



St. Paul Lutheran Church

*The Lutheran Church -
Missouri Synod*

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Granite Falls, MN 56241

Rev. Jonathan Varns
Pastor

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Chairman
Larry Cuklanz
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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

St. Paul News February 2024

Pastor's Message

A few weeks ago, I announced that Ash Wednesday would be on Valentine's Day. I joked, but was also serious that the best place you could be on Valentine's Day is at Divine Service.

In fact, I often teach things like this. Confirmation classes, Bible study, and premarital counseling. Because I find that Christians, even those who have been members of the Church since birth, frequently follow the advice of our culture rather than that of the Church.

For example, our culture encourages young people to "test drive" their partners to see if they are "sexually compatible." This includes things like cohabitation before marriage, premarital sex, and, in general, acting as though you are married, without being married. Aside from being sinful, and aside from giving the couple false sense of commitment, there are many problems of cohabitation before.

Here's just a few: Cohabitators report higher levels of alcoholism, twice as many episodes of aggression, three times higher rates of depression, more frequent disagreements, more fights and violence, and lower levels of fairness and happiness. Those who got married after premarital cohabitation had greater marital instability, lower marital satisfaction, and poorer communication in marriage, often leading to divorce, which is nearly 50% in our culture. Divorce rates among Christian couples who go to Church and pray with each other frequently is less than .01%. Crazy huh?

My point? Following the advice of our culture with regards to marriage and relationships leads to a coin-flip on whether your marriage will work or not. Following God's Word on your relationships leads to more happiness, more fulfillment, and less problems. This is not to say there aren't exceptions, but why chance it?

So, back to Valentine's Day. What's the best way to celebrate it? Well, practically speaking, restaurants and other attractions will be packed, sitters will be harder to find, Ubers or DDs will be stressed with extra work, and nearly all of the things one can do on Valentine's Day can be done on any day of the year.

And what about the Church? St. Valentine was a Roman priest or Bishop in the 3rd century who was martyred on February 14th, 269 for ministering to persecuted Christians. While there's nothing wrong with feasting, wining and dining, and participating in marital courtship, if you know what I mean, that is, assuming you are married on the last part, it is fitting to give God thanks for such a man as St. Valentine and to mourn sin's effects on humanity which would lead to such persecution on the day of his commemoration.

What good news than, that on Valentine's Day this year, we have the Divine Service of Ash Wednesday, where you can give thanks to God for His endless grace and lament our sinfulness with the donning of ashes. Furthermore, such attending the Divine Service, such praying, and such feasting on our Lord's Body and Blood, will help to bring lasting happiness and fulfillment to your marriage.

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Items of Interest

Lent

Lent is a season of preparation leading up to Easter. It is the forty days plus the six Sundays before Easter. For centuries, it has been observed as a special time of self-examination and penitence. Lent is a time to recognize what we truly need, and to prepare for the joy of Easter. It is NOT a time to punish ourselves.

Following the LWML's Chili And Soup Supper is the

Ash Wednesday Communion Service

on February 14th at 7 pm

(Midweek classes, Handbells and Mixed Choir will not meet that evening.)

Following Wednesdays schedule is:

- K - 6th grade Midweek class 5 - 6 pm
- Midweek Lenten Service - 6 pm
 - Handbell practice - 6:30 pm
- 7th and 8th grade Confirmation - 7 - 8 pm

LWML News

Thanks to all who contribute to the "Mite Box" and to the monthly "Noisy offerings". In January \$67.43 was donated and this money will go toward LWML mission projects.

January 15th was our quarterly meeting. In spite of the bitter cold, we had 10 ladies attend. We discussed trying a new menu for Ash Wednesday supper. So, this year we will be serving Chili and other soups along with a bread stick. A variety of desserts will also be served. This year we opted to have a free will offering. We hope many of you will be attending the supper and staying afterwards for the Ash Wednesday church service at 7 pm. See page 6.

This year we will again be having an Easter Breakfast. Thanks to Jayne Baumann for organizing this event! Watch the bulletin for upcoming details.

We are looking for a volunteer to "tidy up" the Kids Activity Bags. This involves just taking out old colored pictures or broken color crayons and putting in the seasonal books inside the bags. The outer bags and stuffed animals should be put in the washing machine occasionally also. We have ample things on hand to add as needed. Please contact Judy R or Sue E if you're willing to help with this project. The children who use these are always delighted to find out what's inside!

Thanks to Mary H, Kathy E, Carol P and Sue E for serving at Blood Mobile in January.

Save the date: June 3-5 at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd, MN for the 31st Biennial Convention. Please contact Mary H or Judy R if you're interested in attending this event. The keynote speaker is Katie Schuermann. There are break-out Bible sessions, Mites in Action Speakers, Mite Walk, entertainment and singing and of course great food and fellowship!



February Birthdays

| | |
|--------|--|
| Feb 2 | Anne Johnson |
| Feb 3 | Michelle Guza |
| Feb 5 | Maddison Johnson Jasmine Petersen Jennifer Schmidt |
| Feb 6 | Bentley Krueger David Skjefte Jr Eileen Wegner |
| Feb 8 | Carley Redepenning |
| Feb 11 | James Ryer Jerrad Ryer Kerry Steffen |
| Feb 13 | Tammy Edman Lucas Granfors |
| Feb 14 | Joseph Anderson Heath Kirschbaum Cheyanne Schmidt |
| Feb 15 | Michael Brown Chase Kemnitz |
| Feb 20 | Gage DeVries |
| Feb 22 | Seantae Read |
| Feb 23 | Kathy Johnson Jan Peterson |
| Feb 24 | Preston Berends |
| Feb 26 | Allen Stengel |
| Feb 27 | Katie Phinney Lennox Stengel |
| Feb 28 | Donna Hustad |
| Feb 29 | Jackson Staab |

Birthday Blessings to you all.

Please contact the church office if we missed yours.



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And if you aren't married, you will be strengthened in living the single life that God as currently called you to, and even more than that, you'll receive the same strengthening of faith, forgiveness, life and salvation, that everyone who attends the service receives.

Don't take cues from our culture and probably be ultimately disappointed. Takes cues from the Church, where you find freedom, true love, true joy, and hope in Jesus Christ! Men – take her to Church and pray with her! It's the best thing you can do on Valentine's Day.

+ God's Peace+

Pastor Jonathan Varns

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Quarterly Voter's Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2023

(Covers period from Sept 18 to present.)

1. Meeting call to order by Chairman Larry Cuklanz. 40 members attended.
2. Opening prayer by Pastor Varns.
3. Minutes from September quarterly meeting were reviewed. No additions or corrections noted. Motion to approve by Jim Wegner, 2nd by Dorothy Ims, motion carried.
4. Financial/Designated reports from November were reviewed. There was discussion on our deficit that continues. If general checking goes below a level of \$1500, funds are transferred from our Thrivent account. Motion made to accept these reports made by Gene Stengel, 2nd by Molly Hoff, motion carried.
5. Pastoral Report
 - Regular activities - Sunday morning worship service, recorded, edited, and uploaded; Sunday morning Bible Study, Monday morning 8:00 am men's Bible Study, Thursday morning 9:30 am women's Bible Study, pastoral homebound visitations.
 - Irregular activities – midweek Advent Services 6 pm Wednesdays, ministering and burial for Colton and Emily Ebel's pregnancy loss of their twins.
 - A question was brought up: One homebound/nursing home members were listed by Pastor at this time.
6. Membership Report
 - Death: Laura Nelson died October 19, 2023 (no pastoral care)
 - Confirmed: Dane Paul Hildahl - November 26, 2023uHutH
 - Released: Cheryl Bohlman and Tricia Chodur
7. Board and Committee Reports
 - 7.1 Board of Elders
 - Elders working through the Book of Concord, Augsburg Confession. They will have a new leader/presenter every 2 months.
 - The Elders have decided we will be bringing the collection plate to the front to the altar as we did before Covid. We start after January 7th.
 - 7.2 Board of Trustees (Report by Tom)
 - We have 3 trustees: Tom Edman, Travis Luepke and Dennis Smith. Also, Kerry Steffen is recognized. They were all noted as having done much and it is all much appreciated by all.
 - Project updates by Tom: Members brought questions regarding the outside crosses in front and the bell tower regarding their finishes. On inspection, the paint is peeling but the crosses are in good shape. The goal is to repaint areas the first part of summer and before our Fall Anniversary.
 - Landscaping: we thank Kerry for his work around the church placing foundation rocks and boulders. Maintenance is decreased with this.
 - Courtyard: seed is re-established following heavy rains last summer. On one section, a land bridge will be taken care of for drainage. The elevation of the drain is designed to hold water.
 - Fluorescent lights in the Parish Hall: There are 44 of the 4' bulbs, and we're looking to change to LED's. There are about 88 bulbs, taking out all the ballasts and changing to LED's. Ceiling lights in front of church were replaced. Bulbs might be changed there also to LED's and this will all be done starting in January.
 - Also, Tom checked the Hillyard floor cleaning machine with the representative to review the machine as we are looking to use the machine more. With no janitorial service for 2024, we will have a janitorial signup sheet for volunteers to do the cleaning.
 - Floors will be re-waxed and done before the Anniversary. We'll see how this volunteer process goes.
 - The parking lot is done with new asphalt coating and parking lines. This was done by Gallagher from Ortonville.

- A comment was made that we could use another Trustee as we have only three. Anyone interested, please contact Larry or one of the council members.
- Kerry stated we need more room for storage. Our white outside shed needs shingles. He suggests getting rid of it and raising money for a new garage/shed for the east side of the Parish Hall. With our crowded back room and furnace room, Carol mentioned electrical panels must have 20" around them for safety per the Fire Department. Currently, this is not the situation.
- There was a round of applause for Tom for his report and the Trustee work.

7.3 Special committees

- Sue Erickson notes the 125th Anniversary plans are moving along.

Motion to approve these reports was made by Brad Christensen, 2nd by Ken Podratz, motion carried.

8. Old Business

- None noted or brought forward.

9. New Business

- An audit committee is needed to review the books. Volunteers are Sue Erickson, Jayne Baumann, and Larry Cuklanz. This will be done in January.
- Election for treasurer - 3 yr term. Anne's situation has changed, and she doesn't want to continue. Larry has some members in mind he'll speak with as no offers for the position were received at the meeting. We have no Vice Chairman either.
- Adopt 2024 Proposed Budget. Another question on the janitorial position and why it isn't on the budget. The plan is to do it ourselves. Anne is working on the chart for people to check off as they do work. "Outside Yardman" is now under "Snow Removal as we aren't paying for this work. Question on "Circuit Assessment" and Pastor mentioned that it is for the National Convention fee. The treasurer for the Circuit for the last 3 years didn't make an assessment so this year, we have three years' worth. It is noted we paid our assessment each year. We pay per our membership roster of 50 cents/year. Another reason to work on membership. A question on why we don't pay Kerry for his work in the church. Anne clarified we can't without filing a 1099 and he chooses not to be paid at this time. A suggestion was made to individually thank him as we wish. Motion was made to accept the 2024 budget by Brad Christensen, 2nd by Tammy Edman, motion carried.

10. Announcements

- Next Board of Elders and Council meetings – Tue, Jan 9

Motion made to adjourn meeting by Gene Stengel, 2nd by Jim Wegner, motion passed.

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Hammer

(Unapproved by the Voter's - ok'd to publish by Church Council.)



Vital Statistics

Attendance and Offering Report for January

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Attendance</u> | <u>Offering</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Sun, Jan 7 | 59 | \$3,970.00 |
| Sun, Jan 14 | 39 | \$3,135.00 |
| Sun, Jan 21 | 60 | \$1,685.00 |
| Sun, Jan 28 | 68 | \$2,762.50 |

2024 Budget Income needed each Sunday - \$3,485.00)

Financials as of 1-28-2024

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Year to Date Actual Contributions | \$11,552.50 |
| Year to Date Contributions Needed | \$15,100.41 |
| Difference | (\$3,547.91) |
| Year to Date Actual Expenses | \$17,088.33 |
| Year to Date Budgeted Expenses | \$15,100.41 |
| Difference | (\$1,987.92) |

Daily Bible Readings

| | |
|--------|---|
| Feb 1 | Genesis 41 Psalm 32 Luke 23:1-25 |
| Feb 2 | Genesis 42 Psalm 33 Luke 23:26-56 |
| Feb 3 | Genesis 43 Psalm 34 Luke 24:1-12 |
| Feb 4 | Genesis 44 Psalm 35 Luke 24:13-53 |
| Feb 5 | Gen. 45:1-46:27 Psalm 36 Hebrews 1 |
| Feb 6 | Gen. 46:28-47:31 Psalm 37 Hebrews 2 |
| Feb 7 | Genesis 48 Psalm 38 Hebrews 3:1-4:13 |
| Feb 8 | Genesis 49-50 Psalm 39 Heb. 4:14-6:12 |
| Feb 9 | Exodus 1-2 Psalm 40 Hebrews 6:13-20 |
| Feb 10 | Exodus 3-4 Psalm 41 Hebrews 7 |
| Feb 11 | Exodus 5:1-6:27 Proverbs 1 Hebrews 8 |
| Feb 12 | Exodus 6:28-8:32 Proverbs 2 Hebrews 9:1-22 |
| Feb 13 | Exodus 9-10 Proverbs 3 Heb. 9:23-10:18 |
| Feb 14 | Exodus 11-12 Proverbs 4 Hebrews 10:19-39 |
| Feb 15 | Exodus 13-14 Proverbs 5 Hebrews 11:1-22 |
| Feb 16 | Exodus 15 Proverbs 6:1-7:5 Hebrews 11:23-40 |
| Feb 17 | Exodus 16-17 Proverbs 7:6-27 Hebrews 12 |
| Feb 18 | Exodus 18-19 Proverbs 8 Hebrews 13 |
| Feb 19 | Exodus 20-21 Proverbs 9 Matthew 1 |
| Feb 20 | Exodus 22-23 Proverbs 10 Matthew 2 |

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.

Group 2

Serving for February

Anderson, Bryan and Renae
Berends, Randy and Tamra
Beyer, Brian, and Laura
Cobb, Kris and Holly
Enninga, Dan and Kathy
Enninga, Dustin and Krystle
Guertin, Sarah
Hammer, Brett
Hammer, Mary
Hempel, Terry and Rosemary
Hinz, Paul and Diane
Jeseritz, Randy
Johnson, Ted and Kathy
Kirschbaum, Janet
Korthuis, John and Kathy
Lindstrom, Nick and Hailey
Luepke, Otto and Theresa
Miller, Eugene
Myers, Troy and Jenna
Nokleby, Dorothy
Podratz, Ken and Carol
Redepenning, Tony and Amy
Rigge, Jim and Cindy
Rigge, Michael
Sherman, Leslie and Renee
Sietsema, Barb
Stengel, Allen and Pat
Streich, Chris
Streich, LouAnn
Varns, Pastor and Lindsay
Wegner, James and Eileen
Zempel, Meredith
Zempel, Nicole
Zimmer, Kevin and Laura


Group 3

Serving for March

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



| | | | |
|--------|--|--------|--|
| Feb 21 | Exodus 24 Proverbs 11 Matthew 3 | Feb 25 | Exodus 33-34 Proverbs 15 Matthew 6:1-18 |
| Feb 22 | Exodus 25-27 Proverbs 12 Matthew 4 | Feb 26 | Exodus 35-36 Proverbs 16 Matthew 6:19-34 |
| Feb 23 | Exodus 28-29 Proverbs 13 Matthew 5:1-20 | Feb 27 | Exodus 37-38 Proverbs 17 Matthew 7 |
| Feb 24 | Exodus 30-32 Proverbs 14 Matthew 5:21-48 | Feb 28 | Exodus 39-40 Proverbs 18 Matthew 8:1-13 |



LWML invites you
on Ash Wednesday for
“Food for Heart and Soul”

Chili and Soup Supper

February 14, 2024

5 pm - 6:30 pm

Free-will offering

Menu: chili, wild rice, vegetable beef, potato
bacon soups, bread stick, assorted desserts, and beverage.

St. Paul Lutheran Church

1050 10th Ave, Granite Falls, MN

Sponsored by the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League

Proceeds will be used to support missions
and church projects.

A Thrivent Action Team Event

Take out meals available – 320-564-2221