

St. Paul's News

December 2023

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 156, 215 North Warren Street
Orwigsburg, PA 17961
Office: 570-366-2316
Fax: 570-366-7357
www.stpauls-orwigsburg.org



“AND THIS SHALL BE A SIGN FOR YOU: YOU WILL FIND A CHILD WRAPPED IN BANDS OF CLOTH AND LYING IN A MANGER.” LUKE 2:12

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will continue every second Sunday of the month with the following schedule:

December 10	March 10
January 14	April 14
February 11	May 12

Teen class (ages 11-18) will meet at 9:15 a.m.

Youth class (ages 1-10) will meet during the 10:30 a.m. service

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Dec. 9 - Holly Jolly Christmas Party

Our second annual Christmas party will take place on Saturday, December 9th in the church's gathering room. Show up any time between 10 a.m. and 12 Noon for Christmas crafts, games, and hot chocolate! This is an event for the children of our church AND our community (up to age 10) so spread the word and bring a friend!

***Dec. 10 - Children's Christmas Pageant**

The whole church is invited to attend our "no rehearsal" Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 10, during the 10:30 a.m. service. More information to follow. Please mark your calendars! There are no lines to learn and no practices to attend! Come to church during the 10:30 a.m. service, pick a costume, and join us in celebrating the birth of our Savior! Kids and adults of all ages are invited to participate!

[*If you or your child are planning on participating, please come to church a few minutes early to pick your costume. If you are able, please text/call Sarah ahead of time in order to RSVP, so that she has enough costumes prepared.]

Thank you for your continued support of the Sunday School program!

For information or to volunteer, please contact Sarah Eger - 570-394-3522 (cell) or via email at swoodring86@hotmail.com.

STiC NEWS

Our table in the Gathering Room will feature, as it did last year, ideas for thoughtful gift –giving that also benefits God's good creation as well as the recipient...and as we consider God's extravagant love for us, we too perhaps can add one more recipient to our list. Don't fret...it needs no wrapping or tags!

Think of your yard, small garden, or property as a place where you can give the land the boost it needs to become the best environment to support the creatures who used to be there, the way God made it to begin with. All of us have been primed to think in terms of the outdoors being an extension of our indoors and needing to be "pristine" and ordered, and under *control*. Sadly, the methods of achieving such lawns actually undo the diversity desperately needed by the wildlife in that habitat. There are many Schuylkill County folks striving to restore the natural balance this way, and there are many resources for figuring out what works best for you. Many of us have done this, a little at a time, and discovered that a more 'native' yard enhances our pleasure, reduces our maintenance hours, and therefore, our stress.

Now, in the garden's off-season, is a great time to reflect on how your property functions: does it serve human expectations, or does it help restore nature's needs...and are there ways to achieve both? You will find a half-sheet of online resources on the STiC table; one of my favorites is Homegrown National Parks!

There will also be a container for that loose change that weighs in your pocket or makes your wallet bulge...rather than doing yet one more fundraiser. This source will help with the incidental costs which STiC incurs...so if you have pennies from heaven, please share! (Other coins accepted as well!) STiC does have a budget line item, but it's rather modest.

SRT walks will resume in the spring!

Thanks to all,
Sue Reier

WELCA NEWS

St. Paul's women had 17 in attendance at the November meeting. Michael Lado presented an informative, interesting program with visual sights of the many places he and his wife visited in Israel and Jordan this year.

Our talented shopper, Cindy Ritschel with her grandson's help, selected the requested gifts and displayed them at the meeting. These were for two young boys thru the Diakon Foster Childrens' Christmas project.

A Christmas luncheon is scheduled on December 7th at the McKeansburg Hotel. A Sign-up sheet with the menu and cost (same as last year) is at the gathering table. There is also an envelope for payment by check, but if you prefer to pay cash, please see one of the coordinators. Deadline to sign up is Sunday, December 3rd. We all have enjoyed this social event in the past so please pray for good weather so it won't be necessary to cancel like last year and have your payment returned.

Our December In-gathering offering will be accepted this day and given to the designated recipient Friendship Hose Co. of Orwigsburg.

Sue Schenck stated she is seeking ushers for the Christmas Eve services. If you are interested, please contact her.

Sue Reier requested our group to host light refreshments for a community winter nature series at our church at 3 p.m., Sunday, January 14th. The other two programs in the series will be hosted by Salem Methodist and St. John's United Church of Christ. Motion was made and accepted by all. A sign-up sheet will be available in mid-December.

Please donate any extra 2024 calendars. These will be given to the visitors at the Orwigsburg Food Pantry. Place these on the gathering table by December 15th.

News of early registration for the 2026 Triennial Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa is on the WELCA bulletin board.


Our coordinator, Danielle Richards, has agreed to co-chair the planning of the Spring Cluster which will be held at Friedens Lutheran Church, Hegins, PA, on Saturday, April 13, 2024. Details will be available in February.

Future information about upcoming meetings will be announced in church, in bulletins and the monthly newsletter.

THANK YOU!

My thanks to our choir director, Justin, our bell and chancel choirs, the women of the ELCA, the pastors and choir members from St. John's and Salem, and to everyone who played a part in making our first post-COVID Community Thanksgiving Service so special. A total of \$273 was raised by this event to support our Community Food Pantry. Thank you for your generosity!

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

1. The Men of St. Paul's sold approximately 250 quarts of soup and numerous baked goods at their November soup sale. The profits will be put towards the ongoing cemetery projects.
2. We met our goal of \$8,000 in Benevolence donations for 2023. Please consider directing your donations to the cemetery fund to help complete the tombstone repairs.
3. In an effort to fund future STiC projects, a change collection jar will be placed on the STiC table in the Gathering Room. Please add your two cents (and more!).

4. Church Council is extremely grateful for the generosity that is constantly shown by our caring congregation. Thank you!

SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

The Elmer H. Eiche Fund Scholarship committee is pleased to announce that a scholarship has been awarded to Maddy Swick. Maddy attends Western Michigan University where she is working towards her BFA in Musical Theatre Performance. This scholarship will be put towards her "Musicianship II for Musical Theatre Students" course.

This scholarship is available for those continuing their education in the areas of art, music, and theological training. Applications are available in the church office.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Our annual Christmas Concert will be held on Sunday, December 17 at 4:00 p.m. The program includes traditional carols, music by St. Paul's Handbell Choir, Chancel Choir, and instrumentalists. Join us for light refreshments and fellowship following the concert.

DEADLINE TO ORDER POINSETTIAS NEARS!

This year poinsettias are priced at \$9.00 per potted plant. Please choose between red and white blooms and fill out the form found later in this newsletter. Please note that poinsettia orders and money must be received by Sunday, December 31!

PASTOR ON VACATION

Pastor Mike will be on vacation on December 30 and 31. In his absence, Pastor Rob Reier will lead our worship at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 30, as well as at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 31.

If emergency pastoral care is needed while Pastor Mike is on vacation, please call 717-649-3532, as soon as possible!

A CARD CAN LIFT ONE'S SPIRIT!

The Evangelism committee would like to continue sending cards, signed by our church family, to members who cannot worship with us in person, military personnel, and college students away from home. Cards are located on the small table with the prayer list. Please remember to sign our card(s) upon entering or before leaving our church.

ADULT FORUM

Adult Forum continues to prepare for the birth of Christ during this Advent season. We are using An Unlikely Advent by Rachael Billups as a basis for our discussions. We will meet December 3, 10, and 17 in the church parlor at 9:15 a.m. We will return to our study of Prayer by Timothy Keller on January 7, 2024.

Please contact the church office or Barbara Lafko (570-366-1208 or bjlafko@yahoo.com) for further information.

WORSHIP ON CHRISTMAS EVE AND NEW YEAR'S EVE

Because Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, on Sunday, December 24, our congregation will worship together at a single 9:30 a.m. worship service, rather than at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Later that day, we will gather to celebrate Christmas Eve with candle lighting and carols at 5:00 and 9:00 p.m. (rather than 10:00 p.m.) Holy Communion will also be shared at each service.

On Sunday, December 31, New Year's Eve, we will worship together at a single 9:30 a.m. worship service (rather than at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.) Please mark your calendars!

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SET

Our annual congregational meeting will be on Sunday February 18, 2024, immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Please mark your new calendar for this important meeting!

In case of inclement weather (or other emergency), our annual meeting will be held on the following Sunday at the same time.

CHILI & SOUP SALE - A SUCCESS

The Men of St. Paul's received more than \$2,700 during their Chili & Soup Sale" on Saturday, November 4. Thanks to everyone who made soup or chili and/or provided baked goods. Thanks also to the many people who purchased, shared, and enjoyed everything the Men of St. Paul's had to offer!

CRAFTERS' GUILD

All are welcome to join the Crafters' Guild of St. Paul's. We make projects that include all skill levels, no experience necessary. If you prefer to work on projects at home, we also welcome handmade items donated to the group.

If you would like more information, please contact the church office (570-366-2316), Kristin Durkee (804-380-9066), or Amy Dewald (570-449-4816).

2024 FLOWER AND BULLETIN DEDICATIONS

The green Flower and Bulletin binder has been updated! Sponsors for Altar flowers, Chancel flowers, and bulletins can now be dedicated for the year 2024.

ATTENTION: ALL COMMITTEE LEADERS

Your year-end reports for 2023 will be needed by Sunday, January 7, 2024. Please have them completed, proofread, and ready for print by the deadline date. Email your file(s) to: office@stpauls-orwigsburg.org.

SUPER BOWL EVE SOUP & CHILI SALE

As an "appetizer" to Super Bowl Sunday on February 11, 2024, The Men of St. Paul's will host a Super Bowl Eve Chili & Soup Sale on Saturday, February 10 beginning at 8:30 a.m. "on the Square."

Come early for best selection of delicious chilis, tasty homemade soups, and just baked breads and pastries.

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

During their November meeting, our Council approved Anna Kruk and Lynn Logan of Orwigsburg, PA., to be received as new members of our congregation.

Please welcome our church's newest members into our community of faith. We thank them for joining us and sharing our ministry.

WILL WORSHIP BE CANCELED?

If you are not sure scheduled worship will be held due to inclement weather, please call the church office at (570) 366-2316 and listen to the outgoing message on the answering machine.

You can also check our Facebook page for a possible cancellation of worship.

Be safe, not stuck--check before you leave your home!



LUTHERAN ADVENT TRADITIONS

Christians around the world are now observing the liturgical season of Advent.

From the Latin word for “coming”, Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation for the coming of Christ both in the past in his incarnation as the baby Jesus, but also in the future with his promised second coming as Christ Triumphant.

Advent also marks the beginning of the church calendar. It traditionally starts on the Sunday closest to St. Andrew’s Day (November 30th) and continues for four Sundays until Christmas.

During this time the paraments and vestments in many churches will change to purple or blue to recognize Advent as a time of preparation and repentance as well as a symbol of the royalty of the coming King. Blue is also a symbol of anticipation and hope.

Christians in many countries have adopted various traditions of lighting candles during Advent to observe this as the time of the coming of Christ who is the light of the world.

One tradition is the use of an Advent wreath both in the church and the home to mark each Sunday in the Advent season.

While the origin of this tradition dates to the Reformation, the current form was developed more recently.

The wreath is often made of evergreens in the shape of a circle to represent eternal life. It consisted of four candles originally; three purple or blue candles to match the liturgical colors and one pink candle lit on the 3rd Sunday in Advent.

This 3rd Sunday is known as *Gaudete* Sunday, meaning “rejoice” in Latin. Lighting this 3rd

candle, Christians would relax their fasting to rejoice for the promised Messiah is coming soon.

Many Advent wreaths also have a 5th candle, the Christ candle, which is lit during the time of Christmas, symbolizing that Christ, the light of the world, has entered the darkness.

Another tradition, is the observance of a special commemoration during the season of Advent, namely St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra on December 6.

As numerous stories surrounding St. Nicholas spread and became legend during the Middle Ages, Martin Luther was concerned that the observance of St. Nicholas day was becoming separated from Christ the true giver of gifts.

As a response, Luther began the tradition of celebrating the *Christkindl* or Christ Child who would bring gifts to children on Christmas Eve.

Although Luther hoped to eliminate the secular traditions surrounding St. Nicholas in his day, Lutherans still observe the commemoration of St. Nicholas, and give thanks to God for this special saint, who blessed others and confessed Christ in a time of darkness and persecution.

There is so much beauty and rich tradition during the season of Advent to prepare Christians for the coming of Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem.

Let us grow in our faith as we enjoy this time of preparation and anticipation -- with our family and friends!

This article was adapted from an article by Betsy Karkan.

A PROGRESSIVE DINNER?

The Evangelism Committee has tentatively set the date of Saturday, February 24, 2024, for a progressive dinner. At least three volunteers are needed to host a portion of this “tasty” event.

If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Connie Teter or any other member of the Evangelism committee before December 31st.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Mel Letcher, Mary Ellen Hering
 - 2 Kimberly Haney
 - 4 Timothy Seigfried, Melissa Seigfried,
Landon Stover
 - 5 Josh Clarke
 - 6 Michael Murphy
 - 7 George Smith
 - 8 Nevin Zehner, Mallorie Dukmen
 - 9 Hope Clarke
 - 10 Travis Moyer
 - 11 Crawford Leibold
 - 12 Sandy Ludwig, Jared Sterner, Marcus Shin
 - 13 Kendra Wertman
 - 15 Shane Kokitus, Jordan Post, Becky Smoot
 - 18 Karen Travor
 - 19 Sandra Mertz, Lewis Sims
 - 22 Danielle Richards, Amber Eisenacher,
Haley Rymarkiewicz
 - 24 Brandon Miller
 - 26 Fern Moyer
 - 27 Krysta Seigfried, Diane Brobst, Anna Kruk
 - 28 Sharon Thomas, Lauren Sterner
 - 30 Cody Wertman, Marisa Auteri, Liz Lamm,
Samantha Schuld
 - 31 Wendy Schuld, Sean & Ryan Brueninghaus
- *****

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 4 Steven & Sharon Thomas
 - 6 Dave & Gail Wolfe
 - 18 Paul & Heidi Glenn
 - 21 Earl & Sue Fuller
- *****

ANGEL TREE

Our Angel Tree project provides gifts to children who visit the Orwigsburg Food Pantry. We ask that you spend about \$20 per tag. Each child will also have a stocking that you can fill with age-appropriate goodies.

Please return your wrapped gift, the Angel Tree tag, and filled stockings by Sunday, December 10th.

Contact Deb Bolinsky at (570) 789-3540 or bolinsky5@verizon.net with questions.

DECEMBER FLOWER SPONSORS

December 3

Altar: In memory of my grandparents, George and Frieda Somers, and their children, Clarence, Alice, Lydia, Frances, and George, by James Lengel and the Lengel family.

Chancel: OPEN

December 10

Altar: In honor of Alexandra and Victoria's birthdays by their parents.

Chancel: In loving memory of Clark "Duke" Schenck by Sue, Kurt, and Julie.

December 17

Altar: In loving memory of Harry W. Lafko by his family.

Chancel: OPEN

December 24

Altar: In memory of loved ones. Diane Brobst

Chancel: In memory of Cathlene Krammes by Robin Zimmerman.

December 31

Altar: OPEN

Chancel: OPEN

DECEMBER BULLETIN SPONSORS

December 3: In memory of Lorain Kunkel and grandchildren Bradley Kunkel and Paula Hubner, by Julia Kunkel and Family.

December 10: In honor of Travis Moyer's Birthday (Dec. 10) by his grandmother, Fern Moyer.

December 17: In memory of my parents, Guy and Frances Lengel, by son James Lengel and the Langel Family.

December 24: In memory of Robert Shaud and Carl & Shirley Brensinger by Darin and Crystal Brensinger.

December 31: In memory of Cathlene Krammes by Robin Zimmerman.

DECEMBER 2023

SERVICE SCHEDULE



SUNDAY 8:00 AM	DECEMBER 3	DECEMBER 10	DECEMBER 17
GREETER:	Krista Harding	Krista Harding	Krista Harding
USHER:	Pastor Mike	Pastor Mike	Pastor Mike
LECTOR:	Amy Dewald	Ruth Ann Withers	Connie Teter
COMMUNION ASSISTANT:	Amy Dewald	Ruth Ann Withers	Connie Teter
10:30 AM			
GREETER:	Deb Bolinsky	Wayne Lutsey	Wayne Lutsey
USHER:	Diane Brobst	Bill Smoot	David Kriner
LECTOR:	Sue Reier	Deb Bolinsky	Tom Wehr
COMMUNION ASSISTANT:	Cindy Ritschel	Pat Kunkle	Wayne Lutsey
ALTAR GUILD:	Glenda Bright Diane Brobst	Glenda Bright Barb Sterner	Tina Butler Chris Long
COUNTERS:	Gwen Wehr Tom Wehr Glenda Bright	Rosalie Wingle Diane Brobst Marlene Eidam	Joyce O'Rourke Gloria Dierwechter Pat Davis

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 ~ 9:30 AM

GREETER: TBD; **USHER:** Chris Long; **LECTOR:** Tina Butler; **COMMUNION ASSISTANT:** Chris Long

ALTAR GUILD: Joanne Emerich and Gwen Wehr; **COUNTERS:** Gwen Wehr, Tom Wehr, and Glenda Bright

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE ~ 5:00 PM

GREETER: TBD; **USHER:** TBD; **LECTOR:** TBD

COMMUNION ASSISTANT: Kay Weidensaul

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE ~ 9:00 PM

GREETERS: Wayne Lutsey and Tina Butler; **USHERS:** Karen and Maddie Travor

LECTOR: Samantha Clarke; **COMMUNION ASSISTANT:** Greg Sklar

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 – NEW YEAR'S EVE ~ 9:30 AM

GREETER: TBD; **USHER:** Jerry Gossel; **LECTOR:** Sandy Freeman; **COMMUNION ASSISTANT:** Sue Reier

ALTAR GUILD: Joyce O'Rourke and Jean Premich; **COUNTERS:** Connie Teter, Barb Sterner, and Glenda Bright



HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

DECEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 5:30 p.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion
3 ADVENT 1 8 & 10:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:15 a.m. Adult Forum	4	5 6 p.m. Service Ministry	6 ST. NICHOLAS, BISHOP OF MYRA 6 p.m. Bell Choir 7 p.m. Chancel Choir	7 Noon - 3 p.m. WELCA at McKeansburg Hotel	8	9 1 to 3 p.m. Holly Jolly Christmas Party 5:30 p.m. Worship
10 ADVENT 2 8 & 10:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:15 a.m. Adult Forum 10:30 a.m. "No-Rehearsal Children's Christmas Pageant"	11 7 p.m. Council	12	13 6 p.m. Bell Choir 7 p.m. Chancel Choir	14	15	16 5:30 p.m. Worship
17 ADVENT 3 8 & 10:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:15 a.m. Adult Forum 4 p.m. Christmas Concert	18	19	20 No rehearsals scheduled	21	22	23 5:30 p.m. Worship
24 ADVENT 4 9:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion CHRISTMAS EVE 5 p.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion 9 p.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion	25 CHRISTMAS DAY No worship services are scheduled.	26	27 No rehearsals scheduled	28 10 a.m. Rainbow Friends	29	30 5:30 p.m. Worship
31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 9:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY No worship services are scheduled					

Reverend Michael T. Petresky
Justin McClure, Organist/Choir Director
Amy Dewald, Office Support Staff
Carl Heintzelman, Sexton
Karen Tavor, Treasurer
Wayne Lutsey, Financial Secretary
Jessica Swick, Social Media Manager

570-366-2316 - Ext 11
570-573-4076
570-366-2316
484-408-5152
570-366-8757
570-617-9617
936-648-6809

pastormike@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
justin@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
office@stpauls-orwigsburg.org

karen@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
cwlutsey@gmail.com
jessica@stpauls-orwigsburg.org

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Poinsettias for Christmas Eve will again be ordered from
Blue Mountain Farms in New Ringgold, PA.
The cost of a 6.5" bloom plant is **\$9.00**.

Please indicate red or white blooms and to whom you wish to dedicate.
If you choose not to dedicate the plants, you will be listed as a sponsor.

THE DEADLINE TO ORDER POINSETTIAS IS DECEMBER 3!

Please complete the bottom of this form and return it with payment to the plate
marked "Poinsettias" in the gathering room.

NAME: _____

I would like to order _____ red poinsettia(s),

I would like to order _____ white poinsettia(s),

at \$9.00 each. If you wish to dedicate your plant(s) "in honor/memory of,"
please circle one for the lines you complete below. **PLEASE PRINT.**

Honor/Memory: _____

Honor/Memory: _____

Honor/Memory: _____

Honor/Memory: _____

Honor/Memory: _____

Are you paying with CASH? ☐ or CHECK? ☐ CHECK # _____

Total # of Poinsettias: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____

DECEMBER 2023

**ST PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
P.O. BOX 156
ORWIGSBURG, PA 17961**

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Pottsville, PA
17901

PERMIT NO. 52

UPCOMING EVENTS:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 – CRAFTERS' GUILD DISPLAY & SALE IN OUR FELLOWSHIP ROOM.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 – CHILDREN'S "HOLLY JOLLY" CHRISTMAS PARTY AT 1 P.M.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 – CHILDREN'S "NO REHEARSAL" CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AT 10:30 A.M.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 – CHRISTMAS CONCERT AT 4 P.M. REFRESHMENTS FOLLOW THIS EVENT.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 – SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 9:30 A.M.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP WITH CANDLELIGHT & CAROLS AT 5 & 9 P.M.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 – SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 9:30 A.M.

WATCH US ON YOUTUBE. VISIT US AT OUR WEBSITE.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK. JOIN US FOR WORSHIP!