



St. Paul News

March 2025

St. Paul Lutheran Church

**The Lutheran Church -
Missouri Synod**

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Granite Falls, MN 56241**

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**Chairman
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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.

Pastor's Message

As we are beginning the season of Lent, I began to think about Lent and about our Savior's Passion, and what He has accomplished for us. I came across a sermon I wrote over 30 years ago and because of the importance of what happened on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, I wanted to share it with you. I would encourage you to read first the Biblical text on which it is based.

"THE UNIQUENESS OF THE GOSPEL

Romans 10:8b-13

In describing the uniqueness of the Gospel, Martin Luther once wrote, *"The Law is the Word of perdition; the Gospel is the Word of grace. The Law is the Word of wrath; the Gospel is the Word of joy. The Law is the Word of pain; the Gospel is the Word of comfort. The Law is the voice of Judge and accused; the Gospel is the voice of Bridegroom and Bride."* As easily contrasting as this description seems to be, Luther said it is a most difficult but necessary thing to distinguish between Law and Gospel. Many people are still deceived into believing that God's righteousness can be earned by living a good, moral *"Christian"* life. Some pastors even fall prey to this temptation, believing that righteousness is achieved through self-sacrifice – one's family life, one's health, one's private time for reflection and personal devotions. This situation is not unique nor uncommon today, or in Paul's time. However, the season of Lent, with its extra worship services and its concentration on the message of Christ's death directs us to the Gospel – a Gospel which is uniquely good and reliable.

In the Epistle Lesson for the First Sunday in Lent, Paul explains that the Gospel is uniquely good because it is always near to us, and that is especially comforting. It is near because as the apostle says, God brings it to us through preachers. In the Old Testament, God's Law was to be continuously near, always preached by parents and priests so that the young and old in Israel would live by it. God's Law is always near us today, always revealing our sinfulness, always humbling us when we need to be humbled, always creating terror and condemnation in our hearts when we start leaning toward indifference to His Word. But just as we hear in Luke 4:1-13 (Gospel Lesson for Lent 1) and as Paul is saying, we are not alone and defenseless against temptation. We are not alone against the spiritual struggles with which we have to contend everyday. He is saying that the Gospel is always near. This is a great comfort to us, a comfort that we might take for granted. Where God's Word is, there He is also. There can be times in our hectic lives when everything seems to be going wrong, times when we feel especially alone, times when we begin to question our self-worth and effectiveness in our careers or as parents and spouses. It can be very difficult talking about and sharing our cares and concerns with others. But we are never alone. Paul is bringing us the Good News that God is always near in His Gospel. We need only to call on Him, to depend on Him, to have faith in Him, to trust in Him for strength, encouragement, and forgiveness. God speaks of this special comfort through His servant Isaiah who, inspired by God, wrote: *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned"* (Isa. 43:2).

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Items of Interest

Come and Worship at St. Paul!

Midweek Lenten Services will be held **Thursday evenings starting March 6th** at 6 pm with Pastor David Tilney, St Luke's Lutheran, Posen, Wood Lake.

Holy Week Schedule with Pastor Donald Polege:
Maundy Thursday April 17th at 7 pm
Good Friday April 18th at 7 pm
April 20th Easter Breakfast at 8:30 am
Easter Service at 9:30 am

Quarterly Meeting

The Quarterly Voters' Meeting will be Sunday, March 16th following the service, with a potluck dinner following the meeting. An item on the agenda will be election of officers. Open positions are for vice chairman, secretary, Elders, and trustees. Also there will be a vote to accept changes made to Parish Hall Guidelines for serving events. There are copies of these guidelines available in the narthex to enable members to review them before the meeting. All confirmed members 18 years of age and older are eligible to vote and encouraged to attend.



Potluck Dinner after the
Quarterly Meeting
on March 16th.

LWML News

Thanks to all who contribute to the "Mite Box" and to the monthly "Noisy Offerings." In February \$27.57 was donated and this money will go toward LWML mission projects. Thanks for your continued support.

The Lutheran Women In Mission are busy preparing for the "Sunday Soup at St. Paul," on Sunday, March 2nd. Serving is from 11 am-12:30 pm. Our ladies are preparing a variety of soups along with an assortment of desserts. We plan on donating a portion of the proceeds to the California wildfire victims. Come and support this fundraiser. See page 6 for more information.

Mark your calendars for our upcoming LWML quarterly meeting on Monday, April 21st. Our meeting will begin at 2 pm and all ladies of St Paul are invited to attend.

The National LWML Convention takes place in Omaha from June 26-29. It's not too late to sign up to go along. Please contact Judy or Sue for information regarding signing up for this convention or call the church office for more information.

Each quarter the MN North LWML provides an email of updates called: Minnesota Northern Light. You can download it from the district website at www.lwmlmnn.org. There are lots of updates about the mission grant reports and articles written by many of the board committee members that are very interesting.

Lutheran Island Camp are accepting reservation for 2025 season already. Check all the various camps that are available for kids ages 8-14 at islandcamp.org/summer. Don't forget that the LWML has financial assistance available.

LWML Fundraiser

We have another fundraising opportunity! "Go, Set, Ready" coffee will once again be offered! Same as before, they have a variety of flavors in ground or bean as well as K-cups. Cost is \$15 for both 1# bags and K-cups. Information and order blanks are available on the narthex shelf. Payment is due at the time of your order. This makes great hostess gift for Easter, Mother's Day gift or just for you! Orders will be taken during March with delivery April 12th.

Thank You

Dear Members of St. Paul, I wish to thank you from the depth of my heart for the kind gift and words that were spoken to me on Sunday, February 9th. I have had the privilege to serve you for many years. I am nearing 83 years of age in a few weeks and my mind is slowing down. I don't know how much longer the Lord wants me to serve as a pastor to His people. Thank you for the many kind years I was able to serve you. What I am able to continue to do remains in His hand. I care deeply for all of you and I will continue to serve as I am mentally and physically able. I pray God's richest blessings for all of you. Pastor Schultz

Thrivent

It's time once again to direct your Choice Dollars. You have until March 31st to direct your Choice Dollars. You can go to thrivent.com/thriventchoice or call 1-800-847-4836, and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt. Please don't let your Choice Dollars expire!

Food Shelf

March is "Food Drive Month" and they need your help. There is a "Donation Box" in the coatroom for our local Food Shelf where you can donate individuals. Cash donations may also be given. Please place the donation in an envelope marked "FOOD SHELF" and put in the offering plate. End hunger in our community by supporting our local food shelf!

Vital Statistics

Attendance and Offering Report for February

<u>Date</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Offering</u>
Sun, Feb 2	55	\$3,670.00
Sun, Feb 9	57	\$3,015.00
Sun, Feb 16	60	\$5,315.00
Sun, Feb 23	56	\$2,159.00
(2025 Budget Income needed each Sunday - \$3,270.00)		

Financials as of 2-26-2025

Year to Date Actual Contributions	\$24,240.54
Year to Date Contributions Needed	<u>\$28,337.66</u>
Difference	(\$4,097.12)
Year to Date Actual Expenses	\$24,736.33
Year to Date Budgeted Expenses	<u>\$28,337.66</u>
Difference	\$3,601.33

March Birthdays

March 1	Rena Anderson
March 2	Boyd Steffen
March 6	Molly Hoff
	Jason Kirschbaum
	Tracy Kirschbaum
March 7	Nancy Guertin
	Ashley Luepke
March 9	Chris Berends
	Chase Luepke
	Lee Timm
March 10	Dawn Lubrant
	Vern Nelson
	Teresa Quintal
March 11	Brad Christensen
	Katrina Nelson
March 13	Anna Olson
March 14	Kevin Markgraf
March 15	Emily Cobb
	Marjorie Syring
	Jane Van Sickle
March 16	Ann Johnson
March 17	Rebecca Donner
	Greg Doose
	Tony Redepenning
	James Trotter
March 19	Terry Hempel
	Eugene Miller
March 20	Jenifer Hildahl
March 21	Brianna Markgraf
	McKenna Markgraf
March 25	Linda Streich
March 26	Quinton Staab
	Emily Williamson
March 30	Kaitlyn Luepke
March 31	Jessica Donner
	Chris Hoyer

Birthday Blessings to you all.

Please contact the church office if we missed yours.

March Acolytes

Sun 2	Brielle Redepenning
Thur 6	James Luepke
Sun 9	Lucas Canatsey
Thur 13	Madelynn Staab
Sun 16	Sara Canatsey
Thur 20	Brielle Redepenning
Sun 23	James Luepke

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 4

Serving for March

Banken, Janine
 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
 Reese, Tom
 Rude, Odell and Carol
 Schultz, Dennis and Phyllis
 Skjefte, Dave and Val
 Steffen, Kerry and Julie
 Timm, Craig and Susan
 Timm, Daphne
 Timm, Lee
 Twedt, Charles and Kari
 Wilking, Larry
 Yeager, Dave and Darlene

Daily Bible Readings For March

Mar 1	Leviticus 1-2	Proverbs 19	Matthew 8:14-34
Mar 2	Leviticus 3-4	Proverbs 20	Matthew 9:1-17
Mar 3	Leviticus 5-6	Proverbs 21	Matthew 9:18-38
Mar 4	Leviticus 7-8	Proverbs 22	Matthew 10:1-25
Mar 5	Leviticus 9-10	Proverbs 23	Matthew 10:26-42
Mar 6	Leviticus 11-12	Proverbs 24	Matthew 11:1-19
Mar 7	Leviticus 13	Proverbs 25	Matthew 11:20-30
Mar 8	Leviticus 14	Proverbs 26	Matthew 12:1-21
Mar 9	Leviticus 15-16	Proverbs 27	Matthew 12:22-50
Mar 10	Leviticus 17-18	Proverbs 28	Matthew 13:1-23
Mar 11	Leviticus 19	Proverbs 29	Matthew 13:24-58
Mar 12	Leviticus 20-21	Proverbs 30	Matthew 14:1-21
Mar 13	Leviticus 22-23	Proverbs 31	Matthew 14:22-36
Mar 14	Leviticus 24-25	Eccl. 1:1-11	Matthew 15:1-20
Mar 15	Leviticus 26-27	Eccl. 1:12-2:26	Matthew 15:21-39
Mar 16	Numbers 1-2	Eccl. 3:1-15	Matthew 16
Mar 17	Numbers 3-4	Eccl. 3:16-4:16	Matthew 17
Mar 18	Numbers 5-6	Eccl. 5	Matthew 18:1-20
Mar 19	Numbers 7-8	Eccl. 6	Matthew 18:21-35
Mar 20	Numbers 9-10	Eccl. 7	Matthew 19:1-15
Mar 21	Numbers 11-12	Eccl. 8	Matthew 19:16-30
Mar 22	Numbers 13-14	Eccl. 9:1-12	Matthew 20:1-16
Mar 23	Numbers 15-16	Eccl. 9:13-10:20	Matthew 20:17-34
Mar 24	Numbers 17-18	Eccl. 11:1-8	Matthew 21:1-27
Mar 25	Numbers 19-20	Eccl. 11:9-12:14	Matthew 21:28-46
Mar 26	Numbers 21	Song of Songs 1-2:7	Matthew 22:1-22
Mar 27	Num. 22:1-40	Song of Songs 2:8-3:5	Matthew 22:23-46
Mar 28	Num. 22:41-23:26	Song of Songs 3:6-5:1	Matthew 23:1-12
Mar 29	Num. 23:27-24:25	Song of Songs 5:2-6:3	Matthew 23:13-39
Mar 30	Num. 25-27	Song of Songs 6:4-8:4	Matthew 24:1-31
Mar 31	Num. 28-29	Song of Songs 8:5-14	Matthew 24:32-51

Help Wanted

We are looking for help. Are you interested in a very part time position at the church doing janitorial or yard care? Paid positions. For more details call the office at 320.564.2221 or contact the trustees.



Easter Flowers

We will be ordering flowers for the Altar and for the spring garden at the foot of the large cross again this year but at this time prices were not available. When they are, information will in the weekly bulletin and displayed in the narthex.

The Gospel's unique quality of goodness lies not simply in the fact that pastors are God's medium for bringing it near. It actually enters and resides in us. It becomes a part of us. *"It is in your mouth and in your heart."* The human heart is said to be the point of contact with God. By nature, the heart is inclined toward evil. But by the grace of God, it also becomes His dwelling place through the means of the Gospel. The heart becomes the spectacle of God's love, the womb for spiritual rebirth. Faith opens the door of our hearts to God, but unbelief slams it shut in His face. Other than the human heart, there is no geographical location in the universe, no intellectual frame of mind where we can have such a close and personal communion with God. Through the Gospel, God's love is poured into our hearts almost to the point like bursting like a balloon. As long as it keeps coming in, some of that love has to be released. God's love erupts like a volcano and flows into our mouths where we just have to tell others about Him.

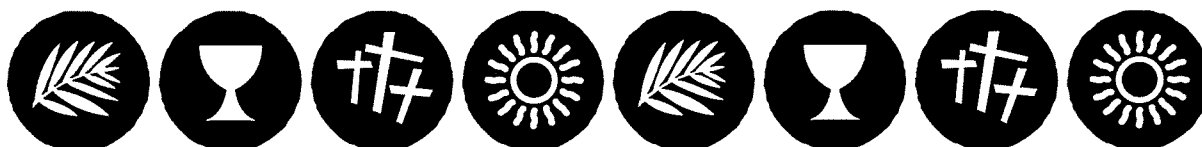
The Gospel is uniquely good because of the achievements it has and continues to accomplish. Through this gracious medium comes God's gift of faith. Through this medium, God declares us righteous, forgiven, and saved from spiritual death. Paul tells us that faith can be found in the human heart. Our faith is rooted in Jesus' death on Calvary for our forgiveness and in His resurrection for our salvation. We tend to view the season of Lent as a solemn, somber occasion because our Savior went through such terrible physical and spiritual suffering on account of our sins. And it seems natural for us to have feelings of guilt, to shed a tear when we think about or watch a movie about Jesus' Passion. However, unlike the Law, the purpose of the Gospel is not to stir up feelings of guilt over sins, but to announce that Jesus' suffering and death was the ultimate demonstration of love for us, that He went through all of this to remove our guilt. The purpose of the Gospel is to announce that through such horrible suffering and death, forgiveness has been won. The crosses that we wear around our necks or hang on a wall or sit on an altar are not to serve as a catalyst for some guilt trip, but as a sign of glory, a reminder that Jesus has conquered the cross, that He paved the way for us through death and into life. We have heard the Passion story many times before. It is a story we never tire of, a story of victory.

Besides creating faith in our hearts, Paul tells us that the Gospel creates the confession of Jesus in our mouths and in our lives. It is the means by which we give evidence to our faith. Genuine confession is an expression of our faith. If we confess Jesus as Lord in the privacy of our homes or at church or anywhere else, we are acknowledging Him as the exalted Savior, the divine Mediator, the only One whom we trust, worship, and obey. John tells us that such a confession actually unites us with God. *"If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God"* (1 John 4:15). By confession, Paul means that we testify to Jesus as our only Savior and Lord, not only by the statements we make in public and private, but by our lives as well. What we do and how we live is an expression of what we believe. In his lectures on Romans, Luther said that confession is the principal work of faith, and it involves denying ourselves. Human nature doesn't like to admit to any sins and failures. It is so much easier to make excuses, to blame others, to rationalize and justify what we say and do. But when we make a confession of faith in Christ as Savior and Lord, we are acknowledging our own sinfulness and unworthiness of His grace.

There is another reason the Gospel is especially unique. It is universal. Paul explains that it is never biased nor discriminatory. It knows no ethnic, social, or cultural limitations. Jesus didn't die on the cross and rise again only for the believer or for the person who has never heard the Gospel. He died even for those who reject His offer of forgiveness, those who ridiculed Him, those who laughed and made fun of Him as He hung on the cross. He died for them as much as He died for us. Jesus' command to all pastors and to each and every one of His followers is to preach the Gospel to every creature – whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, rich or poor, black or white. That is how we give evidence to and testify to our faith. We share it with others.

The Gospel has some unique qualities, and that's why it is our most treasured possession. The season of Lent serves as a reminder of the Gospel's value in our lives, and of the great price that it cost. Treasured possessions always come at great cost. We must not let it remain idle. With any prized possession, we must use it. God's Word is our only weapon against temptation as Jesus demonstrated in the assigned Gospel Lesson for the First Sunday in Lent (Luke 4:1-13). It is our only source of true comfort, our only power and means of salvation. In the context of this text, Paul is encouraging us not to let the Gospel fall among thorns or rocks or parched earth. Instead, it must be nurtured and cultivated in good soil. It must be shared. It must bear fruit. AMEN.

May God bless you always,
Rev. Donald Polege



St. Paul Lutheran Church
1050 10th Ave, Granite Falls, MN

invites you to

“Sunday Soup at St. Paul”

March 2, 2025

11 am - 12:30 pm

Menu: chili, and wild rice with chicken,
tomato basil, and veggie beef soup, bread stick,
assorted desserts, and a beverage.

Free-Will Offering

(Proceeds will be for California Wildfire Victims.)

Sponsored by the Lutheran Women in Missions
A Thrivent Action Team Event



