

THE Epistle from St. Paul

DECEMBER 2025



The Word...Dwelt Among Us

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, The Lord's peace be with you! The Season of Advent is here again, counting back four Sundays from Christmas Day. You've seen Halloween decorations change toward Christmas in the stores, maybe with a short Thanksgiving in between. You'll notice a seasonal shift in the Church too. With Advent begins what the Church calls "the time of Christ," or "festival time," which runs through the Day of Pentecost. Festival time, which encompasses the two great feasts of Christmas and Easter, with two times of preparation and fasting that precede the feasting.

Though less commonly known, Advent is like Lent—a fast in the Church, in which we practice disciplines that prepare our souls for the celebration of the Christmas feast. We mourn over our sins, and we look to the coming of Christ at Christmas and at the last day. We give up bad habits and we stop caving to evil desires, while we feed all that is godly—learning to pray and study the Scriptures more earnestly. Even the Liturgy changes in order to mark the season—for nearly all of festival time, we'll use Divine Service Setting Three. In Advent and Lent, though, the Church refrains from singing the Gloria. It's a time to keep the spiritual disciplines and to prepare for the full-voiced rejoicing of Christmas and Epiphany.

You may notice too that there's not a Gospel Procession during the time of Advent or Lent. The Gospel Procession is a way that the Church celebrates the presence of Christ among us, especially in the Holy Gospels. But in Advent we look forward to Christmas when the Word becomes flesh and comes to live in the midst of His people. Then at Christmas, our reflection on our own sin and brokenness gives way once more to a golden feast. We'll revel in the Gospel Procession again and celebrate the Lord Who strides right into the midst of a messy congregation, and hundreds of broken lives, and speaks Himself into our ears and souls for our forgiveness and healing and life. God be with you all!

John 1:6-14

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In Christ,
Pastor Newton

Stewardship Report

The Stewardship Board will be decorating the church for Advent/Christmas on Saturday, December 29, from 9:00am-11:00am. Cookies, treats, and hot chocolate will be served. Please bring cookies or treats you would like to share. After the days of Christmas, the decorations will be taken down on Saturday, January 3, from 9:00-11:00am. Casey's breakfast pizza will be provided.

During the Advent season, for the midweek meal on December 10, the Stewardship Board will be serving soups and crackers.

In the early months of 2026, the Stewardship Board will be hosting a couple of social events (Bunco night and Bible trivia). Look for more information soon!

For the month of November, the Church Council has been serving donuts and coffee for Fellowship/Bible study time. The Property Board will be serving in December (except for December 7). The Board of Education will be serving in January.

In His Service,
Ken Kise
Stewardship Board Chairperson



Lady Diners meet on Tuesday, December 2 at Portofino's in Ankeny At 11:30am. If you have any questions please see Betty Berlau or Donna Stoelk. Lady Diners is open to any single ladies of St. Paul.



St. Paul provides services to local nursing homes once a month. Members are always welcome to attend the services. Dates may vary with the Christmas holiday so please check with the church office.

- Sunny View at 2pm on December 21
- Rock Creek at 2pm on December 16
- Mill Pond at 2pm on December 28

Prayer List Refresh

Just like the start of a new year, on January 1, 2026, the bulletin prayer list will have a fresh beginning. All names will be cleared from the list and we'll start from scratch.

On Sunday, January 4 you can submit names for the prayer list on your attendance card. You can also email or call the church office. Please include the person's name, relation to you and the reason for the prayer.

Contact Kathy in the church office if you have any questions.

Thursday Service Gets Renamed

You may have noticed the Thursday morning service has been renamed from Matins to Chapel. It's still at 9:30am each week and it will typically be a service from the hymnal. From Matins to Service of Prayer and Preaching among others. We hope you'll join us.

LWML Meets December 9

On Tuesday, December 9, ladies are invited to join us for our annual dinner here at St. Paul, beginning at 5:00pm. We'll be ordering takeout from Smokey D's and have a fun time with a gift exchange game. To help us plan, please RSVP to one of the LWML board members or sign up by December 7! Meals run about \$15 and is due December 9 if you want Smokey D's (or if you prefer, feel free to bring your own meal). For the gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift with a value up to \$10. We hope you can join us! It's always a nice time to unwind and enjoy time together.

We'd also like to give a special thanks to the Advent by Candlelight hosts, guests, and planning team for a lovely start to the season.

To keep us engaged during this time, especially when Bible studies tend to pause until January, check out LWML's spiritual growth resources. There are brief devotions, short studies, podcasts, and even scripture coloring options. Just a little something to enjoy and keep you connected. (www.lwml.org/all-spiritual-growth)

Have a Merry Christmas as you seek and enjoy God's blessings!

Your LWML Board and Sisters in Christ,
Kim Rasler, Sue Stoll, Betty Berlau, and Vicki Sickels



Offering Envelope Renumbering January 1

If you are currently assigned an offering envelope over 250, you will receive a new number beginning January 1, 2026. After reviewing how many unused envelopes there are between 250 and 300, we realized we could save several hundred dollars by renumbering!

If you no longer want envelopes because you give electronically, notify Kathy in the office.

Advent Services Offered at Noon

Beginning with Wednesday, December 3 you can attend an Advent service at Noon or 7:00pm. This is perfect for those of you who do not like to drive after dark or don't want to go out in the cold at night!

If you have any questions please see the church office or Pastor Newton.





The 144 Envelope FUNdraiser has officially wrapped up, and we are so grateful for the incredible generosity of our St. Paul family. Your support means more than you know, and every dollar goes directly toward helping our youth grow in faith and fellowship. You are such a blessing!

All funds raised will go toward junior and senior youth gatherings, helping our teens grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, build faith-filled friendships, and (of course) have a ton of fun along the way!

We *did* notice a few envelopes still looking for a sponsor. If you didn't get a chance to participate—or if you'd still like to help—please reach out to Laura Nelson and she'll happily get an envelope into your hands!



Each year, St. Paul Youth Board hosts a Parents Day Out, giving parents a few hours to enjoy some time to themselves while we care for the kids! As always, we're inviting youth in grades 6–12 to help make this a fun and successful event. We'll play games, do crafts, and keep the little ones entertained.

The Youth Board — Jen, Candy, Libby, Kate, and Jeff — are gathering a headcount for two things:

1. Youth volunteers – if your tween or teen can help, please have them sign up in the Narthex.
2. Kids attending – parents, please sign up your children so we know how many to expect.

Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex. Thank you for helping make this event a fun and meaningful experience for everyone!

December Youth Calendar

- Dec. 2 — Board of Youth meeting 5:30pm
Dec. 3 — Youth Christmas Service Practice 6:00pm-7:00pm
Dec. 6 — Youth Christmas Service Practice 9:00am-12:15pm (light lunch provided)
Dec. 7 — Youth and Children's Christmas Services 8:00am and 10:45am
Dec. 7 — Be our guest between services and enjoy festive treats and drinks
Dec. 7 — Social Ministry Project, soup meal kits, between services
Dec. 10 — Midweek 5-7:30pm (Supper, Study and Service)
Dec. 13 — Parents Day Out 9:00am-Noon
Dec. 14 — Sunday School and Youth Bible Study Christmas Parties during Christian Ed. Hour
Dec. 14 — Combined Junior and Senior Youth + Parents Sunday Funday Noon-2:00pm
Dec. 17 — Midweek 5-7:30pm (Supper, Study and Service)
Dec. 21 — Fellowship only between services
Dec. 21 — Rite of Enrollment, 8th and 9th grade Confirmation students
-

Youth and Parents Christmas Sunday Funday!

We're wrapping up the year with something extra fun and a little different! On Sunday, December 14 from Noon-2:00pm, we're combining junior and senior youth for one big Christmas Sunday Funday Party — and this time, parents are invited too.

Here's what's in store:

- ♦ Parents vs. Students Holiday Games — think friendly competition and lots of laughs!
- ♦ Cookie Exchange — bring a batch to share and take home a mix of sweet treats!

It's the perfect way to celebrate the season together, with food, fun, and family-style fellowship. Save the date and get ready for some parent-youth showdown fun!



IDW Senior Youth Gathering Recap

Wow, what a weekend! Our senior youth had an amazing time at the Iowa District West Sennior Youth Gathering, and I just had to share a little recap with you.

From the moment we arrived on Friday, the energy was electric. Students jumped into fun and games, making a joyful noise alongside Gloria Dei's youth band (micro version), being introduced to our theme Ephesians 2:10, and fellowship right away, and our keynote speaker, Pastor Drew Oswald, absolutely knocked it out of the park! His talks gave our youth so much to think about and reflect on as we journey together in Christ.

Our St. Paul crew was asked to participate in a few special ways. Pastor Newton distributed the Lord's Supper on Sunday, blessing our students with Christ's true body and blood—a powerful and grace-filled way to close out the weekend. Pastor also led our youth group in compline each evening before bed and morning prayers on Saturday and Sunday before breakfast. Sarah Newton gave a phenomenal sectional on vocation and the family, inspiring our teens to think about their gifts and calling in everyday life. And, of course, I had the absolute delight of emceeing the weekend—cheering, laughing, and sharing in all the fun alongside our amazing students.

Speaking of fun, Saturday night's "night life" was a blast—glow golf, silent disco, laser tag, inflatables, Gaga Ball, 9-square in the air—you name it! It was such a joy to watch these teens connect, laugh, and just enjoy being together.

A huge thank you to Jen Thompson, Jeff Fahrmann and Zack Nelson. These three ensured everything ran smoothly, from the meal on Friday night to transportation to capturing memories on camera. But even more importantly, they were praying for our students, modeling Christ's love in every moment, and supporting them in ways both seen and unseen.

Finally, a shoutout to St. Paul Lutheran's teens—you all made this gathering *one for the books!* Your laughter, terrific balance of maturity and silliness, and openness to grow closer to Jesus in all the ways IDW provided made my weekend unforgettable. Thank you for sending your amazing kiddos with us—what a blessing to be part of their faith journey!

In Christ,
Laura Nelson
Director of Youth Ministry





At left: St. Paul member Josh Remington, along with his sons, Isaiah and Samuel, staff the LCEF booth.



Above: Sarah Newton discusses vocation.



Our own Laura Nelson was emcee for the gathering.

At left: youth rolling bandages as part of a mission project.

You can find more photos on our FB page.

Update from Vicar Jarrod Thomas

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ, This month at ULC has continued to be filled with wonderful opportunities to teach and work with the congregation here in Minneapolis. I have continued to preach every other Sunday, and I recently finished planning an Advent midweek preaching series here, where Pastor Kind and I will be preaching through sections of Zechariah each week. It was great fun to try and put together readings with Psalms and hymns for each week, while constraining myself to the few weeks we have of Advent. I will be working on a similar project for Lenten midweek services soon.



I have also started teaching Sunday morning Bible study, where we are slowly making our way through Titus. That has been a great joy to study and prepare for, as well as actually teaching it. In the first couple weeks of teaching on it, we have made it through the first three and a half verses, which have been fantastic to wrestle with and discuss. It is a delight to see the joy everyone has in studying and analysing God's Word!

I have continued teaching Greek and our Confessions group, as well as assisting with our homeschool co-op. I have been in talks with the co-op to teach the mothers and any children old enough Latin in the Spring or Summer, as many of them are very interested in classical education. This will be a huge blessing for me as well, as it will help me better learn that ancient language which so many of our forefathers in the faith wrote in.



We have had a lot of events the last few weeks. At the end of October, we had our Halloween party, which was a blast! The next week, we had a card-writing event, where we wrote cards to all of the people on our prayer list up here. Later this week, as I'm writing this, we are taking a trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Art to have a relaxing evening appreciating the artwork. Outside of these more regularly scheduled church events, we also have hosted a concert here, featuring English Renaissance era music, which was beautiful. The next day, I went with a few congregants to an organ concert nearby, which was fantastic.

I'll be back home for Thanksgiving week since we don't have any events that week. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone then!

Blessings in Christ,
Vicar Jarrod Thomas
316 10th Ave SE, Minneapolis MN 55414

Photo top right: A page of my (very messy) notes on Titus for Bible Study. Middle photo: Me dressed as my supervisor for our Halloween party. Bottom photo: The concert at ULC this past weekend.



USHER MINISTRY

Are you looking for ways to use your time and talents at St. Paul? We are currently seeking individuals to serve as ushers, a vital ministry that welcomes attendees and ensures a smooth worship experience. If you are warm, welcoming, and feel called to serve, we invite you to join our team! High school age and older women and men (couples encouraged to serve together!) are invited to participate.

Typically ushers serve two Sundays in a row every couple months or so. It's a great way to meet members and welcome our visitors! If you are interested see Kathy Olson in the church office.

DECEMBER 1 & 15

Sunshine
KIDS

Bring your little ones to [St. Paul Lutheran Church](#) on the 1st & 3rd Mondays of each month for **FELLOWSHIP** and **PLAYTIME**.

Afterward, stick around as we learn about **JESUS** through
SONG, DANCE, STORIES & MORE!

AGES
0-5

FREE



10-11
AM

1ST & 3RD
MONDAYS

Adult participation encouraged. Complimentary coffee provided.

Please enter through the back entrance of the building. Thank you!

December Bible Studies

BASIC Bible Study

Thursday, December 11 at 10:00am. Led by Pastor Kottlowski, they will continue the study of Romans.

Homebuilders

Sunday, November 7 at 4:00pm. *The Sanctuary Is Our Home*. This year Homebuilders (a group for those interested in following Jesus as a household) will delve into the Sacrament of the Altar as the center of life for the Christian family. From the altar where the Lord visits His people extend the spokes of Christian living: mercy, witness, and life together as a household held in Christ.

Midweek Bible Studies

Wednesdays from 6:00pm-7:00pm. Adults meet in the Sanctuary with Pastor Newton. Senior youth are in the youth room and junior youth meet with Laura Nelson in the youth room by the Fellowship Hall. Worship follows at 7:00pm.

Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study

Sundays at 9:30am in the FLC. Grab your coffee (in a reusable cup of course) and head into the FLC for *The Who, What, When, Where, Why of It All*.

Sunday Morning Youth Bible Study

Sundays at 9:30am. Join Dave Brunelle and Laura Nelson on an engaging journey through God's Word as we look into the lectionary and see how it points us to Jesus and our identity in Him.

Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Study

Thursday, December 4 10:00am. Led by Pastor Kottlowski. They are using a devotional book entitled *Unfailing: God's Assurance for Times of Change*.

October Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting October 21 at 6:30pm. In attendance: Pastor Joel Newton, Director of Youth Ministry Laura Nelson, Tim Davies, Amber Giese, Mike Giese, Adam Haselhuhn, Ken Kise, Dave Reddel, Duane Suhr, Jennifer Thompson, Megan von Qualen, Mike Sickels. Absent: Joel Ott, Josh Remington. Devotion led by Pastor Newton on Acts 18 with excerpts from *To Live with Christ*.

September 16 meeting minutes motion to approve: Mike Sickels, seconded to approve: Megan von Qualen, Approval: unanimously approved.

Staff reports from Pastor Newton and Laura Nelson (in written form). Motion to approve staff reports: Ken Kise, seconded to approve: Amber Giese. Approval: unanimously approved.

Financial report motion to approve report: Dave Reddel, seconded to approve: Mike Sickels. There was discussion about subtotals and totals not adding correctly in the report, Mike Giese stated he will be meeting with OneSource to discuss the report. Approval: approved.

Board Reports (provided by the following members)

Children & Family - Megan von Qualen

Youth - Jennifer Thompson

Stewardship - Ken Kise

Motion to approve Jessica Loghry to stewardship board: Dave Reddel, seconded to approve: Mike Sickels. Approval: unanimously approved.

Elders - Adam Haselhuhn

Property – Mike Sickels

Education - Amber Giese

Evangelism – no report

Motion to approve board reports: Tim Davies, seconded to approve: Amber Giese. Approval: unanimously approved.

Old Business

Cyber Security – November 6 at 5pm with Ankeny police department presenting

Construction Update – construction committee met again and there was discussion of asbestos and other issues.

Budget – board budgets have been submitted and budget committee will be meeting to discuss.

New Business

Pastor and Laura's housing allowance. Laura (41%). Motion to approve: Dave Reddel, seconded to approve: Mike Sickels. Approval: unanimously approved.

Next meeting is November 18, 2025, at 6:30pm.

Motion to adjourn: Duane Suhr, seconded to approve: Ken Kise, Approval: unanimously approved

Lord's Prayer recited to end the meeting.

December 2025

ELDER OF THE WEEK

07: Nathan Wendzel
14: Shawn Thomas
21: Jeff Fahrman
28: Hans Schaeffer

ALTAR COMMITTEE

Sue Crawford, Donna Stoelk

OFFERING COUNTERS

December 7
Dave Reddel, Marilyn Sharar

December 14
Jennifer Dorfner, Doyle Witt

December 21
Jennifer Dorfner, Marilyn Sharar

December 28
Dewayne McGohan, Rod Silvey

USHERS

December 7 & 14

8:00am — Ken Kise, Dan Hubbard
10:45am — Jason, Jaydon, Jordan, and Jalen Buls

December 21 & 28

8:00am — Jim Harvey, Gary Hauge, Eddie Bell
10:45am — Dewayne McGohan, Mike KoesterCraig

Christmas Eve

5:00pm — Tim Davies, Eric Forde
7:00pm — Jon Gerths, Don Halbur
9:00pm — Eric Bradley, Cal Uhlig

Christmas Day

9:30am — David Reddel, Collin Reddel, Mark Lauthen



December Birthdays

01: Abby Pinkerton	16: Mollie Fahrman
Beth Snyder	17: Josiah Kisker
Patricia Townsend	18: Nadine Sturtz
Del Wesack	19: Karen Gerths
02: Jon Jero	Gary Vesely
Anthony Rosing	20: Becky Haase
03: Eddie Bell	21: Jason Buls
04: Don Halbur	Amanda Hayden
05: Dwain Swanson	Don Nemitz
06: Char Shaw	22: Dakota Allen
07: Rylan Rohlfen	Jenni Madsen
12: Justin Hopp	Linda Nordstrom
13: Amber Giese	23: Stephen Townsend
14: Alexander Heflebower	26: Brian Johnson
Barb Lauthen	Ruth KoesterCraig
Mike Sickels	29: Becky Behrens
15: Kim Rasler	30: Dan Pottratz
Brian Thompson	31: Kevin Wesack

December Wedding Anniversaries

05: Karen & Terry Whipple
10: Lindsey & Tyler Irlmeier
13: Janet & Maceo Anderson
15: Ann & Darwin Rohlfen
16: Marcia & Curt Hora
20: Carol & Terry Moelnke
23: Barb & Mark Lauthen
Mary & Duane Sulr
28: Stacia & Eric Bradley
31: Jennifer & David Reddel

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:00am Sonshine Kids 6:30pm Voters Meeting	2 11:30am Lady Diners	3 10:00am Moms Group Noon Advent Service 5:00-6:00pm Meal 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 6:00-7:00pm Confirmation 7:00pm Advent Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4 9:30am Chapel 10:00am Ladies Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	5	6 9am-12:15pm Christmas Service Rehearsal
7 8:00am Youth & Children's Christmas Service Festive Treats & Drinks! 10:45am Youth & Children's Christmas Service 4:00pm Homebuilders	8 9:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Property Board Meeting	9 5:00pm LWML Dinner 6:30pm Elders Meeting	10 10:00am Moms Group Noon Advent Service 5:00-6:00pm Meal (Stewardship) 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 6:00-7:00pm Confirmation 7:00pm Advent Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	11 9:30am Chapel 10:00am BASIC Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	12	13 9am-Noon Parents Day Out
14 8:00am Worship Service 9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Bible Studies 10:45am Worship Service Noon-2pm Jr/Sr. Youth & Parents Sunday Funday	15 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:00am Sonshine Kids	16 2:00pm Rock Creek Service 6:30pm Council Meeting	17 10:00am Moms Group Noon Advent Service 5:00-6:00pm Meal 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 6:00-7:00pm Confirmation 7:00pm Advent Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	18 9:30am Chapel 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	19	20
21 8:00am Worship Service Fellowship 10:45am Worship Service 2:30pm Sunny View Service	22 9:00am Staff Meeting	23	24 Offices Closed  5:00pm Christmas Eve Services 7:00pm 9:00pm	25 Offices Closed 9:30am Service  MERRY CHRISTMAS	26 Offices Closed	27
28 The Holy Innocents *9:30am Worship Service* 2:00pm Mill Pond Service	29	30	31 Offices Closing at Noon 7:00pm Service	1 Offices Closed	*Only one service on December 28	