

St. Paul's News

January 2024

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
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SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

January 14
February 11
March 10
April 14
May 12

Our Teen class (ages 11-18) will meet at 9:15 a.m. and our Youth class (ages 1-10) will meet during the 10:30 a.m. service

THANK YOU!!

Words cannot express how thankful I am for such a wonderful, loving, and supportive church family! Thank you to everyone who helped make our first No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant a success!!

As I stood up front, looking at the members of the pageant and listening to the congregation singing, I could feel the love of the Lord surrounding us. I thank Him for bringing us together as a WHOLE congregation to celebrate the joy of the birth of His son. It was a truly memorable experience that will live in my heart for a long time.

A special and heartfelt THANK YOU to Jessica for introducing me to this pageant, working with me to bring our vision to life, and for bringing her enthusiasm and joy to this project! Thank you to Justin and Pastor Mike for your help in planning, Deb for your help at the pageant, Danika and Cole for reading and to Jason and Eric for always being "in the wings" to step in and help out in any way!

They say it takes a village, and I am so grateful to be a part of this village!

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

A recent sermon brought me a new way to think of sharing a message. Pastor Mike said something like, *Having things in good order is all well and good, but if it gets in the way of God's love, then God's love must always prevail.*

Like so many of us, I was raised with keeping your property, inside and out, trim and neat, with everything in its proper place. That's good order! However, recent research has shown that a manicured grass lawn is truly a "Diversity Dead Zone". Alarming, totally, considering that diversity of plant and animal life is how God designs nature ...plants and animals...and people, to thrive. It turns out that a 'yard garden', planted thoughtfully with native pollinators, is very attractive, and in the end, LESS WORK of trimming and mowing.

Please take some time in this new year and pray over the best gift you can give to the natural world right around you. (Of course, standard grass lawns are still good for when children play ball, etc.)

Valentine Gifts for Homebound: The succulents we worked on propagating last year are growing but will need supplements! On Saturday January 20, at 10 a.m. we'll work on these as well as creating Valentine cards. Come for coffee, creativity, and fellowship!

Coin Jar in Gathering Room: In order to avoid 'one more fundraiser', STiC is asking for loose change to cover some of our costs...such as those extra succulents and bulbs we'll need to make really nice planters for our homebound folks. Please take some of what's weighing heavy in your pockets and spread the wealth!

First Day Walk at Frog Hollow: This is the first of a (hopefully) yearly celebration of the New Year! We'll be starting at 10 a.m. Please wear sturdy walking shoes and something bright orange (we also supply some vests, just in case.)

Blessings this New Year! ! Sue Reier

WELCA NEWS

A Christmas luncheon held at the McKeanburg Hotel on December 7th was enjoyed by 23 of St. Paul's women. Gwen Wehr, along with her guitar, led the group with a carol sing-along narrated by Cindy Ritschel. Everyone agreed the event was successful and reservations were made for 2024.

The December in-gathering in the amount of \$315.00 was received for the Friendship Hose Co. of Orwigsburg.

Thanks is given to the Orwigsburg library knitters and all the others who supplied caps/scarves for the Seamen's International Christmas Project. Two large boxes were mailed to the Philadelphia post. Danielle Richards handled and paid for the mailings.

It was requested that our group provide light refreshments for the community winter nature series. If able, please add your name to the sign-up sheet at the gathering table.

No meetings are scheduled for January and February, but a March meeting will be arranged and announced via newsletter, etc.

Since the attendance at our meetings has been increasing, we are looking forward to another successful year.

For information contact Joyce O'Rourke at (570) 366-2887.

A MINISTRY OF ENCOURAGEMENT!

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.

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.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- The Service Ministry committee recently delivered holiday tins of cookies, candies and handmade ornaments to 14 shut-ins from our congregation.
- Council members loved the enthusiasm and joy that filled the sanctuary on Dec. 3rd for our first "No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant!" Thank you, Sarah and Jessica, for sharing your creative talents with St. Paul's.
- The 2024 church budgeting process is underway and will be shared at the annual congregational meeting on Feb. 18th, 2024, immediately following the 10:30 service.

ADULT FORUM

Adult Forum resumes on Sunday, January 7, 2024. We will continue our discussion using Timothy Keller's *Prayer*. The "Prayer of Prayers," the Lord's Prayer will be our first discussion topic of the new year.

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

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!

SPCA BLANKET DRIVE

Hello, Friends,

We would like to thank WELCA, especially Joyce O'Rourke, for sponsoring our efforts with the Blanket Drive for Ruth Steinert Memorial SPCA. The members of our congregation donated so many blankets it was amazing! Back in October, Makayla, a sweet young woman who accepted the donations taken to The Blessing of the Animals when Sue delivered them, saw the single bag of blankets and was so excited about them. Makayla told her "the dogs really need them with winter coming on." Sue responded that St. Paul's was like Harry Potter's Hogwarts, where all you have to do is ask, "and help will always be given."

Accordingly, Sue pitched the idea to Justin, Tina, and Cindy, and eventually Joyce, and the project took off. We are so grateful to all of you who donated. Some members even brought us brand new blankets! The Staff at RSM, and especially Makayla, send their sincere thanks. There were enough for every dog to have three! Thank you so much.

Once again, our generous Congregation has risen to the task, this time helping those who have no voice.

Sincerely,
Tina Butler, Cindy Ritschel, and Sue Schenck

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SET

Our annual congregational meeting will be on Sunday February 18, 2024, immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service.

During this meeting, we will vote for members of our Council and on a budget for 2024. Other business of the congregation may also be discussed. In case of inclement weather (or other emergency), our annual meeting will be held on the following Sunday at the same time.

Please mark your new calendar for this important meeting!

A PROGRESSIVE DINNER PLANNED!

The Evangelism Committee invites all interested adults to participate in a "Progressive Dinner" on Saturday, February 24, beginning at 6 p.m. Anyone attending Saturday church services will be able to join us with the appetizers from 6 to 7 p.m. at the home of Barbara Sterner. At 7 p.m. we will proceed to the home of Michael and Elinda Lado for soup and salad. At 8 p.m. we will enjoy desserts at the home of Lee and Amy Dewald.

A sign-up sheet will be located at the gathering place by February 1st. If childcare is needed, please let our committee know.

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).

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 the best selection of delicious chilis, tasty homemade soups, and just baked breads and pastries.

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

We are up to 495 followers on Facebook! Keep 'LIKING' and 'SHARING' and sharing the Good News ONLINE! THANK YOU!

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE MAGI?

The Magi, also known as the Wise Men or the Three Kings, play a significant role in the biblical account of Jesus' birth from the Gospel of St. Matthew. Let's explore what we can learn about God from their story:

1. They were "seekers"
The Magi were Gentiles, not Jews. Despite their non-Jewish background, they were drawn to seek the newborn King of the Jews. This demonstrates that God's salvation is not limited to a specific ethnicity or nationality. God's grace extends to all people, inviting them to seek and worship him.
2. They followed a "star"
The Magi followed a miraculous star that led them to Bethlehem. Some believe that this star symbolizes God's guidance and provision. Just as God guided the Magi, he continues to guide us today. When we seek God earnestly, God directs our path.
3. They brought "precious" gifts
Upon finding Jesus, the Magi fell down and worshiped him. They presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Some believe these gifts hold deeper meanings:
 - Gold: Represents Jesus' kingship and royalty.
 - Frankincense: Symbolizes Jesus' divinity and priestly role.
 - Myrrh: Foreshadows Jesus' sacrificial death for all humanity.

From the Magi, we learn that true worship involves humility, reverence, and offering our very best to God. Their gifts foreshadow Jesus' identity and mission on earth.

The story of the Magi also reminds us that God's salvation is inclusive, God's guidance is sure, and that true worship involves seeking God with trust and sincerity.

The journey of the Magi reflects God's invitation to all humanity: "When you search for me, you will find me, if you seek me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13).

ASH WEDNESDAY

The season of Lent begins with the observance of Ash Wednesday. This year our Ash Wednesday service will be held on Wednesday, February 14 at 7 p.m. The imposition of ashes and the sharing of Holy Communion will be offered at this service. Please mark your calendars!

A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

WELCA would like to give a special thank you to Deb Bolinsky for overseeing the Angel Tree project for St. Paul's again this year.

Each year after receiving the names from the food pantry, Deb supplies the stockings and name tags for our Angel Tree, and then delivers the gifts and stockings back to the food pantry after they have been collected.

Her work and attention to this project, in addition to the generosity of our church family, has made it another huge success!

CHANCEL FLOWER ORDERS

Chancel flower orders must be called in to Forget-Me-Not Floral by TUESDAY each week. Please make sure you write your information in the green dedication book or call Sue Schenck at 570-386-2647 (or the church office) that day with your dedications.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - 1963

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jason Kaunas, Darlene Henry
- 2 Jessica Witman
- 3 Sue Schenck
- 4 Charlene Rarick Knauss
- 5 Robert Ruff
- 6 Shannon (Frampton) Fanelli, Mike Bright
- 7 Debra Kokitus
- 8 Jack Miller, Karly Hine, Tammy Mosher
- 9 Madyson Riegel, Kathleen Wimbrow
- 10 Bill Folk, Jr., Scott Butler, Gabriel & Lincoln Seiler
- 11 Joe Marcusky, Donovan Spatz
- 12 Noel Brensinger, Cameron Keener, Jodi Spotts
- 13 Darcy Medica
- 14 Chris Long
- 17 Leslie Dahl, Jason Trubilla, Elizabeth Williams, Jerry Goessel
- 19 Janice Grove, Gerald Hinnershitz
- 20 Ethan Spatz
- 23 Amy Dewald
- 25 Mark Wilson, Joyce O'Rourke
- 27 Christa Sterner, Cynthia Kennett
- 28 Paulette Sassaman
- 30 Madison Tavor, Ann Spitler

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 22 Jim and Sandy Spotts

ANGEL TREE NEWS

A huge and heartfelt thank you to everyone who purchased gifts and filled stockings for our annual service project with the Orwigsburg Food Pantry!!

This year the pantry received gift lists for 104 local youth and our congregation bought gifts for 15 of the children, the most that any local church was given. This is a testament to the kind and caring members that fill our pews every weekend.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

JANUARY FLOWER SPONSORS

January 7: In memory of our grandparents, William and Lottie Long Legel, and their children, John, Guy, Arthur, and Amelia, by James Lengel and the Lengel family.

January 14: OPEN

January 21: OPEN

January 28: OPEN

JANUARY BULLETIN SPONSORS

January 7: OPEN

January 14: In memory of Ann and Lamar Butler by Scott and Tina Butler.

January 21: OPEN

January 28: OPEN

A NOTE OF THANKS!

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all who sang, rang, read, baked, decorated, or helped in any way to make our 2023 Christmas Concert such a success.

We received many compliments and words of gratitude from those who attended. It is truly a blessing to be able to share our faith in Christ through the gift of music.

May your New Year be filled with plenty of peace, love, joy, and music!

To God be the glory!

Justin

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.

HOW WILL YOU "RESOLVE" TO BETTER FOLLOW IN THE PATH OF CHRIST IN 2024?

JANUARY 2024

SERVICE SCHEDULE

	<u>JANUARY 7</u>	<u>JANUARY 14</u>	<u>JANUARY 21</u>	<u>JANUARY 28</u>
<u>8AM</u>				
GREETER	Krista Harding	Krista Harding	Krista Harding	Krista Harding
USHER	Pastor Mike	Pastor Mike	Pastor Mike	Pastor Mike
LECTOR	Connie Teter	Ruth Ann Withers	Kay Weidensaul	Amy Dewald
COMMUNION ASSISTANT:	Connie Teter	Ruth Ann Withers	Kay Weidensaul	Amy Dewald
<u>10:30AM</u>				
GREETER:	Bill Smoot	Doug Travor	Cindy Ritschel	Cindy Ritschel
USHER:	Tina Butler	Gwen Wehr	Tom Wehr	Madelyn Knecht
LECTOR:	Sue Schenck	Doug Travor	Kristin Durkee	Jeff Ritschel
COMMUNION ASSISTANT:	Evan Davis	Doug Travor	Jeff Ritschel	Bill Smoot
ALTAR GUILD:	Kathy Miller Connie Teter	Kathy Miller Connie Teter	Joanne Emerich Gwen Wehr	Joanne Emerich Gwen Wehr
COUNTERS:	Rosalie Wingle Marlene Eidam Diane Brobst	Joyce O'Rourke Gloria Dierwechter Pat Davis	Connie Teter Joanne Emerich Barb Sterner	Connie Teter Glenda Bright Barb Sterner

GIVING STATEMENTS

Members who use their envelopes to contribute to the ministry of this congregation can pick up their 2023 Giving Statements when they come to worship on Saturday, January 6 or Sunday, January 7, 2024.

Statements which are not picked up by Monday, January 22, 2024, will be sent to members via U.S. Mail.

MEMORIAL GIFT

A gift has been given to our general fund in memory of D. Mark & Gertrude Herb, Ray C. & Helen N. Diefenderfer, Lauren Herb Dow, Ralph J. Herb, and all loved ones by Mark & Becky Herb.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for all your thoughtful Christmas cards and generous gifts. Your kindness and prayers have truly been a blessing to me and my family. God bless you all!

Pastor Mike, Sue, and Mikey

GIVE TO OUR FOOD PANTRY

We encourage everyone to continue to support our Community Food Pantry over the winter months. A box for non-perishable food items is in the narthex. Let's continue to help feed our hungry neighbors!

JANUARY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY 1 p.m. Walk at Frog Hollow	2	3 7 p.m. Chancel Choir	4	5	6 5:30 p.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion
7 EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD DEADLINE FOR ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:15 a.m. Adult Forum	8	9 6:30 p.m. Finance	10 7 p.m. Chancel Choir	11	12	13 5:30 p.m. Worship.
14 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:15 a.m. Adult Forum & Teen Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Youth Sunday School 3 p.m. Winter Nature Series Presentation	15 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY 7 p.m. Council	16	17 6 p.m. Bell Choir. 7 p.m. Chancel Choir	18	19	20 5:30 p.m. Worship.
21 3 RD EPIPHANY 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:15 a.m. Adult Forum	22 6:30 p.m. Worship & Music	23	24 6 p.m. Bell Choir. 7 p.m. Chancel Choir	25	26	27 5:30 p.m. Worship
28 4 TH EPIPHANY 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:15 a.m. Adult Forum	29	30	31			

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

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JANUARY 2024

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

PERMIT NO. 52

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7 – THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD – WORSHIP AT 8 AND 10:30 A.M.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14 – THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD - WORSHIP AT 8 AND 10:30 A.M.

WINTER NATURE SERIES PRESENTATION AT 3 P.M.

WATCH US ON YOUTUBE. VISIT US AT OUR WEBSITE.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK. JOIN US FOR WORSHIP!