

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

# Weekly Update

August 18 - August 24



**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**

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: On Loving Our Enemies

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

-Jesus, Matthew 5:43-45

A few weeks ago I heard a pastor speak at a conference. He spent some time lamenting the divisions, the culture wars, and the overall disintegration of dialogue that we have in this country. He pointed out how the church is not very different than the world around us at modeling a better way. Truth.

He turned our attention to words of Jesus, which is always a helpful thing to do. We reflected on the most challenging teaching of Jesus (Matthew 5), when he tells his disciples the posture that they are to have toward their enemies in order to fully express God's kingdom ideals. I must admit, I lean in every time someone brings up this passage. It's one of the most countercultural statements that Jesus makes. It's the most difficult and most remarkable action of discipleship. And these days it's so relevant, because we sure are quick to place people (and groups) on our "enemies" list.

The speaker went on, "Jesus calls us pray for our enemies. We are to commit to praying for God to do a work in our enemies. LORD, do a work in our enemies! Amen? Amen." Nearly everyone nodded and said, "Amen!" I did too. It was a good encouragement.

But.

Most times when you hear the words of Jesus and find yourself nodding in quick and easy agreement, you need to take a moment and carefully reflect. Following Jesus is usually harder and more costly than we tend to think it will be. And in this case, there was so much nodding in the room, right after the hardest saying of Jesus. Were we missing something?

The statement given was a fine encouragement, but it was incomplete. Here's why. There's a problem with hearing that Jesus says to pray for our enemies, and then praying that God changes our enemies. The risk here is that we can be praying for our enemies in word, but in reality we are just spiritualizing our conflict with them. Jesus doesn't simply say that we should pray for our enemies. He says that we should love them and pray for them. It isn't just the action of the prayer, but the posture of it that is so crucial.

# View from the Pulpit: On Loving Our Enemies

Of course we believe and hope that God is able to bring transformation in our enemies' lives.... just like God is able to bring transformation in ours. But it's quite possible for me to remain angry and arrogant in my posture to my enemies, all while praying for God to set them straight because they are just acting so stupid. In doing so I re-interpret the point of Jesus' words to mean: "Pray for them, so that they get fixed."

But looking at the person of Jesus, that's not what he meant. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your father in heaven.

Our father's love looks like acting for the benefit of another. It looks like pushing aside our own self-importance and prioritizing the person next to us. It looks like humility and care and sacrifice. It looks like wanting goodness in our enemies' lives....even if they don't change. So my praying is intended to be an extension of that love.

Jesus is inviting you into praying for goodness to fall on your enemies. He's asking you to start moving beyond the issue or conflict, and embracing them as co-humans once again. Jesus is inviting you to love them like God does. So when we do the hard thing and pray for our enemies, we don't simply pray that God sets them right. We pray that they experience the fullness and goodness of God's love and beauty and care.

Here's an awkward truth: On at least some level, you are likely on someone else's "enemy list". Keep that in mind. How would you want them to pray for you? What sorts of things would you want them to ask God for, as they bring you before the King of Love? What would you desire their posture to be, when they pray for their enemy and it's you? Let that instruct your prayers as well.

Jesus, may your love and goodness fall on all those whom I am tempted to put on my enemy list today.

Peace,  
Keith

- From: Together for Good: simple reflections on community, spiritual formation, and the way of Jesus

# View from the Pew: Stormy Weather

Tropical Storm Debbie is blowing, huffing, and puffing rain as I am writing this. Tornado and flood warnings made lots of noise on our cell phones. Clouds are racing across the sky faster than any birds can fly, and the wind is whistling and howling songs of power and greatness.

All these great phenomena might be a special message to us from the Lord Himself. "Wake up, everyone! Pay attention to me when I am speaking to you!"

We all have problems. All too many people on this earth have extreme dilemmas, dangers, grief, and sorrow in all their daily lives. The ravages of war, poverty, hunger, homelessness, addictions, crime victimization (and the list goes on and on) have become such an insurmountable challenge for so many. So, what can we do about it?

1. Pray. Ask God through Christ to guide us to help others and also guide those with so many needs to be guided to ways to overcome the conditions and roadblocks in their lives.
2. Share our time, talent, and treasure.
3. Volunteer in activities that help others.
4. Practice the Golden Rule
5. Love your neighbor- the one next door, the ones in other states, and those in other nations.
6. Above all, look to the awesome power and beauty in nature which God has provided us. The sun, the sky, our mountains and valleys, and the wildlife - the birds, trees, flowers, and all the miraculous beauty surrounding us.

Through all of these things, the Lord is blessing us and speaking to us. Watch, listen, and prayerfully respond.

- Tom Undercoffler

## **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

Aug  
18



## Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Readings for this Week:

First Reading: Proverbs 9:1-6

Psalm: 34:9-14

The Epistle: Ephesians 5:15-20

Gospel: John 6:51-58

### This Week's Ministers:

Celebrant: Lynne Graham

Altar Guild: Barb Undercoffler

Announcements: John Warriner

Lector: John Warriner

Hospitality:

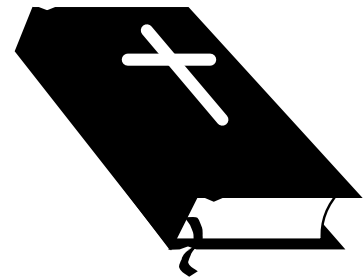
### This week's Hymns:

When morning guilds the skies

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

God of grace and God of glory

On a hill far away

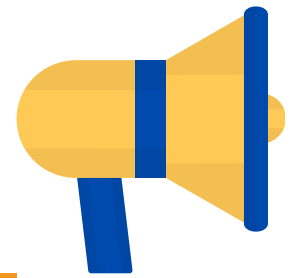


### This week's Gospel according to: John

Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."

# Happenings and Announcements



**INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY**

**AUGUST 23 2024**

**5 p.m. TO 7 p.m.**

**BLUE RIDGE PARK**  
116 Church Street  
New Milford, PA 18834

**Free Food • Speakers  
Educational Resources  
Candlelight Vigil**

**SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY RECOVERY ALLIANCE**  
Knowledge. Hope. Healing.

**STOP THE STIGMA**

The poster features a central illustration of a lit candle with a flame, set against a circular background with a halftone dot pattern. The overall color scheme is orange and yellow.

## 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 John Warriner at 570-278-2317.



## This Months Birthdays:

James Bailey 8/2, Matilda Rogers 8/7, Scott Price 8/13, Barb Undercoffler 8/19, Bob Aiken 8/23, Margaret Burgh 8/28, Patty Aiken 8/30



## This Months Anniversaries:

Jack & Carol Lasher: 8/6/1960  
Cole & Kate Aukema: 8/6/2022

## 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

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost, August 11, 2024

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy wounded side that flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

The August 11th, 2024, 10:00 Morning Prayer service was led by Lynne Graham. John Warriner gave announcements and Vickie Calby served as lector. 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.



## Worship Leadership Training

On Saturday, August 10, John Warriner, Vickie Calby and Lynne Graham went to Worship Leader Training at Trinity, Carbondale. Led by Canon Melinda Artman and Fr. McGinty of Christ Church, Forest City, they reviewed how to lead ante-communion and Morning Prayer helped us become more familiar with the Book of Common Prayer.



## St Paul's Little Free Pantry

St. Paul's pantry on Chestnut Street is open for business and is being used by the community. You will see donation boxes in the Parish Hall and inside the church front door. A list of appropriate donation items is in the pantry, or speak with Harry or Wanda.



## Wind and Rain

Wind and rain might not stop the postal service, but it slowed things down around here. The hard rain last Thursday and Friday caused flash flooding and blew trees down in town. By Monday, it had emptied into the Susquehanna River, which was nearing flood stage.





## Road Crossing

On the back roads in Susquehanna County, you never know who or what will be crossing!



## Vacations

John Warriner and Bob Dunn sent some pictures of their vacations. John and Gaby went on a cruise to Alaska and took a photo of a whale and Bob and Vera are in Canada fishing – broken shoulder and all. Bob's picture is taken from their back porch.



## EARLY AUGUST IN SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

“This morning, the sun endures past dawn. I realize that it is August—the summer’s last stand.”

Flash flooding occurred this Friday. The tomato plants loved the heat of July and the rain. They’re heavy this year. Carol Lasher took a picture of her daylilies and Lynne took a picture of Grandma’s old-fashioned Rose of Sharon. Catalpa trees with seedpods. We called them Indian Tobies in the old days and smoked them like cigarettes. High clouds between showers. It’s August, and summer.

