

The Epistle

The Newsletter of St. Paul's Moravian Church
8505 Heathermore Blvd. Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
Phone: 301-627-4200
www.spmoravian.org spmoravian@gmail.com
Facebook: St. Paul's Moravian Church
Rev. Bill Andrews' e-mail: stpaulspastor@gmail.com
Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 9.30 AM - 2.30PM



December 2018

THE BENEFITS OF ADVENT

Advent is one of those funny words you only hear in church! You're not alone if you wonder what it means or why it matters. For centuries Christians have used the four weeks before Christmas (Advent) as a time for spiritual preparation. We have understood that the "sugar high" of Christmas can't last and will leave us with a "crash" of boredom, emptiness and cynicism. The healthy thing is to build anticipation slowly by deferring gratification and putting our focus on reflection, serving others and prayer. These powerful practices can purge our souls, ground our hearts and still our frantic spirits. Can you see how much more deeply you will appreciate and celebrate Christmas having "kept" Advent?

It isn't easy to "keep" Advent because Christmas is a jealous lover! She expects us to shop, wrap, entertain, and decorate with every waking moment. She distracts us with dazzling displays, awesome opportunities and dizzying dreams.

You must be fierce and determined! You will fight to "keep" Advent because you know in Advent you will find the Christ of Christmas. As you take time to sit quietly, time to read the Bible, time to enjoy creation, time to worship in Church you will "hear" the voice of God. The voice of One who made you and who is Love. Who alone can heal you, feed you, satisfy you. Give your most precious possession (time) to receive God's greatest gift – Jesus Christ!

Have a blessed Advent - and a blessed Christmas!
Pastor Bill

DECK THE HALLS NEEDS YOU!!

You are invited to come out and Deck the Halls with us on December 1st, 2018 at 9am. Please join the Sacristans as we decorate the church for Advent!

Christmas Eve Service Monday, December 24, 7:30

WORSHIP IN DECEMBER!

Make worship part of your Christmas season! Your faith will be inspired and your heart encouraged by the powerful message of Christmas!

- ◆ December 2: Holy Communion –begin the season close to Christ.
- ◆ December 9: Christmas Concert – music from the Choir and soloists will stir your soul and fill your heart with love.
- ◆ December 16: Lovefeast –and special music to bless your body and soul.
- ◆ December 16, 4 PM: Marlton Community Christmas Carol Sing!
- ◆ December 24, 7:30 PM: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service –We look forward to seeing you and your family as we worship the Newborn King together!
- ◆ December 30: Lessons and Carols — a time to meditate on the meaning of the season.

CHRISTMAS EVE

You are invited to experience the joy of Christ's birth at St. Paul's on Christmas Eve. The service is at 7:30 PM and will excite you with the sights, sounds and smells of a Moravian Candlelight Service. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite someone to join you at church - people's hearts are more open and Christmas offers a beautiful message of faith, hope and love. If you are willing to serve as an usher or fire watcher for the service, we could use your help! Contact Larry Sinn to explore ways you can participate.

YOUR PRAYERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Members of the 18 Moravian Provinces all over the globe take a turn to pray for each other 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. St. Paul's prays on the 11th. We share these 24 hours with the Faith, Graceham and Trinity congregations, so we are only responsible for six hours. You can be a part of this important work by signing up for a 20 minute slot. Materials are available to inform and guide your prayers. Sign up after worship soon! God bless you as you pray!

UNITY PRAYER WATCH DECEMBER 11, 2015

COMPLETING YOUR 2018 GIVING

We are grateful for the many faithful members who are very careful to complete their giving by the end of the year. Listed below are the options and timelines set by law for credit in 2018. Contact Marissa to discuss your giving as the year closes.

- Give at one of the remaining worship services of 2018
- Mail your check **postmarked by 12/27/2018**.
- Use your bank's **bill pay system by 12/27/2018**
- Bring your gift to the church office **by 12/30/2018**.

Thank you for making a difference in countless lives in this community and around the world. 2018 giving statements will be emailed or posted in January 2019.

A SEASON FOR GIVING

It's not too late! If you have not made your pledge for 2019, you still have time to submit it.

KIDS CLUB – DECEMBER 14th

God is blessing Kid's Club! Children from the community are coming to this exciting program for students grades K-6 where they hear messages from God's Word, sing, do a craft and even have a snack! You can help make this important outreach ministry a success! You can serve as a staff member, make a financial contribution, but most importantly you can pray for God's continued blessing on Kid's Club.



OPPORTUNITIES

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY Tuesdays, 10:30 AM – 11:45 AM, led by Sister Dorothy Thomas
PRAYER & HEALING SERVICE You are invited to join us as we pray for one another on **December 7**, at 7:30 PM
MEN'S GROUP will meet December 17, at 6 PM.
MEN'S BREAKFAST All men are invited to attend on Saturday, **December 15** at 8:00 AM. Join us at the Marlboro Grill in the town of Upper Marlboro.

MORAVIAN STARS

It is a Moravian tradition to light our homes with stars during the Advent season. We offer 21" and 12" illuminated **Moravian Stars**, for a donation of \$25 and \$20, respectively. You may purchase stars after worship or through the church office. These stars make excellent gifts!



2019 MORAVIAN DAILY TEXTS



The Daily Texts is available in journal (\$16), large print (\$12) and paperback (\$15) editions. They will be available on the table in the Narthex after worship beginning December 2. They make great Christmas gifts!

MARLTON COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROL SING!

Something new for this Christmas season is a special opportunity to sing the carols and songs of the season we love so much! On Sunday, December 16 at 4:00 PM our doors will be open to the entire community to enjoy some of the best-loved music of the season. Sacred carols will be combined with some popular tunes to help us open our hearts to the spirit of Christmas. Refreshments will be served. You are invited to come and sing, and to invite someone to join you. For more information contact Diane or Bob Rausch.

MARLBORO CHURCHES FOOD BANK

Please bring your food donations to church with you on Sunday, December 2nd. The November statistics were 141 bags given out to 46 families. This included 3 new families.

Thank you for all your donations!!

For December our volunteer schedule is:

Truck Unloading will be **Wednesday, December 5th at 1 PM**

Thursday, December 6th, 7 PM set up food at Trinity Episcopal

Friday, December 7th, 8 AM bag food at Trinity Episcopal – volunteers are especially needed for the Friday morning bagging

Saturday, December 8th, 7 AM distribute food at Trinity Episcopal

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE FOOD TRUCK UNLOADING: We are trying something new with the food truck delivery and unloading. Volunteers will gather at 1 pm to move food inside the hall and produce into the Clagett building at Trinity Church. Please help if you can.

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE ANDREWS

On behalf of Gail and I please accept our heartfelt wishes for a truly Merry Christmas to you and yours. We are blessed to serve a wonderful congregation and pray that 2019 will be filled with blessings for the entire St. Paul's family! Pastor Bill.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA DONATION FORM

Christmas Poinsettias add such beauty to the Sanctuary for our Christmas services. They are a visual presentation of the Christmas story. You are invited to support this project by donating towards the cost of the plants. Your gift of any amount will help others worship the Savior. Envelopes are available at the Opportunity Table.



PASTOR'S BIBLE CHALLENGE

Most Christians I know wish they knew the Bible better. For many there is a spiritual hunger, an inner thirst to know God more deeply through His Word. There are many who have followed Jesus for decades who have never read the Bible “cover to cover” and wish they could.

Your opportunity is here! Join the Pastor's Bible Challenge for 2019. Beginning January 1, we will consistently and systematically read the Bible throughout the year.

There are several ways you can participate:

- **Cover to Cover** Join Pastor Bill in reading the entire Bible over the course of 2019. Go to Biblegateway.com to find a selection of plans to help you.
- **Chapter a Day** Start with the Gospel of Matthew and read through the New Testament one or two chapters each day.
- **Verse a Day** - Use the Moravian Daily Text (printed or online) and read one or two verses each day.

Each quarter we will check in and monitor our progress. Sign up at the Opportunity Table or email Pastor Bill.

Let 2019 be the year you take a step forward and go deeper with the Word of God.



2019 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Offering Envelopes for 2019 will be ready for YOU to pick up, Sunday December 9th, 2018 (on the table in the narthex). Envelopes are prepared for all members and regular attendees. If you have not yet made a commitment for 2019 and would like to, forms are available on the narthex table. Let's all do our part to serve the LORD. Thank you!

SPECIAL OFFERING FOR NO ROOM AT THE INN

Your contribution to the “No Room at the Inn” offering will help with this important ministry of the Moravian Church. St. Paul’s is happy to give you the opportunity to make a special offering to support Moravian Open Door’s ministry. Please give as you are able and make your check payable to St. Paul’s Moravian Church, earmarked “No Room at the Inn.” The offering will be received at the Christmas Eve service.

CHILDREN’S CENTER

Since December has come, we are starting to get into the festive spirit of celebrating Jesus’ birth and all that he has done for us throughout his life. The children have been practicing for the annual Christmas Program for family and friends. Please join us on Wednesday, December 12. Doors open at 6:30 pm and the show starts at 7:00pm. We are doing something a little different this year where the school age children are producing the program through their special interest club. Each club has contributed to the program in some way. For example, the cooking club will bake cookies for the night of the play and the drama club created some of the choreography. Mrs. Bradford and Ms. Jasmine are doing a tremendous job spearheading the school age portion of the Christmas program.

The Pre-K children have been continuing their learning about going green, taking care of their environment, and reducing waste. They are also practicing songs for the Christmas program and hope to showcase their talents in front of everyone. Mrs. Antoine, Ms. May, and Mrs. Jasmine have been doing an excellent job working with them daily with all that is happening in this busy season. We thank them for their knowledge, experience, and most importantly loving grace they show to the children.

In keeping with tradition, Jeff Haynie has again sponsored for us to be a part of the rotary lights of kindness. This is an opportunity for us to decorate a Christmas tree and raise money if we win. Please vote for us through the following: <http://www.rotarylighsofkindness.org/> or go to Homestead Gardens at 743 W Central Ave, Davidsonville, MD 21035. Each vote costs \$1.

Additionally, I would like to express my deepest thanks to all who have donated to our furniture fundraiser and for participating in the Claire’s Gourmet fundraiser. The orders for Claire’s will arrive by December 13. In child care most, of our money comes from tuition only and any other amounts help us reach our mission of providing a safe place for children where they can learn about and grow a relationship with God.

We have openings for children ages 2-5 in our Pre-K program. If you know anyone who wants high quality childcare, have them call us at 301-627-4202 for a tour. More information can be found on our website at stpaulsccc.org.

{Continued on bottom of previous page.}

“In that day you will say: “Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.” - Isaiah 12:4

Mr. Christopher Antoine, Director

FINANCIAL *Peace*
UNIVERSITY

IT'S TIME
TO TAKE

Financial

PEACE!

Join the millions who
never worry about money!

Dave Ramsey and his team of financial experts will
teach you how to beat debt and build wealth with the
most powerful tool there is . . . your income.

More Info

Come join the us on **January 12, 2019 at 10:00am at St. Paul's Moravian Church** as we kick off our **Financial Peace University** group! Together we will learn how to take control over our finances through budgeting, saving, spending, and getting out of debt. The 9 week workshop, annual membership to Financial Peace University, annual membership to the EveryDollar budgeting app, and tons of other resources is \$109 per household. Walk this journey with us to financial freedom.

For more information please contact John and Joy-Lynn Ruiz at johnandjoylynn@gmail.com