



St. Paul News

December 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

Chairman
Larry Cuklanz
320-5564-4969

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

Christmas is a season of hustle and bustle. No doubt about that. Presents for everyone in the family, as well as many friends. Decorations, inside and out. Big family meal. Travel. There is a lot of preparation that goes into Christmas. No one would ever go through December without preparing for Christmas.

But do you prepare spiritually? It is very tempting for so many people to gloss over the fact that the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ is the reason for Christmas. Even worse, many families get to Christmas too tired to do anything but serve the meal and open presents. It's sad that too many families spend their December toiling away only to come to Christmas without much energy for those things that really matter. Be honest - decorations, presents, intense travel, big family meals do not make Christmas what Christmas is.

What makes Christmas a meaningful Christmas is the celebration of Jesus Christ coming to us in flesh and blood. This was done for our salvation because in flesh and blood, Jesus died on the cross as payments for our sin. It's the celebration that all of this was done for us. Jesus Christ was born of Mary for us, just as Jesus Christ died for us.

Just as you would prepare for Christmas with decorations and presents and such, do not forget to prepare spiritually. Do not get to Christmas worn out and weary from all of the hustle and bustle, and be unable to receive and appreciate the gift of the birth of the Savior.

Advent is a time of preparation - spiritual preparation. Consider slowing down this December and focusing on that which matters most. To help, consider attending the midweek Advent service. It is a separate worship service, another opportunity to worship for the week, another chance to take a deep spiritual breath and with it the aroma of God's peace.

May God bless you this Advent season with a steadfast commitment to preparing spiritually for His coming. May God bless your Christmas celebrations and your Christmas preparations. May God bless you with a very Merry Christmas!

+God's Peace+

Pastor Jonathan Varns

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Council Notes

The monthly Board of Elders and Church Council meeting for December has changed to Tuesday the 5th. The times remain the same - Board of Elders at 6 pm followed by the council at 7 pm.

The Quarterly Voters' Meeting will meet Sunday, December 10th at 11 am. The 2024 Congregational Budget will be presented and the election for treasurer. All confirmed members who are 18 years of age and older are encouraged to this meeting and to share in the decision making of the congregation.



Bake Sale

A bake sale will be December 10th following the service. Proceeds from this sale will go towards St. Paul Lutheran's 125th Anniversary. If you would like to donate an item or two, please have it at church before the service that morning. We also ask that you mark a price on the items. You can contact Sue Erickson or Judy Rode if you have a request for any special ingredients.

Photo Directory

We will be doing our own 2024 Pictorial Directory and we are asking that you submit your own picture or family picture by emailing it to church or bring one into the church office (stpaulgf@embarqmail.com). You also have the option to come in and Jayne Baumann or Mary Hammer will be happy to take the picture for you. Anyone wishing to help with this project, contact Sue or the office. Deadline to submit is February 1st.

Member Directory

The 2024 Church Directory will be available in January. A copy of the old directory has been placed in the narthex where you may update the listings for yourself and any family members.

Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2024 will be placed in your mail boxes in early December. Please start to use the **blue** envelopes starting January 1, 2024.

Christmas Calendar

Sunday, December 24th
Christmas Eve Service - 6 pm

Monday, December 25th
Christmas Day - No Service

The Church Council decided since Sunday, December 24th will be the 4th Advent service at 9:30 am and the Christmas Eve service at 6 pm there will not be a Christmas Day service on Monday.

LWML News

Mites can do mitey things! The monthly "Noisy Offerings", which are always held the third Sunday, are a success! Thanks to all of you who find pocket change again and again to fill our cans! November offering was \$62.52. These offering will go toward LWML missions.

At the October 9th quarterly meeting ten organizations were designated to receive \$100 each this year. They included American Bible Society, Bethesda Lutheran Community, LCMS Global Missions, Avera GF Care Center, YMC Family Services, Concordia Seminary Food Bank at St. Louis and Ft. Wayne, Lutheran Island Camp Foundation, Eagles Nest, and Pueblo.

A special meeting was held after church on November 5th to address zone issues.

- 1) A survey was conducted regarding banners that are used at Minnesota North District Conventions.
- 2) Jane Remiger will be our zone delegate at the convention on June 3-5. Our society needed to submit a nominee for an alternate delegate. Mary Hammer will be our nominee.

Mark your calendar for the next St. Paul LWML quarterly meeting that will be Monday, January 15th at 2 pm in the parish hall. (Please note the time change.) Nancy Guertin and Kathy Enninga will serve. All ladies are invited to join us.

Boyd, Zion of Tyro Township, will host the 2024 Spring Rally for the Montevideo Zone. More info will be posted in the bulletin and the newsletter.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

An English Christmas carol where the twelve days in the song are the twelve days starting with Christmas Day to the day before Epiphany.

- * 1 partridge in the pear tree represents Jesus
- * 2 turtle doves – the Old and New Testaments
- * 3 French hens – faith, hope and love
- * 4 calling birds are the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John
- * 5 golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of The Old Testament
- * 6 geese a-laying – six days of creation
- * 7 swans a-swimming – sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit—Prophesy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy
- * 8 maids a-milking – the eight beatitudes
- * 9 ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit—Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control
- * 10 lords a-leaping are the ten commandments
- * 11 pipers piping stand for the eleven faithful disciples
- * 12 twelve drummers drumming symbolizes the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed

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.



Vital Statistics

November Attendance and Finances

<u>Date</u>	<u>Attend</u>	<u>Offering</u>
Sun, Nov 5	47	\$5,995.00
Sun, Nov 12	48	\$2,800.00
Sun, Nov 19	65	\$2,238.00
Wed, Nov 22	51	\$935.00
Sun, Nov 26	77	\$1,843.50

(Offering needed per Sunday in December to reach the 2023 budget is \$5,050.41)

December Birthdays

Dec 2	Lisa Baker Ethan Staab Donald Steffen
Dec 3	Nick Enninga
Dec 5	Ryan Luepke
Dec 10	Jeanne Gabbert
Dec 11	Julie Cuklanz
Dec 13	Kristi Klassen Katelyn Luepke
Dec 14	Pat Stengel Krystal Twedt
Dec 15	Rhett Brown
Dec 16	Darlene Yeager
Dec 17	Tracy Hammer Dan Hildahl
Dec 18	Judy Hempel Otto Luepke
Dec 19	Henry Soukup
Dec 20	Cheryl Bohlman
Dec 21	Alicia Lubrant Zachary Markgraf
Dec 22	DuWayne Galow
Dec 23	Rebecca Varns
Dec 24	Maria Christensen Pam Stengel
Dec 26	Nathan Canatsey
Dec 27	Jayne Baumann Vicki Patterson
Dec 28	Tyler Patterson Sydney Thompson
Dec 30	Janel Guertin Odell Rude
Dec 31	Taylor Hinz Sherwood Mason

Birthday Blessings to you all.

Please contact the church office if we missed yours.

Financials as of 11-27-2023

Year to Date Actual Contributions	\$146,062.57
Year to Date Contributions Needed	<u>\$161,711.44</u>
Difference	(\$15,648.87)
Year to Date Actual Expenses	\$160,149.08
Year to Date Budgeted Expenses	<u>\$161,711.44</u>
Difference	\$1,562.36

SAC Groups will be our greeters and ushers.
 If this is your month to serve, please prayerfully consider
 where you are able to and willing to help.

A new rotation of the SAC groups will start in 2024.
 SAC Group 1 will start the new year serving for January.

Group 3

Serving for December

Baker, Lisa
 Brown, Mike and Anne
 Cuklanz, Larry and Nancy
 Duenwald, Karley
 Freitag, Avis
 Gabbert, Carol
 Galow, DuWayne and Karen
 Hegna, Rolland and RaeAnn
 Hewitt, Loretta
 Hildahl, Linda
 Hoff, Jason and Molly
 Ims, Dorothy
 Iverson, Pam
 Johnson, Jennifer
 Just, Wes and Norma
 Kelly, Mary
 Kvam, Curtis
 Nelson, Carol
 Olson, LuAnn
 Peterson, LeRoy and Jan
 Quintal, Teresa
 Reinke, Gerald and Darlene
 Rigge, Vernon and Anita
 Rush, Barb
 Schmidt, Deven and Jill
 Schmidt, Douglas Jr. and Darla
 Steffen, Boyd
 Streich, Eugene
 Streich, Linda
 Trotter, Donnie and Jodi
 Ulven, Lorna
 Van Sickle, Eric and Jane
 Winters, Kelly

Group 1

Serving in January

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
 Phinney, Katie
 Putnam, Charlie
 Rode, Judy
 Ryer, Lisa
 Ryer, Shannon
 Schulte, Richard and Kelly
 Saab, Tyler and Tara
 Steffen, Don
 Stengel, Gene and Pam
 Stengel, Rob
 Syring, Melodee

Daily Bible Readings for December

<u>Day</u>	<u>Morning Study</u>	<u>Evening Study</u>
1	Ezek. 45,46	II Peter 3
2	Ezek. 47,48	I John 1
3	Daniel 1,2	I John 2
4	Daniel 3,4	I John 3
5	Daniel 5,6	I John 4
6	Daniel 7,8	I John 5
7	Daniel 9,10	II John 1
8	Daniel 11,12	III John 1
9	Hosea 1-4	Jude 1
10	Hosea 5-8	Rev. 1
11	Hosea 9-11	Rev. 2
12	Hosea 12-14	Rev. 3
13	Joel 1-3	Rev. 4
14	Amos 1-3	Rev. 5
15	Amos 4-6	Rev. 6
16	Amos 7-9	Rev. 7
17	Obad. 1	Rev. 8
18	Jonah 1-4	Rev. 9
19	Micah 1-3	Rev. 10
20	Micah 4,5	Rev. 11
21	Micah 6,7	Rev. 12
22	Nahum 1-3	Rev. 13
23	Habak. 1-3	Rev. 14
24	Zeph. 1-3	Rev. 15
25	Haggai 1-2	Rev. 16
26	Zech. 1-3	Rev. 17
27	Zech. 4-6	Rev. 18
28	Zech. 7-9	Rev. 19
29	Zech. 10-12	Rev. 20
30	Zech. 13,14	Rev. 21
31	Malachi 1-4	Rev. 22

Social Activity Committee

2024 Serving Schedule

Group 1

Serving for January, May, September.

Group 2

Serving for February, June, October.

Group 3

Serving for March, July, November.

Group 4

Serving for April, August, December.

125th Anniversary

Sunday, September 22, 2024 we will recognize the 125th Anniversary of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Granite Falls, MN. A planning meeting is scheduled for December 14th at 1 pm in the parish hall. All suggestions and ideas how to celebrate this event are welcomed.

Portals of Prayer for January - March
are available in the narthex.