

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Greetings! In *The Lutheran Difference Adult Study*, we have just finished up the second chapter on Law and Gospel. Luther, as a young monk, was acutely aware of what scripture had to say about his own sin and well-deserved condemnation, but he knew little of the comforting doctrine of God the Justifier and Savior. He came to know its comfort only after he had learned to distinguish between Scripture's two main themes: law and gospel. As Luther stated, "When I discovered the proper distinction – namely, that the law is one thing, and the gospel is another – I made myself free."

The Law shows us God's will and reveals our sin; the gospel proclaims our salvation in Christ. When we confuse these two doctrines, we remain confused about ourselves and about our God. Lutherans believe that the proper application of Law and Gospel is imperative, so that sinners are brought to repentance through the condemnation of the Law and are justified through faith in the promises of the Gospel.

We have been learning that the Lutheran interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, which comfort us and make us free, differs greatly from how other Christian denominations interpret scripture. As a result, our doctrines also differ. The most striking difference is in our understanding of salvation. Lutherans believe that salvation belongs to all who believe that Christ sacrificed himself on the cross for their salvation (the Gospel). The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus himself was born under the law, that he perfectly fulfilled the Law's demands in his earthly life, and that he suffered the condemnation of the Law in his atoning death. These things he did in our place, for our sake. This is our great comfort: all that we cannot do, Christ has done for us.

The Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches both teach that salvation ultimately depends on the Christian's obedience to God's law. This requires them to lower the requirements of the law, though Jesus commanded us in Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." And who of us is perfect? In this teaching, salvation is not assured, but it is a prize that must be earned.

The Baptists, Wesleyans, and Methodists teach that salvation ultimately depends on the Christian's decision to follow Christ. For these denominations, the obedience to the law has been lessened to a simple decision, sometimes called an altar call. And yet is not every decision that we make a choice between following Jesus and not following Jesus? Each time we get angry we are killing our neighbor in our hearts, which reflects that we are not, in fact, following Jesus. Jesus tells us clearly in John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you."

The Reformed and Presbyterian Churches teach that salvation is never certain, as it is given only to the elect, those whom God has pre-chosen. In the *Canons of Dort* Article 12, members of the Reformed Church of America are encouraged to look for signs that they are elected "by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God's Word — such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on." So, feelings are the barometer used to know whether a person has been elected and will be saved, thereby offering no assurance or comfort.

Finally, the Liberal Churches, such as the United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and Unitarians, believe that salvation pertains only to the betterment of this life. No assurance of eternal life or salvation is to be found in these teachings, therefore there is no comfort to be found either.

Each Sunday you are invited to worship to hear God's law to repent you and God's Gospel, which raises you up to new life through the forgiveness of sins. Through Word and sacrament, our Lord chooses you as his own and renews his promise that you live now and forever with him in eternal life. See you in church!

Love from your sister in Christ,
Pr. Tricia Mattson

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Council Meeting-January 11, 2023 7:45 p.m.

Vice-Chairman John Mueller called the January meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. in Room 101. Members present were John Mueller, Angel Clemon, Sarah Groebner, Jacob Marz, Randy Wendt, Tim Vogel, Pastor Tricia and Jeff Krueger. Also present was Katie Mueller, Parish Coordinator and Anita Jensen, Financial Secretary. Bill Vogel was absent.

Pastor led the group in a prayer.

M/S/P to approve the Secretary's minutes from the December meeting.

M/S/P to approve the Financial Report as printed. M/S/P to pay the December benevolence. Anita reported that the bill for the electrical work for the new boiler installation was \$4,764.61 which will be paid out of the Undesignated Memorials as agreed upon by the Church Council earlier.

Building and Grounds Report:

- We are on the schedule for the new carpet to be installed for the lower north ramp entrance. Will be notified when ready to install.
- Krause Construction has not come to check the steeple problem.

Parish Education Report:

- M/S/P for St. Paul's to host Vacation Bible School June 11-15, 2023.
- M/S/P to pay ¼ of the cost for students to attend Ingham Bible Camp this summer. Parish Education will pay ½ and families will cover the other ¼ of the payment. The church's part will come out of the Spiritual Growth Fund.
- M/S/P for the Luther League to attend the "Quake" Event March 17-19, 2023 in the Twin Cities.

Pastor's Report:

Visitation

- Visited with and gave Holy Communion to members in their homes, in hospitals, at nursing homes and at assisted living residences.

Worship

- Led worship with Holy Communion at St. John's Circle of Care on January 10, 2023.
- Presided at the funeral of Joseph McGonigal at

Sturm Funeral Home December 31, 2022.

- Led worship for the Christmas Eve Worship Service on December 24, 2022.

Parish Education

- Leading Bible Study at The Maples on Mondays at 3:00 p.m.
- Leading Bible Study on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m.
- Teaching confirmation on Wednesday nights.
- Christmas party finally held January 11, 2023.
- Leading the Lutheran Difference Adult Study on Sundays at 10:10 a.m.
- Attended the Parish Education meeting on January 9, 2023.

Community

- Issued four SAFE vouchers to neighbors in need.
- Submitted an article to the Advance-Press December 20, 2022 entitled *Always Christmas*.
- Attended the girl's 7th and 8th grade basketball games on January 5, 2023.
- Attended the High School Music Department's Vocal Christmas Concert January 7, 2023.
- Attended the boy's 7th and 8th grade basketball games on January 10, 2023.

Continuing Education

- Planning to attend the Augustana District Theological Conference in Bloomington February 6-7, 2023.
- Taking vacation January 17-23, 2023.

Old Business:

- Nominating Committee—Bill and John are working on securing names for open positions.
- M/S/P to approve the 2023 Budget that will be presented at the Annual Meeting.
- All reports are due to Katie by January 16 for the Annual Report.
- The auditing committee will meet on January 17 to audit the books. Committee members are Elsie Groebner, Jo Schwartz and Nancy Renner.
- Ten letters were sent to neighbors of the church regarding snow removal on the parking lot. Vehicles need to be removed when snow needs to be cleared.
- Anita reported on the Church Insurance. Our Grinnel policy expires at 12:01 a.m. January 15. A new insurance policy was accepted from Church Mutual to cover our needs.

New Business:

- Jordan Milbrath from Prairie Plans was present to review the church's investment portfolio performance over the past year.
- M/S/P to approve the Annual Meeting Agenda with three additions. Under Old Business: discussion on the Music Fund. Under New Business: tithe incoming monies to designated funds and increase the Spiritual Growth Budget to \$3,500.
- M/S/P to close the Elementary Youth Group checking account at Red Rock Bank since the group no longer exists. The funds will be added to the Bible Camp Scholarship Fund.
- Ash Wednesday and Lenten Services – M/S/P to hold services at 7 p.m. on Wednesday evenings. Lenten meals will be served each week from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Katie will put up sign-up sheets to serve the meals.
- Holy Week Services – M/S/P to hold Maundy Thursday Service (April 6) at 7 p.m., Good Friday Service (April 7) at 7 p.m. and Easter Sunday Service (April 9) at 9 a.m. There will be only one service on Easter which worked well last year.
- St. John's Home requested a \$85 donation for the year—\$60 for bingo and \$25 for birthday party. M/S/P to make donation to St. John's.
- The 2023 Church Council will be installed during the 9 a.m. worship service on February 5, 2023.
- The SAFE Annual Meeting will be held Tuesday, January 24 at 7:15 p.m. at St. Johns Lutheran Church.
- New Member Orientation Classes will be held January 31, February 7 and February 21. New Member Sunday will be February 26.

M/S/P to adjourn at 9:09 p.m. Closed with the Lord's Prayer.
Next meeting will be Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 7:45 p.m.

~Jeff Krueger, Church Council Secretary

Our Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 29th following the 9am worship service. Luther League will be serving breakfast for a free will offering.

Deadlines:

Sunday Bulletin: Wednesday by 10 am.

Epistle: 20th of each month. Please call or email the church office with additions or changes for the bulletins or Epistle. stpaul_lutheran@hotmail.com

St Paul Attendance

Jan 1 ~ 36

Jan 8 ~ 63

Jan 15 ~ 69

Jan 22 ~ 42

St. Paul Mirror

*Numbers will be added in after the Annual Meeting on 1-29-23

Giving 1/15&1/22)	\$23,054	Gen Funds Rec'd YTD	\$25,956
Wkly amt. to meet budget	\$	Expenses YTD	<u>\$10,974</u>
Budget YTD	\$	Difference	\$14,982
Benevolence Budget	\$		
Benevolence Paid YTD	\$152.50		
Sunday School Offering	\$5	Thrivent Choice \$ Rec'd	\$39
		Amazon Smile YTD	\$

Thrivent Financial—As always, St. Paul Lutheran Church is grateful for your consideration when you make charitable giving plans. If you are a Thrivent Financial member eligible to direct Choice DollarsSM, we ask you to consider St. Paul Lutheran as you help direct Thrivent Financials charitable funds.

Church Directory! We have an online church Directory!

- * Go to <https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com/> and create a log-in account with your email the church office has on file. If you can't log in, let Katie know so we can get it entered!
- * If you don't have access to the internet and would like a printed copy of the directory, let Katie know.
- * Those with smartphones can easily download the Instant Church Directory app in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and have the directory at their fingertips!
- * The online directory can be updated constantly, so information should never be outdated! Email updated pictures, address or phone changes to Katie and they can be added instantly!

- Notice: Please update your phone numbers and/or email address with the church office!
- Several of the numbers we have are disconnected and we need to know how to get a hold of you!
- You can leave a note in the box outside of Katie's office, call or email the church office at 507-723-5880 or stpaul_lutheran@hotmail.com. We appreciate you keeping us updated!

Please pray for... Larry & Ruthie Potter, Al & Robin Groebner family, Kevin Wendt, Mae Meyer and Family, Dalores Stern, Dave Telecky (Jena Veenstra's dad), Larry Potter, Randy Wendt, Linda Fisher (Delmar Nelson's daughter), Jarrett Sharp (Jo Muske's brother), Bud Wendt, Marcia Schiller, Sherry Fenger; Cylee Graff, Shane Clemon, Ethan Langseth, Emily Wendt, Tabor Gluth and all those serving in the military, at home and abroad.

Prayer Chain —If you have a prayer concern you would like passed along, please call Jan Severson (723-6358) or the church office (723-5880). Please specify if you want the concern on (1) the Prayer Chain and/or (2) included in Sunday morning prayers which will be included for **two** Sundays unless otherwise specified or request is renewed.

February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 10:00 Ch. 8 Broadcast 6:00 Luther League Meeting 6:30 Confirmation 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	2	3 Office Closed	4
5 9:00 Worship 10:00 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Talk 10:10 Lutheran Difference Study 10:30 Ch. 8 Broadcast	6 No Bible Study Pastor at Continuing Ed	7 6:00 Bible Study 7:00 New Member Class 7:00 pm Ch. 8 Broadcast	8 10:00 Ch. 8 Broadcast 6:30 Confirmation 7:30 Choir Rehearsal 7:45 Church Council Meeting	9	10 Office Closed 2:00 BINGO @ SJLH	11
12 9:00 Worship 10:00 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Talk 10:10 Lutheran Difference Study 10:30 Ch. 8 Broadcast	13 3:00 pm The Maples Bible Study	14 6:00 pm Bible Study 7:00 pm Ch. 8 Broadcast	15 10:00 Ch. 8 Broadcast 6:30 Confirmation 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	16	17 Office Closed	18 10:00-3:30 First Communion Class
19 9:00 Worship 10:00 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Talk 10:10 Lutheran Difference Study 10:30 Ch. 8 Broadcast	20 3:00 pm The Maples Holy Communion 5:30 St. John's Home Annual Meeting	21 10:00 SJLH Worship 6:00 pm Bible Study 7:00 New Member Class 7:00 pm Ch. 8 Broadcast	22 Ash Wednesday 10:00 Ch. 8 Broadcast 5:30-6:30 Lenten Meal 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 Ash Wednesday Worship 8:00 Choir Rehearsal	23	24 Office Closed	25
26 9:00 Worship 10:00 Sunday School 10:00 Coffee Talk 10:10 Lutheran Difference Study 10:30 Ch. 8 Broadcast	27 3:00 pm The Maples Bible Study	28 6:00 pm Bible Study 7:00 pm Ch. 8 Broadcast	St. Paul Lutheran Church, 303 N Cass Ave, Springfield, MN 56087 Church Telephone: 507-723-5880 www.splespringfield.org Pastor's e-mail: pastortriciamattson@gmail.com Office e-mail: stpaul_lutheran@hotmail.com			

Worship Service Helpers

Date	Sound & Video	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Organist
2/5	Paul & Jonah	Mel Vogel	Grace Jacobs Molly Jacobs	Team 2	Jo Schwartz
2/12	John Mueller	Kurt Glaeseman	Nicholas Groebner Nathan Groebner	Team 3	Jeff Krueger
2/19	Russell Rogotzke	Jeanette Pidde	Hayden Gluth Brooklyn Anderson	Team 4	Jeff Krueger
Ash Wednesday 2/22	Tim Vogel	Paul Muske	Brayden Trapp Ali Trapp	Team 1	Jeff Krueger
2/26	Peter Heitzman	Daniel Kettner	Randee Dombek Abbygail Jeppesen	Team 2	Jo Schwartz

Usher Teams

- 1 - Delwin Beussman, Don Bloemke, John Marz, Paul Meidl, Nic Mays
- 2 - Doug Gatzlaff, Kurt Kratz, Dave Bittler
- 3 - Doug Schiller, Russell Rogotzke, Mark Buerkle, Jeremy Dove
- 4 - Tim Vogel, Scott Vogel, Kurt Glaeseman, Bill Vogel

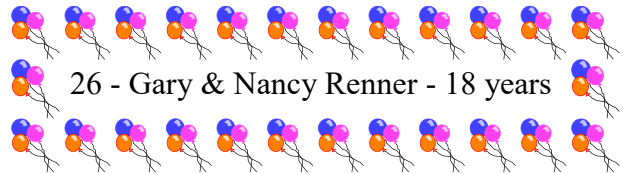
February Altar Guild

Kari Haugo

February Birthdays!



February Anniversaries!



Bring your empty egg cartons to the church kitchen or drop off at Katie's office.

SPLC New Member Orientation

We will be holding new member orientation sessions on Tuesdays, January 31, February 7 and 21, from 7:00-8:15 p.m. During the sessions, you will learn about St. Paul's, and we will watch and discuss short video clips on the Small Catechism. Expect the sessions to be thought provoking, challenging, and comforting! If needed, childcare can be arranged. Please share this information with others! You may RSVP for the sessions by contacting Katie or Pr. Tricia at 723-5880 or via email at stpaul_lutheran@hotmail.com or pastortrici-mattson@gmail.com.

We need 2 volunteers for BINGO on February 10th at 2:00 pm. Please let Katie know if you can help out!



Your 2022 Giving Statements are ready and are either in your mailbox here at church or have been mailed out.

St. Paul's is hosting Vacation Bible School this summer, June 11-15, 2023. Parish Ed is looking for volunteers to join the planning committee. If interested in helping, speak to a member of Parish Ed or let Katie know.

Augustana District Theological Conference Living in the Promise: A Conversation About Law and Gospel February 6-7, 2023 Bloomington, MN

This year's Convocation of the Cross topic "Living in the Promise" does not offer a resolution to this centuries-old debate, but rather a healthy and theologically rich conversation about law and gospel. We invite you to witness Dr. Robert Kolb and Dr. Steven Paulson discuss the topic and join the conversation as we live in Christ's promise together!

To register go to <https://augustanadistrict.org/2023-theological-conference/>

2023 Summer Bible Camp opportunities at Ingham Okoboji Bible Camp!

St. Paul's Spiritual Growth Fund and Parish Education will be issuing scholarships to those who register for one of these camps at Ingham Okoboji! Parish Ed will cover half of the cost and the Spiritual Growth Fund will cover one fourth of the cost of the Pathfinders, Trailbalzers, and Jr. High Camp, and they will cover the full cost of the Camp-in-a-Day camp.

Early Bird Registration ends on March 1st, so register today! Proof of registration should be sent the church office so I can mark you down for a scholarship! Brochures are located at the entrance to the sanctuary or you can check dates and register online at www.okoboji.org/register

We will be bringing back the Lenten Meals this year! Beginning with Ash Wednesday, February 22nd. The meals will be served from 5:30-6:30 pm followed by the Worship Services at 7:00 pm. Sign up in the fellowship hall to serve a meal!

The Annual Meeting of St. John Lutheran Home Corporation will be held on Monday, February 20, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. All delegates and interested parties are invited to attend. An agenda will be available at the meeting.

**St. Paul Lutheran
Church, LCMC**
303 N Cass Avenue
Springfield, MN 56087

Postmaster: Dated material
Please Deliver Promptly
Address Service Requested

Calendar Highlights - February 2023

18 - 1st Communion Class
22 - Ash Wednesday

Phone: 507-723-5880

Fax: 507-723-8712

Office Hours

Pastor: Tricia Mattson

Monday & Thursday 9-noon

Wednesday 1-4

Or by appointment

pastortriciamattson@gmail.com

Parish Coordinator: Katie Mueller
Monday-Thursday 8:00 am-noon
Email: stpaul_lutheran@hotmail.com

Housekeeping: Steve Lyle

Maintenance: Al Groebner

Financial Secretary: Anita Jensen
Fin_secretary@newulmtel.net

St. Paul EPISTLE is a publication of St. Paul Lutheran Church. It is published monthly to keep members and friends informed of programs and ministries of the church.

Articles may be submitted for publication subject to content.

Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. Worship

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Coffee Talk



Springfield Area Food Shelf hours
Tuesday 5:00pm – 7:00pm
Thursday 9:30am – 11:30am
625 N Jackson Ave - Springfield, MN 56087
(Springfield Clinic Lower Level)
507-723-3663 (FOOD)

We are on the Web!
www.splcspringfield.org