



St. Paul News

April 2025

St. Paul Lutheran Church

**The Lutheran Church -
Missouri Synod**

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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

Since Easter is soon to be upon us, I wanted to share with you a sermon written many years ago about seasonal customs. The season of Lent has various customs including ashes, fasting, penitence, foot washing, and the veil. Today, we will look briefly at two Easter customs: bunnies and eggs. In our text, St. Paul says, *"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."* We might paraphrase these words: *"If it is in bunnies and eggs that Easter consists, we – and all other people – are to be most pitied."* The fact is that Satan loves to sidetrack and pervert all the good gifts of God. Do you know what the word *"Easter"* means, where it comes from? Easter is the name of the Teutonic fertility goddess of spring. Those ancient fertility cults were all over the world. The goddess was called *"Astarte"* in Babylon and *"Oster"* in Germany. Since the day of Jesus' resurrection came at the same time of the year as these pagan festivals, the church sought to switch the people's thoughts from the pagan celebrations to Jesus and His resurrection. And they kept the ancient name. Some of the customs of these ancient festivals of spring remained. As far back as Old Testament times, God's people had been caught up in fertility cults, with their temple prostitutes. Only by participating in immoral rituals could people hope for an abundant harvest and springtime renewal. Rabbits were a symbol of this fertility. Anyone who has raised rabbits knows why. They really know how to multiply. Eggs were also apt symbols. The ancient Druids, Hindus, Japanese, Chinese, and Babylonians celebrated the arrival of spring with sacred eggs.

On the one hand, these customs can be viewed as harmless leftovers from long-forgotten cults. Now, they are just *"fun."* As we know, Satan works unrelentingly to pervert all the gifts of God. Take, for example, our celebration of Christmas or of Sunday, the Lord's Day. For many, Christmas has little or nothing to do with Christ, the world's Savior. Many people view Sunday as *"my day,"* a day to sleep in, relax, and do whatever *"I"* want for once. It's not a day to honor the Lord. Satan tries to get us so absorbed in bunnies and eggs and celebrations of spring that our *"hope in Christ"* is in danger. That's his whole goal in your life – to leave you with no hope, no faith, no confidence, no strength, no forgiveness, no purpose in living. By ourselves, we are hopeless. We have no strength or confidence to overcome our greatest problem: sin. We are alienated from God by our rebellious hearts, adrift from His kindness and compassion because of our disobedience. Apart from God, human beings have no lasting goal. We have no purpose for living and no reason for hope in the future.

But these treasures are exactly what God wants to give us. That's why He came at Christmas, to bring you *"good news of great joy that will be for all the people. . . . A Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."* That is also why He invites you to His house every Lord's Day. Your problems and worries and temptations and guilt build up. God wants to reconnect with you as His dear Child. He wants it to be His day with you so He can renew in you all the riches of His kingdom. Do you know why the Lord's Day is Sunday? It's because the resurrection took place on Sunday. Sunday is to be a weekly *"resurrection day,"* *"a mini-Easter."* The worship service is our weekly *"feast of victory,"* our weekly reminder of all the promises God has given us by His

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Items of Interest

Holy Week and Easter Services

Please attend our Holy Week and Easter Service. This is the most sacred and important time of the year for Christians, and we encourage all of you to take advantage of the wonderful variety of worship opportunities that will be available to you. Don't forget to bring your family and friends to share in the majesty and mystery of this special week!

Palm Sunday: April 13th at 9:30 am we will observe Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and reverently looked forward to His passion.

Maundy Thursday: April 17th at 7 pm we will reflect on our Lord's institution of His life-giving Supper. In recognition of this most Holy and blessed gift Maundy Thursday Communion Service will be celebrated.

Good Friday: April 18th at 7 pm the service will reflect on the depth of our sin and Jesus' infinite love for us, a love that led Him to the Cross to be the sacrifice that freed us from sin, death, and the devil.

Easter Sunday: April 20th we celebrate the joy of the resurrection with a morning of fellowship and worship. An Easter Breakfast will be served between 8:15 - 9:15 am and the menu will be egg bake, muffins, coffee, juice and milk. The Easter Worship Service follows at 9:30 am.



Notice

There will be a pre-call meeting with Pastor Finnern, President of MN N District, on Thursday, March 27th at 6:30 pm following the Midweek Lenten Service.

April Birthdays

- April 6 Christopher Streich
- April 7 Barb Sietsma
- April 10 RaeAnn Hegna
- April 11 Curt Markgraf, Daniel Rude
- April 13 Bryan Anderson,
Kristin Canatsey
- April 14 Sarah Van Sickle,
Jordan Zens
- April 15 Carrie Cunningham
- April 16 Riley Hoff, Emily Johnson,
Charlie Putnam
- April 18 Kris Cobb
- April 20 Austin Canatsey,
Barb Kling,
Carol Podratz
- April 21 Jackie Janiszkeski
- April 22 Tracy Oevermann
- April 23 Garrett Cobb,
Madelynn Staab
- April 24 Kandi Black
- April 25 Mercedes Enter,
Michele Hoyer
- April 26 Dane Hildahl,
Larry Meyer
- April 28 LuAnn Olson
- April 29 Jeff Hoyer, Lanny Hoyer
- April 30 Phyllis Schultz

Birthday Blessings to you all.

Please contact the church office if we missed yours.



Portals of Prayer for April - June are available in the narthex.

LWML News

The "Noisy Offering" along with the mites for March was \$36.82. Thanks for your continued support for LWML missions!

"Go, Set, Ready" coffee is being sold by the LWML. Also available to order are flavored syrups used for iced coffee. (Directions for iced coffee is posted on the bulletin board.) Order blanks are available in the narthex and should be in to the office by March 30th and it will be at church by April 13th. Try a new flavor for yourself and it also makes a great gift for a friend or two.

The National LWML Convention takes place in Omaha from June 26-29. Here are some typical things that happen at a National Convention. Tours are available on the web-site. You would prepay for this and then a bus will take you to see interesting things in the area. The delegate this year for the Montevideo Zone is Karen Nelson from St. Luke's of Wood Lake, Sue Erickson is the alternate. The delegates will be voting on Mission Grants. All of those in attendance will be watching on the screen as to which grants get selected. Within minutes the computer tabulates the numbers and we're able to view the votes. They also vote on any new amendments to the LWML Bylaws and vote on any positions that need to be filled from a list of candidates. Meals can be purchased on your own outside of the event center or else they are purchased ahead of time and then you select which speaker you would like to hear during your meal time. Most of the attendees choose to come to hear the interesting speakers! There are "Servant Activity's" and you can choose to help with that if you like. Often there is a Mission Walk and hundreds of the ladies/men all walk in a long line and the tour takes you to where you probably wouldn't have taken a bus and therefore see more interesting sites. There is a choir made up of the ladies who sign up for this event. They have a couple practices and then perform during our church services. One fun highlight is when each zone has a banner that they either have made or purchased and each representative carries their banner. This is most impressive as some wear costumes from the country they are representing! The banners are then displayed for all to view up close once the procession is finished. There are two church services. It is so impressive when all the pastors march in together and many stations of Communion are set up for the entire group to participate. Two years ago in Milwaukee over 3550 people attended. It's a very moving experience to have that many LCMS members all worshipping together! If you would like to attend, please contact Sue Erickson, Mary Hammer or Judy Rode and they will help you register for the event.

Mark your calendars for our next quarterly meeting on Monday, April 21st at 2 pm. One item of business is that we need to start planning the Summertime Pie Social that's held in July. All ladies are welcome to attend.

Financials as of 3-24-2025

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Year to Date Actual Contributions | \$35,250.66 |
| Year to Date Budgeted Income | <u>\$42,506.49</u> |
| Difference | (\$7,255.83) |
| Year to Date Actual Expenses | \$35,049.02 |
| Year to Date Budgeted Expenses | <u>\$42,506.49</u> |
| Difference | \$7,457.47 |

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

Group 1

Serving for April

Anderson, Rachel
 Berends, Anthony
 Berends, Chris
 Buchholz, Merlin and Sylvia
 Christensen, Brad and Maria
 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
 Janiszkeski, Jackie
 Johnson, Matthew
 Markgraf, Kevin
 Matasovsky, Chris and Emily
 Odegard, Kody
 Phinney, Katie
 Putnam, Charlie
 Rode, Judy
 Ryer, Lisa
 Ryer, Shannon
 Schulte, Richard and Kelly
 Staab, Tyler and Tara
 Steffen, Don
 Stengel, Rob
 Syring, Melodee

Vital Statistics

Attendance and Offering Report for March

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Attendance</u> | <u>Offering</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Sun, Mar 2 | 73 | \$3,680.00 |
| Thu, Mar 6 | 38 | \$775.00 |
| Sun, Mar 9 | 54 | \$1,705.00 |
| Thu, Mar 13 | 28 | \$1,045.00 |
| Sun, Mar 16 | 50 | \$1,202.00 |
| Thu, Mar 20 | 42 | \$475.00 |
| Sun, Mar 23 | 63 | \$1,731.00 |
| Thu, Mar 27 | N/A | |
| Sun, Mar 30 | N/A | |

(2025 Budget Income needed each Sunday - \$3,270.00)

grace. That's why Easter is "the" decisive day in world history and in your history. St. Paul reminds us: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." As we heard in our text, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men," that's why Satan works so hard to pervert all the great celebrations of the church year. He wants us to feel that we are still in our sins. He wants us to feel that faith is futile. He wants us to have no hope in Christ. He wants us to remain in the darkness and despair and aimlessness of the disciples that first Easter morning. He wants us to be shrouded in gloom.?

Do you know that Christ has risen? Do you know that Your Redeemer lives, and that because He lives so shall you? Your religion does you no good unless you know this, unless you know Him. Knowing Him is the whole point of the Christian faith. If you do not know the Savior in Your heart of hearts, you "are to be pitied more than all men." You are to be pitied even more than those who live and die as Hindus and Buddhists and Muslims. They may never have had the opportunity to hear of Christ. They may never have known of the feast the Lord has prepared for all peoples, as Isaiah described it. They may never have known that death has been swallowed up forever because Christ is risen! They die in ignorance. We die in defiance. We heard, but didn't care. We turned our backs to His outstretched hand. We preferred bunnies and eggs and Sunday morning naps. We enjoyed wallowing in our pity bag. We enjoyed having an excuse to feel sorry for ourselves. We enjoyed doing as we wanted with all the time, talent, and treasure our Lord had entrusted to us for His service. We enjoyed imagining that we would never have to give an account.

Do you know that Christ is risen? Is Easter and every mini-Easter your day to reconnect with the Lord and His good purposes for your life? Do you want strength and confidence and hope and direction and forgiveness in all the ups and downs of life on earth? Do you know that Christ is risen, risen for you? Do you know that the price for all your sins has been paid? Do you know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? Do you know "the peace of God which transcends all understanding," and believe that your living Lord is with you all the time? Do you know that death has been conquered? Do you know that you belong to the Lord? Have you let yourself belong to Him so that you can walk and one day rise with Him? If so, all the riches of His kingdom are yours now and forever. St. Paul expresses our confidence in Christ when he said, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins. . . . We were by nature objects of wrath. But because of His love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved." Your resurrected Lord stands before you on this, His victory day. He invites you to "cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." He wants you to leave on His victory Day with renewed joy and confidence and strength and purpose in your heart.

As one pair of rabbits produces bunnies, a dozen fold, so Your Lord will produce for you a hundred fold harvest from His "riches untold." As a chick emerges from the captivity of its egg to light and life, so can you emerge from the captivity of sin and death by God's grace. As spring renews the fertility of the earth, so your life can be renewed. That's what Easter can mean to you. That's what every mini-Easter can mean for you – throughout your life and into eternity. Don't let Satan pervert God's grace for you. Too much in life and death depends on it. Say with Isaiah: "This is the Lord, we trusted in Him; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation." Let us stand amazed with tears of joy, for Christ is risen. "He is risen indeed!" AMEN.

May God bless you always,
Rev. Donald Polege

Easter Flowers

We will be ordering flowers for the Altar and for the spring garden at the foot of the large cross. (You may also bring in your own spring flowers to add to the Easter garden on Saturday, April 19th). There are sign-up sheets in the narthex or you may also call the church office at 320-564-2221. Orders are due by **April 6th** and payment is to be made before Easter. Please make the check payable to St. Paul Lutheran and put in the offering plate or bring to the office.



- | | |
|---|---|
| Oriental Lily - \$25 | Daisy Mum - \$25 (lavender, yellow, white) |
| Cushion Mum - \$25 (lavender, yellow, white) | Easter Lily - \$25 (has 5 or more blooms) |
| Cyclamen - \$25 | Kalanchoe - \$25 (orange, yellow, hot pink, pink, red) |

I would like to order a plant

in memory of:

CAPRI 2025

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|-------------------------------|---|--|---|-----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 6 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Time 10:45 am K-3rd gr Sunday School 11 am Adult Bible Class 1 pm Confirmation Class | 7 6 pm Board of Elders 7 pm Church Council | 15 St. Paul Lutheran | 16 6 pm Handbell Practice 7 pm Mixed Choir Practice | 17 7 pm Maundy Thursday Communion Service | 18 7 pm Good Friday Service | 19 |
| 13 9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Coffee Time 10:45 am K-3rd gr Sunday School 11 am Adult Bible Class | 14 2 pm LWML Qfly Meeting | 22 Newsletter Articles Due | 23 6 pm Handbell Practice 7 pm Mixed Choir Practice | 24 9 am Bldg Bridges Choir 1:30 pm Bible Study | 25 | 26 |
| 20 8:15 - 9:15 am Easter Breakfast 9:30 am Easter Service | 21 2 pm LWML Qfly Meeting | 29 | 30 6 pm Handbell Practice 7 pm Mixed Choir Practice | "Dinner at Your Door" | | |
| 27 9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Coffee Time 10:45 am K-3rd gr Sunday School 11 am Adult Bible Class 1 pm Confirmation Class | 28 | | | Church delivers | | |
| | | | | Altar Guild Kathy Enninga And Sue Erickson | | |
| | | | | Acolytes | | |
| | | | | Thur 3 Sun 6 Thur 10 Sun 13 Thur 17 Fri 18 Sun 20 Sun 27 Thur 27 | Sara Canatsey Brielle Redepenning James Luepke Lucas Canatsey Madelyn Staab Sara Canatsey Brielle Redepenning James Luepke Lucas Canatsey | |