of St Benedict) who wanted to be monks, telling them what to do, how to be Christ-followers in that unique way, and how to have a good relationship with each other.

Ms. Valente's book has been a refreshing look at life lived as a follower of Christ and The Rule of Benedict. In one chapter she has a discussion with one of the sisters who lives in a community in Kentucky. She is talking about community. I could not help but think about the communities that I have been seeking to serve in God's name – St Paul and Christ the King. It is hard to keep people connected. There are so many other places of community that we live in.

Leaders at both Christ the King and St Paul, for distinct reasons, have found it hard to help others grow their faith and stay connected to the church community. Christ the King has now been without a full time called pastor for over a year. That gets a little disheartening. It is hard to keep people connected to the church community when a central leader/ shepherd is not fully present. My time with them as Sunday worship leader will be complete on September 4. I will still be their interim pastor but in a much more diminished role. At St Paul, the Council was gracious in giving me time to rest and recuperate. My family and I are so very thankful for this gift. August has been a time of reconnecting along with planning with the Council.

I wonder if we can learn about community from the monastic community. I have a quote from the book by Ms. Valente I sitting on my desk. It says: church is a place (community) where people agree to link arms – support one another and help each other grow. I like that. I have seen that "linking of arms" in both St Paul and Christ the King. There have been "linking of arms" between both parishes (Lent midweek and Holy Week schedule).

I pray that as we enter the Fall ministry season that we would continue to link arms together. I pray that God guide us as we seek to help each other grow in faith and share that faith with others.

Blessings and Peace for the journey,
Pastor Mackey <><

Dear St. Paul Congregation,

First, I wanted to thank you all for welcoming my mother and her partner so warmly during their visit in Huntington. They had a wonderful time in West Virginia, and attending the three services at St. Paul was a highlight. They loved the people, enjoyed the messages of three thoughtful sermons by Pastor Kevin and our two guest preachers, and to boot, they heard me play the organ for the very first time! This was only the second time in the United States for my mother (she came once in 2003), and I appreciate your being a part of this very positive experience. Thank you!

I am happy to report the St. Paul Choir has started rehearsals again on Wednesday nights at 7 pm. For now, we are still meeting in the sanctuary and aim to keep the rehearsals on the shorter side (45-60 minutes). Currently, we are working on three anthems, one for the end of August, and two for September. If you'd like to join, please either simply show up, or contact me after service or by phone (585-410-7659) or email (vauth@marshall.edu). Perhaps you have family or friends who like to sing? They are more than welcome to try it out.

Last year, we invited the praise band "Render the Hearts" to our annual service and picnic at Ritter Park. They have accepted our offer to come back, and I am sure we are all looking forward to this change of pace. All of the band members are professional musicians and former Marshall students (I had some of them in class!). Let's make them feel welcome on Sunday, September 11!

Henning



Dear Congregation of St. Paul Lutheran Church

And just like that, we swing into the next season. Let Jesus fall upon all of our hearts this Autumn. The youth of St. Paul, the youth in our community and many members of St. Paul have been stirred up spiritually through The Power of One VBS. It is such an amazing blessing to be a part of God's work. As I plan VBS, God stirs up love, faith, grace, and so much more. I truly remember what it is to be a child of God, to be loved, and to know that I am made in His image, and how important it is to share the Good News and the unconditional love of God with all I meet.

VBS was wonderful! We focused on the Holy Trinity- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We had interactive bible stories, crafts and music each night along with fellowship, team building activities, and ending with prayer and popsicles. We had about 15 children and about 30 youth and adults that made VBS such an amazing experience. It was beautiful to watch all of these brothers and sisters in Christ use their gifts to share the message of God's love, Jesus' sacrifice and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Together as One, we spread the message, shared the love, created gifts and praised His name. I truly feel if we touch one heart and soul and mind and share the truth of our Awesome God, then we have fulfilled God's plan. It was a Glorious 3 days to do just that. We prayed, we played, we sang, we praised, we shared the love of our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! The last day, we saw the Power of One come together. We stood in a circle and joined hands. We had 3 hula hoops representing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The hula hoops had to complete full circle and be passed through everyone without letting go of one another. Of course these amazing children, youth and adults completed the task. The Power of One, in working together with the help of the Holy Trinity-All things are possible! The children ended in signing and singing three songs: Our God is an Awesome God, Jesus in the Morning and Three in One. They sang from their hearts in Miller Park and spread the Good News to all of those around! You can watch this on our St. Paul Facebook page. I would like to thank everyone who donated their time, gifts, donations to our VBS. You are appreciated. You made a difference. Thank you from my heart.

We also had a moving worship on 8/21/22. It was Confirmation Day for Jacob Hale, Cameron May and Owen Murray. These fine young men have showed perseverance and strength through the last 3 years. I am proud of all their studies and watching them live and serve through the Grace and Love of God. They will do great things! I look forward to watching their faith journeys.

As we close our days of summer and look for the exciting adventures of what fall may bring, let us remember the love and the light of Christ. Help us to remember all the goodness in our lives. Help us to stir up stories and share the Good News and share the unconditional Love of God with one another. Help us to Keep growing our roots.

Here are some lyrics from TobyMac and his song "The Goodness!"

May you enjoy all of God's Blessings and the Goodness in your life! Go in peace and Serve the Lord!

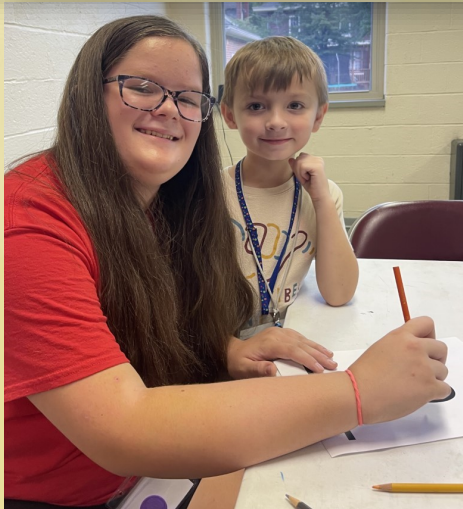
Your Loving sister in Christ,

Jill

You made the rain, so, when it falls on me, should I complain?
Or feel You're calling me
It's all on me to stay and really catch what You're showing
It's my roots that You're growing, 'cause life is more than this moment

Ain't no doubt about You
Everywhere that I go You keep showing up Lord, You
Make me wanna shout it, oh
You're the goodness in my life

You are the light so, when the darkness falls
The greatest heights, they never seem so tall, no, not at all
You're right, it's my roots that You're growing
Don't wanna miss what You're showing



VBS
2022



Join us on September 11 at 10:00am for a special Worship service in Ritter Park, followed by a picnic. The Huntington based band, "Render the Hearts" will be here to share their music with us.

Food will be provided by the Fellowship Groups.

Please wear your red St. Paul t-shirt and bring a lawn chair.

ABOUT RENDER THE HEARTS: Isaiah 6 verse 10 says to "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed." RtH is moving continuously expanding their fan base and making a mark on the Christian music industry. Their driving Pop Rock sound is enhanced by splashes of melodic guitar/keyboard lines, smooth vocal harmonies, and intricate drum rhythms.

RtH has been described by fans and concert goers as having a "groovy sound" and "pocket"! After releasing a self-titled EP in April 2013, RtH spent some time touring and writing before releasing a Christmas EP in November of 2015. September 1, 2016 marked the international release of their 1st full-length album entitled "Run to Love". On February 14, 2018 the band released "Love is.." along with a campaign to encourage Christ-followers to push their own judgements and feelings aside and simply love people the way Jesus did and does.

Through 2019 and into 2020, Render the Hearts continues to release worship covers in new and exciting ways in prep for a 2nd album release!

September 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10:00am Worship Giving of Bibles 	Office closed 	9:30am Quilting	7:00pm Choir	6:00-7:30pm Girl Scouts		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10:00am Worship and Picnic at Ritter Park 		9:30am Quilting	6:00pm CCC/ LYO Kick Off 7:00pm Choir	10:30am OKV Conference Meeting in Beckley		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10:00am Worship 11:00am Sunday School 11:00am Adult Forum 12:00pm Council		9:30am Quilting	6:00-7:30pm CCC 7:00pm Choir	Bible Study on YouTube 6:00-7:30pm Girl Scouts		
25	26	27	28	29	30	
10:00am Worship 11:00am Sunday School		9:30am Quilting	6:00-7:30pm LYO 7:00pm Choir	Bible Study on YouTube		



GIVING OF BIBLES

September 4

10:00am

We will be presenting two of our youth with Bibles this year. Please plan to be here to share this important time with our youth.

For your convenience a file holder has been attached to the outside of the door to the church office. If you need to leave a message for Pastor or Kathy you may leave it in the holder. There will be pens, paper, and envelopes for you to use. Of course, you may also leave messages, etc. on Kathy's desk if you prefer.



The readings listed below are sent to the congregation each day (Monday-Friday) by email. If you are not currently receiving the Daily Devotional and would like to please contact the church at secretary@stpaulhuntington.org with your email address.

READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

August 29-September 2: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-33

September 5-9: Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 51:1-10; I Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10

September 12-16: Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113; I Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13

September 19-23: Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146; I Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

September 26-30: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; Psalm 3:1-9; 2 Timothy 1:1-14; Luke 17:5-10

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you to the council/ followers of Jesus here at St. Paul for my time a rest/ re-creation and renewal during the month of July.
Pastor Mackey <><



ADULT FORUM

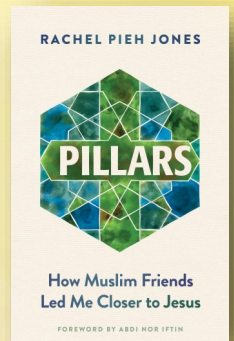
Beginning September 18

Right after worship in the parlor.

Please contact the church office if you would like us to order a copy of "Pillars" for you.

If you ordered a book through the office it is available for pick up in the narthex. Please put a check mark by your name on the list next to the books.

Before September 18, please read over the Forward, the Author's note, and the Introduction.



Worship Helpers for SEPTEMBER

Altar Guild: JOHN AND NOLA SCOTT

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Communion Deacon	Acolyte	Bread Provider
9/4	David Stuart	Linda Schnieder	Steve Golder	DeLaney Utey	
9/11	Bernadette Wellman	David Stuart	Creigh Pemberton	No Acolyte	
9/18	Keith Wellman	Bernadette Wellman	David Stuart	Jacob Hale	Jenny Murray
9/25	Ruthann Arneson	Keith Wellman	Bernadette Wellman	Cameron May	



If you signed up (a few years ago) to be a Prayer Pal, please remember to continue praying for your "Pal". If you have forgotten who your prayer pal is, please call the church office.



VBS
2022





- 2 Isaiah Garnett
- 3 Betty Church; Pat Jones
- 4 Wilda Maynor; Christine Vickers
- 6 Katie Bell; Luke Fornash
- 8 Zak Garnett
- 9 Garrin Simpson
- 10 Jennifer Murray; Brad Bell
- 11 Trudy Hesse
- 14 Ruthann Arneson
- 16 Jo Kendall
- 18 Daniel Kist
- 21 Annette DuVall
- 27 Dominick Barham; Neil Arneson
- 29 Carolyn Becker



WINTER COAT AND SOCK DRIVE

August 1-September 30

The Quick Response Team of Huntington is sponsoring a coat and sock drive. They are asking for new and gently used coats and new socks.

Donations can be dropped off at

Cabell County EMS

846 8th Avenue

Huntington, WV 25701

Please drop off during their office hours: Monday thru Friday 8:30-4:30.

You may also bring items to St. Paul and Pastor Mackey will deliver them for you.

CRIDLIN FOOD PANTRY

For the Month of September we will be collecting boxes of Cereal for Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry. Please place your items in the bin in the narthex.



School has started back! We will begin delivering meals to Southside Elementary. If you can donate any of the items listed below it would be appreciated. Items should be in individually packaged containers and not contain any peanut products.

individual mac and cheese

individual ravioli

Pop tarts

fruit cups

granola bars

Vienna sausages

individual juice drinks

single serve cereal

Foods should be in individual servings and not contain peanuts.

Report on the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2022 from Norma Gensler, delegate, to the congregation of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Huntington, WV

Two years ago (or was it three?) I was elected at Synod Assembly to be a delegate from our Synod to the Churchwide Assembly that was held August 8-12, 2022, in Columbus, Ohio. What an eye-opening experience! Can you imagine approximately 900 ELCA Lutherans in one place at the same time – masked and vaxxed – and COVID tested each morning before the sessions? It was worth the trip for the daily worship services – it seems the only item the five services had in common were the Words of Institution. Who knew that Lutherans speak 35 languages across the world – and several of those languages were used in worship. As an aside it is interesting to note that the Russian language was not included in our worship booklet, but Ukrainian was! I was pleased to find that our small delegation from WV-WMD Synod were seated alone at one table instead of being spread out among the 900. There were six of us, and some Synods had 30 delegates! If you have ever been a St. Paul delegate to our Synod Assembly, you would find the business is conducted in much the same way -- just on a grander scale. I have to admit, I was often thankful that I am only the Synod Secretary and not for the entire ELCA! And, rest assured that our Bishop Riegel has our Synod's best interests at heart. All of the sessions are recorded and available here <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNDmVwhzM36cUMtUudiwX5SCpoRYGA41> (the ELCA YouTube channel) if you would like to see for yourself. Look for the Plenary sessions. The worship services are available at the same YouTube site.

I praise God that I was able to represent our Synod for this necessary task of conducting the business for the Churchwide Assembly.

Finally, **I challenge each of you to volunteer to represent St. Paul at the next Synod Assembly to be held the first weekend in June 2023. Our church can send two delegates in addition to Pastor Mackey and me. You might be surprised to find out how our Synod works!**

Each year Synod Assemblies from across the ELCA send memorials (requests) to the Churchwide for consideration. Not all requests are granted to be brought before the Assembly for action. Here is a list and synopsis of the memorials considered at Churchwide 2022.

Pertaining to a renewed Lutheran Church:

To direct the Church Council to **establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church** comprised of leaders of diverse representation from all three expressions that, working in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, shall reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism, and will present its findings and recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention to be called under the rules for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. (WV-WMD Synod was a co-sponsor of this memorial.)

Pertaining to the social statement on Human Sexuality:

To authorize a **social statement reconsideration to revise Human Sexuality**: Gift and Trust (2009) so that its wording reflects current church understanding, church policy, civil law, and public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender non-conforming couples in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018). While references would be reviewed throughout the whole statement, the following sections are designated for reconsideration as described here:

- "Marriage: shelter and context for trust" p.15. This would not reconsider the idea of marriage as shelter and context for trust but would consider the import that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals;

- “Lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” p.18f. Revision here would not change this church’s current understanding that recognizes four identified positions of bound conscience within its life. p.19, but would review wording about “publicly accountable, lifelong monogamous same-sex relationships” in light of public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender-nonconforming couples;
- “Loving families: ground and source for social trust” p.21f. Review here would consider references to diversity of family configurations; and To authorize the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Church Council to approve the parameters and expense budget of this process and identify the revenue source(s) to provide for this revision to be considered as early as the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

Pertaining to Urban ministry:

To affirm the strategic direction of the ELCA Fund for Leaders ministry to enhance the capacity of people of color through its disbursement of scholarships to Theological Education for Emerging Ministries candidates; To refer this memorial to the Congregational Vitality Training and Development Team in the Christian Community and Leadership home area to create a **churchwide Urban Ministry group**, in partnership with the appropriate leaders in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, to accompany ELCA synods in their urban strategies that lead to the enhancement of congregational vitality and ministry sustainability in the urban context.

Pertaining to Black migrants:

To direct the Service and Justice home area, in consultation with the program directors for African Descent Ministries, African Nationals, and Latino Ministries; African Descent Strategy Team; African Descent Lutheran Association; Association of Latino Ministries of the ELCA; and Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities (AMMPARO), to prepare a proposal for **the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants**, that includes cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its Spring 2024 meeting; To strengthen the current protection and accompaniment of Black migrants through AMMPARO in partnership with ecumenical and interfaith partners both domestically and internationally; **To recommit this church to advocating for Temporary Protected Status and just and humane immigration policy through the Witness in Society team** within the Service and Justice home area; and To encourage congregations to affirm the aims of the African Descent Strategy Implementation Plan for 2020–2025 and the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent.

Pertaining to pay gaps in gender and race:

To refer the memorial to the Church Council to consider commissioning **a study of pay gaps for rostered ministers in the ELCA, particularly as they relate to women, people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQIA+ community, and to consider using such a study not only for the purposes described in this memorial but also for the study of inequitable compensation of clergy of color previously called for by the Church Council (CC19.06.23.)**, for the Quality of Call 2022 Pre-Assembly Report: Report of the Memorials Committee Wednesday, Aug. 10 • Page 5 of 5 Initiative for Women in Ministry, for the study of educational debt, and for such other purposes as might serve the needs of this church; To encourage Portico Benefit Services and the Churchwide organization to make appropriate changes to their bylaws and data privacy policies in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of compensation patterns for rostered ministers; To replace the “Current gross compensation” question from the Rostered Minister Profile with “Minimum Compensation for Next Call;” To amend the “Current Health Benefits” question to read “Needed Health Benefits;” and To remove the “Current Retirement Contribution” question from the Rostered Minister Profile.

Pertaining to the budgets for the next three years:

To approve a 2023 current fund spending authorization of \$68,814,000; To approve a 2023 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$22,869,000; and To authorize the Church Council to revise the spending authorizations after periodic review of revised income estimates.

To approve a 2024 current fund income proposal of \$70,191,000; To approve a 2024 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$22,930,000; and To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

To approve a 2025 current fund income proposal of \$71,594,000; To approve a 2025 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$22,960,000; and To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

Pertaining to lands of Indigenous people:

To encourage all ELCA members, congregations, synods, ministries, colleges, campus ministries, seminaries, camps, associated organizations, and partners to explore including land acknowledgements which center Native voices as part of their public gatherings;

To encourage all ELCA members, congregations, synods, ministries, colleges, campus ministries, seminaries, camps, associated organizations, and partners to become educated about the Indigenous peoples who thrived, prior to European contact, on the land they currently inhabit;

To learn about, learn from, and be in deepening relationship with Indigenous people and tribal nations; To encourage all ELCA members, congregations, synods, ministries, colleges, campus ministries, seminaries, camps, associated organizations, and partners, to support creative programs of restorative justice in partnership with Indigenous people, including, but not limited to, whenever considering a transfer or sale of real property, including returning land (and any structures built on it) after satisfying any financial obligations, to the appropriate Native nations, and when direct return is not feasible or not desired by the Indigenous people, to return the proceeds from the sale of the land to the ELCA Native American Ministry Fund or other local Indigenous led ministries or organizations; To call upon the appropriate home areas and offices of the churchwide organization to work collaboratively with the relevant local synods and their local Indigenous partners to explore sources and needs in funding for the more than 30 ELCA Indigenous congregations and service ministries; and to direct the Resource Development and the Budget and Finance Committees of the Church Council to identify potential sources of sustainable funding for these congregations and service ministries; and for these synods, home areas, offices, and committees to present findings of possible funding of these ministries to the Church Council no later than its Spring 2025 meeting, with a commitment to implement proposed and sustainable actions for funding of these ministries during the 2026-2028 triennium budget cycle; and To call upon the appropriate home areas and offices of the churchwide organization to first engage with the relevant local synods and their local Indigenous partners whenever planning or considering work related to Indigenous people or ministries.

Pertaining to the Supreme Court ruling on Roe V Wade:

To encourage support and prayer for all people affected by the overturning of Roe v. Wade, especially the most vulnerable; To encourage bishops to amplify support for rostered ministers and lay staff of our congregations and affiliated social ministry organizations; To encourage synod and congregational conversation around this church's teachings on abortion, gender justice, and related topics; and To encourage synods of the ELCA to review the impact that the overturning of Roe v. Wade and any legislation and/or judicial rulings of their state(s), commonwealth(s), or territory (or territories) of the United States may have upon pastoral counseling, the pastor-client relationship, and the rostered ministers and social ministry agencies and organizations of the ELCA.

Concerning specialized ministries and On Leave from Call status:

To direct the Church Council to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to initiate a review process of the “Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and the constitutional provisions and policies and procedures as they relate to interim, transition, bridge, specialized, non-parish-based, and innovative calls, as well as on-leave from call status, protocols for removal from the rosters, and communication protocols; To direct the Church Council to ensure that this review process include in its scope of inquiry, but not be limited to: the time limits given for On-leave-from-Call, steps for requesting a roster status, and a process by which an action or lack of recommendation from a bishop may be appealed, including the possibility of an appeal in a judicatory other than the synod from which they were removed from the roster; To require that those involved in the review process include a diverse group representing both the roster of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Word and Service who are or have recently been involved in specialized ministries (e.g., interim, transition, campus, outdoor, college or seminary faculty, chaplains, mission developers, etc.), and those currently or recently on leave from call for a variety of reasons (e.g., between calls, family, disability, study, healing from abuse, etc.); To urge bishops and synod councils to use sparingly any action by which a minister is removed from the roster for non-disciplinary reasons, unless the minister requests removal, until this review is complete, especially for those serving contract calls, as supply preachers, and in other ELCA ministries that don't qualify as a call; and To require that the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization prepare a report and recommendations for consideration by the fall 2024 meeting of the ELCA Church Council.

Concerning greenhouse gas reduction:

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to engage in creation care and advocacy based on the principles of sufficiency, sustainability, participation, and solidarity;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to advocacy and action in support of 50% reduction from 2005 levels in United States economy-wide net greenhouse gas pollution by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050;

To direct the ELCA Churchwide organization to set the goal of reducing its net greenhouse gas pollution 50% by 2030, and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050;

To urge the churchwide organization to continue its network ministry through the Creation Care Network to inform and guide this church in its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;

To encourage congregants, rostered ministers, and bishops to commit themselves to education about the urgency of the climate emergency, the global opportunities of a just transition and to lift up loving our neighbor in response to the climate emergency through their preaching;

To affirm the Mission Investments Fund's “Green Building” initiative and resources, and to encourage continued commitment to supporting ministries in caring for creation and addressing climate change;

To refer to the Service and Justice home area, Office of the Treasurer, Office of the Secretary, and Office of the Presiding Bishop, for implementation consistent with the memorials; and

To request the churchwide organization provide a report to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly assessing the progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions across all three expressions and sharing lessons learned to help meet reduction goals.

Concerning the Audit of Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA:

To authorize the Church Council to determine the parameters and the expense budget of this process and identify the revenue source(s) to provide for this audit;

To direct the Church Council to engage an external auditor to conduct a comprehensive audit for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA and related governance documents and present a report of the findings by the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting;

To direct the Church Council to release the findings of the audit to this church; and

To direct the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to use the findings of this audit to recommend changes to the governing documents to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

Resolutions are submitted for Assembly consideration. The following resolution was adopted.

The Assembly directed the ELCA Church Council appoint a Task Force to explore and analyze nomination and election processes used by synods and the churchwide organization, including but not limited to the ecclesiastical ballot, in order to determine best practices and to make practical recommendations concerning options for the selection of all synod and churchwide officers and that the Task Force report to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council in sufficient time that potential governing document amendments and/or a report on best practices can be prepared in time for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

There were several legislative updates and due to time constraints in my finishing this report I will add the on-line link to the proposed changes.

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/CWA_2022_Legislative_Updates.pdf

Imran Siddiqui was elected to the office of ELCA Vice President on the 5th ballot. Please take the time to read his bio here – it is quite interesting! I found him a spiritual leader, a delightful speaker, and an honest human. Pay special attention to his self-proclamation of his gifts (in red).

Name: Imran Siddiqui

Current Position(s): United States Department of Labor – Employee Benefits Security Administration / Senior Investigator

Congregation: St. John’s Lutheran Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Date of Birth: 5/30/1980

Previous Positions:

Investigator, US Department of Labor / EBSA 2005–2019

Benefits Advisor, US Department of Labor / EBSA 2003–2005

Education with Earned Degrees:

J.D. Emory School of Law 2002–2005

B.A. in Political Science & Economics, Rutgers University, 1998–2002

Honorary Degrees:

None

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Vice President, Southeastern Synod ELCA 2018–present

Board Member, Grace House, Lutheran & Episcopalian Campus Ministry of Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA 2017–present

Past Board and Committee Membership:

Synod Council Member, Southeastern Synod Council ECLA 2015–2018

Board Member, Atlanta University Center Lutheran Campus Ministry 2015–2017

What gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of vice president of the ELCA?

I have been honored to serve as Vice President of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA since 2018. In my term, I have helped lead a Bishop’s Election (in my first year in office) and then have Chaired a Synod Council through the uncertainty and challenges of Covid.

I did not grow up in the Lutheran Church. I didn’t even grow up as a Christian. I was born and raised as a Muslim to immigrants from Pakistan. When I grew up, it felt as if my faith was just a checklist as opposed to a living, breathing thing. During college, it was easy to drift away from the religious I was raised in, and I became an atheist for ten years. I came to faith in Christ through a Pentecostal Church. The folks at this church were so full of light and grace that it shocked me. My stereotypes of Christians had been busted, and I found myself being drawn back to those folks. I just remember their generosity and kindness. At some point, I felt a greater draw of wanting to be like these people and it made me open to faith. Not long thereafter I realized that Christ had been reaching towards me for many years. I was finally open to the love and grace that Jesus had been extending. A year later I attended my first Lutheran Church and absolutely fell in love with the liturgy and never left.

As you can see, I have very different experiences than many people in our Church. I feel that my faith history can bring a different perspective to our conversations. Too often we don't look outside our Lutheran box or doing things "as we've always done them". This keeps us from seeing new solutions or committing the same mistakes over and over again. Due to being a relatively new Lutheran, I have asked questions of why we do the things we do. In this way, we can see if what are doing is working, or we are just doing it because that's what we've always done. I believe it is important that we look at how we do things from all directions so that we can make the best decisions for our Church. I also strongly believe in the importance of listening to one another. And by listening, I mean truly, actively listening. Too often we half listen, wanting more to respond than to understand. And in many boards, we don't listen because we feel we can simply vote down the other voices. I feel that we are called to be better as a Church. I have dedicated myself to actively fostering discussions and bringing in unheard voices into our conversations. How can we say that we love another, if we don't listen to one another. And having conversations with others helps to lead us in different directions, which may work a lot better than we ever anticipated. Because when everyone is heard and helps create our policies, everyone is invested in their success.

Saddiqui was installed at the Friday morning Mass before the Assembly was adjourned about noon.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, on July 28- August 3, 2025.



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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