



JANUARY + FEBRUARY 2026
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted
garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our
iniquities, like the wind, take us away*

—Isaiah 64: 6

Family of believers at St. Paul Lutheran—

This is a recent post on facebook that I found, and wanted to share it with all of you as we transition from the Christmas to Epiphany seasons:

St. Jerome loved Christmas. He had a great and enduring love for the baby Jesus. This is what he would often recite in his head during the Christmas season.

Oftentimes when I look to Bethlehem, my heart converses with the child Jesus. I say, 'Lord Jesus, You are freezing. You shiver. It is so hard and uncomfortable where You sleep, so that I may be blessed. How will I ever be able to repay?' Then I think I hear the child answering, 'I don't want anything, dear Jerome. Just wait. Difficult times await Me, in Gethsemane and on the Holy Cross.' Then I continue to speak, 'dear Christ child, I have to give You something. I'll give You all my money.' The child answers, 'the heavens and Earth are Mine. I don't need your money. Give it to the poor, and then I will receive it as if it were given to Me.' I continue, 'dear Christ child, I will gladly do that, but I still have to give You something, or my sorrow will kill me!' Then the child says, 'dear Jerome, since you are so generous, I will tell you what you can give to Me. Give Me your sins. Give Me your bad conscience and your perdition.' I answer, 'what will You do with them?' Christ answers me, 'I will take them upon My shoulders. They will be My glory in My kingdom. Isaiah prophesied that I would bear your sins and take them away.' I begin to weep, 'child, dear Christ child, You move my heart to tears. I thought You wanted something good of mine, and You only want to have the evil within me. Take away what is mine! Give me what is Yours, so I will be free from sin and certain of eternal life!'

And indeed, each of us could say the same. We all *want* to give something back for God, to get on His good side by a deed or action we have done, but Isaiah says how all our good deeds are like polluted garments (the original Hebrew is even more specific and repulsive.) Put your sins at the foot of the manger and watch as they get carried through to the foot of the cross. In the Epiphany season Jesus is revealed to be the light of the world, the one to break the darkness we all experience. The Christ child was born for you, so continue on the journey He makes with us, and for us.

Blessed to serve—

Pastor Kevin Peterson



Lutheran Women *in Mission*

For over 80 years, the LWML has focused on affirming each woman's relationship with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries and to support global missions. Every female member of an LCMS congregation is an automatic member of the LWML. At St. Paul, we meet four times a year on the first Thursday of March, May, September, and November at 1:30 pm in the conference room. We have a very short business meeting to catch up on what's happening in LWML district and national programs. We then spend time in a Bible study designed for women and we usually have postage stamps to trim. These cancelled postage stamps are sold and the funds received are used to support the mission projects of the LWML. We also collect the postage paid stamps affixed to charitable requests. Bring us the whole envelope please. We also collect eyeglasses and eyeglass cases to be taken on mission trips to countries where they are matched to what the local residents need to improve their vision. Current mission projects of the Northern Illinois District LWML are:

- Worship Anew – ministry to shut-ins
- Griffin Community Center Food Pantry
- Feeding Children in Belize
- St. John, LaGrange Reaching Out for their VBS Program
- Lutheran Heritage Foundation
- Phil's Friends for cancer patients
- Concordia Seminary Ft. Wayne Food Co-op



There will be a door offering the weekend of **February 14 & 15** for the work of the LWML. We are thankful for any gift amount you can donate to these mission projects. If you would like a "mite" box to take home, they will be available in the narthex. The Bible story of the widow's mite is the inspiration for our mite boxes, and we encourage you to share dollars, checks, and any loose change you may have. Thank you for your support!!

In addition to our support of these mission projects of the District and National LWML, we take a table collection at our meetings and welcome Thrivent Choice Dollars as well as the proceeds from an item or two at the Oktoberfest auction. These monies are then donated at Christmas time to four families with Lutheran Bible Translators, and this year we also gave money to Lutheran Church Charities Comfort Dog Ministry, MOST Ministries, and Phil's Friends. The total of these gifts was \$490. We are thankful we are blessed to be able to share in these ministries and share the blessings we have received.



REGULAR VOTERS' MEETING

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1

Immediately following the
9:00 a.m. service.

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Classes will resume in January. The Sunday morning class begins on January 4 and will continue the study of Heroes of the Faith. This interesting study led by Pastor Balzer looks at various characters in the Bible and how their faith in God led them in their lives. The Wednesday afternoon class led by Pastor Kevin begins January 7 and will begin a new study on the book of Matthew. Matthew is one of Jesus' disciples and author of the Gospel. The class meets at 1 pm in the conference room. A Tuesday evening class is yet to be determined. Please speak with Pastor Kevin, Janice Fuglsang, Sandy Hartwig, or Judy Hausermann if you would be interested in attending an evening study.



A collection of colorful hearts and stars in shades of pink, blue, and green, some with patterns.

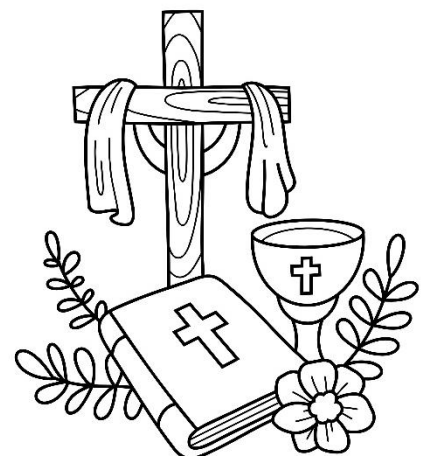
SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join us for Sunday School during the worship service
on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, September-May.
We welcome children aged three through 5th grade.

A collection of colorful hearts and stars in shades of pink, blue, and green, some with patterns.

ALTAR GUILD

Please consider being part of the Altar Guild. The commitment is minimal, set-up and clean-up communion a couple weekends a month, two or three times a year. We work in teams of two so you would have a partner to share the duties with. We can also use some members for cleaning, which involves dusting the pews and altar and filling up pew racks with cards and pencils. These teams also meet twice a month a couple times a year. We really would appreciate any and all help. Please contact the Church Office if you are interested in helping with this important ministry.



*Thank
You*

Many thanks to everyone who donated to and purchased from the Christmas Treasures sale in December. We raised more than \$500 while finding new homes for so many Christmas items!

Please keep next year's sale in mind as you are putting away your own Christmas decorations. If you have any items that you are ready to part with, you can bring them to the church breezeway now and we'll save them for the next year's sale.



ST. PAUL QUILTERS

The Quilters are always happy to have an extra set of hands. Meetings are generally on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 10:15 a.m. in the quilting room (former church library). Our next meetings will be January 14, January 28, February 11 and February 25.



COFFEE SERVERS NEEDED

Consider being a coffee server. Servers brew the coffee and bring in homemade or store-bought treats to be served following the Sunday morning worship service. There is a sign-up sheet in the breezeway. Please contact the church office if you have questions.



THEOLOGY IN FILM



Our Theology in Film nights will continue; the dates will be January 26 and February 23. Come join us as we continue to explore different stories and what they can teach us regarding our own beliefs. Our title in January is a sci fi story that flew under the radar, raising questions about children born with superior genes getting the best jobs in life, while the genetically inferior take the menial, blue collar positions. Our title in February is an Oscar winner for best picture that also works nicely as a Christ figure film. We will see the main character exhibit Christlike traits such as loyalty to his bride, bringing out the best in those around him and not engaging in the cynicism of the world. Invite your friends from other congregations and in the community—pizza will be provided!

LENT BEGINS FEBRUARY 18

Ash Wednesday

WORSHIP SERVICES WEDNESDAYS AT 7:00 P.M.

FEBRUARY 18-MARCH 25

JOIN US FOR DINNER BEFORE WORSHIP AT 5:30 P.M.-MORE DETAILS TO COME



PALM SUNDAY | MARCH 29

Worship with communion, 9:00 p.m.

HOLY THURSDAY | APRIL 2

Worship with communion, 7:00 p.m.

GOOD FRIDAY | APRIL 3

Worship, 7:00 p.m.

EASTER SUNDAY | APRIL 5

Worship with communion, 9:00 a.m.

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3 5:30 p.m. Worship with Communion
4 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion 10:30 a.m. Bible Study	5	6	7 1:00 p.m. Bible Study	8 6:30 p.m. Hand Bells 7:30 p.m. Kantorei	9	10 5:30 p.m. Worship
11 9:00 a.m. Worship Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Bible Study	12 5:30 p.m. Board of Elders 7:00 p.m. Church Council	13	14 10:15 a.m. Quilters 1:00 p.m. Bible Study	15 6:30 p.m. Hand Bells 7:30 p.m. Kantorei	16	17 5:30 p.m. Worship with Communion
18 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion (Interpreter) 10:30 a.m. Bible Study	19	20	21 1:00 p.m. Bible Study	22 6:30 p.m. Hand Bells 7:30 p.m. Kantorei	23	24 5:30 p.m. Worship
25 9:00 a.m. Worship Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Bible Study	26 6:00 p.m. Theology in Film	27	28 10:15 a.m. Quilters 1:00 p.m. Bible Study	29 6:30 p.m. Hand Bells 7:30 p.m. Kantorei	30	31 5:30 p.m. Worship with Communion

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ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

February

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion 10:30 a.m. Voters' Meeting	2	3	4 1:00 p.m. Bible Study	5 6:30 p.m. Hand Bells 7:30 p.m. Kantorei	6	7 5:30 p.m. Worship
8 9:00 a.m. Worship Sunday School 10:30 a.m.. Bible Study	9	10	11 10:15 a.m. Quilters 1:00 p.m. Bible Study	12 6:30 p.m. Hand Bells 7:30 p.m. Kantorei	13	14 LWML DOOR OFFERING 5:30 p.m. Worship with Communion
15 LWML DOOR OFFERING 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion (Interpreter) 10:30 a.m. Bible Study	16 5:30 p.m. Board of Elders 7:00 p.m. Church Council	17	18 ASH WEDNESDAY 5:30 p.m. Lenten Supper 7:00 p.m. Worship	19 6:30 p.m. Hand Bells 7:30 p.m. Kantorei	20	21 5:30 p.m. Worship
22 9:00 a.m. Worship Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Bible Study	23 6:00 p.m. Theology in Film	24	25 10:15 a.m. Quilters 5:30 p.m. Lenten Supper 7:00 p.m. Worship	26 6:30 p.m. Hand Bells 7:30 p.m. Kantorei	27	28 5:30 p.m. Worship with Communion