

THE Epistle from St. Paul



JANUARY 2026

Seven Youth to be Confirmed on Sunday, Jan. 18

The Rite of Confirmation will take place on Sunday, January 18 at the 10:45am worship service as seven of our youth are confirmed in their faith!

The Lutheran church believes, teaches, and practices infant Baptism because we believe God's Holy Spirit can and does give faith, even to infants. Confirmation is an opportunity to give the person, who was baptized as an infant, to stand up on their own to publicly affirm their faith they received in Baptism. Confirmation is a personal and voluntary act that connects people to the congregational membership. By being confirmed, a person is publicly proclaiming they have studied the Bible, the doctrine of the Lutheran Church, and they believe in it and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

St. Paul's Confirmation program seeks to equip students to grow in lifelong faith through fostering a connection between what is taught in class, their experience in worship, and their daily lives. This program also helps students to understand they are a vital and valued part of God's mission in this place and the world.



**BUNCO
NIGHT!!!**

Saturday, January 31, 6:30pm

Treats and beverages provided.
Join us for fellowship and fun!

Hosted by Stewardship

Epiphany Jan. 6

The Feast of the Epiphany centers in the visit of the Magi from the East. In that respect, it is a "13th day" of Christmas, and yet it also marks the beginning of a new liturgical season. Where Christmas has focused on the incarnation of our Lord, that is, on God becoming flesh, the season of Epiphany emphasizes the manifestation or self-revelation of God in that same flesh of Christ. For the Lord Himself has entered our darkness and rises upon us with the brightness of His true light. He does so chiefly by His Word of the Gospel, which He causes to be preached within His Church on earth. As the Magi were guided by the promises of Holy Scripture to find and worship the Christ Child with His mother in the house (Matt. 2:5-11), so does He call disciples from all nations by the preaching of His Word. (from LCMS.org)

Stewardship Report

The Stewardship Board will be taking down the Christmas decorations **Saturday, January 3**, from 9-11am. This is right before Epiphany (January 6). Casey's breakfast pizza (bacon and sausage) will be provided.

We will be hosting a Bunco night on **Saturday, January 31** from 6:30-8:30pm in the Family Life Center. Bunco is a fast-paced dice game with six rounds; whoever has the highest score wins. Treats and hot chocolate will be served. Please join us in fighting off cabin fever!

The Property Board has been serving donuts and coffee in December. The Board of Education will serve in January. The Youth Board will serve in February.

In His Service,
Ken Kise
Stewardship Board Chairperson

Sync Our Church Directory to Your Mobile Device

Now you can sync our church directory directly to your Apple, Android or Kindle Fire device with a **FREE** app!

Search for other members, and then email, call or text – right from the directory app.

It's Easy!

1. Go to your device's App Store.
2. Search for Instant Church Directory.
3. Enter your email as it's listed in our church directory.
4. Follow the directions on screen to complete the login process.



Available on the
App Store

ANDROID APP ON
Google play

amazon
Kindle fire



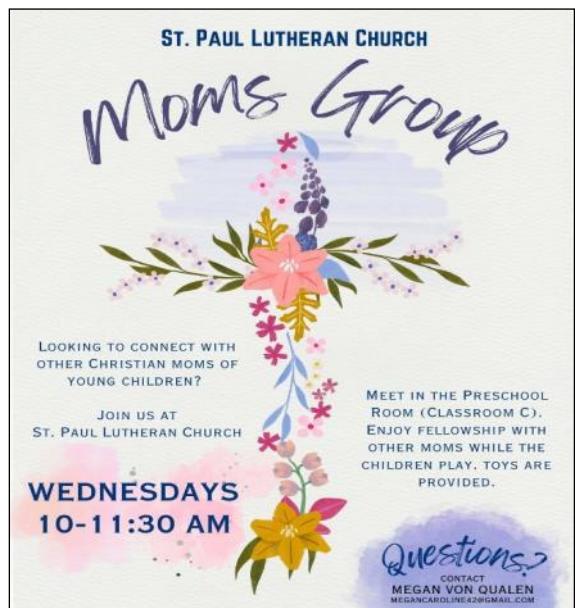
Nursing Home MINISTRY

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 2:30pm on January 18
- Rock Creek at 2pm on January 20
- Mill Pond at 2pm on January 25

Lady Diners

Lady Diners meet on **Tuesday, January 6** at Chili'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.



Update from Vicar Jarrod Thomas

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from the Lord Jesus Christ,

This month at ULC has been quite busy with Advent and Christmas being upon us. We have had special Advent midweek services that I planned out, and we preached on a few major sections of Zechariah, looking at how the prophet displayed the coming Christ especially through Joshua, the high priest at the time of Zechariah. It has been a delightful book to preach on, as it is one of my favorite books of the Old Testament. I am also preaching on Christmas Eve, which is going to be a joy for me.

We have been slowly continuing through Titus on Sunday mornings, but I am hoping to finish the first chapter before the new year. My two classes, Greek and Confessions, have been going well. With the semester coming to a close at our universities, we will have a little bit of a break once Christmas is over, which will be a nice chance to finish planning and preparing for the Spring semester events and Lenten midweek services.

We've also had a lot of Christmas trees to put up and decorate this month. In my living quarters, I put up a little tree with a few ornaments for myself. Then, we put up and decorated a massive tree for the chancel here. We also put up a tree in the narthex and decorated it. Finally, a group of us guys went on "The Great Christmas Tree Hunt" in Wisconsin this last weekend to get a tree for the first floor of Luther House.

I will be in town for part of the week after Christmas, so I am looking forward to seeing you all then! I want to thank LWML for continuing to support me! It is a huge blessing for me as I learn how expensive it is to feed myself and keep myself put together.

Blessings in Christ,
Vicar Jarrod Thomas

Photos —

Top right: My Christmas tree on a table in my living quarters. Middle: The Christmas tree in our Narthex. Bottom left: The Christmas tree in our chancel. Bottom right: The great Christmas tree hunting party, after a long day of driving and bitter cold (it got down to -10 in Wisconsin).



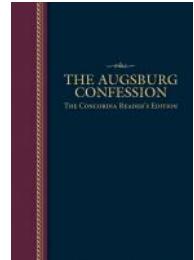
January Bible Studies at St. Paul

BASIC Bible Study

Thursday, January 8, 22, 29 at 10:00am. Pastor Kottlowski continues the study of Romans, following the Apostle Paul on a course through the context of the doctrine of justification and its joyous outflow in the life of the Christian.

Homebuilders

Sunday, January 4 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.



Men's Fellowship & Bible Study

Men of all ages are invited to join in fellowship time and a Bible study each Thursday night at 7:00pm. Beginning January 8 they will be studying *The Augsburg Confession*.

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

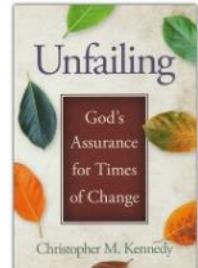
Sundays at 9:30am in the FLC. Grab your coffee (in a reusable cup of course) and head into the FLC for *The Who, What, When, Where, Why of It All*. Join us as we explore all that it means that Jesus descends from heaven to be with us in the Divine Liturgy, why we do what we do, say what we say, sing what we sing, and even dress how we dress! We'll explore the Liturgy as we experience it on Sunday mornings, we'll dig into Holy Scripture especially in Leviticus and Hebrews, we'll hear from the Confessions and from other work of Martin Luther, and we'll explore the new Companion to the Services from CPH and other resources on what happens in worship.

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. Each Sunday from 9:30–10:30am, Junior youth gather with Dave and Senior youth with Laura for conversational Bible study. Together we'll explore Christ's teachings and rejoice in the many wonders of God's grace! They will not meet on January 4 or 18.

Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Study

Thursday, January 15 at 10:00am. Led by Pastor Kottlowski. They are continuing with the devotional book entitled *Unfailing: God's Assurance for Times of Change* by Rev Christopher M. Kennedy. The author, Pastor Kennedy, uses examples from the prophet Samuel's life to illustrate and teach God's promises to be with us during life's many changes.



LWML Meets Tuesday, January 13

Dear Lutheran Ladies — You are personally invited to join us at our monthly Women in Mission (aka LWML) get-togethers on the second Tuesday of the month, as well as participate in our special events. Our next meeting is on **Tuesday, January 13** at 6:30pm at St Paul. We'll have some fellowship time along with a hands-on mission project and discussion on upcoming ways to serve in the church and community. Attend when you can - we'd love to have you (no previous experience necessary!)!

As we look back on 2025, so many wonderful outreach and serving opportunities were planned and enjoyed. Some include: visiting and financially supporting a room at Hope's Women & Children Shelter; served multiple organizations through projects completed at our annual Mission Workshop; meals and desserts served to support church events and catechumen classes; made bookmarks for church hymnals; hosted bingo at AHEPA Senior Center; LWML Sunday; our fifth annual Craft & Vendor Fair; supported St. Paul related seminary students; Advent by Candlelight; altar guild; and the purchase of Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies; made and donated fleece tie blankets to Joppa; handcrafted and sent out over 400 greeting and encouragement cards; had connections with our youth through "kid watch" events; personalized confirmation and graduation gifts; and prepared Christmas program gifts. And, in between it all, we also enjoyed some time building relationships through dinners, playing games, devotions, and working on events.

These opportunities are a wonderful testament to the serving mindset at our church, the work of our faithful crew of servants, those who pray for us, and the newbies who have jumped into our fun craziness. So, as you're thinking about 2026, keep LWML in mind and come when you can.

It's been a pleasure serving with you in 2025 and we can't wait to see where our mission mindedness takes us in 2026! See you on January 13!

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



Building Healthy Families

The beginning of a New Year can bring feelings of anticipation, excitement, and hope as we start with a clean slate, our resolutions to keep. Still looking for ideas that will bring new life to your New Year?

How about one of these —

- Read from Scripture 15 minutes every day
- Go to church every Sunday (or during the week if your church offers services)
- Set aside 20 minutes at the end of the day to pray
- Join a Bible study group
- Memorize a new Bible verse each week

Don't give up! It takes six weeks of doing something repeatedly to make it a habit. Happy and blessed New Year to you and your family! — *Lutheran Family Service*

Midweek Begins January 14

It's back! After breaking for Christmas and New Year's, Midweek begins again on **Wednesday, January 14**. All ages are invited to join us for a meal from 5:00-6:00pm, Bible studies and Confirmation 6:00-7:00pm and service at 7:00pm.

Pastor Newton • Adults

Caitlin Remington • High School

Laura Nelson • Confirmation

Alyssa Wendzel • 4th-5th Grades

Amber Giese • 2nd-3rd Grades

Karen Kisker • Kindergarten-1st Grades

Joyce Binneboese • PreK

The nursery team is also available during the Bible study hour!



January 19

Songshine KIDS

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

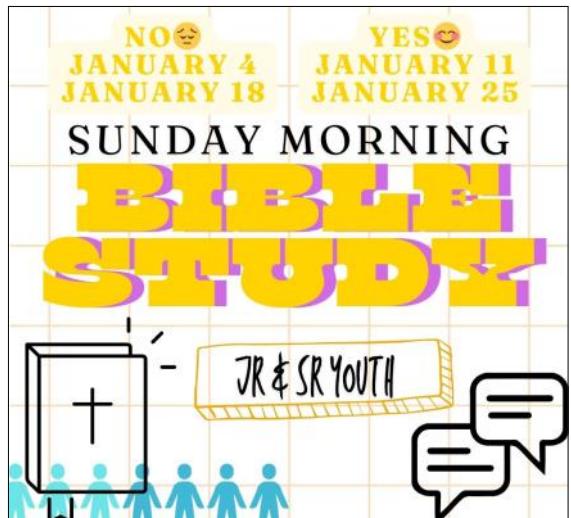
Afterward, stick around as we learn about **JESUS** through **SONG, DANCE, STORIES & MORE!**

AGES 0-5 FREE 10-11 AM 1ST & 3RD MONDAYS

Adult participation encouraged. Complimentary coffee provided.



Our first informational meeting about the 2026 Higher Things Conference (June 30 – July 1 in St. Louis, MO) will be **Sunday, January 25** from 11:45am–12:15pm in the Youth Room. PRO TIP: Take a few minutes to review the materials Laura Nelson shares ahead of time so you have a handle on the basics. This meeting will last 30 minutes or less. Important: Attending does not commit you to the trip. Parents and students ages 14–19 are encouraged to attend together. We hope to see a room full of smiling faces!



January Youth Calendar

Jan. 4 — Fellowship only. No Sunday school or Bible classes

Jan. 4 — Junior Youth Sunday Funday Noon-2:00pm

Jan. 7 — Worship only 7:00pm. No Midweek or meal

Jan. 11 — Youth Bible Studies 9:30-10:30am

Jan. 11 — Senior Youth Sunday Funday Noon-2:00pm

Jan. 14 — Midweek 5-7:30pm (Supper, Study and Service)

Jan. 18 — Confession of Saint Peter with the Rite of Confirmation 10:45am

Jan. 18 — No Junior or Senior Youth Bible Studies. Sunday School for preK—5th grade only

Jan. 21 — Midweek 5-7:30pm (Supper, Study and Service)

Jan. 25 — Junior and Youth Bible Studies 9:30-10:30am

Jan. 25 — Parent & Teen Higher Things Conference Info Meeting 11:45am-12:15pm

Jan. 25 — Mill Pond Service and Sunday Sips 1:40pm-3:00pm

Jan. 28 — Midweek 5-7:30pm (Supper, Study and Service)



Junior youth is kicking off the new year with a Sunday Funday on **January 4** designed to reconnect and have a blast! Expect high-energy games, tasty treats, a short devotion, and lots of time to laugh, move, and just be together again. It's all about fun, friendship, and getting back into the groove as a group. Drop off at Noon and pick up at 2:00pm. We can't wait to reconnect and have some serious fun!



Sunday, January 11 the senior youth are heading off campus to tackle an escape room together—working as a team, thinking fast, and enjoying time together outside our usual space. It's a fun way for students to spend time together and do something a little different. Friends are always welcome!

November Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting November 18, 2025, 6:30pm. In attendance: Pastor Joel Newton, Director of Youth Ministry Laura Nelson, Tim Davies, Mike Giese, Adam Haselhuhn, Ken Kise, Dave Reddel, Josh Remington, Duane Suhr, and Jennifer Thompson. Absent: Amber Giese, Joel Ott, Megan von Qualen, and Mike Sickels. Devotion led by Pastor Newton on Hebrews 4:9-16 with excerpts from *To Live with Christ*.

October 21 meeting minutes motion to approve: Jennifer Thompson, seconded to approve: Adam Haselhuhn, Approval: unanimously approved.

Staff reports from Pastor Newton and Laura Nelson. Motion to approve staff reports: Ken Kise, seconded to approve: David Reddel. Approval: unanimously approved

Financial report motion to approve report: Jennifer Thompson, seconded to approve: Adam Haselhuhn Approval: unanimously approved.

Board Reports (provided by the following members)

Education - Amber Giese (written form only)

Children & Family - Megan von Qualen (written form only)

Evangelism – Josh Remington

Youth - Jennifer Thompson

Stewardship - Ken Kise

Elders - Adam Haselhuhn

Property – no report

Motion to approve board reports: Tim Davies, seconded to approve: Mike Giese

Approval: unanimously approved

Old Business

None

New Business

Pastor Kottlowski housing allowance: \$15,000 - this will not increase his salary, just allocate this portion towards housing. Motion to approve: Josh Remington, seconded to approve: Adam Haselhuhn Approval: unanimously approved.

Nominations for Synod president, vice president, and regional president: Nominations to be brought up at the voters assembly.

Budget: David went through the proposed budget numbers with council members. No changes were made to the draft provided. Motion to approve: Ken Kise, seconded to approve: Jennifer Thompson Approval: unanimously approved. The plan is to place December voters assembly material into member's mail slots this Sunday.

Next meeting – December 16, 2025, 6:30pm at Suhr's residence. Motion to adjourn: Mike Giese, seconded to approve: Ken Kise, Approval: unanimously approved

Lord's Prayer recited to end the meeting.

JANUARY 2026

ELDER OF THE WEEK

04: Peter von Qualen
11: Steve Bradley
18: Gary Hauge
25: Jon Jero

ALTAR COMMITTEE

Sandy & Steve Townsend

02: CHRISTOPHER MARVIN

Kyle Strothcamp
03: Darwin Rohlfsen
04: Lauren Harken
06: Rod Silvey
07: Julie Hodges
10: Tammy Grant
12: Walker Allen
13: Becky Thomas
14: Jim Anderson
15: Blaine Giese
16: Stephanie Rosing
18: Emily Ebert
25: Jacob Hubbard

19: Bethany Coop
20: Lucas Juhl
21: Bernard Griffin
22: Lori Wesack
25: Curt Hora
Jacob Hubbard
27: Doe Davidson
28: Josh Krehbiel
Zachariah Watt
29: Tyler Wangsness
30: Cookie Brown
Arlan Jans
Barb Kunst
31: Jaren Buls
Mike Giese
Diane Halbur
Kelly Woerdehoff

ALTAR FLOWERS

04: Betty & Ken McConnell
11: Dewayne McGohan, Rod Silvey
18: Betty Berlau, Jon Gerths
25: Jacob Hubbard

OFFERING COUNTERS

January 4

Dewayne McGohan, Rod Silvey

January 11

Betty Berlau, Donna Stoell

January 18

Betty Berlau, Jon Gerths

January 25

Dan Deppe, Jon Gerths

USHERS

January 4 & 11

8:00am — Les Stave, Jeff Fahrmann, Cael Fahrmann, Colby Fahrmann
10:45am — David Reddel, Mark Lauthen

January Wedding Anniversaries

06: Malisa & Tim Davies
10: Dianne & Sherwin Buls

January 18 & 25

8:00am — Ray Marvin, Randy Sunderman, Curt Hora
10:45am — Tim Krehbiel, Steve Bradley (18th), Eric Bradley (25th)

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<i>31 Offices closing at Noon</i>	<i>1 Offices Closed</i>	2	3
<i>4</i> 8:00am Worship Service Fellowship in FLC 10:45am Worship Service 12-2pm Jr. Youth Sunday Funday 4:00pm Homebuilders	<i>5</i> 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:45am Worship Service 12-2pm Jr. Youth Sunday Funday 4:00pm Homebuilders	<i>6</i> 11:30am Lady Diners 5:30pm Youth Board Meeting	<i>7</i> 10:00am Moms Group 7:00pm Service	<i>8</i> 9:30am Chapel 10:00am BASIC Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	9	10
<i>11</i> 8:00am Worship Service 9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Bible Studies 10:45am Worship Service 12-2pm Sr. Youth Sunday Funday	<i>12</i> 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:45am Worship Service 12-2pm Sr. Youth Sunday Funday	<i>13</i> 6:30pm LWML 6:30pm Elders Meeting	<i>14</i> 10:00am Moms Group 5:00-6:00pm Meal 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 7:00pm Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	<i>15</i> 9:30am Chapel 10:00am Ladies Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	16	17
<i>18</i> 8:00am Worship Service 9:15am Sunday School (PreK-5th only) 10:45am Worship Service & Rite of Confirmation Noon Catechumenate 2:30pm Sunny View Service	<i>19</i> 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:00am Sunshine Kids Service	<i>20</i> 6:30pm Council Meeting	<i>21</i> 10:00am Moms Group 5:00-6:00pm Meal 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 7:00pm Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	<i>22</i> 9:30am Chapel 10:00am BASIC Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	23	24
<i>25</i> 8:00am Worship Service 9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Bible Studies 10:45am Worship Service 11:45am Parent/Teen Meeting Noon Catechumenate 2:00pm Mill Pond Service (In Sr. Youth Service & Sunday Sips)	<i>26</i> 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:00am Sunshine Kids Service	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i> 10:00am Moms Group 5:00-6:00pm Meal 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 7:00pm Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	<i>29</i> 9:30am Chapel 10:00am BASIC Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	30	31
						Bunco Night 6:30pm-8:30pm