

**ST. PAUL'S**  
**EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

# Weekly Update

June 23 - June 29



**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.

### **Our Vestry Members**

The Rev. Elizabeth Grohowski

John Warriner, Sr. Warden

Vickie Calby, Jr. Warden

John Finlon, Treasurer

Wanda Peirce, Clerk

Jack Lasher

Dan Graham

Vera Dunn

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: Too Small To Fail - Nadia Bolz-Weber

Sometimes the youth ministers at the conservative Christian summer camps I attended when I was a kid would ask questions like, “how’s your relationship with the Lord?”

I never knew what that meant exactly, but it sounded super nosey and maybe a tiny bit passive aggressive. And just the fact that I always had to keep myself from replying I don’t know, how’s your relationship with your secretary shows that I was never the kind of Christian who ever had “a relationship with the Lord” that could be characterized as good.

I assumed that having a “good relationship with the Lord”, relied on a great deal of understanding and a great deal of effort. Because faith was cultivated by people who worked hard for it, which meant lots of time in church, lots of Bible study, not to mention watching your tongue, watching your attitude, watching only wholesome TV shows. None of which I personally was ever good at. I thought about that this week because the same day I was studying this morning’s parables I was also teaching Luther’s Small Catechism inside the Denver women’s prison.

And in his small catechism Luther says this about faith: I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort, believe in my lord Jesus or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with their gifts, sanctified me and kept me in faith.

Luther teaches that even faith (the thing we think we give to God) is, like every other good thing, really a gift to us from God, it does not come from our understanding and effort. Which I think means that if you were in an Evangelical in the 80s and 90s, you could have been watching better TV all along and still had faith. It makes me wonder if Luther was studying our Gospel for today when he wrote this. Because these two parables are nothing if not good news for anxious disciples.

In our first parable, Jesus says that the kingdom is like if someone just sort of tosses some seeds on the ground and goes to take a nap. And while he’s resting from the great effort it took to toss seeds around, God’s work produces of itself. God’s work produces of itself. And I love this part – the dude literally has no idea how. Totally clueless, but still, he reaps all the reward.

Harvesting the goods of God’s kingdom relies not one bit on our understanding or effort. It relies entirely on God’s generosity. And then in our 2nd parable Jesus goes on to speak of how God’s kingdom is like a tiny little unimpressive seed, which when sown in the ground grows to become what he calls “the greatest of all shrubs” which sounds like saying someone is the smartest of all idiots, but I digress. The smallest, little easy-to-dismiss as insignificant seed becomes the greatest shrub on whose shady branches birds can rest. Which means the life of faith as portrayed in these two parables is far from the one I spent so much of my life striving for thinking I was volunteering for God’s kingdom when really I was being conscripted without realizing it because I was too busy trying to be good. But honestly, most times when I am TRYING to do good things, when I am SO SURE I am being helpful and holy, it all just kinda goes sideways. It’s humbling for someone who has spent much of her career planting a church and writing books and running conferences and starting big projects to realize that God’s Spirit most often moves among us in small ways we don’t even notice, much less can ever take credit for. Maybe our best work in God’s Kingdom is hidden from us at the time, so that our egos don’t mess it up too bad. I’m starting to suspect that the Spirit prefers small nudges to grand gestures, anyhow. When the plane landed, the woman across the aisle casually handed me a small pack of tissues. I took it without managing the courtesy of even looking at her. Eric stepped in and said simply, “Thank you. She’s grieving.” To which the woman replied understandingly, “I thought so”.

And that was it.

Small as a mustard seed. What felt to me as an epic act of compassion was, I assume, easily forgettable to the tissue giver.

I bet she wouldn't even remember it. But I will never forget it. And I know for sure her small gesture planted something in me. Because a couple months ago, I was on a delayed flight...with lots of stressed-out passengers afraid of missing their connections, when I noticed a woman absolutely sobbing into her hands. I grabbed a pack of tissues, and without making a big deal of it, gently handed them to her without any eye contact. She managed to whisper...I might be missing a funeral. We soon took off and for the rest of the flight we spoke honestly of grief and even shared stories back and forth about both being kids who were chronically ill. What I am saying is that, this is what God can do with Kleenex. Kleenex and some not very hard-working gardeners who don't really understand much of anything. We have just the tiny things of God at hand with which to help heal ourselves and this busted up world. Small things that easily fit in a child's pocket. But they are enough. I cannot say for sure, but I suspect that God's best gifts are always the smallest. And the weird thing is, they aren't even rare. They're everywhere. Even when we don't realize it. I say this because Eric and I just returned from 6 ½ weeks of walking across Spain on the Camino de Santiago. And the people in our lives, eager to hear what it was like, ask us to tell them what the highlight was, like what was the best take away...the deepest spiritual lesson...the most profound insight. People want to hear about the big stuff and honest to God all I can talk about is the birds. See, I walked the Camino before, it was about a week after that nice lady handed my weeping self a pack of tissues. So last time when I walked I walked in grief. But this time, it was about a week after my Eric and I got married, and so this time when I walked I walked with my beloved and I walked in gratitude. Now, I don't know if Spain recently imported millions of songbirds but I literally have no memory of hearing them the last time. Maybe because grief can blanket over our senses. But this time it was like a whole production was being put on each morning. They are real show offs those songbirds of Spain.

So I bathed each morning in their symphonic waters without any understanding and effort of my own. Because the best gifts of God are unearnable.

There is no amount of virtue or charitable giving or activism that I could exchange for the mind-blowing gift of songbirds. Those small, and easily missed little magical musicians of God.

I mean to say that we may look for God in majesty, and big showy-offy miracles and highlight reels and profoundly spiritual insights that we think worthy of bestselling books and there's nothing wrong with that. But while we do, the smallest, easily unnoticed, not terribly significant miracles surround us in multitude.

In fact, there is so much beauty in this world that sometimes, I think I might cry from the immensity of it, from the enchantedness of it, from the heartbreak of it. And other times all I can think about is how annoyed I am by how, because of construction, every street in Denver is down to one lane.

And that is a perfectly good life of faith.

I guess what I am saying is that the world is just as filled with the glory of God in the times we notice as in the times we don't.

Just last Summer I was up in the mountains, looking at the night sky and without realizing it I said "they have so many stars up here"

Um...the sky above Colfax and Colorado has the exact same number of stars as the sky in Summit County.

There are the same number of songbirds on the Camino now as 3 years ago.

Which means that the good things, the tiny, beautiful things, the God-scatters-them-all-around-us things don't go anywhere during the times we can't perceive them due to the weight of grief or even due to the light pollution of a shiny life. They are always here. And they are always ours. And they are always free. Amen.

# View from the Pew: Wanda Peirce

## LAKE LIFE

This spring has been especially exciting for us all on our little lake here in Lawsville. Most of us are animal lovers and nature lovers. Whenever the eagles or the herons are around the cell phones are buzzing, letting one another know where to look. For a month Harry and I kept our eyes on eggs that a duck laid under the bush beneath our living room window. Finally on May 6th Momma and a dozen babies waddled across our yard and slid down the bank and into the lake. A few days later several geese were causing a ruckus in the lake near our house, so we knew something was happening. Lo and behold a few hours later, Mom, Dad and 5 brand new baby geese arrived. 3 baby geese and 10 baby ducks have survived and spend the days, with the parents, visiting our neighbors around the lake. Their favorite spot seems to be on our lawn under our pine tree. They all hang together and Papa Goose proudly watches over his family and Momma Duck and her kids! If a neighbor hasn't seen either of the families, the phones start buzzing... "Have you seen the babies today?" We all have adopted these adorable creatures and are concerned about their welfare. What a joy it has been watching them grow, learn to swim fast enough to keep up, play with one another and begin to learn to fly. For now the other wild life have taken a bit of a back seat to these 2 families.

Lake life----gotta love it.



### **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

June  
23



## Fifth Sunday after Pentecost: St Matts Service

### Readings for this Week:

First Reading: Job 38:1-11

Psalm: 107:1-3, 23-32

The Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

Gospel: Mark 4:35-41

### This Week's Ministers:

Celebrant: The Rev. Elizabeth Grohowski

Altar Guild: Barb U. & Carol L.

Announcements: John Warriner

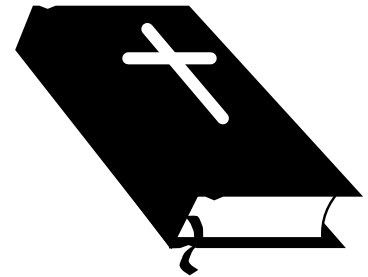
Lector: John Warriner

Hospitality:

### This week's Hymns:

This weeks service will be held at St Matthews Episcopal Church in Stevensville.

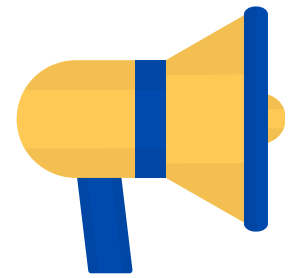
Please join us for our annual Historical Building service! Ice Cream Social to follow.



### This week's Gospel according to: Mark

When evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

# Happenings and Announcements



## Social Night @ Dan and Lynne's

There was a social night scheduled at Dan and Lynne's for June 21 but it was rescheduled to **June 28th @5pm!**

We hope you are all still planning on making it. Bring your favorite dish to pass, your favorite beverage of choice and a lawn chair.

See you then!

## St Matthews Service

This weeks Church Service, June 23, will be at St Matthews in Stevensville at 10 am, followed by the annual fan favorite ice cream social. We hope to see you there!



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

Margaret Burgh, Naomi Bennett, Rita Leigh, Nancy Finlon, Carol Marker,

### 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:

Rita Leigh 6/10, Cathy Hammons 6/10, Ben Zalewski 6/17, Lynne Graham 6/18, Jack Lasher 6/20, Mary Zalewski 6/21



### This Months Anniversaries:

### 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

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost, June 16, 2024

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is His new creation, by water and the word.  
From heav'n He came and sought her To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.

The June 16th, 2024, 10:00 Holy Eucharist was officiated by Mother Liz who also gave announcements. Lynne Graham served as lector and chalice. Penny Jaggars played a prelude, 4 hymns and a postlude on the piano. 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.





## Meadow View

The third Wednesday of the month is when St. Paul's visits the residents at Meadow View to read Morning Prayer and sing hymns. Thanks to Penny for her accompaniment on the piano.



## July 4th is Coming

St. Paul's has the best location in the town for watching the parade and spots are at a premium -- and, you are right next to our ice cream sales! We should sell tickets. Bring your chairs in on Wednesday and set them up.



## July 4th Breakfast

Get ready – the July 4th breakfast is right around the corner. We need cooks and other helpers to make it a success. Let Lynne know if you can help. Here's a picture of last year's crowd. We anticipate about 200 this year.





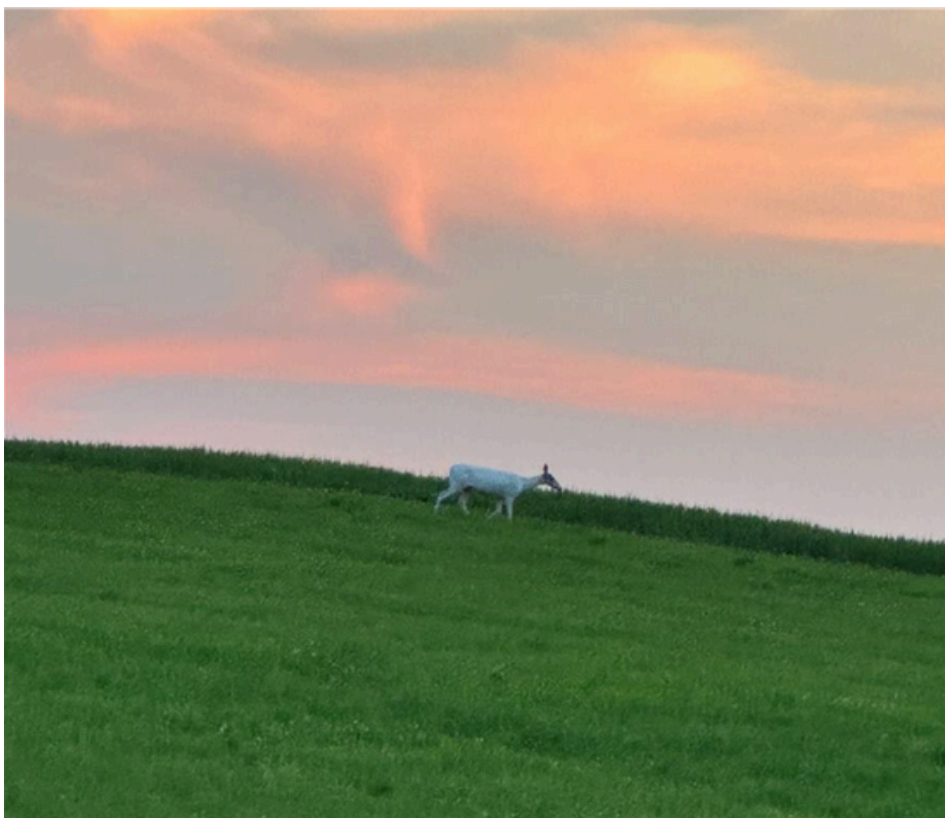


## Father's Day

Sunday was Father's Day and there was a cake at coffee hour to celebrate it. Happy Father's Day to all the St. Paul's fathers.

## St. Paul's Little Food Pantry

If you come out the side door on Chestnut Street across from the Hinds Oil Mart, and look to your left, you will notice St. Paul's future Free Little Food Pantry. It has hardware added and is ready to be stocked with food items, toiletries, and paper products.



## No Fawns for Gertie

Took a photo of Gertie, the piebald doe. It appears she didn't have a fawn this year. She was born four years ago and may have had a baby last year but that's uncertain. We were rooting for her but it doesn't look positive. She actually likes to have her picture taken.



## MID-JUNE IN SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

“Bring out those lazy, hazy days of summer. Those days of pretzels and sunshine and beer.” Happy summer! Even though official summer doesn’t start until Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 4:50, it appears that hot summer started this week a little early with temperatures that reached the 90s several times -- hot days and high clouds. An interesting fact, this is the earliest summer solstice in more than two hundred years. First haying was great and early predictions say it’s going to be a good year for apples, walnuts, blackberries and fruit in general. That evil, invasive bush, multi-flora rose is blooming now in the fields and in hedgerows. All the rain created a plethora of fungi, and this toad lives at the base of the St. Francis of Assisi statue in the Memorial Garden. Summer has arrived.

