

THE MESSENGER



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
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FEBRUARY 2025

Dear Friends in Christ:

This month is the conclusion of the third point of the Formula of Concord, Article Eleven, which reads, "By His Holy Spirit, through the Word, when it is preached, heard, and pondered, Christ will be effective and active in us, will convert hearts to true repentance and **preserve them in the true faith.**"

The doctrine of Election is never to be a point of anxiety for believers which is the whole point of Article Eleven of the Formula of Concord. Which is why we read in the Epitome of the Formula, Article Eleven,

8. We should not reach conclusions about our election to eternal life based on reason or God's Law. That would lead us either into a reckless, loose, Epicurean life or into despair. It would stir up destructive thoughts in people's hearts. For they cannot, as long as they follow their reason, successfully keep themselves from thinking, "If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, no matter what I do." And again, "If I am not elected to eternal life, it doesn't matter what good I do; it is all in vain anyway." 9. <The true judgment about predestination> must be learned alone from the Holy Gospel about Christ, in which it is clearly testified, "For God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all [Romans 11:32]; not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" [2 Peter 3:9], and believe in the Lord Christ. (See also Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11, 18; 1 John 2:2.) (Paul Timothy McCain, ed., Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 498-499.)

Since the Lord is the one that has given us faith in the first place as we know so well from Hebrews 12:1-2 *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."* (ESV)

He is also the one that will keep us in that same faith. Which he accomplishes through the means that He has given us. *"The same means by which He created faith He employs to nourish and to keep it, namely, the Gospel and the Sacraments."* (Koehler, A Summary of Christian Doctrine 1971 Pg 177) This is what St Peter means when he wrote 1 Peter 1:5 ⁵ *who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* (ESV) This is why it is so important that we hold onto these gifts that God has given us. Which is why Dr. Luther, in the What Does This Mean of the Third Commandment in the Small Catechism wrote, *"We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.* (Luther's Small Catechism CPH 1991) It is only through the Word of God that we learn what the Gospel is, and it is only through the Gospel that we learn that Jesus died and rose for us to give us faith to believe in those things that He has done for us. He then nurtures that faith through the forgiveness of our sins, which is made very real to us as we receive His body and blood, in, with, and under the bread and the wine. All of this then is how he preserves the faith that He has given us so that we are not running after every new and shiny thing to detriment of our faith that He has given us. We are His people because He has made us so. We remain His people because He has given us His means to do so. All of which is about the faith that He has given us that we may believe that Jesus is our Lord and only object of which we are to focus upon in faith, the faith that He has given us. I've said it before and I'll say it many more times, God is for us. You don't have to take my word for it, as a matter fact I encourage you not to. Which is why I'll close out this final portion of Article Eleven, point three with what St Paul wrote, lead by the Holy Spirit, in Philipppians 2:13 *"for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."* (ESV)

FEBRUARY

Birthdays Anniversaries

- 1 – Clay Tabbert;
Jacob & Brittney Gilbert (5)
- 2- Millie Wirth
- 3 – Zach Moomaw
- 5- Robert Pfeiffer
- 6 – Darrell Wirth; Dennis Wirth;
- 7 – Elizabeth Funneman
- 8 – Linda Orr
- 9- Brian Kessler; Judy Wittenberg
- 10-Linda Newell
- 11-Catherine Reel
- 12-Diane Jack; Patrick Grant* Merriman;
Gary Wirth
- 13-Max Kull; Kathy Manhart;
Michelle Knop; Eloise Parisien
- 14-Kathy & Will* Ecktein (26);
Tanner & Caroline* Bowers (5)
- 15-Debra Richards
- 17-Peyton Long; Allison & Jake McIlwain (7)
- 19-Katie Widdersheim
- 20-Darin Doehring; Ryan & Sonia Storm (5)
- 25-Denise Bence; Beulah Ulmer;
Shanna Kessler
- 26-Kim Vogel
- 27-Karen Kull; Emily Funneman
- 28-Dennon Stremming; Tyler Wetherell



- Tue. Feb. 4- Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm
- Wed. Feb. 12- Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm
- Sun. Feb. 16- Choir Sings "Blessed Are You"
(arr. Hayes)
- Wed. Feb. 26- Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm

God's Gifts God gives everyone various gifts, talents and abilities. Did God give you the gift of singing? If He did, why not use that gift by singing in our adult choir? We are always ready to welcome and help new members! Just come to any rehearsal to get started. Help us reach others and praise God with the gift of singing!

LOCAL LINKS

Pastor Whybrew: chebrev@yahoo.com
 Church: stpaulsstrasburg@gmail.com
 Website: stpaul-strasburg.com
 YouTube: St. Paul's Lutheran Church Strasburg Illinois
 Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Articles for Newsletter & Guide

Information for the Guide needs to be in the office by 8:00AM on **Wednesday morning**.
 Articles for the Newsletter should be in the office by the **15th** of the month.



Wed. Feb. 5 6:30-7:30 PM
 Wed. Feb 12 6:30-7:30 PM
 Wed. Feb 19 6:30-7:30 PM
 Wed. Feb 26 6:30-7:30 PM

Pause for Peace

As your day draws to a close, spend a few moments with God, reflecting on His love and care for you throughout the day. Just dial 644-3124 to hear His message.

***We are making the new calendar for Pause for Peace for 2025. We have a couple of empty days that we need to fill. It just requires a few minutes one day each month. Talk to Patsy Lenz for more information and to volunteer.



YOU'RE
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Thank you I want to thank the Church Trustees and the St. Paul's members for my Christmas gifts. It meant a lot to me. Neva

Thank you Thank you to the Trustees and members who brought me goodies at Christmas. Everything was greatly appreciated. Sue

Thank you The Sunday School and Weekday teachers want to thank the Board of Education for their generous Christmas gifts to us.

Thank you Thank you to Sarah Luce, Sara Hayes, Shanna Kessler, Karen Kull, and St. Paul's Education for supplying treats in December to the WDS children. It is much appreciated.

Thank you Thank you to all for your cards and gifts this Christmas season. Doreen and I are truly blessed.

Thank you Thank you to Mike Pfeiffer for all his help in the transition of the new church software and with his help with the year end. Mike has spent a lot of time making the transition go smooth. All of your time and hard work has not gone unnoticed. Thank you Mike! Sue

Seminary
News

Gifts of \$1,000 each were sent to adopted seminary students Micah Brown and Hunter Kinnison in November. Thank you for your financial support of our future pastors. Please keep both students and their families in your prayers. They would love to hear from you with a card or note.

Bible Trivia are looking for more people to play Bible Trivia on the first Sunday evening of each month. It doesn't matter how much you know or don't know, how much you've forgotten or what team wins, we just enjoy the fun and fellowship. And we are all learning and relearning a lot!



Would you like to provide WDS treats one week?
The Weekday School children and helpers enjoy snacks or cookies provided once a month by the Board of Education. If you would be interested in providing treats one week during February, March or April, please contact Diane Jack, 217.565.3434. Thank you.

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youth
Group

LYF Meeting Join us for the February LYF meeting on Sunday, February 2 at Trinity, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul's.

Thank you LYF would like to thank all who supported us at the Soup Luncheon. Thanks to your generous donations, we had a great fundraiser raising over \$1000 and serving 120 people! We enjoyed serving you lunch and appreciate your continued support!

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FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

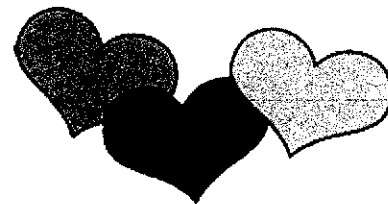
Greeters-

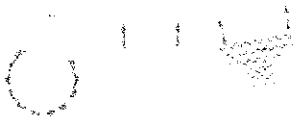
- Feb. 2- Darin & Colleen Storm
- Feb. 9- Diane Jack
- Feb. 16-Rick & Susie Allen
- Feb. 23-Howard & Kay Dust

Greeters-

- Mar 2- Dennis & Kenna Wirth
- Mar 9- Brandon & Shelby Beltz
- Mar 16-Jim & Phyliss Weiss
- Mar 23-Bob & Yvonne Pfeiffer
- Mar 30-Mark & Melissa Luce

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Congratulations We rejoice that a son, Beau Eugene, was born to Isaac and Mariah Kramer December 18, 2024. Grandparents are Erin and John Mueller and Kevin and Chris Kramer. Great grandparents are Rodney and Karis Riley and Bruce and Danyele Boaz.

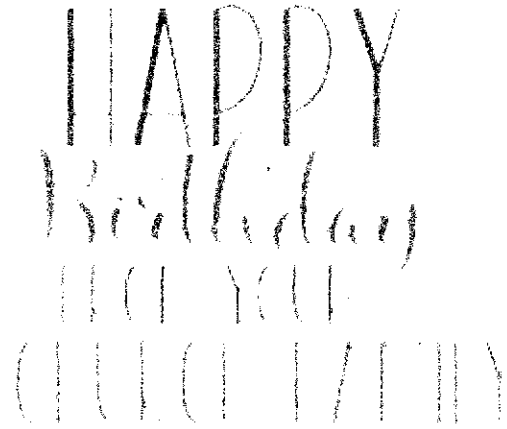
Congratulations "Walkers"! We have met our Goal of "WALKING FOR ST. PAUL" in four months. AWESOME!! Now we need to decide which aspect of our church we want to give the money too. If you have an idea please put it in the envelope on the office door. Thanks for participating and keep walking for yourself now.

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Congratulation Congratulations to Tanner & Caroline Bowers on the birth of their son, Beau Weber Bowers, born on Sunday, January 5, 2025. Grandparents are Chris & Sue Bowers, and John & Eileen Janecki. God's blessings to Beau and his family.



Christmas Shoe Boxes We sent 122 shoe boxes to children around the world in November. It takes many items to fill that many boxes so it is time to start collecting items for next year. The items we are collecting for January are small toys for either boys or girls ages 2 to 16. Thank you for helping.



90 Years Bob Pfeiffer will be celebrating his 90th birthday on February 5th. If you would like to send him a card, his address is: Bob Pfeiffer, 1174 N 2900 East Rd, Windsor, IL 61957.

Birthday Celebration Rosemary Schlechte celebrated her 92nd birthday on January 10th. If you would like to send her a card, she would enjoy hearing from you. Her address is: Rosmary Schlechte, 1103 N Maple St., Apt #5, Effingham, IL 62401.



God is LOVE.

