

St. Paul's News

January 2026

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

P.O. BOX 156, 215 NORTH WARREN STREET

ORWIGSBURG, PA 17961

OFFICE: 570-366-2316

www.stpauls-orwigsburg.org



When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:10-11

THEY FOLLOWED A STAR! ✨

The story of the Magi reminds us that Christ draws all nations to himself. These wise men were outsiders to Israel, yet they were led by God's light to worship the newborn King of the Jews. Their faithful journey shows us that God's good news is not limited to one people or one place, but is a gift for the whole world.

This wondrous story also teaches us what faith often looks like. The wise men trusted the sign of the star rising in the east. They set out, not knowing exactly where it would lead. In their steadfast trust we see that faith means following God -- even when the path is uncertain and at times dangerous.

When the wise men finally found what they were seeking, they did not discover a mighty king in a palace, but a child with his mother in a humble home. What a surprise! Yet they bowed down in worship and offered him their gifts. Their offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh remind us to always give our best — our time, our talents, and our treasures — to the Lord.

For us today, the Magi's journey is a call to trust God's Word, to worship Christ in humility, and to rejoice that the Gospel is for all people.

The story of the wise men who traveled a great distance following a star invites us to walk by faith, to follow the light of Christ, and to bear witness to his glory in the world. As we begin a new year, let us do just that! ✨

Grace, peace, love, and joy!

Pastor Mike

P.S. Thank you for the Christmas cards and gifts. Your kindness and generosity mean so much to me and my family. God bless you all!

2026 DEDICATION BINDER

New sign-up pages have been added to the green Flower and Bulletin binder. You are now welcome to reserve dates in 2026 to sponsor altar flowers, chancel flowers, or bulletins.

WELCA

On November 17, we packed and shipped 110 dark-colored hats/scarves to the Seamen's Church Institute of Philadelphia. We received a thank you letter from them which is on the WELCA bulletin board. A special thank you was sent to the Orwigsburg Library knitters who supplied many items again this year. They enjoy this and they said they have already begun to work on the hats for next year. One of our women paid for the shipping costs again this year. Our group is happy we can be part of this outreach program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

On Thursday, December 4, twenty-eight women enjoyed the fellowship and luncheon at the McKeansburg Hotel. All in attendance agreed to the same time and place for the 2026 event. Gail Rarick shared the history of her beautiful bell collection. This began many years ago with the gift of a bell from her father to her and her sister, and continued until his passing. Each table was decorated with her bells. She also read a poem about bells. The December In-gathering offering of \$336 was given to the Orwigsburg Food Pantry.

We have no meetings scheduled for January and February, but plans are being made for the month of March.

ADULT FORUM

Adult Forum will continue exploring the book of Psalms. We meet on Sundays at 9:15 a.m. in the church parlor. For more information, please contact Barbara Lafko at bjlafko@yahoo.com or 570-366-1208 or the church office.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations and best wishes to Benjamin C. Gallagher and Victoria L. Spitler who were joined in Holy Matrimony at St. Paul's on Tuesday, December 23, 2025. May God abundantly bless them as they begin a new life together -- as husband and wife!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We continue to have Sunday School every second Sunday of the month. For students aged **7 through 12** we study the Bible and do activities based on the lectionary series from **9:15 to 10:15 a.m.** Children ages **1 through 6** are invited to join us for Bible stories, crafts, a snack, fun, and fellowship **during the 10:30 a.m. worship service.**

Here is a list of Sunday School dates for this school year: January 11, February 8, March 8, April 12, and May 10.

THANK YOU!!

- A huge and heartfelt thank you for helping to make our third No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant a success! Thank you for all who participated and helping in the Pageant, including Maddie and Jessica Swick, Justin, and Pastor. It is one of my favorite events of the whole year, and it is truly heartwarming to celebrate the birth of Jesus as a family of faith. **THANK YOU!!!!**

REMINDERS

- Looking ahead for when the snow starts flying...Families, please make sure I have your cell phone number. If we have to cancel church on a Second Sunday I will text you to let you know.
- If you have not filled out a contact/information sheet and Media Release Form, please see me for one.

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

OUR ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our annual congregational meeting will be on Sunday February 8, 2026, 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 emergencies), our annual meeting will be held on the following Sunday at the same time.

SAVE YOUR CHRISTMAS AND ALL-OCCASION CARDS

Please save the fronts of your Christmas and all-occasion cards and bring them to church to support our Crafters Guild's spring notecard project. Our crafters use card fronts to create note card packs which will be available for purchase in the basement craft room. Money raised by the Crafters Guild will benefit those in need in our community. For more information, please contact our church office.

DECEMBER COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- 1.) Council needs to fill 3 seats that will be open by the February congregational meeting. Any church members that have interest in being put forth as a candidate are encouraged to contact a member of Council or the Pastor to learn more about this opportunity.
- 2.) The December 6 Holly Trail event and December 14 Christmas Concert held at the church were resounding successes introducing many community residents to St. Paul's. Well done to all!
- 3.) Special thanks to Social Media Director Jessica Swick for the professional, colorful postcards and pamphlets which she prepared for the Christmas season!

ANGEL TREE

Last year's service project with the Orwigsburg Food Pantry supplied Christmas gifts and stockings to 12 youngsters in our community. The Angel Tree is a huge project and last year it provided Christmas cheer to 90+ youngsters. My faithful and dedicated elves at St. Paul's knew exactly what to do: they jumped in and bought gifts, wrapped them in cheerful paper & bows, and made my part in this program so easy! Thank you all for your kindness and generosity during the Christmas season 🥰

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

On Monday, January 19, we remember the life and witness of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His ministry teaches us that faith is lived out with courage and compassion. He reminded us that “There comes a time when silence is betrayal,” calling God’s people to speak truth with love.

Dr. King also wrote, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality,” a reminder that God has woven our lives together. When we recognize this sacred connectedness, we begin to see our neighbors as gifts entrusted to our care.

As we honor his legacy, may we walk in the way of Christ—seeking justice, offering mercy, and treating every person with God-given dignity.

STIC NEWS

Welcome to the new year and a new way of checking up what’s going on with STiC: our space is on the right hand side of the bulletin board in the Gathering room. This month, we’ll be posting some simple ways to continue our growth in better protecting our beautiful planet...perhaps some of them can be your New Year’s resolutions!

This month, STiC is inviting everyone and anyone interested in creating Valentine Cards for our homebound folks. The idea of card making is being borrowed from the Christmas card creations. Please look for at your calendars and set aside Thursdays of January 9, 16, 23 and 30, gathering at noon (that seems a convenient time for most...). We’ll need to make about 18-20 cards, and some of the process requires drying times in between. I’ll post a sign-up sheet near our bulletin board area, so we know best how to prepare!!!

‘In solidarity with all creation’,
~Sue Reier

ASH WEDNESDAY

This year, our Ash Wednesday service will take place on Wednesday, February 18 at 7 p.m. The service will include the imposition of ashes and the sharing of Holy Communion. Please invite a neighbor or friend to join you for this special service.

CRAFTERS’ GUILD NEWS

Thank you to everyone who created, donated, organized, volunteered, and supported our Christmas Craft Market during the Holly Trail Event and Open House. This successful event raised over \$1,450. These profits will be donated to the Orwigsburg Library and other community groups.

The Crafters’ Guild will resume monthly meetings in January. Our next gathering is Wednesday, January 21 at 12 noon, when we’ll be making Valentine gifts for our homebound members. We hope you can join us.

FLOWER POT COVERS

The decorative pot covers from our Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost flowers can be reused. Saving them helps reduce waste and can save the congregation about \$150 each year.

Please bring your pot covers with you to worship and place them in the collection box in the narthex.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We welcome Cody and Paige Forke of Orwigsburg, PA. and their son, Colton. The Forke family were approved for membership by our Church Council at their December meeting.

Please welcome Cody, Paige, and Colton into our congregation and thank them for becoming part of our “church family.”

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 Gossel' Stephanie Harding
- 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 Travor, Ann Spitler

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Our sincere thanks to everyone who values our ministry and has responded with generosity. Your giving, both great or small, enables us to welcome new members, grow in faith and fellowship, and share the love of Christ with families in need.

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for the ongoing work of the Church and for our congregation!

YEAR-END REPORTS ARE DUE!

Committee leaders should send their year-end reports into our office by Sunday, January 4. Please email your report as an attachment to: office@stpauls-orwigsburg.org.

JANUARY FLOWER SPONSORS

January 4:

Altar: In memory of Guy and Frances Lengel by James Lengel and the Lengel Family

January 11: OPEN

January 18: OPEN

January 25:

Altar: In loving memory of Clark "Duke" Schenck's birthday, 30 January 1943, by Sue Schenck

JANUARY BULLETIN SPONSORS

January 4: In honor of my children by Barbara Sterner

January 11: In honor of my grandchildren by Barbara Sterner

January 18: OPEN

January 25: OPEN

2025 GIVING STATEMENTS

Members who use church envelopes can pick up their 2025 Giving Statements on Saturday, January 4 or Sunday, January 5. Statements which are not picked up by Monday, January 19, will be sent to members via U.S. Mail.

If you have any questions or concerns about your 2025 Giving Statement, please contact our church office.

CHANCEL FLOWER ORDERS

Chancel flower orders must be called in to Forget-Me-Not Floral by Tuesday each week.

Please make sure you "print" your information in the green dedication book or call Sue Schenck at 570-386-2647 (or the church office) that day with your dedications.

JANUARY 2026

SERVICE SCHEDULE

	<u>JANUARY 4</u>	<u>JANUARY 11</u>	<u>JANUARY 18</u>	<u>JANUARY 25</u>
<u>SUNDAY - 8:00 AM</u>				
GREETER	Krista Harding	Krista Harding	Krista Harding	Krista Harding
USHER	Pastor Mike	Pastor Mike	Pastor Mike	Pastor Mike
LECTOR/ COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Connie Teter	Kay Weidensaul	Amy Dewald	Ruth Ann Withers
<u>SUNDAY - 10:30 AM</u>				
GREETER	Jerry Goessel	Greg Sklar	Sarah Eger	Wayne Lutsey
USHER	Jerry Goessel	Cindy Ritschel	Joanne Emerich	Karen Shoener
LECTOR	Chris Long	Becky Smoot	Dave Krewson	Leslie Guldin
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Jeff Ritschel	Cindy Ritschel	Wayne Lutsey	Evan Davis
ALTAR GUILD	Barbara Lafko Amy Dewald	Barbara Lafko Amy Dewald	Hope Clarke Sue Schenck Barb Sterner	Hope Clarke Sue Schenck Barb Sterner
COUNTERS	Gwen Wehr Glenda Bright	Rosalie Wingle Diane Brobst	Joyce O'Rourke G. Dierwechter Pat Davis	Connie Teter Joanne Emerich Barb Sterner

SOUP & CHILI SALE RETURNS!

As an "appetizer" to Super Bowl Sunday, the award-winning Men of St. Paul's will host a Chili & Soup Sale "on the square" on Saturday, February 7, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

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

WEATHER CHECK: STAY SAFE!

If you're unsure if worship is still on due to bad weather, just give us a call at (570) 366-2316 and listen to the outgoing message. You can also check our Facebook page for any updates.

Stay safe and cozy—check before you head out!

SIMPLY GIVING MAKES GIVING SIMPLE


"Simply Giving" is a secure and convenient way to support our church through electronic funds transfer. For more information or to enroll, contact our Treasurer, Karen Travor, or leave a message at the church office (570-366-2316).

NEW MEMBERS' SUNDAY

Our Evangelism Committee will honor our newest members on Sunday, February 15. A reception for them will follow the 10:30 a.m. service.

Let us give thanks to God for our newest members and warmly welcome them!

JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 NEW YEAR'S DAY The Church Office is closed.	2	3 Worship with Holy Communion 5:30 p.m.
4 EPIPHANY SUNDAY Worship with Holy Communion at 8 & 10:30 a.m. Adult Forum 9:15 a.m. DEADLINE FOR YEAR END COMMITTEE REPORTS	5 Worship & Music 6:30 p.m.	6	7 Chancel Choir 7 p.m.	8	9	10 Worship 5:30 p.m.
11 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD SECOND SUNDAY! Worship with Holy Communion at 8 & 10:30 a.m. Adult Forum & Youth Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Children's Sunday School 10:30 a.m.	12 Finance 6 p.m. Council 7 p.m.	13	14 Bell Choir 6 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m.	15 BSF 7 p.m. DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER ITEMS!	16	17 Worship 5:30 p.m.
18 2 EPIPHANY Worship with Holy Communion at 8 & 10:30 a.m. Adult Forum 9:15 a.m.	19 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY  The church office is closed.	20	21 Crafters' Guild 12 Noon Bell Choir 6 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m.	22 BSF 7 p.m.	23	24 Worship 5:30 p.m.
25 3 EPIPHANY Worship with Holy Communion at 8 & 10:30 a.m. Adult Forum 9:15 a.m.	26	27	28 Bell Choir 6 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m.	29 BSF 7 p.m.	30	31 Worship 5:30 p.m.

OUR PASTOR & STAFF

Reverend Michael T. Petresky	570-366-2316 - Ext 11	pastormike@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
Justin McClure, Organist/Choir Director	570-573-4076	justin@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
Amy Dewald, Office Support Staff	570-366-2316	office@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
Carl Heintzelman, Sexton	484-408-5152	
Karen Travor, Treasurer	610-507-2797	karen@stpauls-orwigsburg.org
Wayne Lutsey, Financial Secretary	570-617-9617	cwlutsey@gmail.com
Jessica Swick, Social Media Manager	936-648-6809	jessica@stpauls-orwigsburg.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY 9:00 A.M. to 12 NOON.

JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

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

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PERMIT NO. 52

UPCOMING EVENTS:

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 -CHILI & SOUP SALE AT 8:30 A.M ON THE SQUARE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 – ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AFTER THE 10:30 SERVICE

WATCH US ON YOUTUBE. VISIT US AT OUR WEBSITE. FIND US ON FACEBOOK.

COME AND SEE. EVERYONE IS WELCOME!