



## Pastor's Corner by Pr Dave Heckler

This year, as we begin a new church year with the season of Advent, we find ourselves preparing for the beginning of another new era as well, a new presidency and political era in the United States. Given the tenor of the campaign that preceded it and the political dominance that resulted from it, many people will find their lives significantly changed by its results. Moreover, the life and witness of the Church in the American context faces a significant challenge in these years ahead (as if we weren't already doing so before the election). So I'd like to share some of my own thoughts on where we find ourselves:

- ✦ In the eyes of our younger generations in particular, one thing this election has challenged (anew and more strikingly) is the integrity of the Church. However you feel about that reality, now more than ever, **the Church needs to be the Church—the Body of the outcast-loving, self-giving, despised, crucified, and risen Christ Jesus alive and embodied in the world.** Politicians of every stripe love to parade the banners of a caricature of Jesus and say in the words of Constantine's motto, "By this sign conquer"; but doing so cheapens the power of the Gospel by substituting a domesticated and Americanized "Brand Jesus" for the real Lord of the universe. But in this Advent/Christmas/Epiphany cycle, we're reminded that in the incarnation of God in Christ Jesus, the real God meets us not in the triumph of the "successful", but in the humility of the poor and downtrodden. As we proclaim this real God, we need to begin by meeting Him precisely there...
- ✦ The incarnation of God in Christ also shows us **the radical way God chooses to save the world: from the bottom up.** The people of our communities and our nation face many struggles, and Biblically speaking, government and its leaders are called by God to help those people with their struggles; but given our current political milieu, if our neighbors in need are going to find relief, we (and especially we as the Church) won't have the luxury of waiting for the government to help them. Together, we'll need to meet our vulnerable neighbors where they are, get to know them and their stories (and not just our stereotypes of them), and help them "from below", from the grassroots. (And the Christmas surprise is that as we do so, that's precisely where we'll meet Jesus...)

This may sound counterintuitive, but if you need a natural illustration of the radical way God chooses to transform the world through Christ alive in us, think of a **virus**. Viruses don't look like much in the scheme of things; but if COVID-19 was any indication, they're as powerful as any nuclear warhead, even if they don't leave giant craters in their wake. Viruses take over your body by invading a cell and reprogramming it to produce more viruses, which then take over more cells, etc. Jesus reigns in this world much as a virus does in your body. He doesn't need to have the position or the throne or the destructive power to reign in this world; He transforms people's hearts instead, making them more and more like Himself, living out His life-giving priorities at the grassroots level. And transformed people transform people...

- ✦ And precisely because we're the Body of the outcast-loving, self-giving, despised, crucified, and risen Christ Jesus alive and embodied in the world, we as the Church need more than ever to decide which side of the courtroom we're going to serve from. Many Christians find it far easier to accuse and demonize all those "other" people, pounding them with condemnation from the Scriptures and urging society to do the same. The irony is that in so doing, they embody the courtroom role of the accuser and prosecutor, one which Biblically bears the Aramaic title of "Satan". But in the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit who births the Church fulfills the courtroom role of the "Paraclete"—the one who stands with the accused, who takes the stand on their behalf and testifies to their humanity in the image of God and its overcoming value in God's sight. (And in Hebrews, Jesus Himself is cast as the Paraclete...) I believe that now more than ever, the Church needs to be **the Community of the Paraclete** and take our stand with those whom the rest of society will love to scapegoat and reject, not only to claim "solidarity" with them, but to actually embrace them in God's grace and love and call them our brothers and sisters. (And yes, I believe that to do the opposite is ultimately to stand over against Jesus, not with Him...)
- ✦ Needless to say, as we the Church actually do this, it's going to make us even more a community of **"resident aliens"**, a community that stands in distinct contrast to the scapegoating and violence that makes politics easy but actual caring terribly difficult. We'll look (and perhaps feel) like oddballs in our communities, and certainly in comparison to more "successful" churches that go with the cultural flow and/or stick to getting people to heaven rather than worrying about helping them on earth. But if one of my favorite Biblical passages (Hebrews 11:8-16) is correct, this is precisely who we're called to be—resident aliens who live in tents with a radical

trust in anticipation of God's promised future. And if we're true to this calling, we'll also be distinctive as a **community of grace and love** that embraces all people as God's beloved children...

Our younger generations are longing to see the Church actually live this calling; the outcasts of our society are literally dying for us to do so. And should we be bold enough to do so, should we bold enough to live in and embody the Christ of Bethlehem and Calvary and Easter even in a spiritually violent age, the song so many of us sang in our youth may yet prove true: **"They'll know we are Christians by our love"...**

Yours in Christ Jesus our Lord, *Pr. Dave*

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*The Lord God said when time was full, He would shine His light in the darkness;  
He said a Virgin would conceive and give birth to the Promise.  
For a thousand years the dreamers dreamt and hoped to see His love,  
But the Promise showed their wildest dreams had simply not been wild enough!*

*The Promise was Love, and the Promise was Life;  
The Promise brought Light to the world,  
Living proof the Lord God saves, and the name of the Promise was Jesus!*

• *Michael Card*

*May light and life beyond your wildest dreams  
take shape in your life in Christ Jesus  
in this Advent and Christmas season and throughout the new year!*

*Pr. Dave Heckler*

# Advent and Christmas at St Paul's



On December 1, we began a new Church year with the season of **Advent**. Advent isn't just about counting down the days until Christmas; it's about God bringing forth a new creation in our hearts, in our lives, in our neighborhoods, in our society, and ultimately in the whole universe, and about our being part of that new creation. Advent's about *our* "pregnancy" with God's new thing every bit as much as it's about Mary's pregnancy with the infant Jesus; it's about our being reshaped into the new wineskins of God's Spirit as Christ takes on human flesh and blood once more in Word and water, in bread and wine, in grace and forgiveness *in us*.

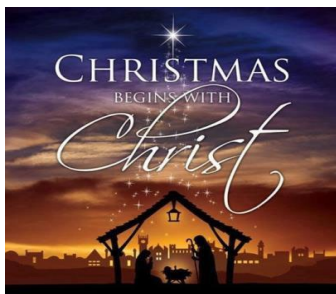
The season of Advent will last for four Sundays; and even as the days outside our sanctuary darken and shorten, the candles of our Advent wreath will be lit against the darkness in an ever-growing light. Come join us as we watch and wait, hope and pray, and "live itchy" with anticipation of the new thing God's doing through Christ Jesus our Lord!

## Sundays in Advent:

- ✦ During the **Sundays of Advent**, we'll gather around the Word and the Table with hymns, canticles, and readings reflecting a more contemplative tone. We'll also be progressively lighting the candles of the **Advent wreath**. If you have a tabletop Advent wreath at home, we encourage you to break it out and feature it on your "home altar" along with the bread and wine if you join with us online for worship.

## Special Advent Services:

- Pr Dave will once again be posting a **worship video** of "**Advent at Taize**" on our church's Facebook page. You and your family can share in this time of worship and reflection at any time during Advent. One of the perks of music from Taize is that it's generally pretty easy to remember after a few times through— and because it's contemplative, it's meant to be sung a few times through...
- Our **Quakertown Ministerium** will also be leading a "**Longest Night**" **Christmas Service** on **December 19 @ 6:30 PM at First UCC in Quakertown** for those who are grieving in these tumultuous days. (First UCC's regular "Third Thursday" Community Meal will be shared before the service.)



## Christmas Season Worship Schedule

**December 22:** This is actually the Fourth Sunday of Advent— but instead of Pr Dave's usual sermon, our Sunday School kids will be presenting their **Sunday School Christmas Pageant** this day.

**December 24:** Our annual **Christmas Eve Candlelight Eucharist** will be held on **December 24 at 7:00 PM**, with special prelude music beginning at 6:30 PM. Our worship will feature the beauty of our Christmas tree and poinsettias, the

lighting of handheld (and this year, safer) candles to hail the Light of the World, your favorite carols, and festive Holy Communion with a strong Christmas flavor. And we'll livestream this service as well— so if you have loved ones who can't make it in person, invite them to join us from wherever they are!





**December 25:** On **Christmas Day @ 11:00 AM**, we'll share in a decidedly less formal "**ChristMass**" **Holy Communion service** here at St Paul's, accompanied by Pr Dave's guitar. (This service won't be livestreamed...)



On **December 29**, the **Sunday after Christmas**, we'll enjoy **Christmas Lessons, Carols, and Communion**. Our readings and hymns will carry us through the entire Christmas story from Zechariah and Elizabeth through Simeon and Anna, with carols serving as commentary on the story.



- Then on **January 5**, we'll celebrate **the Epiphany of Our Lord**, sharing in Holy Communion around Christ Jesus the Light of the World, the Light no darkness can overcome. We'll still have our Christmas decorations up on this near end of the Christmas season too— so even though we'll be online, invite your friends to join you in this time of worship!

So why keep the good news to yourselves? We'll have plenty of flyers available in the church narthex to share with your co-workers, neighbors, and friends. Invite them to join you as we joyfully worship God with us in Christ Jesus this festive season!

## "Christmas in Quakertown"

On Saturday night, **Dec. 7 @ 7:30 PM** (prelude music beginning at 7:00 PM), catch "**Christmas in Quakertown**" at First UCC (Park & 4<sup>th</sup> Streets), featuring the Quakertown Band, the Quakertown Community High School Varsity Singers, and the Festival Choir. This concert always features fabulous music, and a cookie reception will follow the concert.



## "Kringle Shoppe" December 6-8

The annual **Kringle Christmas Shoppe**, sponsored by the Haycock Historical Society, will be held this year from **Dec. 6-8** at the **Haycock Community Center** [1014 Old Bethlehem Road]. Everything at the Kringle Christmas Shoppe is the product of local artisans, authors, and specialty crafters, including our Latvian brothers and sisters; and throughout the event, live music is provided by local musicians (including our own Phil Diehl, Pr Dave, and Tom Schnabel from "Waterfront Blue"). Hours of the Kringle Shoppe are **Friday 10:00 AM-7:00 PM, Saturday 10:00 AM-6:00 PM, and Sunday 10:00 AM-4:00 PM**. Invite your friends and come on out!



## Monday Morning Bible Study

Our **Monday Morning Bible Study is back!** Come join us every Monday from **10:00 AM-12:00 NN** via Zoom or Free Conference Call for a lively and engaging study of the coming week's Scripture readings. (To join us via Zoom, go to [zoom.us](https://zoom.us), click "Join a Meeting" at the top right of the page, use meeting ID **370 014 7169**, and if it asks for a password, use **119805** and you should be in. If you're **using your phone**, these dial-in numbers will work to access Zoom: 929.205.6099 or 312.626.6799. After you dial, you'll be asked for the host's code, and you'll type in 370 014 7169, then 119805 and you're in. To use **Free Conference Call [FCC]**, dial 857.232.0157, enter conference code 144261, and you're in.) You don't have to be a biblical "expert" to get a lot out of this study— so come on out and invite your friends to join you!





## “Heavenly Homemade Sale” December 8

Our Social Ministry Team’s annual “**Homemade Heaven**” Sale will be held **Dec. 8 after worship**. There’ll be plenty of cookies, cakes, candies, muffins, breads, and soups made by “little Lutheran ladies (and gentlemen).” Proceeds will support community outreach in and around our congregation. Everyone is welcome to contribute (and purchase) scrumptious yummys. Come and get it!

## St Paul’s Christmas Card Box is Back!

Thanks to our Social Ministry Team, our annual **Christmas Card Box** is available in the Narthex. Save yourself a stamp and bring in your cards **by Dec. 22** for those who worship at St Paul’s, placing your cards in this box for distribution. The cards will be sorted and available by Dec. 24 for pickup in the fellowship hall.



## AHUB Upper Bucks Code Blue News

The **Upper Bucks Code Blue** sheltering ministry of Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks (AHUB) provides emergency shelter for homeless people when nighttime temperatures and/or wind chills reach dangerous levels— in our case, 26 degrees or below— from **Nov. 15 through Apr. 15**. Last winter, we provided such shelter for 55 different guests over 65 nights; and we anticipate that this winter, we’ll be sheltering even more of our neighbors in need at the Masonic Lodge building in downtown Quakertown. But this ministry requires volunteers sharing their time, organizational skills, relational skills, and of course, food and supplies to make this shelter available for folks in need. **We especially need people willing to serve in overnight shifts** (either 8:15 PM-2:00 AM or 2:00-7:00 AM). If you’re interested in helping with the ministry of AHUB, please see Pr Dave.

## Sunday School is Back!

**Sunday School is back at St Paul's!** We’re meeting from 10:15-11:15 AM on the **second and fourth Sundays of each month**. We have room for all students age 4 through fifth grade, with older kids being helpers/leaders— and we have a great group of students ready to welcome you. Spread the word and join us for Sunday School!



## December Monthly Special: Heifer International

Our “Monthly Special” recipient for the month of December is **Heifer International** (also known as **Heifer Project International**), a global nonprofit working to eradicate poverty and hunger through sustainable, values-based holistic community development. Heifer International distributes animals, along with agricultural and value-based training, to families in need around the world as a means of providing self-sufficiency. Recipients must agree to “pass on the gift” by donating animal offspring and sharing the skills and knowledge of animal husbandry and agricultural training with other impoverished families in the community. We’ll receive the “**Noisy Offering**” for this ministry on Dec. 22. Please give as you’re able!



## Supporting Our Ministries

**Thanks for continuing to support our ministries here at St Paul's!** Your tithes and offerings are much needed during this time. We're currently running a \$15,000 deficit for the year, even with keeping our spending pretty restrained— so your offerings are especially needed. **You can financially support our ministries in several ways:** [1] If you're already signed up for **Simply Giving**, you're already taken care of; [2] You can **mail your offerings** to the church; and now [3] You can go to our church website ([www.stpaulsqtown.org](http://www.stpaulsqtown.org)) and make your contributions online, even using a credit or debit card. Whatever way you choose, your contributions help us continue to serve our congregation and community and build upon the good things God's doing through us.

## Congregational Budget Meeting December 1

On **December 1 after worship**, we'll hold our annual **Congregational Budget Meeting** to review and approve our 2022 ministry budget. (Copies of the budget will be available by Nov. 20 for your review prior to the meeting.) If you'd like to attend from afar, go to **zoom.us**, click "Join a Meeting" at the top right of the page, use meeting ID **370 014 7169**, and if it asks for a password, use **119805** and you should be in. If you're **using your phone**, these dial-in numbers will work to access Zoom: 929.205.6099 or 312.626.6799. After you dial, you'll be asked for the host's code, and you'll type in 370 014 7169, then 119805 and you're in. We'll email copies of the budget in advance, as well as have it viewable on screen during the meeting.



## Scouts BSA Troop 007 News

❖ We're so thankful for St Paul's welcome and support. But right now, there's one more thing we really need to continue to survive and hopefully, thrive: **We need more Scouts!** The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. If you know a parent or grandparent of kids from kindergarten to high school, encourage them to visit one of our Scout meetings on Thursday nights, or check us out at [Scouts007.org](http://Scouts007.org). Our Scouts meet **every Thursday evening at 7:00 PM** in the fellowship hall.

In the fall months, our Scouts are planning on doing a trip to Jim Thorpe, train bike ride, a trip to the USS Intrepid Sea and Air Museum, camping, backpacking, ziplining, trailer organization, and a **campout at St Paul's Nov. 9-10**.

❖ We now have a fully chartered **Cub Scouts Pack 007** at St Paul's! Many thanks to Rich and Robin Beaumont, Sharin Babb, and John Hunsberger for their hard work and leadership in bringing this troop together and leading it. Currently we have six Cub Scouts, and we're doing recruiting at our local elementary schools to bring in more. The Cub Pack needs parent participation for activities and camping. They meet **every Wednesday at 7:00 PM at St Paul's**.

### On Going Business:

1. **Vanguard Account Balances:** As of October 31, 2024, \$116,557.96; September 30, 2024, \$118,070.37; August 31, 2024, \$116,472.40. These two older accounts are being transferred into a new brokerage account.

2. **Income statement:** October 31, 2024, expenses over income (\$15,346.68); September 30, 2024, expenses over income (\$15,421.84); August 31, 2024, expenses over income (\$15,864.79).



## Synod and Conference News



- ✦ Our Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod now has a **new bishop!** **Bp Bryan Penman** was commissioned in a grand celebration September 14 at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral. Bp Penman has already been working with our Quakertown Lutheran Cluster in our collaboration discussions, and has said he'll continue to be in close touch with us in our future work.

✦ Our next **Quakertown Lutheran Cluster Collaboration** meeting is coming up **December 5 @ 7:00 PM** at Trinity, Quakertown's Annex Building. We've officially established a Collaboration Task Force comprised of three appointed representatives from each of our cluster congregations (plus an alternate or two); our reps are Pr Dave, Brett Shaw, and Gordon Bryan.

**REVERSE  
ADVENT CALENDAR**

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.  
ON CHRISTMAS EVE DONATE THE CONTENTS TO A  
FOOD BANK.

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni and cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - cranberry sauce
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - can corn
- December 22 - can mixed vegetables
- December 23 - can carrots
- December 24 - can green beans

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### The Hand of God Shall Hold You..."

When someone dies,

you don't get over your grief by **FORGETTING,**



you get through your grief by *remembering.*

- author unknown

One of the great blessings of life in union with Christ is that the risen Christ binds us in holy and eternal communion with all His people who've *died*, enabling us to grieve in the freedom born of knowing that our loved ones are gone from our sight and for a time, but still joined with us in the body of Christ and alive in Him in far more than memory alone. So far in 2024, we've also said farewell (for now) to *Mitsy Foulke, Sue Becknell, Edna Hottensen, Jolly Ekpe, Jodi Ritto, Dick Wimmer, Irma Guinther, Gunars Berzins, Pam*

## Happy Birthday, Friends!

- 12/1 Lincoln Hallman
- 12/2 Paisley Virnelson
- 12/4 Patricia Fulmer
- 12/5 Madison Reiss
- 12/9 Bruce Krogslund
- 12/11 Ruth Ziedonis
- 12/19 Amanda Hunsberger
- 12/21 Bill Bleam
- 12/22 Erik Hansen
- 12/29 Lidie Shaw

happy  
birthday  
i thank God  
for you.



## Like us on Facebook (and Otherwise Online)!

- Our church website: [www.stpaulsqtown.org](http://www.stpaulsqtown.org)
- Our email address: [stpaulsqtown@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsqtown@gmail.com)
- Our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown](https://www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown)
- Our Joyful Noise Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/joyfulnoiseatstpauls](https://www.facebook.com/joyfulnoiseatstpauls)
- For daily Morning and Evening Prayer: [dailyoffice.wordpress.com](http://dailyoffice.wordpress.com)
- For the Daily Lectionary (Bible readings): [www.satucket.com/lectionary](http://www.satucket.com/lectionary)





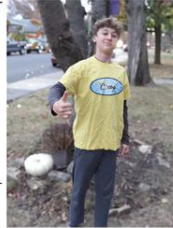
## DRINK COCOA & DO GOOD

**100% of ALL Proceeds go to AHUB our Quakertown Code Blue Homeless Shelter!**



Hi! My name is Caleb; I'm 14 years old and an 8th grader. When I was 7 years old, my family took a trip to Baltimore, MD. It was there I had my first interaction with an individual who was homeless; I was blown away that there were people in this world without homes. On the ride home, my parents told me that there were people in my hometown

where they could stay. I knew I needed to do something to help those without homes. After some brainstorming, I came up with an idea to sell hot cocoa in the winter and my family said they would help me. We started the stand in December of 2018 and thanks to God, the community, my family, and friends – we have raised approximately \$19,000 in total for the shelter! I hope that you will be able to stop over and have some hot cocoa, eat a sweet snack, chat with friends, and enjoy the live music. ALL proceeds will go to the homeless shelter.



Caleb age 7

**Live Music! Hot Cocoa! Baked Items from Local Bakeries and Private Donors!**  
(Including C&C Confections, Nefarious Eats, The Farm Bakery and Events)

**When: Sunday, December 15th  
From 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Where: 207 N. Ambler Street, Quakertown  
Everything \$1.00!!**

**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Hilltown  
Invites You to Visit Our

# Christmas Putz



The Putz (rhyming with *foots*), rooted in the Moravian tradition, is a depiction of the story of Jesus' birth. It is more than a nativity scene. It is the Gospel in miniature form from Mary's annunciation to the visits of the Shepherds and Wise Men to the flight into Egypt to save baby Jesus from King Herod's murderous soldiers. It tells the story of the Nativity through music and small illuminated scenes nestled among moss, rocks, sand, and driftwood.



The Putz will be open for visiting **from Nov. 30 thru Dec. 29, Saturdays 2:00-4:00 p.m. and Sundays 10:00-11:30 a.m.** Free, light refreshments will be served. We will also have a craft for children to make.

**St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

1530 Augsburg Drive, Hilltown, PA 18927

(near Hilltown Pike and Diamond St.)

Web page: <https://splchurch.net/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stpetershilltown>

## Haycock Historical Society's Art & Handwork Sale

# Kringle Christmas Shoppe

**Friday**  
Dec. 6  
10:00 - 7:00

**Saturday**  
Dec. 7  
10:00 - 6:00

**Sunday**  
Dec. 8  
10:00 - 4:00



**Featured Artist:**  
Carolyn Keys  
Fine Jewelry

**Live Music!**

**Food!**

**Raffle Prizes!**

**Over 50 Artists!**

**Ample Parking!**

**Baltic Amber  
Latvian Kiosk!**

**At: Haycock Twp. Community Center**

1014 Old Bethlehem Road, Quakertown, PA 18951  
Visit: [www.kringlechristmasshoppe.org](http://www.kringlechristmasshoppe.org)



# RE:imagined

CHRISTMAS CAROLS LIKE YOU'VE  
NEVER HEARD THEM BEFORE

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: MARY BETH PENJUKE  
ACCOMPANIST: KRISTINE FOSBENNER

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