



The Epistle

**The Monthly Parish Visitor of:
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Tampa, Florida**

**DECEMBER 2016
Volume 61
Number 12**



**God's mission for St. Paul Lutheran Church is
to witness God's love and our faith in the
Resurrected Christ.**



The Gift of Love That Breaks the Breaking

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet ...Matthew 1:22

We sing in Advent, "Come thou long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free". The birth of the Anointed One was long expected among devout people. Scripture is clear about the promise, from Moses through Elijah, Isaiah and the prophets.

Ezekiel, at the time of Israel's exile in Babylon, reports the Word of God, saying "I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken." (Ezekiel 34:23-24 NRSVA)

David had led a united Israel more than 500 years earlier. The kingdom divided in two over political intrigue and economic power grabs. Religion was bent to service those in charge. First the Assyrians overran the northern kingdom Israel, then the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom Judea. Ezekiel sat in exile, dreaming of the day of restoration when the children of Abraham would be made whole and healed of their sins – both the personal disregard of the neighbor and the public disobedience of God's Word. The prophets testify from generation to generation that though the leaders and people alike stray from the path of God, God will seek them out and restore them in love, forgiveness and new vitality.

The desire for the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed, was deep and profound. He would be devout, militant toward Israel's enemies, reinvigorating. Yet none saw him taking up the cross as the tool to break sin, oppression and injustice. To break the broken is an interesting metaphor, isn't it? Injustice is broken society. Oppression is broken authority. Sin is broken relationships. Jesus breaks the brokenness in our hearts, in our lives, and in our world. And he does it for everyone who so welcomes such "breaking".

This breaking of that which is broken in us and creation is what the New Testament means when it says God loves us in Christ. Christ does not leave us in our brokenness. He breaks that which breaks us.

Matthew understands that we are imprisoned in our sinfulness. He writes that the angel of God tells Joseph that "She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21 NRSVA) Matthew focuses his gospel on the teachings of Jesus, providing a description of the church's life as the very body of Christ in the world.

Whether we've longed for him for years or just recently come to desire his appearance, Jesus enters into our lives through the door of forgiveness that restores relationships in community. He is born in our hearts, in our minds and in our wills. This Christ child overcomes whatever separates us from God and one another and creation. He heals us with love, restores our hope, and gives purpose to lives.

Truly, there is no greater gift than the one we celebrate at Christmas.

Join us Christmas Eve at 8:30 pm at Faith Lutheran Church and at 10:30 pm at St. Paul Lutheran Church. On Christmas Day, Sunday this year, there will be one joint Holy Eucharist at 10:30 am at St. Paul.

Let's all welcome the Christ child with great joy and thanksgiving!

Grace and Peace,
Pr Russell Meyer

New Worship Time

Beginning on Christmas Day, St. Paul will **begin worship at 10:30 am regularly on Sunday mornings**. The Service of Holy Communion will continue to be at 10:30 am in 2017.

The Church Council and Pastor Meyer see the new worship hour as a way to increase fellowship with visitors and families with young children after church before the dinner hour strikes. Pastor Meyer will also be offering a sermon discussion forum, beginning early in 2017.



St. Paul Lutheran Church will be **90 years old on January 15, 2017**. Mark the date for a parish-wide celebration. An anniversary committee is being formed by Tina Fritz (President) and Ann Delach (Vice-President). Contact them to assist in the plans. As the Mother Church of Evangelical Lutheranism in Tampa, we have much to give thanks for. Bishop Robert Schaefer will be with us. Friends and family from throughout our history will be invited to a grand luncheon.

We're building a **Pray Ground!** Thanks for supporting the concept of creating a children's space in the sanctuary in front of the Cry Room. A children's table and chairs will replace some of the pews as a place for children to color their Sunday Gospel Bulletin and be more comfortable in church. We think it will enhance worship for parents, children and others seating nearby.





Advent – the season of waiting, watching and wondering. I know it's a great time of year, but for those who know me, this does not really describe my personality. There is so much to DO! Presents to purchase and trees to decorate, yet we are reminded that what really matters is realigning ourselves to God. We are also aligning ourselves to St. Paul at this time. How do we fit in, what are we called to do with our worship lives in 2017. If there are areas you would like to get more involved in, talk to Pr. Meyer or any member of council. Fill out the Time and Talent sheet. Get involved, it is very rewarding,

This is also budget time. As you know, we have a deficit to make up, and I know we will. But we are asking you to pledge, If you have never done so before, now if the time. If you pledged in the past, but not lately, pledge again. If you always pledge, perhaps you can increase your pledge. This is a way you can support your church, and with your generous giving we can do more, and be more. You can send in the form or email the office with your pledge number. The budget committee is in the process of making the final budget and with your help we can have another successful year.

Lastly – what about moving our worship service to 10:30? We hope that moving the service time back a half hour will allow for greater fellowship opportunities. Stay after and discuss the sermon with Pastor Meyer and others. Have coffee and cookies and get to know one another. Let us move together as a stronger body in 2017. Have a Happy Christmas!

Respectfully submitted
Tina Fritz
Council President



St. Lucia Sunday

Saint Lucia's Day is December 13th each year and begins the Christmas season in Sweden.

Our St. Paul **Santa Lucia Sunday** will be **Sunday, December 11th**. Come share in this lovely Swedish tradition – a “Festival of Lights” when the oldest girl in each family awakens early and dresses in a white robe and red sash. She wears a crown of candles on her head, serves her family coffee, sweet rolls and cookies, and sings the old Sicilian melody “Sancta Lucia”.

We'll have our very own Saint Lucia and Star Boy who will bring in the candlelight, and we'll sing the beautiful melody.

Invite a friend to church December 11th to experience our St. Lucia celebration! And...be sure to stay after the service for coffee, sweet rolls and Swedish cookies.



NEW PARISH INSTITUTE

Invites you to join us. . .



*English Folk Carols,
Now and Then*

*Miles Cameron
Classical Pianist*

Sunday, December 11, 4:00 PM

Note date change!

*New Parish Institute
St. Paul Lutheran Church*



***The God Who Comes to Live With Us:
A Midweek Series for Advent***

Please plan on attending the mid-week
New Parish Tampa Advent services!

DINNER*/SERVICE

Wednesday, Dec 7	6:00*/7:00 PM	Faith
Wednesday, Dec 14	6:00*/7:00 PM	St. Paul
Wednesday, Dec 21	6:00*/7:00 PM	Faith

Suppers will begin at 6:00pm with Service at 7:00pm. Faith will be serving Soup and Pastor suggested we plan on having Ethnic meals for our days. Everyone bring a favorite dish they enjoy during the holidays.



PLEASE JOIN US ON FOR OUR

**Christmas Eve Services
(Saturday)**

8:30 pm at Faith
and
10:30 pm at St. Paul
(caroling before service)

**Christmas Day Services
(Sunday)**

Joint Service
10:30 am at St. Paul



MUSIC NOTES

You may have noticed that we have both a new piano and a new organ in our sanctuary. Our first Sunday with both instruments was November 13. The piano belongs to Christie Roberts, the daughter of Glenn and Julie

Williams, and is being loaned to us for an extended period of time. We thank Christie for her generous offer to use the piano, and are grateful as well to Glenn and Julie for helping to make this happen. The organ is a used two manual Allen instrument, and it was purchased for \$5,000. Since an instrument comparable to the one owned by Seminole Presbyterian was not available in time for our needs, Dunne music sold us this one with the provision that we could trade it in on another organ when one comes available and they will give us the full amount on trade. If we are satisfied with this instrument, then we will keep it.

As has been our tradition, our liturgical music changed with the liturgical season. Advent is the beginning of the “church year”, and this is year “A” in the lectionary cycle. The liturgical music that we are using for Advent this year doesn’t come from a particular setting (our hymnal has ten different settings of the communion liturgy), but from the Service Music section of our hymnal, Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Some, such as the Lamb of God, comes from the old Service Book and Hymnal (SBH) that many of us grew up with. The Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) comes from Schubert’s beautiful German Mass, composed in 1827.

Many thanks to our musicians for their participation and sharing their time and talents with us: Ann Delach, Gabriel Morgan, Hilde Reno, Michael Brannan, Jeanine Romano, and Adrian Snow (cantors).

Soli Deo Gloria (to God alone be the glory),
Dennis



Congratulations to Jimmy Dunn on another fantastic Throwback Sunday! Did you see the great *Tampa Bay Times* article on Friday, Nov. 25, complete with two photos? Great publicity.

Other projects we're working on:

install our old St. Paul banner in the alley facing the interstate
look into installing a reader board for messages under our St.

research church fees for weddings

work with the city on repair of our parking lot entrance & exit

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In November we baked cookies and bars for Throwback Sunday, and we plan to help with St. Lucia Sunday in December. Now we are beginning to collect items for the *Lutheran World Relief* health kits.

continued next page

Here's what we are collecting for the health kits: **new bath-size towels - (dark colors recommended), bath-size bars of soap in the wrapping, toothbrushes, combs and metal nail clippers.** If you're out shopping and find a good deal on any of those items, please donate them to any Rebecca Circle member.

Our next meeting will be **Thursday, December 15 at 7:30pm** at the home of Carol Moberg. Carol will also present the program. All St. Paul women and friends are invited.

Ann Delach,
Rebecca Circle Chair



St. Paul Congregational Council
November Highlights

The Council and Pastor are prayerfully considering starting Sunday Worship Service at 10:30 AM, beginning on Christmas Day.

We fully support the healing services, and recommend continuing with this valuable service because we all need healing in differing ways.

Council supports the following recommendations:

Christmas Eve Service to begin at 10:30 pm

Purchase of pew bibles

Purchase an intinction set. The paten and chalice are together, which will eliminate the need for an assistant.

Please check out and participate in our surveys located in the weekly eblast sent out November 22nd.

Next meeting is December 13th, 7:00 pm in the lounge.

Respectfully submitted,
Carmen Hayes, Secretary

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
<i>1st SUNDAY</i> 2 PM Suncoast Area Convention <i>WEEKLY</i>	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 6:30pm Together We Can 9 pm Never Too Young	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 6 pm Men's Lit Study 8 pm NA Speakers Grp	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 1 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 5:30pm <i>Sunset Solutions</i> at 8 pm New Life
4 2nd Sunday Advent 10 AM Sunday School 11 AM Worship Svc	5	6	7 2nd Wednesday of Advent 6 PM Supper 7 PM Advent Svc @ Faith 7:45 PM Choir Reh
11 3rd Sunday Advent 10AM Sunday School 11 AM St. Lucia Worship Svc. 4 PM New Parish Inst @ St Paul Piano Concert Miles Cameron	12	13 7 PM Council	14 3rd Wednesday of Advent 6 PM Supper 7 PM Advent Svc @ St Paul Lutheran 7:45 PM Choir Reh
18 4th Sunday Advent 10AM Sunday School 11AM Worship Svc.	19	20	21 4th Wednesday of Advent 6 PM Supper 7 PM Advent Svc @ Faith 7:45 PM Choir Reh
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10:30 AM Joint Worship Service @ St Paul	26	27	28

Thurs	Fri	Sat
<i>WEEKLY:</i> 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i> 8 pm <i>A New Way</i>	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 11-1 <i>New Bite of Serenity</i>	<i>WEEKLY:</i> 7 pm <i>NA Men's Step Group</i>
1	2	3
8	9	10
15 7:30 PM Rebecca Circle @ Carol Moberg's home	16	17
22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 8:30 pm @ Faith 10:30 am @ St Paul
29	30	31



Stewardship as a disciple of Jesus

Stewardship is an important daily activity in the life of a disciple. Jesus spoke throughout the Gospels about money and possessions (See Luke 12 as an example.) Mostly he warned about the power and ability of possessions to separate you from your relationship with God. Your possessions have the power to get in the way of your relationship with God. You might look to them for security, put your trust in them, and therefore treat them as idols worthy of worship.

Your possessions may be joined in this idolatry by your work, your recreation, or your use of time. In his book “Work, Play and Worship in a Leisure-Oriented Society,” Gordon Dahl challenges our American attitudes. He writes, “We worship our work, we work at our play, and we play at our worship.” What he critiques here is how society has come to misplace its priorities and focus. When you put in 60-80 hours a week in the office and come home on Friday with a briefcase full of work for your weekend, maybe work has become a form of worship. If you force yourself to exercise, what has happened to your sense of play? And when you describe your worship experience only in terms of not getting anything out of it, what is your focus on the purpose of worship?

As a disciple of Jesus, you can find a broader role for stewardship in your daily life. You are called to be the body of Christ in the world — to do God’s work, share your blessings received from God, do God’s will. That understanding of stewardship is both corporate and individual. How do you take care of all that God has blessed you with? How do you use those blessings to accomplish God’s will for the world? This might mean tending to your health, your relationships, your work, your possessions, your finances, your recreation, God’s creation, your congregation, your community or your faith life.

— Adapted from Stewardship 101 as found in “Make It Simple” via www.elca.org



Worship/Altar Guild Minutes

As Edward Pola and George Wyle wrote in 1963 it's "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year"! I have to agree! Even with the "busyness" of the season!! To help us find some Peace during this time let's prepare our hearts and focus on the true meaning of the holiday - The birth of the Christ child. Our mid-week Advent schedule will be:

November 30 th	St. Paul
December 7 th	Faith
December 14 th	St. Paul
December 21 st	Faith

Our theme this year will be Angels and we will continue with Holden Evening Prayer. Our Christmas carol sing-a-long will be after service with the congregation calling out favorite hymns. Suppers will begin at 6:00pm with Service at 7:00pm. Faith will be serving Soup and Pastor suggested we plan on having Ethnic meals for our days. Everyone bring a favorite dish they enjoy during the holidays.

We started a new practice concerning Communion on Sunday **November 27th**. Members will take their own glass from the tray at the bottom of the steps and proceed to the kneelers. After they have received communion they will then deposit the glasses into the basket on each side of the stairs. Ushers will be available to assist as needed.

Our **Advent Wreath** this year is on loan to us from the Dressler family from Faith.

Christmas Eve- 10:30pm. We will begin by singing Christmas carols and continue with the Prelude at 10:45pm. Communion will be by Intinction.

Christmas Morning – Service at 10:30am. Communion will be by Intinction.

Thanks to Carolyn Kelley we have a new Peace candle. The meaning as I believe it was intended is: a simple wordless "illuminating" statement that shows we stand for peace.

Patty Tolzman

TAMPA CONFERENCE GATHERING November 19 -“We are the ELCA!”

A few weeks ago on, November 19, Pastor Meyer and I attended the Tampa Conference Gathering at Calvary Lutheran Church in Apollo Beach. Also in attendance were folks who represented the Suncoast Conference group of churches. St. Paul and Faith Lutheran church are members of the Tampa Conference which consist of 11 ELCA Lutheran Churches five of which are located in Tampa, and a church each in Apollo Beach, Brandon, Lutz, Sun City, Temple Terrace and Wesley Chapel. There are many things I could share about my experience that morning but the most informative and inspiring was the presentation given by the keynote speaker the Vice President (VP) of the ELCA Bill Horne, the first African –American elected to this position. Bill Horne is currently a member of St. Paul’s in Clearwater. He also serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of the city of Clearwater. The ELCA VP position is a six year elected unpaid position that is filled by a layperson from the ELCA community.

Mr. Horne did share information about his role with the ELCA but the major point of his talk was that “We are the ELCA!” Early on in his speech he pointed out that there are most likely several people who attend ELCA churches on a regular basis that truly love and worship our Lord and active in the church but may not really know what it means to be a member of the ELCA. I was quite intrigued by his statement and I had to wonder if there might be folks who are a part of our church family that may not really know what it is to be a member of the ELCA. Mr. Horne went on to share the mission of the ELCA which can be found at www.elca.org. Here is the actual statement from the site:

*“Marked with the cross of Christ forever,
we are claimed, gathered and sent for the
sake of the world. This is the mission state-
ment of the ELCA. As members of the
ELCA, we believe that we are freed in
Christ to serve and love our neighbor.
With our hands, we do God’s work of re-
storing and reconciling communities in
Jesus’ name throughout the world.”*

Mr. Horne also shared the Strategic Directions for the ELCA churchwide organization:

The ELCA churchwide organization, working collaboratively with congregations, synods, agencies and institutions and other partners will give priority to
Accompanying congregations as growing centers for evangelical mission; and
Building capacity for evangelical witness and service in the world to alleviate poverty and to work for justice and peace.

The ELCA is made up of 3.7 Million Members, worshipping in 9,320 congregations located in all 50 States and Caribbean Region and **YOU** are one of those 3.7 million! So perhaps you should ask yourself if the ELCA mission is your mission. As one of the 9,320 congregations, how do you see our church fulfilling the mission of ELCA and its Strategic Directions? In the coming months the church council would like to hold some “in home” meetings where we can discuss with each other our mission and vision for our church.

Please pray for discernment and reflect on what the ELCA mission statement means to you and to your church. When you think about your role and our churches direction please be mindful that we are an ELCA church where we **ARE** freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. With our hands, we **WILL** continue to do God’s work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus’ name...even if it is in small ways in the Tampa community. We look forward to hearing from all of you how you believe as a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church we can support and fulfill God’s mission for the church.

Many Blessing!
 Jeanine Romano, PhD
 ELCA Diakonia Deacon Candidate



YEAR TO DATE (Oct 31):

Total Offerings (pledged, non-pledged, loose plate):	60,838.00
Total Special Offerings	833.00
Total Specified Donations (budget = 2,870.00):	2,798.00

Total Other Income (Building use donations, Seminole rent, etc):	49,204.00
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Total Year-To-Date Income as of Oct 31: \$113,673.00

Total Year-To-Date Operating Expenses: \$115,623.00

Year-To-Date Net Loss as of Oct 31: (\$1,950.00)

Fund Balances as of Oct 31 (Those over \$1,000.00):

Capital Improvement Fund:	8,115.00
Hamilton House Sale Proceeds:	\$64,745.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund:	1,790.00
Property Tax Refund:	3,456.00
Thrivent Choice Fund:	1,422.00

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you all for the kind words, cards, love, and support these past weeks with the death of my sister Debbie in October. She found a church home and family here that she cherished, and loved singing in the choir until she could no longer participate due to her illness. The love and support shown her throughout her illness was most appreciated.



Dennis Douglas, Michael Brannan and Mary Schwind (Debbie's daughter)



Watch dear Lord, with those who wake, watch over, or weep.
Tend the sick, rest the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering,
pity the afflicted, shield the joyous. In your love give us all this
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER LIST

Jeanne Cameron	member
Winnie Clark	member
Dennis Douglas & family	member
Jimmy & Eleanor Dunn & family	member
Carolyn Kelley	member
Teresa Jones	member
Jeanne Purcell	member
Marilyn Weisz	member
Danny Williams	member
Julie Williams & Family	member
Dave Demko & Family	friend of St Paul
James Ellis	friend of Danny Williams
Corey Hartnagle	son of Suzan Hartnagle
Lou Hiza	mother of Margaret Tillis
Glenn Hommert	cousin of Lou Falter
Geraldyn Levos	sister of Gary Levos
Catherine Malmquist	mother of Eddie Malmquist
Lisa Nalencz	daughter of Teresa Jones
Sharon Olenski	friend of St. Paul
Elaine & Gregory Schweinsburg	friends of St. Paul
Betty Sherrill	friend of Lou Falter
Gracie Sontoro	friend of Ron Tillis
Gloria Tillis	mother of Ron Tillis
Gary Toledo	son of Fabio & Joyce Toledo
Diane Tolzman	mother of Wayne Tolzman
Wade Williams	friend of Carolyn Kelley



OUR HEARTFELT SYMPATHY TO:

Jimmy & Eleanor Dunn in the sudden death
of their daughter ***Jana Lee Dunn*** on Thursday,
November 10, 2016. A Memorial Service was held
at St. Paul Lutheran Church, on November 18, 2016.

Dave Demko and family in the death of his wife ***Flo***,
on Sunday, November 13, 2016. Services were held at Blount &
Curry Funeral Home.

DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

DEC. 4 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

AM: ANN DELACH

AC: ISAAC FRITZ

CA: SANDI SNOW

USH: BOB DELACH, JIM CLARK, CURT FRITZ, BRAD HAARER

REFRESHMENTS: TINA FRITZ

DEC. 11 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT/SANTA LUCIA

AM: LEWIS BALSIZER

AC: ISAAC FRITZ

CA: TINA FRITZ

USH: WAYNE & PATTY TOLZMAN, JIMMY DUNN, CURT FRITZ

REFRESHMENTS: RECEPTION FOR ST. LUCIA

DEC. 18 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

AM: MIKE BRANNAN

AC: ISAAC FRITZ

CA: PATTY TOLZMAN

USH: BOB DELACH, JIM CLARK, CURT FRITZ, BRAD HAARER

REFRESHMENTS: LIZ WILSON

DEC. 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

AM: ADRIAN SNOW

AC: ISAAC FRITZ

CA: SANDI SNOW

USH: WAYNE & PATTY TOLZMAN, JIMMY DUNN, CURT FRITZ

DEC. 25 CHRISTMAS DAY

AM: EDDIE MALMQUIST

AC: ISAAC FRITZ

CA: JANE WILEY

USH: JIMMY DUNN, CURT FRITZ, PAUL MCSHEA, FRED BELLIS

REFRESHMENTS: COUNCIL

ALTAR GUILD: PATTY TOLZMAN, ANN DELACH, CAROLYN KELLEY

COUNTERS: TINA FRITZ & JEANINE ROMANO

****PLEASE FIND A REPLACEMENT FOR YOUR DAY IF UNABLE TO ATTEND****

THANK YOU!



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 - Arlynn Haarer

19 - Isaac Fritz

25 - Nathan Tolzman

10 - Dave Stroupe

19 - Tom Feagin

11 - Gary Levos

21 - Dennis Douglas

*If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please call the church office at
813-239-3113*



Name:

Number of Poinsettias: _____ at \$7.50 each

Dedication:

There are many in our congregation who like to help our church celebrate the Christmas season by placing a poinsettia in the nave or the chancel. These traditional flowers may be donated to honor someone, in memory of someone, or just as a gift to St. Paul Church. Once the season has passed, you may claim your flower and plant it at home to help remember this Christmas or give it to a friend. Poinsettias may be ordered by filling out this form and putting it in the offering plate, or by calling the church office at 239-3113. Please attach your payment along with your order **form by December 18th**. If mailing, please have order arrive by **December 15th and** make check payable to St. Paul Lutheran Church and mail to: St. Paul Lutheran Church, 5103 N. Central Ave., Tampa, FL 33603.

St. Paul Lutheran Church (ELCA)

A member of New Parish of Tampa with Faith Lutheran Church.

The church is located just west of I-275 at the Hillborough Avenue exit and three blocks south on Central Avenue.

Worship services with Holy Communion are held at 11 a.m. each Sunday.

You may reach the church office at (813) 239-3113, or by email: office@stpaultampa.org.

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Pastor Meyer's Office hours are by appointment only. Pastor Meyer can be reached by calling (813) 435-5335, or emailing him at pastor@stpaultampa.org.

Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. -2 p.m.

Find us on the web at www.stpaultampa.org.



St. Paul Lutheran Church
5103 N. Central Avenue
Tampa, FL 33603

RETURN
SERVICE
REQUESTED