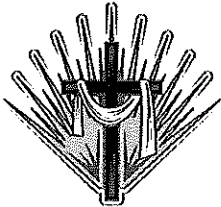

...THE LETTER OF ST. PAUL

February, 2025

Volume 63, Number 11



St. Paul Lutheran Church
4660 W. 94th Street
Oak Lawn, IL 60453
(708) 423-1040
www.stpauloaklawn.org

**The Mission Statement of
St. Paul Lutheran Church**

By God's grace, we exist to prepare hearts, minds, and souls for life in the world and in eternity.

In this month's Newsletter, please read letters from Pastor Gregg Ramirez; our missionaries: the Erbers; and our administrative assistant, Sandra Barry.

Thank you to all who give of their time, talents, and treasures to support the ministry of St. Paul. You are all recognized in our special Volunteer Sunday events on February 16th.

WORSHIP SERVICE
Sundays, 9:00AM

**SUNDAY SCHOOL AND
BIBLE STUDY, 10:15AM**

FEBRUARY AT ST. PAUL

...Change in service times to 8:30 am for Sundays, February 9th and February 16th only

...Southwest Pregnancy Center "Everything Baby" campaign collection ongoing until February 16th

...Toothpaste and dental hygiene items collection for the Food Pantry's Feb. Dental Health month

...Volunteers needed to help Operation Barnabas pack care pkgs. for deployed troops on Tuesday, February 11th at 10:30 am

...Volunteer Appreciation Celebration on Sunday, February 16th with the church service at 8:30 am and a free breakfast/reception following the service for ALL in attendance

...Ladies Guild meeting for ALL women on Tues., February 18th at 1 pm

...Lutheran Witness subscriptions due on Sunday, February 23rd

...Voters Assembly meeting on Tuesday, February 25th at 7 pm in the church sanctuary

Read more information about these activities in this Newsletter! God's blessings to all! See you in church!

THE PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

John 14:23 - If anyone loves Me, He will keep My Word.

Over the past few months, I've gotten to know a fellow, Quinn, who works out with weights, like I do, at the local gym. Someone told Quinn that I am a minister because he's thinking about getting married, and I offered to help as a possible opportunity to have conversations about the Christian faith.

Quinn is a great guy. In his early 30's he's got a very upbeat personality – talkative, likable, and very open to have conversation with different kinds of people. Just recently I met his girlfriend who is very sweet and asked her about them getting married. She said yes, but admitted they're slow – they've been together 12 years. So, I asked about faith and they said they are Christians, but don't go to church. Quinn shared that he reads the Bible sometimes. Then I asked the question: "Can a person be a Christian and not be a disciple?" Quinn hedged on that, and then we moved on again to the subject of marriage – agreeing to keep talking about it happening some time.

So, the door is open with Quinn and his girlfriend. They're in my prayers and that question yet remains open: Can a person be a Christian and not be a disciple? Many like Quinn would agree. They would affirm Jesus as their personal Savior from sin, and experience what the Bible calls justification. But here's where there's a huge disconnect that arises. Does Quinn feel the need to go to church? Why? He can at home confess his sins and trust that he is forgiven.

However, besides justification the Bible speaks about sanctification. That's when, through the Holy Spirit, we move from being conformed to the ways of this world and transformed by the renewing of our minds. How does this happen? It's through growing in faith – the way of discipleship – by means of studying God's Word which the believer hears, reads and inwardly digests. In this way, the life of Christ is formed within the Christian.

Does this help to better recognize the disconnect? Many of our non-church going loved ones are cultural Christians. They may even go to church on Christmas and Easter, but they lack the sanctification component. This cultural Christianity is a religion that is practiced by more Americans than any other faith or religion. It looks and sounds very Christian on the surface, but it is Christian by culture rather than conviction. It's a generic faith that demands and asks nothing of its followers. They are more Jesus admiring rather than Jesus following.

THE PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

How can we best understand this distinction? To me, it is well described through Jesus' last words in the Sermon on the Mount:

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

What's the most significant point in this parable? "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice." What words is Jesus referring to? Answer: Those in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Jesus is declaring that these words are to form the foundation of our identity through our sustained reflection upon them.

Again, do you sense what's going on these days? To me, it's best summarized in what has been called the dirty little secret: Most people who call themselves Christians don't read their Bibles. Maybe 5 to 10 minutes a month, but does this work to achieve what Jesus is looking for in this parable – a person whose house is built on the rock?

As you might surmise, this is an issue I'm passionate about. What say you on this subject? At present, I don't know how to get these crucial understandings across to loved ones for fear I'll push them further away. I would appreciate your feedback to all of this, and may it work that many at St. Paul's would consider Bible Class as more than an option.

Epiphany blessings,
Pastor Gregg

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

4660 W. 94th Street, Oak Lawn, IL 60453
(708) 423-1040 ~ www.stpauloaklawn.org

Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Gregg Ramirez

Director of Music: Mrs. Ruth Sievers ~ ruthsievers@att.net

Church Administrative Assistants: Ruth Sievers and Joanna Cauffman
(for Mrs. Sandra Barry)~ sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org

Office Hours: Mon.-Thurs., 9-1pm; Fridays 9-2pm

To view our Sunday services, calendar, and newsletter, visit www.stpauloaklawn.org

The deadline for placing articles in the newsletter is the 2nd Sunday of the month.

Send submissions to sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org.

OFFICIAL ACTS

DEATHS

We extend our Christian sympathy to the following families:

- to the family of Edna Johnson, called from this life to her eternal home on Friday, January 3, 2025.
- to the family of "Gerry" Keipert, called from this life to her eternal home on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025.
- to the family of Joan Miller, called from this life to her eternal home on Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025.

GROW IN CHRIST ~ SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Sunday School meets in Room 8 each Sunday at 10:15 a.m. after the Sunday morning worship service. Teens and adults are also invited to gather together to study God's Word after the Sunday service in the Timothy Room. The Bible study series is called "God's Love: Knowing God through the Psalms". Grab something to eat and drink and join us!

SERVICE TIME CHANGE TO 8:30 A.M. ON SUNDAYS, FEBRUARY 9 AND FEBRUARY 16

Pastor Ramirez is on vacation during the month of February. Our guest pastor on February 9th and February 16th needs to be present at his own church for a 10:30 a.m. service, but is willing to come earlier to officiate at our services. To accommodate his schedule, these services only will begin at **8:30 a.m.** Please note these changes on your calendar.

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS

The Lutheran Witness is a publication of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and is filled with articles about Christian living, worldwide missions, ministries of various congregations, and encouragement for your personal walk of faith. If you would like to subscribe, please write a check for **\$20.65** payable to *St. Paul Lutheran Church* and write "Lutheran Witness" in the memo portion of your check. **All subscriptions are due by Sunday, February 23rd!**

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

WHEN YOU ARE HOSPITALIZED

Please call the church office to let us know when you or a member of your family has been admitted to the hospital. We want to include you in our prayers and will arrange for a pastoral visit when necessary.

REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS

OUR MEMBERS: Sandy Barry; Betty Beegle; Vic and Marty Both; Jan Briede; Delphine Cherry; Loretta Frank; Louis Clayton Frank; Jennifer Garcia; Arthur Gerth; Amanda Greene; June Hagberg; Katherine Hice; Kevin Hickey; Roy Hodgeman; Herta Iversen; Graham Jackson; Janice Janiszewski; Flora Jones; Robert Kaczmarek; Ron Klingensmith; Betty Kruckow; Elaine Lebron; Jan Leise; Ingrid Lesko; Warren A. Miller; Regina Nordquist; George Oberg; Dorothy Pavella; Barbara Prendergast; Janice & Rich Przybycien; Rosa Richardson; Lori Safstrom; Kurt Seehofer; Beverly Sellers; Norma Silinski; Carol Small; Keith Vanselow; Bill Volk; Susan E. Volk; Sarah Weber

OUR MEMBERS IN CARE FACILITIES: Betty Larson; Gloria Meyer; Melva Smith; Delores Stegemann

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE CONGREGATION: Lisa Anglin; Barbara Apt; Devon Apt; Carrie Aspan; Lance Barrientos; Cathy Becker; Sue Berg; LeRoy Bitner; Henry Bonder; Sharon Bryant; Selma Carmichel; Frankie Coglina; Judy Collins; Edward Cyga; John Darge; Dana DeAngelis; Rudy DeAngelis; Bridget & Nick DeAngelo; Shirley Demyres; George Dodaro, Sr.; Shirley Fairchild; Justin & Ashley Fasel; Emily Feehan; Triston Ferry; Gloria Folsom; David Franzone; Jerry Gross; Ted Gross; Donald Hakanson; Shawn Harland; Charley Heitz; Amanda Hermansen; Ann Herold; Phyllis Hicks; Elaine Hoffstetter; Doreen Holford; Carl Hoppe; Vern Howe; Louise Hrynkow; Kyle Hughes; Rich Huscher; Ray Jackson; Marissa Jiminez; Dana Kahn; Monica Kato; Debby Kehrl; Jimmy Kennedy, Jr.; Julie King; Robert Klaviter; Debra Kleeman; Herb Kleeman; Evelyn & Ron Konieski; Christopher Kosary; Jerry Kreten; Glen Krietsch; Dorothy Kroll; The Lamberth family; Carol Loecherbach; Margaret Lundgreen; Ron Lunt; Adrian Martinez; Iris McCoy; Carol Jean and Tim McPhillips; Audrey Metes; Carol Milazzo; Marie Miller; Daniel Musser; Roberta & Carlos Owens; Pam Palhegyi; Patricia Paulsen; Gail Pennay; Sandy Plath; Jackie Plichta; Barb Potter; Doris Potts; Fred Raddatz; Guillermo Ramirez; Raquel Ramirez; Kimberly Rooney; Sophia Salus; Elmo Schultz; Rhonda Scott; Allyson Seehofer; Linda Shuman; Al Silinski; Kim & Shawn Skelton, Sr.; Sarah Skelton; Anna Stendic; Janet Trierweiler; Bernadette & Rich Trusk; Jose Urena; Wayne Volk; Vicki Warren; Michael Watkins; Gene Wawrzynikowski; Cindy (Joens) Wendel; Katherine Zeleny; Jean & Al Zirbel

THOSE IN THE MILITARY: Mark Brown (son of Pam Brown and nephew of Beth Matusевичius) Navy Reserves/Great Lakes Naval Base, Chicago); Aurora DeAngelis (daughter of Michelle and Curtis Simonson), USACE, Detroit, MI; Peter Scialabba (son of Susan Scialabba and nephew of Sharon Helmbold) Special Forces; Adam Skelton (grandson of Rich and Jan Briede) stationed in Dover, Delaware; Christopher Skopec (son of Steven and Debbie Skopec) stationed in North Carolina; Sean Rosales (son of Ed and Mia Rosales) stationed in Washington.

(Please let the church office (708) 423-1040 know when your need for our prayer list is over.)

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

MESSAGES FROM OUR COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS

Dear Fellow Members of St. Paul Lutheran Church,

The Elders pray that 2025 started off well for you. We wish you a joyful heart and a strong faith. This year promises to be eventful and exciting. We, as a congregation, will be busy with many projects at St. Paul, in the local community, and in mission work abroad. We will also continue our search for the new man God has chosen to lead us.

How are we to act as we face 2025 with its uncertainties and challenges? In the Bible, we can find dozens of positive adjectives that describe a Christian. Here are five that mean a lot to me.

1. Unafraid

We should strive to be fearless in our spiritual lives and in our thoughts about the future.

"Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." Mark 5:36

2. Willing

We should strive to be ready, eager, and prepared to surrender our lives to God. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Mark 14:38

3. Unashamed

We should strive to be open - without guilt or embarrassment - about our faith and lives as Christians.

"However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name."

1 Peter 4:16

4. Strong

We should strive to be resolute, trusting in God's promise to uphold and strengthen believers. "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Isaiah 40:29-31

5. Compassionate

We should strive to be loving and accepting as we interact and work together with fellow members of God's kingdom. "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Colossians 3:12-14

Let us resolve to face the days and months ahead with optimism, determination, and resilience. After all, as we read in Romans 8:31—"If God is for us, who can be against us?" Pray that God will guide St. Paul and make our church a blessing to each of us and to the community.

Yours in Christ,

David Witkosky for the Board of Elders

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTORAL CALL COMMITTEE

The Call Committee has reviewed the personal information forms of nine pastors supplied to us by the Northern Illinois District office. Of these nine, two were suggested by members of St. Paul and the other seven were recommended by the District office.

From the list of nine, the call committee selected six pastoral candidates that we would be interested in calling to be our pastor. Our circuit visitor and regional vice-president will contact these six individuals to determine if they would be willing to entertain a call from us. If they are willing, we will contact them to set up interviews, either online or in person. Please pray for these pastoral candidates and our call process here at St. Paul.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF EVANGELISM/PARISH EDUCATION

The holidays have passed, and I hope everyone enjoyed this blessed time of the year celebrating the birth of our Lord. As I am drafting this article, the temperature outside is below zero, and I can't help thinking about the less fortunate than myself. I can't imagine being homeless in this weather or any weather for that matter. How very thankful I am that God has blessed me with so many blessings. Keep the less fortunate in your prayers.

The first activity our board is hosting is already underway. From January 19th to February 16th, we are hosting the Southside Pregnancy Center Campaign. We are asking for new or slightly used baby items. There is a table setup in the narthex where items can be dropped off. A list of the most needed baby items is available on the table or included on the back page of your bulletin.

They do accept gently used items such as strollers, cribs, mattresses, car seats, and other such items. All contributions are appreciated. If you have a large item, it can be placed under the table. There are envelopes on the table if you wish to give a monetary gift. The envelope can be placed in the box that is provided. Inside the envelope there is a slip that can be filled out if you would like a receipt. Once we turn the envelope over to them, the center will send you a receipt.

We are very blessed to have successfully started Sunday School. We have ten children that have been attending. We welcome any child ages 3 to 10. If you know anyone looking for a chance to educate their child about the love of Jesus, please encourage them to attend our classes. Currently Sunday School is starting at 10:15, but there have been complications with that start time, so starting in March Sunday School will start at 10:30am and end at 11:30am.

We can all look forward to the Parking Lot Party. There is no information for now but as we get closer to the summer, information will be available. Stay warm! God is good.

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

MESSAGE FROM OPERATION BARNABAS

The first Sunday in February is Four Chaplains Day. It is dedicated to four Chaplains who trained together and became friends at the Army Chaplains School and were assigned to serve aboard the USAT Dorchester, a converted civilian liner. Those chaplains were Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist Minister; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish Rabbi; Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic Priest; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Reformed Church in America Minister. On January 23, 1943, a three-ship convoy that included the Dorchester left New York to steam to a base in Greenland with 902 aboard. At 12:55 a.m. on February 3, 1943, the Dorchester was torpedoed by a German submarine U-223 off Newfoundland in the North Atlantic. The torpedo knocked out the Dorchester's electrical system, leaving the ship dark. Panic set in among the men on board and many of them were trapped below decks. The chaplains sought to calm the men and organize an orderly evacuation of the ship and helped guide wounded men to safety. As life jackets were passed out to the men, the supply ran out before each man had one. The chaplains removed their own life jackets and gave them to others. They helped as many men as they could into lifeboats, and as the Dorchester sank, the Chaplains locked arms on the rising bow, in prayer for the others. The survivors in the water heard them singing hymns in Hebrew, Latin and English. ("As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lit everything. The bow came up high and she slid under. The last thing I saw, the Four Chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets." - Grady Clark, survivor) Only 230 survived.

The Christmas cookies for Veterans event was a success. Containers of cookies were distributed to Veterans in local area nursing homes. Cookies were also given out to St Paul Veterans who were in church Christmas Eve and Veteran friends. Thank you, St Paul Congregation.

The Care package program was able to send 6 packages each for December and January. With each package being shared with other troops, we could be touching many more troops, and they are very appreciative of our remembering them. We will be getting more names of deployed troops during January. Remember these troops are all young men and women who have volunteered to serve and defend us far from home. Starting in February, we will also add seven additional chaplains who are deployed or stationed overseas.

If you care to help our mission with a donation, it is easy. Just add it to your offering envelope and show the donation amount on the Operation Barnabas line. If you wish to be part of the Barnabas Mission, please call Rich Przybycien at 1(708)420-9528.

**GOD bless America, GOD bless all our military men and women, and
May GOD bless us all.**

Thank you.

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

MESSAGE FROM FAITH IN ACTION/SOCIAL MINISTRIES

This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. We love, because he first loved us. 1 John 4: 10 & 19

St. Paul congregation, thank you so much for your support for those in need during the Christmas holiday. You have touched the hearts of many with your generosity. We delivered 41 toys and 38 McDonald's plush animals to Worth Township for their Christmas toy collection for families in need. We also thank the board of Evangelism/Christian Education for their 30+ holiday children's gift bags and to Operation Barnabas for the 10 packages of cookies. With a grateful heart, we thank Thrivent and our grant writers for \$750 in Visa cards that were used in our food pantry in December through January. Because of you and our sponsors, we served 82 families and 229 individuals in **December**.

So many of our clients thank you for giving with your heart. We could not help them without your help. You are not only helping feed their bodies, but you are also feeding their souls. We continue sharing Portals of Prayer with our clients. Our clients are strengthened by God's love through these prayers and devotions.

February is also dental health month at the food pantry. In the past, we were able to receive gifts from dentists in the community, but as we all know things are different today. We look for dollar deals on toothpaste and dental items, and we also will be sharing the toiletries and hygiene items you and the community have given us. Our clients look forward to this special month when they get something a little extra in their bags.

Through you and our partners, we have been blessed to serve those in need. We have collected 1558 pounds of rescued food, including Panera and Pepperidge Farm, meat, fruit, vegetables, and deli items. Our clients are able to receive a box of these rescued items along with their shelf stable grocery bag. The rescued food is not only used in our food pantry, but is also used to make the meals for the homeless through BEDS Plus.

The men's cook team prepared a BEDS turkey dinner in January; because of a meat donation from Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry. We would like to thank everyone that attended the BEDS-Plus 13th annual Soup and Bread Event on Sunday, February 2nd. 21 soups w/ bread were available along with appetizers, desserts, and entertainment. It is a kid friendly unending soup bowl event enjoyed by many. This event is dedicated to helping individuals in Chicago's Southwest Suburbs stabilize their lives through housing and essential services. If you did not attend, put it on your calendar for 2026.

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

Thank you for your constant support of our missions. You are always welcome to join our team, just call the church office and leave us a message (food pantry x18). We are still looking for someone to help us with food rescue, and we always welcome businesses or schools to have a food drive for our pantry.

Again, thank you for your generosity, and sharing the love of Jesus.

A Tribute from Faith in Action

A tribute with a heavy heart to Edna Johnson. FIA will remember forever the life of Edna, as she inspired our social ministry board. We have so many memories of Edna in the food pantry, cooking for BEDS dinners, making desserts, writing thank you notes, and being a moral support for everyone she met. We remember her little pink basket that carried her spices and tea & crumpets—our special snack while we waited for the BEDS meal to cook in the oven. She was constantly with us, if not physically then in her spirit and her prayers. She has been our prayer warrior for years; always trusting in the Lord and His guidance in our lives. She would stay connected with those that were hurt or down in spirit. She loved her mission here at St. Paul and always approached her mission with a smile on her face. We will miss you dear Edna, our dear friend, but now you are in glory with Jesus and John. Thank you for your service here at St. Paul.



'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' Matthew 25:21

MESSAGE FROM SANDY BARRY

Dear Friends in Christ,

It's been a few months since I've had the energy to write and let you know how things have been going.

It's been six months since my transplant. I'm still working my way through this stem cell 'adventure' and have gone from receiving chemotherapy at the time of my transplant to being on a targeted oral chemotherapy, and having all of my whopping 24 plus medications 'dialed in', of which I'm tolerating fairly well. Instead of having to be at the hospital on a regular basis (like I was all summer), my daughter and I now attend clinic one day a week on Fridays, which has been wonderful! It goes something like this: Labs are drawn; I see my medical team for results of those labs, and sometimes I need to receive an infusion of magnesium or potassium or whatever I may need that day. Just recently I needed to receive blood, but - no worries, all is well.

I have been prescribed a medication called Tacrolimus, a strong immunosuppressant (highly toxic to the body, yet very necessary for stem cell patients to take during the first 6 months to a year- at least!) This medication caused a rare condition that- to keep it short- inflamed every blood vessel in my body, restricting my red blood cells from regenerating, ultimately 'eating up' my platelets and

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

causing them to drop. The reason I mention this is that for the last four months, my medical team has been somewhat baffled by my consistently decreasing platelet count despite having the rest of my lab work appear steady and strong. These past two months in particular my team was concerned that perhaps I was facing Graft vs. Host disease (a dangerous complication of Allogeneic Stem Cell Transplants), or he heavily questioned if my Leukemia was trying to come back.

My medical team stopped the Tacrolimus and once that happened, the inflammation in my blood vessels decreased and my platelet counts began to rise, which was great news! When your platelet counts are low, you feel sluggish and tired. When the platelet counts rise, your energy is renewed and you have some "pep in your step", and I love that feeling. It has been a stressful few months, but I am thankful that my medical team was able to discover and get to the bottom of this complication. They even shared with me at my last appointment that they believe I may now finally be turning a corner in this process. Praise be to God!

Faith and a positive attitude can go a long way toward making a cancer experience bearable. Each and every day is precious to us ... a gift from heaven. So during this time, I made a resolution to maintain a positive and healthy attitude. To have a halo of hope greeting me every morning.

Each day holds so much promise. Each day holds so much passion and I don't want to miss one minute of God's goodness. My cancer experience has allowed me the opportunity to reflect on my life and has given me permission to make the changes that I've always wanted to want to make no matter how small.

I want to thank you for your thoughtfulness through cards, phone calls, text messages and emails, as they continue to come in, for filling me with words of encouragement, comfort and peace. Some of you have designed cards especially for me and I want you to know that I cherish every one of them.

I've received hot chocolate in cards and beautiful bookmarks, Angel ornaments, and adorable stuffed animals that made me smile. I have an anonymous Angel at church who has blessed me from time to time with special gifts of love. I don't know who you are, but with all my gratitude and love, I thank you and pray God's continued blessings upon YOU!

The New Year has begun as we are now in February. As I reflect over the Christmas season, I think of Jesus and His love: because Jesus came, we can have peace with God. We can be filled with all joy, abound in hope, be justified freely, be alive toward God, have the spirit of wisdom, be under His grace, know the hope of His calling, be conformed to His image, be a child of God, be His heir, have victory and know the riches of the glory of His inheritance. Because of Jesus we have so many reasons to rejoice!

To all of us - the patients, survivors, family, friends, employers and caregivers who are living with cancer or any other illnesses or situations causing great concern - NEVER let go of the thing that makes getting up every day worth living for ... the gift of HOPE. God be with you and bless you.

My love,

Sandy

OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

VOTERS' ASSEMBLY MEETING

All St. Paul members of the Voters' Assembly are requested to attend the next Voters Meeting on Tuesday, February 25th at 7:00 p.m. Come to hear reports from our Boards and committees (including the Pastoral Call Committee) and participate in the discussion and/or adoption of any new business decisions that need to be made. **ALL** St. Paul members are invited to attend the meeting.

MESSAGE FROM THE LADIES GUILD

Attention, Ladies Guild Members and Friends! Our February meeting date has been changed to **Tuesday, February 18** (instead of February 25) at 1:00 p.m. in the Timothy Room. Please join us for devotions, a short meeting, refreshments and a topic/discussion on "Learn How to Enjoy Reading Your Bible", led by Marilyn Bitner. Bring a friend! All are welcome!

MESSAGE FROM THE FAMILY OF EDNA JOHNSON

From the family of Edna Johnson: "We thank everyone who attended her funeral. We appreciate all of the cards, messages, prayers and memorial gifts. We will miss her."

ALTAR FLOWERS

Thank you to our flower chairperson, Terry Hornburg, for the beautiful floral arrangements she has been blessing us with each Sunday to celebrate a special occasion or "just because". Thank you also for your diligent care given to the Christmas poinsettias while they were in place around the altar at Christmas. To place an order for flowers, you may reserve a date on the flower calendar in the narthex and/or call the church office at 708-423-1040. Please make your check payable to *Terry Hornburg*.

The Southwest Lutheran Chorus, under the direction of Debbi Hochgesang, welcomes new members of all voice parts as they again begin rehearsals here at St. Paul later in February for a spring concert. Please contact Debbi at 708-499-2866 for more information and rehearsal dates.

The Sunday worship video is now available each week on our website www.stpauloaklawn.org. To access the video, just click on the Sunday date – or church services - on the homepage.

Please contact the church office (708-423-1040) or email sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org if you have recently moved, or if your phone number or email address has changed. Thank you!

David and Joyce Erber
LCMS International Mission * Ghana, West Africa

Christmas 2024

Saint Paul Lutheran Church
4660 W 94th St
Oak Lawn, IL 60453-2513

Dear People of God in Oak Lawn,

"The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned" (Matt. 4:16 quoting Isaiah 9:2).

Jesus is the light who has come into the world! (John 12:46).

Jesus is our joy, our life and our salvation!

Merry Christmas!

Ministry Update

Joyce and I continue to serve the Lord through LCMS International Mission. We continue to live in a small house in the huge capital city of Accra, Ghana.

Joyce is responsible for all the financial dynamics for LCMS work in Africa. She has a role in almost every LCMS mission endeavor in Africa. One of those endeavors is PROJECT 24. Project 24 is a group of 9 boarding facilities for children of Masai nomadic cattle herders. Since these nomadic people are always on the move, it is difficult for children to go to school. Each of the boarding facilities is close to a Lutheran school so that the children can live in a Christian home and be raised in the Christian faith and the catechism. Many of the students have carried Christianity back home to their families. A number of the students have graduated and have become pastors. There are some great Kenyans who are running these boarding facilities. This doesn't mean they are always great with simple accounting practices. Project 24 brings Joyce both joy and challenges!

I have been designated as the Greek instructor for our seminary in Ghana. Some of the guys are great with languages. Of course, these guys already know two or three or five languages and are good at learning them. But, along with Greek, I model preaching in every class session, I get every student involved in teaching and problem solving. We work on reading and interpreting Scripture. The students are discovering that learning to identify subjects, verbs and objects and other parts of speech in Bible passages helps them to understand the passages. And, the students are actually learning Greek. Finally, I hope the students learn to love their future church members as I seek to love them and constantly assure them that God loves them! My best days are my days with the students!

Family Update

This year, Joyce and I were blessed with the births of two new beautiful granddaughters. One was born in Accra, Ghana in July. The other was born in Minneapolis in September. In Ghana, every person has a name according to the day of the week they were born. I am Kwabena. Joyce is Abena. These two little girls are both Adwoa (born on Monday). This makes Joyce Nanabaa Adwoa and me, Nanabeema Adwoa for both girls. Amazingly, Joyce and I will be together with all of our children and our three precious grandchildren for some very special days just before Christmas.

May God bless you during the Christmas season and always! Thank you for your prayers and partnership in proclaiming Christ, the Light that has come into the world!

David and Joyce

Dear People of God in Oak Lawn,

Thank you for your donations: \$383.80 recorded on August 6, \$1,554.80 on September 9, \$364.80 on September 27, \$681.80 on October 22 and \$621.80 on November 26.

We are grateful for your generous and sacrificial offerings. Your support enables us to serve in Africa and to do all we can to help missionaries and Lutheran churches across Africa as well as to help to build up and equip our seminary students in Ghana.

Thank you!

David and Joyce

David.Erber@LCMS.org & Joyce.Erber@LCMS.org

For those who desire to support this work financially,

1. Write check to: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
 2. On Memo Line, write: "Support for Erbers - Ghana"
 3. Send to: LCMS, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861
- Or go to: www.lcms.org/givenow/erber Or go to: Mission Central

MEMORIALS & THANKOFFERINGS

MEMORIALS

Given by:

Sharon Rochlitz
Ruth Mrochen
Elaine Lebron
Sandra Spano
Edith Raddatz
Mary Lou Degidio
Mary Lou Degidio
Debbie & Mike Will
Grace Kreten
Sharon & Ed Kristof
Elaine Lebron
Debbie & Mike Will
Jean & Karen Racek
Laura & Mel Safstrom
Elma Harris
Joan Hagen
Ruth Sievers
Ruth Sievers

In Memory Of:

Judy Anderson
Rev. George Mrochen
Dana Lebron
Irma & Joseph Small
Walter Pavella
Michael Degidio
Baby Matthew Webber
Edna Johnson
My Mother's Birthday
Edna Johnson
Fred Guetzman
Geraldine "Gerry" Keipert
Edna Johnson
Edna Johnson
Edna Johnson
Edna Johnson
Edna Johnson
Gerry Keipert

Designated for:

General Fund
General Fund
General Fund
General Fund
General Fund
General Fund
General Fund
Faith in Action (FIA)
Faith in Action (FIA)
General Fund
General Fund
Faith in Action (FIA)
Faith in Action (FIA)
Faith in Action (FIA)
General Fund
General Fund
General Fund
General Fund

THANK OFFERINGS

Given by:

Debbie & Mike Will
Grace Kreten
Kristine Sowa
Janice & Bill Leise
Sandy Barry
Sandy Barry
Sandy Barry
Sandy Barry
Sandy Barry
David Conrad
Janice & Bill Leise
Karen & Jean Racek

For:

Debbie's Baptismal B-Day
Blessings Received
Family & Friends
Janice's Birthday
Blessings Received
Blessings Received
Blessings Received
Blessings Received
Blessings Received
Alumni Donation
Betty Shamasko's Birthday
Betty Shamasko's Birthday

Designated for:

Faith in Action (FIA)
Faith in Action (FIA)
General Fund
General Fund
General Fund,
Operation Barnabas
Faith in Action (FIA)
Ladies Guild Kitchenette
SW Lutheran Chorus
General Fund
General Fund
General Fund

OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS AS OF JANUARY 1, 2025

President: Bill Leise
Vice President: Mike Will
Secretary: Denise Murray
Treasurer: Mark Landstrom
Contributions Secretary: David Purdy

Board of Elders:

Dave Kandel, Kevin Kenealy, Bill Leise, John Lilja, Rich Przybycien, Keith Vanselow, David Witkosky

Board of Parish Education/Evangelism:

Glenn Bitner, Barbara Herring, Cheryl Horan, Linda Miller, Sharon Rochlitz, Betty Shamasko

Board of Social Ministry / Faith in Action:

Jan Dietz, Cathy Kumke, Sue Lilja, Carol Small, Debbie Will

Board of Stewardship:

Sue Browne, Lori Safstrom, Jean Racek, Lorrie Ragland, Ruth Sievers

Board of Trustees:

Jerry Aspan, Marty Fasel, Glen Hicks, George Oberg, Ed Raff, Mike Will

Endowment Committee:

Joe Berlinski, Dave Kandel, Karen Nordstrom, David Witkosky

Acting Sunday School Superintendent:

Barbara Herring

Anniversary Committee:

Barb Puder, Lorrie Ragland

Nominating Committee:

Sandy Barry, Ruth Sievers

Scholarship Committee:

Kylee Murray



Baby Items Needed!!

(most needed items)

Diapers - sizes 4,5,6 and Pull-Ups

Baby wipes

Baby shampoo

Baby body wash

Baby Lotions

Diaper rash cream

Baby Formula (Enfamil preferred)

Pedialyte Electrolyte drinks

Pediasure Nutrition shakes

Clothing - Newborn to 4T including: sleepers shoes, socks, under shirts, underpants, coats, hats, mittens, boots etc.

Baby towels & wash cloths

Baby blankets and swaddle sleep sacks

Bibs & burp cloths

Gently used items:

Diaper bags, carriers, pack & play, crib & mattresses, car seats w/base, strollers, high chairs, booster seats, bath tubs, swings and rockers.

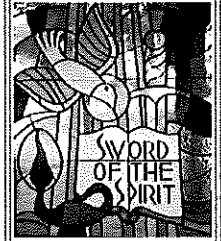
Maternity Clothing Small thru XXL

There are envelopes available on the table if you wish to give a monetary gift.

St. Paul Lutheran Church - Oak Lawn, Illinois

February 2025

January  March



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Funeral for Gerry Kelpert: 9:00 am Visitation 10:00 am Funeral Service
2 9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:15 am Sun School & Bible Study	3	4 10:00 am Bd of Elders 6:30 pm Bd of Evangellsm/Parish Ed 6:30 pm Faith In Action 6:30 pm Bd of Trustees 6:30 pm Bd of Stewardship	5 FOOD PANTRY 2:00 pm Food Pantry	6	7	8
9 8:30 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:15 am Sun School & Bible Study	10	11 10:00 am Ladies Guild Board 10:30 am Operation Barnabas 6:30 pm Church Council	12	13	14	15
16 8:30 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:15 am Sun School & Bible Study	17 3:00 pm BEDS Cook Team	18 1:00 pm Ladies Guild General Meeting	19 FOOD PANTRY 2:00 pm Food Pantry	20	21	22
23 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sun School & Bible Study	24	25 7:00 pm Voters Meeting	26	27	28	March 1