



St. Paul News

January 2023

St. Paul Lutheran Church

*The Lutheran Church -
Missouri Synod*

1050 10th Avenue
Granite Falls, MN 56241

Rev. Jonathan Varns
Pastor

860 11th Ave
Granite Falls, MN 56241
218-235-8493

shepherdofthecross@gmail.com

Church office:
320-564-2221

stpaulgf@embarqmail.com
www.stpaulgf.org

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. Paul Lutheran Church is to promote the worship of the Triune God as revealed in Holy Scriptures, by teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and administering the Sacraments, in order to equip people for Christian life and service.

Pastor's Message

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

It's that time of year when a lot of people are making a new year's resolution. This year, maybe among your resolutions, you should make a resolution to go to worship often. Make it a point to strengthen your faith and receive the gifts of God. Even if you already go to church weekly or don't make resolutions, here are 5 things you'll notice about going to our Lutheran Divine Service:

1) The Liturgy consists mostly of words from Scripture.

The traditional liturgy goes way back through Church history to even the first few centuries. Through 2000 years of wisdom, through plague and famine, poverty and prosperity, tyranny and freedom, the Church passes it down. The main reason it is still used is because it is almost entirely straight from Scripture. In fact, nearly all of the regular set parts of the liturgy are taken straight from the Bible. If someone would object to our liturgy, a fitting response might be "Which words of God do you think we shouldn't say?"

2) There is some chanting.

The Divine Service includes some chanting. Some pastors chant more than others. Chanting, with its flexible meter and flowing melodic line, is simply the way that a person can sing prose. Most of our songs today—whether hymns or raps—are metrical, with fixed patterns of rhythm and rhyme. They put music to poems. It is also possible to sing any sequence of words. That requires music that flows along with the pattern of speech. This is what chanting is.

3) I actually forgive you your sins.

"The pastor can't forgive sins! Only Jesus can do that!" Well, right, only Jesus can forgive sins. But Lutherans believe that God works through human beings. In the absolution, I usually say that I am called and ordained. God forgives sins through pastors, just as He gives us our daily bread through farmers and creates new life through mothers and fathers. The Scriptural warrant for human beings forgiving sins is clear. After His resurrection, Jesus breathed on His disciples, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld" (John 20:22-23).

4) You will hear a Law and Gospel Sermon.

I do not preach politics, pop psychology, or even Biblical principles for successful living. The sermon is based on one or more of the three Bible readings read in the service, but it will be handled in terms of the distinct Lutheran approach of Law and Gospel. The Law shows us our sins, and the Gospel shows us our savior. When we know that we are sinners and cannot save ourselves and believe that Jesus has died for us and offers us new life, we have saving faith, which, in turn, bears the fruit of love for our neighbors.

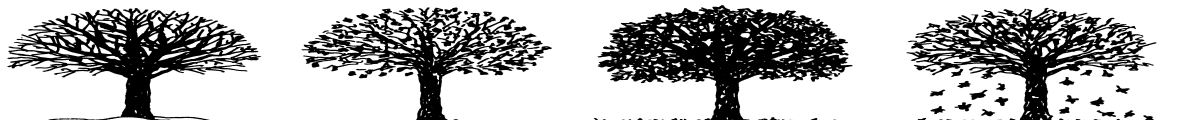
5) You must be catechized before you receive communion.

Closed communion is a Biblical practice. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:28-29 that no one should receive the Lord's Supper without examining oneself and discerning what you are receiving. We receive Christ every time we take communion, and we receive for the forgiveness of sins. It is necessary to know what you are receiving and why.

Our Divine Service creates a sense of transcendence and holiness. I hope you will appreciate it, whether you are a seasoned church-goer or a season church-goer. And if you make a resolution to attend more often, I pray you keep it up. The rewards of grace and truth are far worth it!

+God's Peace+

Pastor Jonathan Varns



As We Start the New Year

Council Meeting

Members of the Board of Elders and Church Council are reminded of their meetings on Monday evening, January 10th at 6 pm and 7 pm respectively. An item on the agenda will be to make nominations for the Church Council election which will be held at the March's Quarterly Voter's Meeting. Open positions are for a vice chairman, elder, trustee and secretary. If you would like to volunteer or encourage someone else, please let one of the board member know.

LWML News

The monthly "Noisy Offerings" are a success! Thanks to all of you who find pocket change again and again to fill our cans! December's offering was \$44.32 making the year total \$650.71. Again thanks for your support! This mite money will go toward LWML Missions.

The quarterly meeting of the LWML will be Monday, January 16th at 2:00 pm in the parish hall. There will be a short devotion followed by the business meeting. Coffee and treats will be served. All woman of the congregation are welcome!

Mark your calendar for the 2023 LWML 40th Convention this summer. It will be held in Milwaukee June 22-25.

Annual Reports

Anyone having any financial reports or other information to be included in the 2022 Annual Report is asked to have it at the church office by January 15th.

Church Directory

These directories contain member contact information, Ministry Groups (SAC) for each family, SAC serving guidelines, and the LWML Booklet. If you or a family member had a change of address, phone number or an e-mail address please let the office know. The directory will be available when changes to the SAC Groups have been finalized.

Lutheran Witness

Subscription cost for 2023 is \$25.80 and the magazine will be mailed directly to your home. Please call the church office if you would like to order or renew your current subscription. Orders must be received by January 31th.

Snow Policy

If Sunday Worship Service is cancelled, all other events for the day are also cancelled. If YME School classes are cancelled due to the weather, all church events for that day are also cancelled. The closing can be heard on KMGM-FM (105.5), KKRC-FM (93.9), KDMA-AM (1460) and also will be posted on Facebook. In regards to worship services during the winter season, please remember to **use your best judgment** in terms of going out in wintry weather. If it is unsafe for you to be out (even in your own driveway), don't go out. Although Pastor is glad to visit you in the hospital, he would rather visit you in your home! So, be safe; missing church due to weather is not an offense to God; remember how much he cares for you too.

Trivia Answers From December's Newsletter

1. c. Feeding trough
2. e. None of the above. The Bible doesn't even mention an "innkeeper" because the "inn" was probably more like a guest room in a house.
3. e. None of the above. The Bible doesn't say, we just assume that since Jesus was born in a stable that there were various barnyard animals.
4. e. None of the above. The "magi" saw the star and they were not kings, but astronomers.
5. d. Somewhere in Israel - there is always snow on Mt. Hermon.
6. d. An angel army - meaning literally thousands.
7. c. precious perfume
8. d. A spice used for burying people
9. e. We don't know. They were magi, not wise men - but the Bible doesn't give the number. Many people assume that there were three because of the three gifts. However, in ancient times these men usually traveled in caravans of ten to twelve, along with a full entourage for protection.
10. e. In a house.
11. b. A young child. The shepherds were there the night Jesus was born. The magi came months later.
12. c. Moved ahead of them and stopped over the place where Jesus was

The monthly newsletter is being downloaded to the web page at stpaulgf.org. You can find the newsletter under Ministries and the calendar under Events.

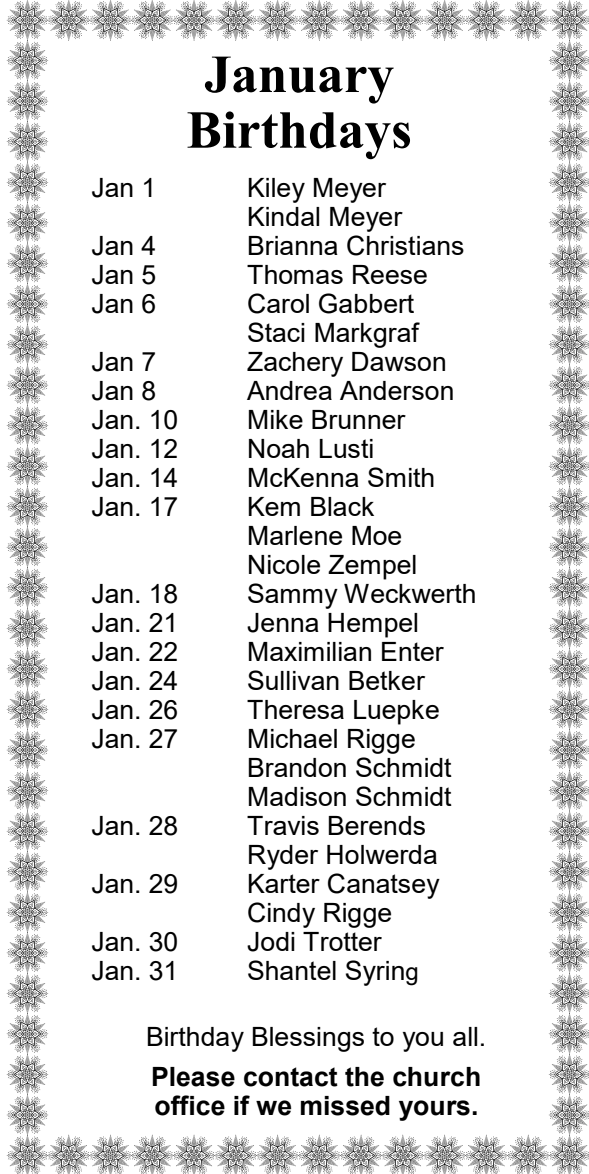
New rotation of the groups starting in 2023.

SAC groups serve as our greeters and ushers. If this is your month to serve, please prayerfully consider where you are able to and willing to help. The sheets are available on the narthex shelf.

SAC Group 4 SAC Group 1

Serving for January

Serving for February



January Birthdays

- Jan 1 Kiley Meyer
Kindal Meyer
- Jan 4 Brianna Christians
- Jan 5 Thomas Reese
- Jan 6 Carol Gabbert
Staci Markgraf
- Jan 7 Zachery Dawson
- Jan 8 Andrea Anderson
- Jan. 10 Mike Brunner
- Jan. 12 Noah Lusti
- Jan. 14 McKenna Smith
- Jan. 17 Kem Black
Marlene Moe
Nicole Zempel
- Jan. 18 Sammy Weckwerth
- Jan. 21 Jenna Hempel
- Jan. 22 Maximilian Enter
- Jan. 24 Sullivan Betker
- Jan. 26 Theresa Luepke
- Jan. 27 Michael Rigge
Brandon Schmidt
Madison Schmidt
- Jan. 28 Travis Berends
Ryder Holwerda
- Jan. 29 Karter Canatsey
Cindy Rigge
- Jan. 30 Jodi Trotter
- Jan. 31 Shantel Syring

Birthday Blessings to you all.
Please contact the church office if we missed yours.

- Banken, Jim and Janine
Baumann, Jayne
Bruss, Margie
Canatsey, Kristin
Donner, Jenelle
Donner, Jessica
Ebel, Colton and Emily
Edman, Tom and Tammy
Gabbert, Don and Jeanne
Hildahl, Dan and Valerie
Holtan, Marie
Hoyer, Lanny
Jeseritz, Tanya
Johnson, Mark
Keller, Katie
Kling, Verlyn and Barb
Kvam, Carrie
Kvam, Gordon
Kvam, LeRoy and Debra
Luepke, Mike and Pam
Meyer, Greg and Jackie
Meyer, Larry and Karla
Petersen, Loren and Marci
Reese, Tom
Rude, Odell and Carol
Schultz, Dennis and Phyllis
Skjefte, Dave and Val
Smith, Dennis and Lu-Ann
Steffen, Kerry and Julie
Timm, Craig and Susan
Timm, Daphne
Timm, Lee
Twedt, Charles and Kari
Wilking, Larry
Yeager, Dave and Darlene

- Berends, Anthony
Berends, Chris
Buchholz, Merlin and Sylvia
Christensen, Brad and Maria
Christensen, Rachel
Doose, Chad
Doose, Greg and Susan
Doose, Mike and Kristi
Erickson, Wes and Sue
Gabbert, Dennis
Gatchell, Dorian and Melanie
Guertin, Dave and Nancy
Hammer, Nancy
Hammer, Tracy
Hempel, Tim and Jody
Hildahl, Eric and Teresa
Johnson, Matthew
Klassen, Jim
Klassen, Kristin
Luepke, Travis and Jenn
Markgraf, Kevin
Myers, Troy and Jenna
Phinney, Katie
Putnam, Charlie
Rode, Judy
Ryer, Lisa, James and Jerrad
Ryer, Shannon
Schulte, Richard, Kelly and Kantrice
Staab, Tyler and Tara
Steffen, Don
Stengel, Gene and Pam
Stengel, Rob
Syring, Melodee

Contribution Statements

Contribution Statements for the year 2022 will soon be placed in your mail box. Please pick yours up as soon as possible. In compliance with an IRS regulation, a separate sheet (cream colored) has been included for those who contributed \$250 or more on one single day. This is to be given to your tax preparer along with your contribution statement. REMEMBER to throw your green 2021 envelopes and begin using your new Pink 2023 offering envelopes.

Vital Statistics

Attendance Report for December 2022

Date	Attend	Comm	Offering
Sun, Dec 4	55	44	\$6,502.95
Wed, Dec 7	16	---	\$465.00
Sun, Dec 11	44	43	\$4,693.00
Wed, Dec 14	19	---	\$210.00
Sun, Dec 18	45	36	\$1,430.00
Wed, Dec 21	Cancelled		
Sat, Christmas Eve	83	---	\$2,062.00
Sun, Christmas Day	41	24	\$1,580.00

2023 weekly offering needed - \$3,392.56

Start the year with Bible readings which are from both the Old and New Testaments that by the end of the year you will have read the **entire** Bible.

Daily Bible Readings For January

<u>Day</u>	<u>Morning Study</u>	<u>Evening Study</u>		
1	Genesis 1, 2	Matthew 1	16	Genesis 38, 39, 40 Matthew 12:22-50
2	Genesis 3, 4, 5	Matthew 2	17	Genesis 41 Matthew 13:1-32
3	Genesis 6, 7, 8	Matthew 3	18	Genesis 42, 43 Matthew 13:33-58
4	Genesis 9, 10, 11	Matthew 4	19	Genesis 44, 45 Matthew 14:1-21
5	Genesis 12, 13, 14	Matthew 5:1-26	20	Genesis 46, 47, 48 Matthew 14:22-36
6	Genesis 15, 16, 17	Matthew 5:27-48	21	Genesis 49, 50 Matthew 15:1-20
7	Genesis 18, 19	Matthew 6	22	Exodus 1, 2, 3 Matthew 15:21-39
8	Genesis 20, 21, 22	Matthew 7	23	Exodus 4, 5, 6 Matthew 16
9	Genesis 23, 24	Matthew 8	24	Exodus 7, 8 Matthew 17
10	Genesis 25, 26	Matthew 9:1-17	25	Exodus 9, 10 Matthew 18:1-20
11	Genesis 27, 28	Matthew 9:18-38	26	Exodus 11, 12 Matthew 18:21-35
12	Genesis 29, 30	Matthew 10:1-23	27	Exodus 13, 14, 15 Matthew 19:1-15
13	Genesis 31, 32	Matthew 10:24-42	28	Exodus 16, 17, 18 Matthew 19:16-30
14	Genesis 33, 34, 35	Matthew 11	29	Exodus 19, 20, 21 Matthew 20:1-16
15	Genesis 36, 37	Matthew 12:1-21	30	Exodus 22, 23, 24 Matthew 20:17-34
			31	Exodus 25, 26 Matthew 21:1-22

Thanks to those who donated a Poinsettia for our Christmas Services.



- Mike and Anne Brown in memory of loved ones
- Merlin and Sylvia Buchholz in memory of loved ones
- Larry and Nancy Cuklanz in memory of loved ones
- Dan and Kathy Enninga in memory of loved ones
- Wes and Sue Erickson in memory of loved ones
- Rolland and RaeAnn Hegna in memory of our parents
- Dorothy Ims in memory of Paul Ims
- Mary Kelly in memory of Barb Benson and loved ones
- LeRoy and Jan Peterson in memory of the Bottcher family
- Pastor and Phyllis Schultz in memory of our parents
- Jim and Denise Varns in memory of Jonathan's Grandparents
- Edward and Kathleen Varns
- and
- Kenny and Jackie Friedrichs
- Jim and Eileen Wegner in memory of loved ones