

Greetings St. Paul Lutheran Church!

I know we consider ourselves a congregation that is older in age but if I look at the ministries I've been focusing on lately, it's with the younger. We often think we don't have youth in the church but they are here. We don't have big youth groups like we have in the past but our youth are active and engaged. I look at the other 3 ELCA churches in Sarasota and we have the most engaged youth. Even one of our confirmands has her membership in another ELCA church in Sarasota but since they can't offer confirmation we gladly welcomed her. We will celebrate our confirmands on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Remember to wear red that day for Pentecost. There will be a reception following worship for Ryan and Kellen Masse, Kendall Riley, and Elle Bates – our confirmands!



Last Sunday is a perfect example of our youth ministry. Here is a picture of the children's message time as we interacted with Esther Smith's creation of Noah's Ark.

Of course, some of these kids were with the baptism family but we almost always have some youth for a children's message. I remember when I got here we didn't. I don't ever want us to say we don't have kids in our church.

And speaking of our baptism family. Eva and Emily were graduates of our Early Childhood

Learning Center. I was talking with Eva, the older one, and she mentioned that she has been at St. Paul longer than I have been here. And it's true. Seeds planted years and years ago through our preschool have bloomed into two wonderful newly baptized children of God. It makes my heart sing to see this come to fruition. And it doesn't end there. In worship on Sunday we also had a mother and her 10-month-old son who will be starting in the preschool in August. I really thought having Eva and Emily baptized was the peak of a wonderful ministry but then I'm reminded it doesn't end, it starts over again.



Here is a picture of this year's VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten – the year before Kindergarten) with their Bibles they get from the church. This Bible is used throughout the school year during chapel. When they get graduate, they get their own to take home with their name on it and the date of their VPK graduation. Thank you to JoAnn Jordan and Esther Smith for sharing with me the weekly chapel time. The kids love guessing who is going to lead every week.

Take care and God bless

*-PrAshley*