

St. Paul's Epistle

"St. Paul's Lutheran Church glorifies God by connecting people to Jesus through teaching, serving, caring, & telling!"

St. Paul's Lutheran Church 1700 Carridale Street SW Decatur AL 35601 256.353.8759 www.StPaulsDec.com

Friends in Christ,

Four hundred years ago our pilgrim forefathers came to our nation's shores. And many bowed their knee to God, but some did not. Many wanted this country founded on Christian principles, though some did not.

Almost two-hundred and fifty years ago when The Declaration of Independence was written, it was a revolutionary document, in more than one way. Not only did it declare that we were separate from England, but it was an idealistic document, for it spoke of all people being created equal, and of each having certain inalienable human rights.

Congress adopted The Declaration that a new nation might find greatness in the world. Then they strove to take the idealism of The Declaration of Independence and put it into reality, and that was not so easy.

Once during a deadlock, tradition says that Benjamin Franklin stood and said, "Gentlemen, let us pause and pray. Let us call upon the Almighty God and ask for His help." They did that, and continued to pray, and the delegates brought forth a Constitution truly glorious in purpose, in freedom, and in hope for all people. And we give thanks for what God accomplished through His people two and a half centuries ago, and we remember all those since who have given their lives to preserve the freedoms we cherish.

Though today, in our time, we also recognize that America is really two nations in one. It is, in a sense, a nation within a nation. One is spiritual, wanting to live by the commandments and principles of God. The other is sensual, sex-oriented, materialistic, violent, wanting to live by force, by its own cunning and skill.

Since the beginning, there has been a spiritual and moral voice in our nation. The Church (that is the true Church, committed to the infallible Word of God) has spoken the Lord's Word to our leaders and throughout society to all people of our land. But I am aware that we as Christians, members of Christ's Church, don't always do the right thing; we are not always as involved as God expects us to be.

And indeed, God is dealing with our nation. We may even ask, or consider, "How near is God to removing His hand of favor from our country?" Truly, the people of our land must turn from their blatant sins and look in faith to Christ who died to bring us forgiveness. Risen from the dead, Jesus is our only Hope.

There is a spiritual move in our nation today. It may not be big enough to be called a "revival" in our land, but God is stirring the hearts of people. So the real question is, are we praying that we would be a part of it? Are we praying that God would use us during these uncertain times to reach others and point them to Christ?

Can a nation come back to God? The answer, of course, is yes. As long as there's a God, people can come back to Him. All one needs to do is repent—that is, turn from sin and look in faith to Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose from the grave.

So at this time, as a fellow member of Christ's Church, please pray with me:

"Heavenly Father, we come to you in the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, whose we are and whom we are called to serve. Lord, we love our nation.

We pray that the Spirit of God would stir up the consciences and the hearts of our people.

Lord, let spiritual awakening come to our land. Rouse sleeping people. Enter hearts by Your Word.

Use us each to share the Word of Christ. Grant newness of life, and faith that is vibrant.

Let the lost look to Christ for salvation, and let the lapsing live with firm commitment to You.

In Jesus Name we pray. Amen."

In Christ our Lord,

Pastor Aaron Kretzschmar

July 2023

8:15am Traditional Worship
In-Church & Facebook Live
9:30am Sunday School all ages
10:00am WZDK 98.5 FM Radio
10:45am CrossLife in the ARC

Holy Communion
July 2 & 16

Staffed Nursery 8am until noon

Bible Study

Adult Bible Study

Heroes of the Bible

Sundays 9:30am

Pastor's Bible Study 9:45am

Book of Matthew Bible Study

Wednesdays 10:30

Book of Exodus Bible Study

Wednesdays 6:15pm

Looking Ahead

Elder's porch visits

July 9

Movie night

July 13

CELEBRATING 125th Anniversary

125
YEARS

Homecoming

Celebration

October 8

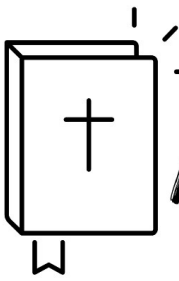
2023 Theme

"Through the years,
the Lord is faithful!"

*For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures
forever, and his faithfulness
to all generations.*

Psalms 100:5





Notes from Miss Skylar



St. Paul's Family,

"In the same way, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." - Matthew 5:16 NIV

We had such an amazing time shining Jesus' Light at Stellar VBS last month! We averaged over 80 children the entire week getting exposed to the all the different Bible Lessons and Bible Points! All the children enjoyed a friendly competition with one another to see which group could bring the most offering to go towards of our 2023 VBS Mission Offering, Because International's the Shoe That Grows! The winning group got to spray me with silly string at the very end of our VBS on Friday, June 23rd!

The children weren't the only ones having a blast at Stellar VBS, all our amazing and wonderful volunteers did as well! I want to extend a huge THANK YOU to all of the volunteers who made our 2023 Stellar VBS a success this year! And hope you're able to return next year to volunteer! We will have a volunteer thank you lunch on Sunday, July 9th, so please mark your calendars to join us if you volunteered this year for VBS! At this lunch there will be an opportunity to share what you feel went well, what can be improved on, and just any other ideas for our 2024 VBS!



Looking ahead to next Summer! I'm excited to announce that for our 2024 VBS we will be heading under the sea with Group's SCUBA VBS! Be sure to grab your snorkel and swim gear and plan to attend and volunteer next summer with us!

God's Blessings,
Skylar Smith, DCE

Look for more pictures from our amazing STELLAR VBS!



Volunteer Thank you Lunch

Sunday, July 9th, at 12pm
in the Fellowship Room

Thank You to all the volunteers!



Vacation Bible School

THE ANCHOR

St. Paul's Young Adults

Saturday, July 15th | 6:30pm

To receive information and reminders text "@yaanchor" to 81010

Enduring Faith

July Sunday School Lessons

7/2 - All Together

7/9 - The Faith-Full Judge: Ruth

7/16 - The Chosen King: Saul Becomes King

7/23 - The Fearless Shepherd: David and Goliath

7/30 - The Faith-Full Friend: David and Jonathan

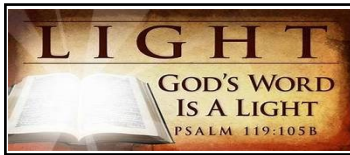
Bible Reading Challenge

July - The Hand of God

Join our 2023 Bible Reading Challenge! These daily readings look at verses that focus on a different theme every month. These verses may only take a few seconds to read, but we encourage you to read them multiple times throughout the day and spend time in prayer with God over the verses. We also encourage you, if you have the time, to READ MORE! These verses are a starting point!

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Day 1: Isaiah 66:2 | Day 17: Psalm 138:7 |
| Day 2: Psalm 19:1 | Day 18: Psalm 31:15 |
| Day 3: Psalm 95:4-5 | Day 19: Psalm 98:1 |
| Day 4: Isaiah 48:13 | Day 20: Isaiah 43:13 |
| Day 5: Job 12:10 | Day 21: Psalm 121:5 |
| Day 6: Job 36:32 | Day 22: Isaiah 41:1 |
| Day 7: Isaiah 40:12 | Day 23: Nehemiah 1:10 |
| Day 8: Isaiah 41:19-20 | Day 24: Isaiah 41:10,13 |
| Day 9: Psalm 145:16 | Day 25: Psalm 16:8 |
| Day 10: Habakkuk 3:4 | Day 26: Psalm 18:35 |
| Day 11: 1 Chronicles 29:12 | Day 27: Psalm 89:21 |
| Day 12: Psalm 118:15-16 | Day 28: Isaiah 42:6 |
| Day 13: Daniel 4:35 | Day 29: John 10:29 |
| Day 14: Psalm 144:7-8 | Day 30: Psalm 138:10 |
| Day 15: Isaiah 64:8 | Day 31: 1 Peter 5:6 |
| Day 16: Jeremiah 18:6 | |

You can pick up a monthly bookmark at church, like our Church Facebook page to get the daily reading (and be sure to Like and Share the reading for the day so that your friends can see them too!), or text "@stpaulsbrc" to 81010 to get text message reminders.



Here are several studies along with our 2023 Bible Reading Challenge on page 2 to help us be in His Word and in His light!

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

10:30-11:30 am in Room 316

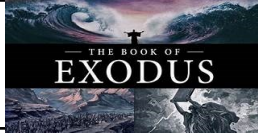
Hope to see you there! If you have any questions, please contact Skylar!

The Gospel of Matthew



Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Wednesday nights beginning at 6:15 pm in Room 317. Please join us!



Sunday Morning Bible Study

9:30 am Room 317

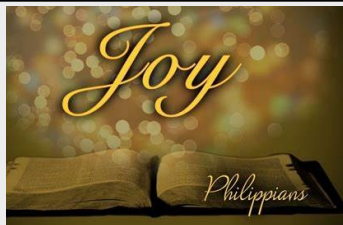
Join us for a interesting and lively discussions



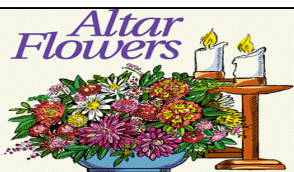
Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study – Philippians: Embracing Joy

Do you need a shot of joy or a boost of holy optimism in your life? If so, you will be encouraged by Paul's emotional words to the Philippians.

Even though the apostle was writing from a jail cell, he could still speak of the joy, purpose, and belonging that he had found in Christ. In this short letter, he reveals how you can likewise fix your eyes on Jesus in spite of your circumstances and know that you can do all things through Christ because the tomb is empty! Please join Pastor Kretzschmar on Sunday mornings starting at 9:45 am in the Fellowship Room.



Adult Confirmation Class
Wednesdays at 8pm
In person and by Zoom
Talk to Pastor for more info



The Flower Calendar for 2023 is up in the breezeway. Sign up early for your special day!

Save the Date!
CELEBRATING
125
YEARS

St Paul's Lutheran Church
Celebrating 125 Years
Sunday, October 8, 2023

St Paul's Quilters meet in Room 317 each Wednesday at 10am. Join us! For more information contact Helga Daniel.



Meet us in the Parlor every Thursday at 11am. Bring a friend!

CELEBRATING
125
YEARS

St. Paul's is Celebrating its
125th Anniversary
October 8, 2023

Memories, Memories

Do you have a favorite memory of your time at St. Paul's?

Do you have favorite memories of your time at the Sherman Street church?

The Anniversary History Committee is collecting memories for the 125th Anniversary and want to include yours!

We would like to preserve these memories for the future. If you have memories that you are willing to share, please send them to Beth Hornish at emhornish@gmail.com or put them into my mailbox at the church. We will collect them and you will be able to see everyone's memories at the Anniversary celebration on October 8, 2023. Thank you for sharing!

Beth Hornish

Memories
are special moments
that tell our
Story

CPR

TRAINING CPR class signup

We are working on getting a FREE class to learn CPR conducted by the Decatur Fire Department at the Flint Creek training facility. Dates have not been determined yet, but we are thinking it will be in July and August depending on the level of interest. If you are interested, please sign up below and you will be contacted with details and preferred dates.

Phone Number: _____

Name: _____

Preferred month (July/Aug)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
2 Pastor out-Gary Nagy preaching 8:15am Traditional Worship & FBL† 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship† 5:00pm HS Youth Night	3 7:00am KTT Summer Program (W, Th,F) 7:00am PS Ext Care (M,W,Th,F) 8:45am Preschool (M,W,Th) 10:00am LWML Meeting (mingle 9:30-10:00)	4 Independence Day Campus Closed	5 10:00am KTT Chapel 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Adult Bible study 7:15pm Praise band	6 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 9:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00pm staff lunch	7	8 2:00pm KTT "Be U" event
9 8:15am Traditional Worship & FBL 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 12:00pm VBS Thank You Lunch 1:00pm Bldg use 1-7pm 1:30pm Porch Visits by Elders	10 7:00am KTT Summer Program (M-F) 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th)	11 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 9:30am Staff meeting 10:30am 125th Anniversary Mtg 6:00pm Education meeting 7:00pm Vestry meeting	12 10:00am KTT Chapel 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Adult Bible study 7:15pm Praise band	13 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 9:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00pm staff lunch 6:00pm Movie Night	14	15 Newsletter deadline 6:30pm Young Adult Event
16 8:15am Traditional Worship & FBL† 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship† 5:00pm HS Youth Night	17 7:00am KTT Summer Program (M-F) 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th)	18 <i>Pastor out this week</i> 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 6:00pm Preschool Board meeting 7:30pm Fellowship board meeting	19 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Adult Bible study 7:15pm Praise band	20 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 9:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00pm staff lunch	21	22
23 Pastor out-Mike Widmar preaching 8:15am Traditional Worship & FBL 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship	24 7:00am KTT Summer Program (M-F) 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th)	25 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 9:30am Staff meeting 6:30pm Elders meeting	26 10:00am KTT Chapel 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Adult Bible study 7:15pm Praise band	27 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 9:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00pm staff lunch	28	29
30 8:15am Traditional Worship & FBL 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship	31 7:00am KTT Summer Program (M-F) 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th)	1 August 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 9:30am Staff meeting 12:00pm Choir rehearsal	2 10:00am KTT Chapel 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Adult Bible study 7:15pm Praise band	3 1st day of school 8:30 9:30 11AM Exercise Class 9:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00pm staff lunch	4	5



- July 1 Asher Nicholson
- July 2 Sue Bosco
- July 4 Bonnie Mann
- July 4 Nolan Holway-Jones
- July 5 Katherine Plunkett
- July 6 Bailey Bauer
- July 6 Celia Gilchrist
- July 6 Randy Harville
- July 6 Amber Parson
- July 10 Dale Carlson
- July 10 Jaida Terry
- July 11 Bruce Burch
- July 11 Gavin Cevallos
- July 12 Shari Jones
- July 13 Rick Sautter
- July 13 Ron Neuendorf
- July 16 Scott Pitts
- July 16 Karby Schmelter
- July 17 Heather Reardon
- July 21 Rick Morgan
- July 21 Craig Baker

- July 22 Leesa Pittman
- July 17 Heidi Holder
- July 18 Meghan Carroll
- July 19 Mary Terry
- July 20 Joyce Weiland
- July 23 Charlene Lechner
- July 23 Sarah Mitchell
- July 24 Cindy Hamilton
- July 24 Rich Maschke
- July 25 Peggy Kauffman
- July 25 Brianna Staudt
- July 26 Brigitte Gust
- July 28 Wanda Parrotta
- July 29 Linda Armentrout
- July 29 Nicole Ringers



- July 6 Cynthia & Dallas Southers
- July 9 Michael & Nicole Ringers
- July 9 Scott & Diane Pitts
- July 9 Jimmy & Carol Mueller
- July 10 Jordan & Vladi Herrarte
- July 10 Jeff & Maribeth Morgan
- July 10 Joceyln & Brian Mitchell
- July 12 Mark & Val Blaske
- July 13 Craig & Celia Faller
- July 16 Cindy & Ken Hamilton
- July 17 Raymond & Heather Asher
- July 19 Tim & April Nave
- July 19 Mike & Michelle Parson
- July 19 T.J. & Wanda Parrota
- July 20 Lana & Joel McCay
- July 22 Meghan & Blake Carroll



Join us Thursday, July 13 at 6pm for FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT.



God's Blessings on your Special Day!

Serving the Lord in Worship this Month at St. Paul's

	July 2	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30
Elders	8:15am Bill Darwin	Tim Nave	Joseph Woodbury	Mickey Whiteside	Tim Nave
Ushers	8:15am Jim Disher Ken Hamilton Mickey Whiteside Mike Widmar	Rick Daniel Jack Blaske Tim Nave Oliver Nave	Mike Ater Bob Seibert	Graham Peebles James Thrasher Michael Kimmett Mathew Kimmett	Jim Disher Ken Hamilton Mickey Whiteside Mike Widmar
Acolytes	8:15am Owen	Emma	Katelyn	Owen	Emma
A/V Techs	8:15am Rich Maschke	Bob Sullivant	Rick Maschke	Bob Sullivant	Rich Maschke
Readers	8:15am Jeff Pittman	Rhonda Reece	Gary Nagy	Luke Frasher	Del Davis
Sanctuary Flowers	Campbells	Open	Open	Open	Open

Altar Guild for July: Melinda Baker and Melanie McNa

Counters for July: Patrick Helpingstine and Rhonda Reece

Elders	10:45am Tim Herfurth	Gary Nagy	Ron Fritze	Roy Weiland	Tim Herfurth
Host families	0:45am McRae family	Morgan family	Atkins family	Ballentine family	Burrell family
A/V Techs	10:45am Rick & Carol Morgan	James Gilchrist	Mike Ringers	Tim Herfurth	Tim Herfurth



Outreach Project

Thank you to everyone who contributes and prays for the visitors to our Blessing Box!

Please help to keep the Blessing Box stocked by placing non-perishable items in the Blessing Box or in the collection box under the Portico at the Sanctuary entrance.



2023 Year-to-Date Average Attendance

In-church attendees 121
Facebook sign-ins 14



Current Loan

Balance: **\$232,400**

Financial Plan Activity thru May 31, 2023

YTD FirstFruits Giving: **\$ 191,194** PLAN: **\$187,500**

YTD Total Expenses: **- \$ 185,447** PLAN: **\$204,605**

Plan Activity thru May

THANKS TO ALL for faithful giving in-person and online.

Those giving by mail are GREATLY ENCOURAGED to give online;

Sending checks in the mail is the least safe way to donate.

Currently, 35% of our Givers give safely online; to join them,

- go to the [website](#),
- download the Mobile app,
- snap the QR code, or
- contact the Church Office for a paper authorization form.

Online Giving is greatly encouraged!



VANCO



Secure Giving at www.StPaulsDec.com



Vanco Mobile app on [Google Play](#) or in the [App Store](#)

Are YOU Receiving CALLS from St PAUL's?



You will now see calls from the number **(855) 248-7295**

Be sure to "create a new contact" with the **(855) 248-7295** number and name it "**St Paul's Calls**" or something you will recognize!

--- EVERYONE ---

Customize your Communication Preferences by clicking on:

<https://stpaulsdec.360members.com/communications/access-preferences>



The Elders will focus on calling all our members who haven't been at worship recently with the goals of:

- Letting members know that we care
- Finding out how they are doing
- Gathering prayer requests
- Letting the members know about the activities going on at St. Paul's
- Encouraging members in the life of the church (worship, Bible study, fellowship, service, caring for others)
- Reaching out to the shut-ins with a devotion & communion.

Since making contact with many of our members is difficult, Pastor and the Elders will be making "porch visits" to our inactive members sharing our goals with them. The Elders will be working with Pastor and the committee planning for the celebration of SPLC's 125th anniversary.

St Paul's Lutheran Preschool VBS 2023



For more info and pictures of activities, please visit www.facebook.com/StPaulsDec.Preschool

CELEBRATING
125
YEARS

St. Paul's is Celebrating its
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October 8, 2023

In preparation, Ron Fritze and Beth Hornish are leading us through our history in preparation for this grand celebration. Anyone wishing to participate in its planning may contact Craig Baker, Congregation President!

A Welcome Break for Traveling Volunteers St Paul's Bed and Breakfast Ministry

Following the devastating Category 5 hurricane that ravaged the New Orleans area in August of 2005, St Paul's embarked on one of its largest undertakings in its 125 years of existence. This effort was directed at helping residents of New Orleans affected by this terrible storm. Several volunteer work groups from St Paul's made the journey to New Orleans 9th Ward. The groups included both adults and youth. The volunteer's work included clearing storm debris and stripping contaminated wood from flooded homes. Prayer sessions with the hurricane victims were also a huge part of this mission. In addition to the volunteer work groups that traveled to New Orleans, St Paul's members also participated in the effort by collecting food, water and supplies that were transported to Camp Restore, the Lutheran hurricane relief headquarters located in New Orleans. It was a fantastic effort by all the St Paul's members.

Our largest group was from Asland University. Because they were a youth group of 35, our church decided to feed them a big breakfast that included casseroles and bacon. Their comment was they couldn't believe someone would do all of this for them. Another youth group stayed for 8:30 service Sunday morning and sang for worshippers.

All the groups have shown respect for our facilities and have appreciated the hospitality.

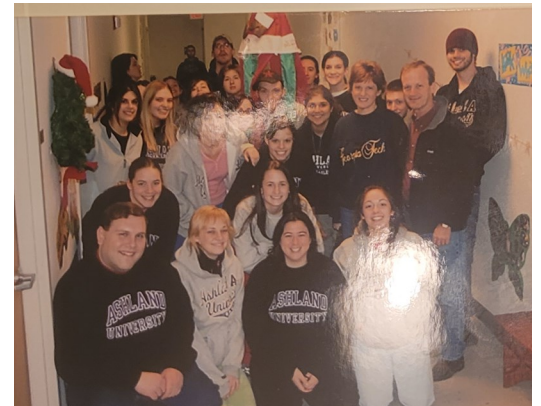
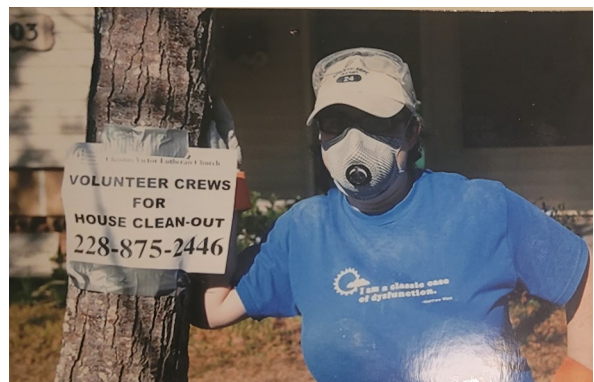
Lutheran Churches from many Northern states were also sending groups to help. Our church members were touched by the willingness of fellow Christians who, though they lived so far away, were willing to take time from work, school and responsibilities to make the long journey to serve their fellow man. Jane Burrell, one of our church members, suggested that we set up a Bed and Breakfast ministry to help offset the expenses incurred by these distant traveling groups. The B & B ministry would serve as a mid-way overnight stop for the work teams traveling from Northern churches to the New Orleans area.

Teams were assembled to facilitate the work necessary to run the Bed and Breakfast ministry. These teams included: Greeter Team, Set-Up Team, Breakfast Team, Clean Up Team and Laundry Team. The Bed & Breakfast Ministry team members had to work closely with the other groups using the church facilities such as our Preschool and Boys and Girls Club to ensure the safety and security of all involved. This required much coordination, special arrangements and new procedures.

The Bed & Breakfast Ministry operated for approximately two years providing an overnight stay, hot shower and breakfast for many volunteer work groups, both for the trip to New Orleans and for the return trip home. When the relief effort in New Orleans ended, the B & B Ministry transitioned to provide lodging and meals for the Bike & Build organization. This organization coordinates college age volunteers that travel cross country from the East Coast to the West Coast via bicycle to raise funds and awareness for the Habitat for Humanity Charity. The young people from Bike & Build utilized the B & B Ministry for approximately ten years. They were not only an inspiration for our members, but also a pleasure to host. In addition to raising funds for the charity, the volunteers would also participate in the construction of habitat homes in the area. They were also kind enough to host bike safety workshops for our Boys and Girls Club members.

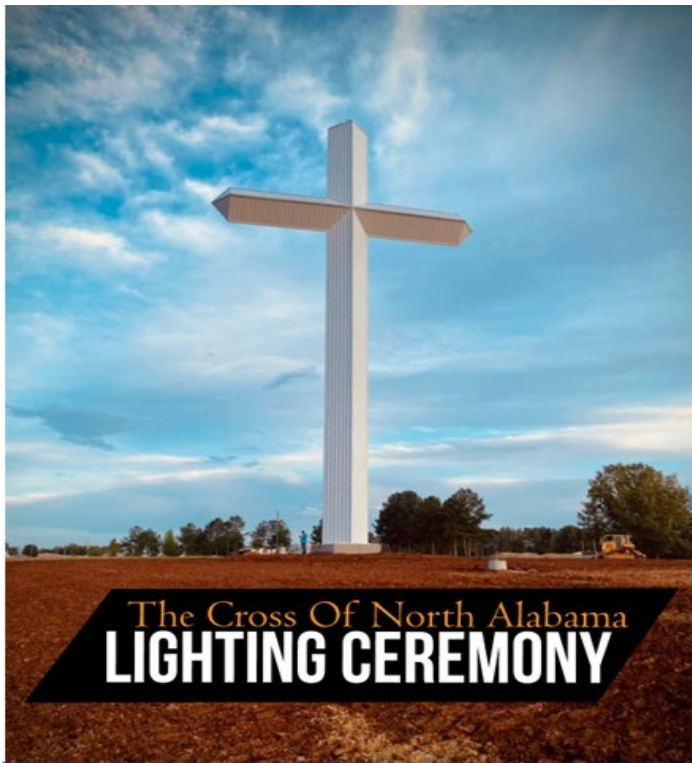
The Bed & Breakfast Ministry was much needed, much appreciated and hugely successful. The ministry provided housing and meals for almost 1,000 volunteers traveling to the coast or cross country. It was a great effort by the members of St Paul's and was most certainly a blessing to not only the travelers it served, but also for our team members.

Jim Forthman and Penny Peoples



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
1700 Carridale St SW
Decatur AL 35601

www.StPaulsDec.com
www.Facebook.com/StPaulsDec



Cross of North Alabama – Phase II Update to St. Paul's

- Pay off Phase I debt & continue fundraising
- Approve Landscaping Concept for Cross Site – placement of interactive prayer stations, family picnic area w/ pavilion, trees, walkways, parking, benches and markers
- Provide utilities to the Cross Site – Power, fiber and water installation has begun
- Provide safe access from Hwy 67
- Complete landscaping construction

**Please attend twilight lighting ceremony on
Sat August 5th at Nature's Trail Church**

- Pray for successful completion and that the Cross glorifies Christ and honors our Father.
- Consider a contribution to support the erection of the Cross.
 - Donations can be made electronically at www.thecrossofnorthalabama.com at no cost using JEFFY or by mailing check to Cross of North Alabama, 1408 Shoal Creek Rd, Decatur, AL 35603
 - Questions: See **Tommy Livingston** or **Craig Baker**