

## ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# Weekly Update

March 5- March 11



**276 Church Street, Montrose, PA 18801**


Office 570-278-2954, Monday-Thursday 8:15am-3:00pm

Click on link to email St. Paul's: [stpaulsmontrose@epix.net](mailto:stpaulsmontrose@epix.net)

Click on link to go to our Website: <http://stpaulschurchmontrose.org>

Click on link to go to our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsmontrose>

To proclaim God's love by word and example and to seek Christ in one another.

In person worship or you can watch live streamed on YouTube. Go to St. Paul's website <http://stpaulschurchmontrose.org> and click this red button  on the front page, which takes you to our YouTube page.



**Donations** You can scan the QR Code. Or go to St. Paul's Website and click the Donate Button for online giving. You can mail your tithes & pledges to the church office at 276 Church St., Montrose, PA 18801

### Church Closures

Please turn your radio dial to WPEL 96.5 FM. We will announce any closure of our church service on that station.

# View from the Pulpit: Mother Liz

## “Pray for me a sinner...”

Many people do not know that we have the sacrament of reconciliation of a penitent in the Episcopal Church. Any time is the perfect time to consider this sacrament. Lent being a penitential season however, it is most timely as the Church calls us to the “observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditation on God’s holy Word.” We are all prone to sin. Though we may not want to admit it, and our current culture seems to have put the idea aside, it exists. It is why in our baptismal liturgy (and confirmation), the candidate is asked, “Will you persevere in resisting evil and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?” The message is clear, we will fall many times and when we do, we need to repent. A similar implication exists in the marriage rite. The prayers state, “Give them grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their faults and seek each other’s forgiveness and yours.”

I think we can all admit that sin is real, and we all know we are all capable of it. Yet sometimes we may feel that we have done something unforgivable, or we may be carrying something in our hearts that we want to deny, but to do so would be unhealthy and spiritually damaging. In extreme cases of grievous sin we may even worry that God wouldn’t really forgive us.

The scriptures tell us “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9).

Repentance, reconciliation, and healing are at the heart of the Gospel and Jesus’ ministry as he heals both in body and spirit those whom he encounters. In the very beginning of his ministry, as recorded in Mark (1:15), Jesus echoes John the Baptist declaring, “Repent, and believe in the good news.” Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us our trespasses,” and so prayer is the first step in seeking God’s forgiveness, and, it is through God’s forgiveness of us that we learn how to forgive.

The Catechism in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer states, “Reconciliation of a Penitent is the rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution” (BCP p. 861). Many are surprised to learn that the Episcopal Church as a liturgy of confession. They often say, “I thought that was only in the Catholic Church!” (meaning Roman Catholic). Others resist the idea of individual confession as something they do not need, saying, “We have a general confession in the Eucharist, and that’s enough for me,” or “I confess directly to God.”

The Episcopal Church’s position on the rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent has long been that, “all may, none must, some should,” yet many have found that confession to a priest is a powerful means of divine mercy and sacramental grace.

It is true that the General Confession is roomy enough to include our corporate transgressions as well as our personal sins. The reach of absolution in the General Confession extends to both personal and corporate sin. And as in every case of penitence, it presupposes a resolve for amendment of life, coupled with a determination to reduce the harm we have caused to whatever extent we can.

For some, the repetition of the General Confession each week may feel less efficacious, or they may be facing a situation or life circumstance whereby public confession does not fully meet their needs. In this situation, the sacrament of the Reconciliation of a Penitent is available. As Scott Gunn and Melody Wilson Shobe note in *Walk in Love*, “there is also a great power in shining the light of truth into the dark places of our lives. Shame feeds on silence and secrecy. When we enumerate our sins aloud and ask specifically for forgiveness, we can set down the weight of sin and shame that we’ve been carrying and allow God to take away those burdens.” In short, saying them aloud makes them real.

# View from the Pulpit:

In the Rite of Reconciliation, the priest offers counsel, direction, and comforting words. The experience is a sacred conversation. By talking through some of what is weighing on our souls, we can find a way through and a new direction. The priest may suggest a prayer, psalm, or some other action to be done as a sign of penitence and act of thanksgiving (BCP p.446). These prayers or actions are the outward and visible sign of the inward work of forgiveness and reconciliation that is between us and God and done in love.

After one has named their sins and talked with their confessor, absolution is given. Different from the General Confession, the absolution is specifically focused on that which has been confessed. This can be tremendously powerful as we hear the assurance of forgiveness in a new and powerful way. Relieved of our burdens, we emerge filled with joy, strength, and renewal of spirit as we are sent into the world in peace.

This sacrament in the Episcopal Church is the same as the Roman Church in that what is confessed will not be disclosed to anyone. The Book of Common Prayer safeguards the ancient discipline regarding the secrecy of a confession as “morally absolute for the confessor and must under no circumstances be broken (BCP p. 446).”

The space in the rite when a priest offers ‘counsel, direction, and comfort’ is a moment when, if a crime has been committed, the priest could encourage the penitent to report himself or herself and would offer to go with the person to the authorities immediately. A priest would presumably [and yes, I would] withhold absolution until true repentance, including taking responsibility for one’s action, had been made.

Once the Rite of Reconciliation is concluded, what has been disclosed and discussed is never mentioned again unless the penitent wishes to have a further discussion of the matter. But when God offers you forgiveness it is total and complete. The slate has been wiped clean.

If you have never made a confession before, or haven’t made one in a long time, you may wonder how to best prepare for this rite. Some valuable guidelines are reflecting and meditating on: the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20); the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7); the Fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-26) and the Seven Deadly Sins (pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony, and sloth).

A final note, I too practice this spiritual discipline. I believe that in order to be a confessor, I must regularly practice confession in my own life.

The Rite of Reconciliation is always available by appointment; and the opportunity is particularly available on Good Friday. If preferred, a referral may be made to another priest when going to one’s parish priest is not desired.

The Rite of Reconciliation of a is a renewal of baptismal grace and a deep encounter in healing and forgiveness. In this rite we entrust ourselves to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. This is the joy of confession and is as the psalmist says, what God promises that “as far as the east is from the west” He removes our sins from us. (Psalm 103:12).

# View from the Pew:

Hello God, I called tonight  
To talk a little while.  
I need a friend who'll listen  
To my anxiety and trial.

You see, I can't quite make it  
Through a day just on my own.  
I need your love to guide me,  
So I'll never feel alone.

I want to ask you please to keep  
My family safe and sound.  
Come and fill their lives with confidence  
For whatever fate they're bound.

Give me faith, dear God, to face  
Each hour throughout the day  
And not to worry over things  
I can't change in any way.

I thank you God for being home  
And listening to my call,  
For giving me such good advice  
When I stumble and fall.

Your number, God, is the only one  
That answers every time.  
I never get a busy signal,  
Never had to pay a dime.

So thank you, God, for listening  
To my troubles and my sorrow.  
Good night, God, I love You too,  
And I'll call again tomorrow!

- From Variety Reading Web Site found on <https://www.varietyreading.com/christian-stories/calling.php>  
- Submitted by Sandy Seeger

## **We would love for you to be included!**

Article submissions (photos, community news items, or a personal or faith story) are due every Wednesday. This is YOUR newsletter, and all congregants are invited to share their stories and photos. Please email your items to Kate at [stpaulsmontrose@epix.net](mailto:stpaulsmontrose@epix.net) or John Warriner at [jdwarri@me.com](mailto:jdwarri@me.com); post an item to St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 276 Church St. Montrose, PA 18801 on Facebook; or drop a note in the offering plate.

# Sundays Service

March  
5



## Readings for this Week:

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm: 121

The Epistle: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Gospel: John 3:1-17

## This Week's Ministers:

Celebrant: The Rev. Elizabeth Grohowski

Altar Guild: Gaby W. & Barb U.

Announcements: Lynne Graham

Lector: Vickie Calby

Organist:

## This week's Hymns:

The God of Abraham praise

Now let us all with one accord

And now, O Father, mindful of the love

Lift high the cross



## This week's Gospel according to John:

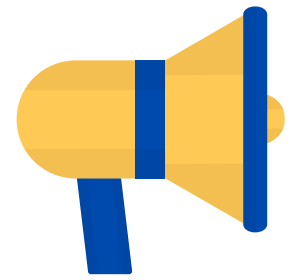
There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

# Happenings and Announcements



## Holy Land Presentation

After Church on March 19th, there will be a potluck lunch in the Parish Hall while Mother Liz and Mother Rebecca present and reflect on their trip to the Holy Land.



### For those who are ill or have requested our prayers:

Margaret Burgh, Naomi Bennett, Rita Leigh, Nancy Finlon, Addie Evans, Carol Marker, Ellen Ely, Rev. Janet Watrous, Edward.

### Pastoral Emergency or Non-Emergency Contact:

You can call the parish office during office hours. After hours, call Mother Liz 212-222-8109.



### This Months Birthdays:

John Finlon 3/6, Elizabeth Smith 3/15, Edgar Warriner 3/20, Elaine Petrzala 3/22, Robert Kuhn 3/24, Tom Undercoffler 3/30



### This Months Anniversaries:

There are no anniversaries this month. If you would like to add your birthday or anniversary to the list, call or email Kate in the office!

### Our thanksgivings:

We give thanks for those who celebrate their birthdays this week. O God, our times are in your hand: look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives. Amen.

We give thanks for those celebrating wedding anniversaries this week. Grant o God, in your compassion, that those celebrating wedding anniversaries this week may live out the covenant they have made. May they grow in forgiveness, loyalty and love, and come at last to the eternal joys, which you have promised through Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with them this day and forever. Amen.



# Last Week's Service and Events

First Sunday in Lent– February 26, 2023

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:  
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and pow'r are great, and, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

The February 26th, 2023 live-streamed 10:00 Holy Eucharist Service was led by Mother Liz. Lynne Graham did the announcements and Nancy Dooling read as lector. Joyce Printz was our organist. The service included three hymns along with the Prelude and Postlude. As you know, our live-streamed services can be watched live or any time on YouTube. Just go to our webpage and hit the red button.



## Mother Liz Celebration

How time does fly! On February 26th, Mother Liz celebrated the first anniversary of her ordination to the priesthood. Congratulations! We are very happy to have you on this journey with us.



## Joan Hamilton, a St. Paul's Parishioner, passed away

Joan Hamilton, a former parishioner of St. Paul's, passed away last week. A memorial service was held after church on Sunday, the 26th. Some of her obituary is included:

"Joan H. Hamilton, of Tunkhannock, PA passed away on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Born in Bridgeport, CT on March 20, 1936, she was the daughter of Victor and Grace Rosenau Hynes. She was predeceased by her husband of 51 years, Burr F. Hamilton. Joan was a graduate of Stratford High School and the Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing. She worked for many years as a registered nurse at Bridgeport Hospital and Milford Hospital. Upon retirement, Burr and Joan moved to northeastern Pennsylvania. Joan became a long-term volunteer at the now closed Tyler Memorial Hospital in Tunkhannock. In addition, Joan was an enthusiastic volunteer at several food pantries in the surrounding area."



## Daughters of the King

Here's an early photograph of St. Paul's Daughters of the King. Joan is standing directly behind Carol Marker. Such a faithful, dedicated group of women who we are lucky to have.



## After Church Brunch

After church on Sunday, the 26th, because Joan Hamilton's Memorial Service didn't start until 2:00, a number of parishioners went over to the Uptown Grill and had brunch. Anna Warriner, our recent graduate, joined us from Philadelphia. A good time was had by all. Sorry Harry, that's your head!





## Soup Night, March 1st

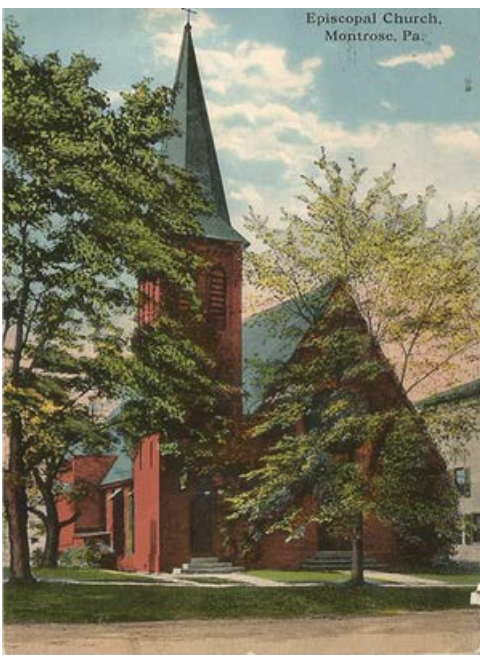
Everyone at St. Paul's now knows that the first Wednesday of the month is Soup Night. Pots of soup are brought in by volunteers, heated and distributed at church. We deliver to the Square, to Esther and Margaret. It's a time of comradery for the volunteers and some nourishment for our neighbors. This month's soup de jour was old fashioned chili and butternut squash. Next month will be April 5th and we are planning Italian wedding and split pea. Come and join the fun.



## Cross Covered During Lent

A St. Paul's tradition. The cross behind the altar has been covered. The Lenten veil is a visual representation of the penitential nature of the season. During Lent, we hone our spiritual practices and as we grow in self-awareness of our tendency to sin, we become more and more aware that we cannot fix ourselves on our own. The Lenten veil reminds us that we are sinners in need of a Savior.

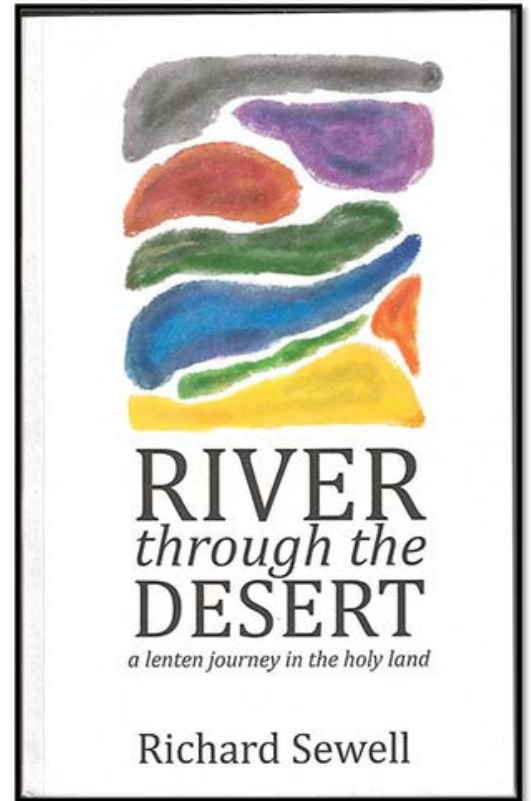




## St Paul's Church, 1918

Another early postcard of St. Paul's turned up on Ebay. This is a colored one and quite handsome. Postcards started in 1905 and we have a number of views of the church on them.

## Lenten Book Study



## Remember When

Social Night at the Undercofflers.  
What a happy group.



Barb, Stephanie, Jane, Rich, Dave, Jerry, Tom, Jack,  
Lynne, Carol, Maggie, Carol, Nancy., Margaret, Vickie.;



## LATE FEBRUARY IN SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

"On the wind in February, snowflakes float still. Half inclined to turn to rain, nipping, dripping, chill."

Well, it's been another week of half brown and half white. The fields and trails were brown before Tuesday when we got about 5 inches of snow. Took a picture of an opossum eating seeds under the bird feeders. Opossums and skunks are the first mammals out of hibernation. St. Francis of Assisi in the Memorial Garden seems to epitomize the week by having to don another mantel and hat of snow. There are 20 more days of winter, if we could just keep the daffodils underground for a little bit they will make it yet. Come on spring!

