

THE EPISTLE

The Newsletter of the People of St. Paul

December
2009/
January
2010

St. Paul Mission Statement

“As disciples in Christ’s church, we gather to worship, to grow in faith, and to serve our community and our world.”

This is the time of year that we should sit back and take stock of all the blessings we have been fortunate to have been given. We have homes, warm clothes, food to eat, friends, family -- all the things we need.

Too many times we get caught up in what we want -- not need -- to make us happy.

God is good to us in so many ways. During the Christmas season and into the New Year, reflect on your life and ways in which you can make the lives of others happier with the simple gifts of love and understanding and share the good news that Christ was born for us.

During this holy season, may the Lord fill us all with peace and love. May the love of Christ be born anew in all of us. May the joy of Christmas bring you and your loved ones happiness.

Jayne and I wish all of you a most blessed Christmas and New Year.

Pastor Jim Gable



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

How can it be?

How can it be that my oldest nephew and niece are already fourteen years old, taller than me, and recently confirmed?

How can it be that my youngest nephew is twelve and already a great debater?

How can it be that Cliff and I have been married twenty-five years?

How can it be that the children I once shared children's sermons with in my early years in the pastorate are now asking me to officiate at their weddings?

How can it be Advent already?

How can it be?

While I was busy living my life, life snuck up on me and surprised me. While I was busy living my life, life went on and the days became months and the months became years and now, it's Advent. It's time for you and me to make time in our busy lives to reflect on what Advent means for us as Christians.

The church season of Advent points to two times in God's plan for us and all of creation:

It is the time when we prepare to look back and remember and celebrate the coming of Christ at Christmas - the birth of the infant Jesus, the Word made flesh, Emmanuel (God with us), our Savior and look forward to reading the wonderful beloved Christmas story as found in Luke's Gospel.

Advent is also the time when we look forward to Christ's return, his Second Coming.

- To the time when he shall come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

- To the time when God's Kingdom shall come into its fullness.

- To the time when swords shall be turned into plowshares and the oppressed shall be set free.

- To the time when all things shall be made new.

The Scripture readings during Advent tell us to stay awake, pay attention, and prepare for this time that is coming. It shall arrive while we are busy living our lives.

How can it be?

It's God's perfect plan for our busy lives!

Since this is a December/January newsletter, Cliff and I wish you and yours a blessed Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. May God's richest blessings be yours, as you love and serve God and neighbor in faithful discipleship throughout the coming New Year.

Yours in Christ our Lord and Savior,
Pastor Linda



Christmas Services...

The "Blue Christmas" A Service of
Remembering and Healing -
Sunday, December 20
12:15 PM

Christmas Eve - Thursday, December 24
6:30 PM Family Service with
Candlelight
9:00 PM Holy Communion with
Candlelight

Christmas Day - Friday, December 25
9:30 AM Holy Communion
Service

Christmas 1 - Sunday, December 27
9:30 AM Lessons and Carols
Service (Remember to bring your
bells!)

Christmas 2 - Sunday, January 3
8:00 and 10:45 AM Holy
Communion Services

The Epiphany of our Lord - Wednesday,
January 6 - 6:30PM
(Please note the time change)

Holy Communion
and Burning of the
Greens (Bring your
greens from home
to burn.)



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Music News...

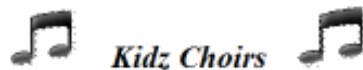
Advent is finally here – YEAH! With that statement alone many will think that I have finally lost it... Many will simply tell you I lost it long ago. But I truly mean that it is great that Advent is here! Advent is a time of preparation, preparing for the coming of Our Lord. We all enjoy preparing for the coming in our daily lives: shopping for gifts, food, sending cards, the music, it is all very “good feeling.” However, we must take care to not pander to society's commercialized rush to the Christmas season, an attitude that is worrisome when some equate worship, particularly liturgical worship, with "people feeling good and in a Christmas mood." Our thoughts, our devotions, our preparations should all be in the preparation. There is beautiful music that exists within the Advent season, despite what Kmart and Wal-Mart might have you believe with Andy Williams singing “Sleigh Ride” from every store speaker as early as October!

Advent music has been overshadowed by all the "bright, tinselly stuff" of Christmas. Look for perennial favorites such as "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," based on an ancient 12th century chant, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" and "Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People."

As we enter into Advent we embark on a new, but familiar musical setting in our liturgy, Setting 10. This setting uses known hymns and responses as components of the liturgy. It will be much like seeing familiar faces at a reunion. And so I encourage you, particularly during these last weeks of Advent when the pressure becomes greater to succumb to society's wishes and society's commercialization, to hold fast to Advent and its music, Christmas will arrive soon enough!

Have a Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas!

Soli deo Gloria!
Ken



Kidz Choirs

As promised, our children's choirs have a new, combined name! We are now “King's Kids!” Come hear us sing the fourth Sunday of (almost) every month!

**There will be NO choir rehearsals for King's Kids & Joyful Noise on December 27 and January 3.*

Contemporary Corner...

Divine Intervention

Each month as I prepare to write my Epistle article, I hope and pray for some divine intervention. I find my inspiration in my daily life and everyday adventures – places where God dwells, usually unnoticed.

Today, as I'm nearing my Epistle deadline, we spent the day at my brother's house. After helping with the dishes, I asked for some hand cream...and found my divine intervention! My sister-in-law had an enormous bottle of something called "Pure Grace" by philosophy, a beauty company out of Arizona. I had seen this line of beauty products on QVC but never tried it for myself. Now the hand cream was lovely...but the message printed on the bottle was as soothing for the soul as the



cream was for the hands. I share this message with you in hopes that your holiday season is filled with family, friends, and many blessings:

“One of the best tools for longevity and good health is not just taking a walk outdoors, but taking your walk while holding the hand of God. When we walk in gratitude for each and every moment, we empower ourselves by empowering our spirits. When we breathe in nature through our eyes, ears, and lips, we become certain that not only are our souls eternal, but that God knows how to manage our lives, our troubles, and our worries and our days better than we do. So today and everyday 'let go and let God.'”

Happy Holidays,
Melodie Fair

***Contemporary Worship Dates:
December 13
January 10 & 24***

Epistle Reminder:
All articles/information for the February Epistle should be submitted no later than the **January 15th** deadline. E-mail submissions are *preferred* and should be sent to baeapaynter@gmail.com OR articles can be placed in the folder marked “Epistle” outside the church office. **NOTE:** Please include a contact name and phone number with articles placed in the folder. Thank you!

Upcoming December Events...

Town Hall Meeting

There will be a Town Hall meeting on Sunday, December 13 to discuss the 2010 budget. The members of the Congregational Council will be providing a light lunch. Please plan to join us!



Church Decorating for Christmas

When? Friday, December 11
Time? 6:00-8:00 PM (Dinner at 5:30)
Who? EVERYONE!!!

Please join us to decorate the church for Christmas. We could use EVERYONE's help! Also, we are going to have a pizza dinner in the social hall before decorating. Pizza, drinks, and munchies will be provided. The cost for dinner will be \$3/person. If you are planning to come for dinner, there will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex.



Join us for the Sunday School Christmas Program:

***“ONE STARRY NIGHT...
ON A SUNNY DAY”***

Sunday, December 20 at 10:00AM in the Nave



Upcoming January Events...

Thankoffering Service

St. Paul Women of the ELCA are once again presenting the Thankoffering Service on Sunday, January 17, 2010. This year's speaker will be Sue Groff, the associate director of Bridge of Hope.

Bridge of Hope's mission is to end and prevent homelessness for women and children with the help of trained mentors within congregations. St. Paul has one of these groups. Mrs. Groff was first introduced to this organization when someone in her own neighborhood was the recipient of the mentoring offered by Bridge of Hope. She has been working in her current capacity for seven years and for over twenty years with non-profit organizations.

St. Paul WELCA encourages you to attend this service and hear more about the opportunity to take our faith into the community. A special offering will be received for WELCA's church-wide Thankoffering project that benefits women and children in crisis.



Save the date(s)!!

In addition to the normal meeting time for blanket making which is on the last Wednesday of the month, the Saturday chosen for January will be January 23, 2010 from 9:00 AM to noon. If you can come on Wednesday, that will be Wednesday, January 28, 2010.



“SOUPER” Bowl of Caring Sunday, Jan. 31, 2010

Join us in the Social Hall immediately following the 10:45 service for some delicious homemade soups, bread, drinks, and desserts!

Admission: A non-perishable food item and/or money donation
ALL PROCEEDS GO TO LUTHERAN
WORLD HUNGER and
LITITZ/WARWICK COMMUNITY
CHEST
(Sponsored by the 7th and 8th grade
Confirmation class)

Congregational Council...

November Meeting Minutes

Pastor Gable led opening devotions based on Revelations 12. We should all rejoice because good wins and evil loses.

Financial Report: Highlights included:

- * Income is down \$106,000 compared to budgeted amount
- * Endowment Fund has increased
- * Utilities and maintenance are up
- * Expenses have exceeded our income

Administrative Teams:

****Financial:*** The average weekly giving for the first two weeks after the Town Hall meeting increased; however, for the 3rd week, the weekly giving slipped back to \$7200. We will pay \$2500 to benevolence.

****Cemetery:*** The cremation area has been cleaned.

****Personnel:*** Ray Lowry has agreed to fill the remaining Personnel Committee position. The Personnel Committee is looking at staff efficiency.

****Council:*** Recap of the goals from the Council retreat in September were:

1. Stewardship – a committee has been formed including Dave Bingaman, Jeff Eby, Pam Kiskaddon, Kate Martin, Nancy Miller, and Phyllis Frankhouser. There are 3 more positions to be filled. The first meeting will be in December.

2. Fellowship – There will be a Fellowship Fair on Sunday, November 22 at 9:30AM in the Narthex. All of the small groups of our church have been invited to display their group information and sign-ups. There will also be an opportunity for people to sign-up for new groups based on the interests of church members.

The list of suggestions from the Town Hall meeting on October 25 will be sent to the Ministry Teams to address.

The Town Hall meeting has been scheduled for December 13. Council members will provide lunch.

****Property:*** Our fall clean-up on Saturday, October 31 was a great success.

Worship Life Team: Discussion took place about our new offering procedure. It was decided that we will continue to allow people to go up on their own.

Mission Life Team: The Mission Awareness Sunday was a great success.

Family Life Team: The youth group will be sending a team to volunteer at the Habitat house, a lock-in and Winterfest are approaching, and the library is almost complete. Dinner clubs are up and running. There will be a Family Advent Festival on Sunday, November 29 at 9:30AM.

Property News...

Some Dirt from Mr. Ray!

There are certain things that are sacred to Lutherans. One thing that comes to mind is parking spaces. Another that should be, but isn't always, is the ground where they worship. St. Paul Property Committee has a solution to this oversight.

In the spring of 2010, we will ask the pastors to bless the compost pile at the rear of our facility. There is some really good "stuff" in there!

Then volunteers will bag the compost for anyone to purchase for a donation to our equipment and grounds fund to replace trees, shrubs, and equipment as the need arises.

We can't guarantee the results, but with the quality of the compost and the blessing, it certainly can't do anything but be good for your flower beds and vegetable gardens.

With our many blessings, we thank you for your help! Look for more details in the spring!

Mr. Ray and the Property Committee



~ Your Help is Requested ~

In order to keep the church office and our members' records up-to-date, please notify the church office...

- ...when you or a family member is in the hospital or has been discharged. (LGH will notify us if you tell them that you are a member when being admitted.)
- ...when you move or change your address or phone number (**including college address and phone number moves.**)

Thank you for your help!

WELCA ...

St. Paul Circle at Luther Acres
Meets 1st Wednesday of the month
at 1:15 PM
in the Luther Acres Activity Room

Ruth Circle
Meets 1st Sunday of the month
at 9:30 AM
in the church library

Topic of study for December:
Hope – Hope Does Not Disappoint
Theme Verse:
Romans 6:11

Women of the ELCA membership
booklets may be picked up on the table in
the narthex.



St Paul Circle at Luther Acres

The St Paul Circle at Luther Acres will
meet on Wednesday, December 2, at
12:30 PM in the Hershey Activity Room.
This meeting will be a dessert social, so
please bring a dessert to share. Drinks
and paper products will be provided.

Women of the ELCA

Women of the ELCA invites all women
of the congregation to a winter brunch to
be held in the social hall on January 30,
2010, at 10:00 AM. The speaker will be
Steve Gallion, “The Garden Guy,” from
Stauffers of Kissel Hill. The program
will be followed by a delicious meal. An
offering will be collected for the
Lutheran World Relief health kit project.
There is no fee for the event, but a
donation will be accepted to defray costs.
Reservations are required by Sunday,
January 24. A sign-up sheet will be in
the narthex in the beginning of January.
If you have questions, please contact
Phyllis Frankhouser at 626-4200.

Health Kit Update

WELCA has exceeded the goal of 100
health kits!!! To date, 179 kits have been
packed and more are on the way. How
can this be? At the January WELCA
event on January 30, 2010, Steve Gallion
(the Garden Guy) will be the special
speaker. The special offering monies
from this event will be used to purchase
health kit items so more kits can be
assembled. So it looks as if St. Paul will
easily double the amount of kits we
hoped to assemble.

THANK YOU, ST. PAUL, FOR YOUR
WONDERFUL GENEROUSITY!
Stay tuned for the final count.

Thank You Notes...

Dear Church Members,

My family and I want to thank you for all the good food. Everything has been wonderful and tasty. Everything you have done has been such a big help. I am feeling good and Margaret is thriving. Jessica is busy being big sister. Samuel and Gracy are doing good in the school. Your pray and helping us before Margaret came and now has been a blessing. My family and I would like you to continue to pray for us. Everything thank you so much.

Love,
Mang and family

Thank You, Blood Donors!



Forty-eight units of blood were donated by our members and others from the community at our most recent blood drive on October 29th. Each unit has the potential to help three recipients. Thanks so much for this great response in this outreach to those in need.

Dates for our 2010 blood drive events are May 13, September 2, and December 30. Watch for announcements in the Epistle and church bulletins as these dates draw closer.

Thank You

The property committee would like to thank all of those kind souls who braved the less-than-fair conditions to help with the Fall cleanup. We were able to accomplish much during the morning cleanup to unclog gutters, clean leaves off social hall roof, clean the garden beds, thin perennials, trim shrubs, and get the grounds ready for winter. We definitely showed that we can accomplish much if we all pitch in a little, and that church service means more than a block of time on Sunday. The property committee is proud and extremely thankful for this tremendous display of stewardship. God bless.

With Sincere Appreciation

The members of the family of Pastor James Shannon want to express appreciation for the love and concern shown during his illness and at the time of his death. The beautiful service that celebrated his life with the choirs and other musicians assisting and with so many attending was very uplifting. We also thank those who attended the viewing and those who assisted at the social event afterwards.

Thank you also on behalf of the many needy people who have been helped by Lutheran World Relief because of the contributions made in his memory.

Stephen Ministry...



Stephen Ministry Prayer

Lord of the Church, we give you thanks for the life and ministry of your servants in this congregation. We thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, empowering their journey of faith and service. Today we pray for the Spirit's guidance as we recruit Stephen Ministers. Open the ears and hearts of those you have prepared for a ministry of caregiving. Raise up those whom you have blessed with the gifts of mercy, compassion, faith, and encouragement, that they might develop their gifts and use them to bring your love and forgiveness to people in need. We pray in your name and by the power of your Spirit. Amen.

Disaster Relief Trip...

Camp Biloxi Disaster Relief Trip

A trip to Camp Biloxi in the Gulf Coast for the purpose of providing disaster relief to those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is currently being organized. Just after the storms in 2005, it was estimated that it would take 6-10 years to rebuild the Gulf. RAI Ministries, who runs Camp Biloxi, indicates that those estimates were accurate. They believe that they are about halfway toward full recovery. Obviously, that means that there is lots of work left to do. The dates of our fourth conference trip are April 18-24, 2010. There will be an informational meeting on Sunday, December 6th, at 2:00PM, at Trinity Lutheran Church in New Holland. If you are interested in helping, please plan to attend.



Nursery School...

Greetings from St. Paul Community Nursery School

November was a busy month for both students and teachers alike. The children learned about fall. They watched the changes in the weather and scenery and made beautiful and unique art work including leaves, corn, and pumpkins, of course.

The Music Program has been a wonderful addition to St. Paul's Nursery School thanks to successful fundraising. With the guidance of Mrs. Melodie Fair, music class has become a quick favorite among the children. The children also look forward to their visits from Pastor Gable and Pastor Hanus.

As the calendar continued to move ahead through November, the children learned about Native Americans' lives and how the Pilgrims came to America. The month of November wouldn't be complete without a Thanksgiving Feast and learning to be "grateful" for the things they have.

Hope you all had a Happy Thanksgiving!



Sunday School...

AUGSBURG

- Dec. 6 "A Son is Born" Frank Wood
Dec. 13 "An Unexpected Sign"
Marsha Campbell
Dec. 20 "A Unique Birth" Diana Hill
Dec. 27 No Class
Jan. 3 "Declaring Identity" Don Shaub
Jan. 10 "Facing Temptation"
Tom Herrmann
Jan. 17 "Works of Healing"
Dave Althouse
Jan. 24 "Inviting the Weary"
Janice Hackman
Jan. 31 "Overcoming Rejection"
Nancy Weiss

CONFIRMATION

- Dec. 6 How to Identify the True
Christian Church on Earth
Dec. 13 Seven Important Bible
Teachings Every Lutheran Should
Know
Dec. 20 Top 5 Misconceptions About the
Book of Revelation
Dec. 27 NO CLASS
Jan. 3 Creation
Jan. 10 The Human Condition
Jan. 17 King David
Jan. 24 Psalms for Help
Jan. 31 "Souper Bowl of Caring"

Ministers

The People of St. Paul

Pastor

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Chris Nikoloff	Laura Kiskaddon
Tom Trayer	

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