

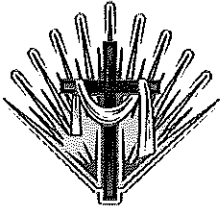
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# THE LETTER OF ST. PAUL

May, 2025

Volume 63, Number 5

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St. Paul Lutheran Church  
4660 W. 94<sup>th</sup> Street  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453  
(708) 423-1040  
[www.stpauloaklawn.org](http://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.

Please read Sandy Barry's  
message inside this Letter.

Pastor Lindenberg has  
declined the call extended  
to him to be our pastor.

A special voters meeting  
will be held at 7 pm on  
Thursday, May 15 to call a  
new pastor. Please read the  
message inside this Letter.

Thank you to all who give  
of their time, talents, and  
treasures to support the  
ministry of St. Paul.

WORSHIP SERVICE

Sundays, 9:00AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND

BIBLE STUDY, 10:30AM

## *The God-given Gift of MOTHERS!*

*There is no love, like a mother's love, no stronger bond on earth... like the precious bond that comes from God, to a mother, when she gives birth.*

*A mother's love is forever strong, never changing for all time... and when her children need her most a mother's love will shine.*

*God bless these special mothers, God bless them every one... for all the tears and heartache, and for the special work they've done.*

*When her days on earth are over, a mother's love lives on... through many generations, with God's blessings on each one.*

*Be thankful for our mothers, for they love with so much love, from power God has given, and the strength from up above.*  
*(Anonymous)*

## **HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!**

*How will you honor your mother (or her legacy) this Mother's Day? Will we see you in church? For some women, this day may bring pain or sadness. If someone reaches out to you, please take time to listen.*

## THE PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Philippians 2:3-5

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset of Christ Jesus.

Beginning in childhood and going into my college years, I was by nature an introverted and shy individual. Being up-tight was such a concern that I prayed to God for help, and I believe my prayers were answered by making friends with a fellow named Bob. Rather than being serious as myself, Bob was a happy-go-lucky guy who liked to tease a lot. Also, I noticed that Bob was good at drawing people out by asking questions. For me, Bob's example was a real game changer. Making a connection with others became so much easier. Increasingly I became free of my self-conscious rut by starting to focus more on the other individual through wanting to know more about them.

Have you consciously used this technique as an opportunity to get into conversations with someone new? As believers we know that God desires for us to reach out to others with the love of Christ. But how? I think it can begin by simply being curious about them. Have you ever been eager to learn something about someone? Better yet, can you remember a time when someone was sincerely curious about you? How did that make you feel? What was your response to them? Didn't it cause you to think that they really care about you? In fact, the word "curiosity" comes from the Latin root "cura", meaning to care, to tend, to heal. When we care about another person, we are motivated to learn more about him/her. Curiosity as it relates to relationships, is the humble, sincere interest to know and care about another person and his or her thoughts, beliefs, passions, and doubts.

In your life, how are you doing in this area? It's a challenge! Now, perhaps more than ever, our curiosity is hindered by self-preoccupation, individual pursuits, busyness, and distractions that lead to apathy about people around us. Thus, how important are those words of St. Paul from Philippians:

*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.  
Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*

## THE PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Isn't Jesus the greatest example of looking out first for others? He said: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve" As the Good Shepherd He cared to the point of laying down His life in service to others. Throughout His ministry Jesus took the time to ask people what was going on in their lives so that He could meet their needs of body and soul. He asked them questions.

And so can we! Asking questions builds connection. It shows you want a relationship. It demonstrates you want to understand more. You value their opinion and perspective. Over time your meaningful spiritual questions give people the opportunity to wrestle with the truths about life, themselves, and God.

Something that has helped me over the years goes by the acronym FORMS

- Family – people like to talk about those near and dear
- Occupation – it opens the door if you ask about their job
- Recreation – are they into sports? What's their favorite team?
- Motivation – Is there some pastime, hobby they are passionate about?
- Spiritual – Can you tell me a little bit about your spiritual life?

I'd like to challenge you to take the opportunity when you're seated and looking around at a public place to be curious about the people you notice. Ask yourself: "I wonder ... What is their life like? What are their life dreams? What do they believe?" What could you ask them? Perhaps you're somewhat acquainted with a neighbor down the street or at the coffee shop. It can all begin with a casual phrase like: "I couldn't help noticing" ... or "I'm wondering" ... or "I'm curious."

Of course, it takes time to develop this approach to looking at people. Yet know that your humble interest is appealing to people. As you allow your Spirit-led curiosity to enter into conversation, it opens the way for people to think more about the God Who makes our life worth living.

Easter blessings,  
Pastor Gregg

# OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

## ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

4660 W. 94<sup>th</sup> Street, Oak Lawn, IL 60453  
(708) 423-1040 ~ [www.stpauloaklawn.org](http://www.stpauloaklawn.org)

Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Gregg Ramirez

Director of Music: Mr. Jeff Kiel

Church Administrative Assistants: Joanna Cauffman and Ruth Sievers

(for Mrs. Sandra Barry)~ [sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org](mailto:sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org)

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

To view our Sunday services, calendar, and newsletter, visit [www.stpauloaklawn.org](http://www.stpauloaklawn.org)

The deadline for placing articles in the newsletter is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month.

Newsletter editor: Ruth Sievers

Send submissions to [sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org](mailto:sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org).

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### OFFICIAL ACTS

#### DEATHS:

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family of *Marjory "Marge" Noffke*, called to eternal rest with Jesus on April 21, 2025. Services were held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Naperville, IL, on April 24, 2025.

#### TO BE RECEIVED INTO MEMBERSHIP:

Melissa Cardinal by transfer from Mt. Greenwood Lutheran Church, Chicago, IL

#### PASTORAL CALL DECLINED

... by The Rev. David Lindenberg of Peace Lutheran Church, Rapid City, SD

### GROW IN CHRIST ~ SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Sunday School meets in Room 8 each Sunday at 10:30 am after the Sunday morning service. Teens and adults are also invited to gather together to study God's Word after the Sunday service in Room 6. **The Bible study series is called "God's Love: Knowing God through the Psalms"**, led by Pastor Ramirez. Grab something to eat and drink and join us!

### ALTAR FLOWERS

Thank you to our flower chairperson, Terry Hornburg, for the beautiful Easter arrangement of the lilies and daffodils donated by our members and for the floral arrangements she has been blessing us with each Sunday to celebrate a special occasion or "just because". 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*.

# 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.

## REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS

**OUR MEMBERS:** Sandy Barry; Betty Beegle; Vic and Marty Both; Jan Briede; Delphine Cherry; Doris Cyga, 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; Betty Larson; 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; Wayne 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 Coglinase; Judy Collins; John Darge; Dana DeAngelis; Rudy DeAngelis; Bridget & Nick DeAngelo; Shirley Demyres; George Dodaro, Sr.; Shirley Fairchild; Justin & Ashley Fasel; Diane Fauser, 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 Kehrli; Jimmy Kennedy, Jr.; Julie King; Debbie Kleeman; Herb Kleeman; Zech Kleeman, Evelyn & Ron Konieski; Christopher Kosary; Jerry Kreten; Glen Krietsch; Dorothy Kroll; The Lamberth family; Margaret Lundgreen; Adrian Martinez; Iris McCoy; Carol Jean and Tim McPhillips; Audrey Metes; Carol Milazzo; Marie Miller; Daniel Musser; Roberta & Carlos Owens; Pam Palhegyi; Patricia Paulsen; Jorene Pierzga; Sandy Plath; Jackie Plichta; Barb Potter; Doris Potts; 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; Marian Strassner; Janet Trierweiler; Bernadette & Rich Trusk; Jose Urena; 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 Matusевичus) 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:

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1 Peter 1:18,19

What a glorious Easter celebration we experienced! The Elders thank you for your attendance and participation. We were strengthened and encouraged by the enthusiastic involvement of so many parishioners in our Wednesday Lenten dinners and services, our Holy Week activities, and our Easter pageantry. We thank Pastor Ramirez for his inspiring messages, Jeff Kiel for his skilled and creative coordinating of liturgies and music, and the singers and musicians in our church family for beautifying and energizing our worship. We pray that the congregation now feels ready to face the world and everyday life with renewed energy and a transformed heart and mind.

May we be refreshed as by streams in the desert. Psalm 126:4

The month of May promises to be filled with many possibilities for worship and service. We hope you will take advantage of at least a few of these opportunities. St. Paul needs you to do God's work!

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16,17

Yours in Christ,  
David Witkosky  
St. Paul Lutheran Board of Elders

### MESSAGE FROM THE PASTORAL CALL COMMITTEE

The work of the Call Committee continues. On Friday, April 25, Pastor David Lindenberg of Peace Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota, informed our call committee chairman by telephone that he would be returning (declining) our call to be the pastor of St. Paul. His formal letter and the returned documents will soon follow.

**BREAKING NEWS:** The Call Committee met on April 30 and set the date of **Thursday, May 15 at 7 pm** to issue a call for our next pastor. All voters are urged to be present for this important meeting. Other members are also welcome to attend and may participate in the discussion.

# OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

## MESSAGE FROM SANDY BARRY, OUR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Dear Friends in Christ: Greetings in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Spring has arrived, the days are getting longer, the weather is getting warmer, and God's magnificence is all around us. Nature's palette has awakened once again as we watched trees, plants, and flowers bud and grow and bloom. Birds have returned and are singing their symphonies while animals come out of hibernation seeking food and a mate. Ah, yes, creation is good! Why? Because God is good! Spring is a time of revival and new life. As Christians, and by God's grace, we're each given new life and new mercies, not every season, but every morning. Great is God's faithfulness! May we be as faithful to Him as He's been with us.

It's been one year since my cancer diagnosis and 10 months since my stem cell transplant. I am still in remission!! All thanks and praise to the Lord! Because of Jesus and in Jesus' name, I am healing. Stem cell transplant recovery is a slow process but step by step, I'm making progress and that's all that matters. I won't bore you with a recap of all that's happened, but I do want you to know that one of the more serious complications I've experienced is my body's inability to keep platelets in the normal range of 150,000 - 400,000. Platelets are tiny blood cells that play a crucial role in blood clotting. Too few platelets can lead to bleeding and bruising, which I've experienced, while having too many platelets increases the risk of blood clots in the legs, brain or lungs. For the last few months, my platelet counts have been below normal so during weekly visits to the hospital, I received injections designed to boost platelets. As of April 18th, I'm happy to report that my platelet count was 311,000!! In the next month I won't be receiving those weekly injections. Time will tell if my body is able to make platelets and keep them in the normal range. Please keep me in your prayers.

I want to give a heartfelt "Thank You" to my beautiful daughter, Mandy, who sacrificed more than a year of her life to be my sole caregiver. What an angel and blessing she has been! When Mandy learned I was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML), she researched everything about it. She had such an incredible understanding of all that my diagnosis entailed, including treatment options, that the doctors wanted to know what medical school she attended!!

Mandy helped me navigate through my new world of doctors, hospitals, and clinics with patience, kindness and grace. She drove me to every appointment, made phone calls on my behalf, applied for grants, created my CareLines fund-raising page, picked up and refilled prescriptions, sorted out approximately 15-20 medications for me weekly, managed my financial affairs, decorated my hospital rooms with cards and photographs of friends and family, encouraged me with words of love and always told me I was doing "a great job", especially when I was working to rebuild the strength in my arms and legs. And if all that's not enough, she daily cleaned and disinfected my home, managed laundry, shopped for groceries, put the groceries away, cooked meals, bought me my first wig, made sure I had everything I needed and she did it all with a smile on her face. How very thankful I am that the Lord blessed me with such a loving and caring friend. Please keep Mandy in your prayers.

I want to give a shout out and a "Thank You" to my terrific son-in-law, Gian, who supported Mandy and me from day one by being there for us, making us laugh, bringing us food and treats while I was in

## OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

the hospital, and offering words of encouragement. No matter what, anything we needed, he was willing to do. "G" also shopped, cooked, baked, managed the maintenance of my car which this year needed car washes, oil changes, a new battery, new brakes, and four new tires. Ahh, Yes, we've been having so much fun this year! Please keep "G" in your prayers!

We all go through seasons of trials and challenges. This past year we had plenty of dark and dreary days, but we've also known the sunshine of God's love surrounding us and pushing me onward in recovery. If you've walked through a long stretch of winter as we have, it's time to remind yourself that spring is here and that God's goodness is everywhere. In His precious word the Lord promises that He will never leave you or forsake you. He is with you and for you as He's been with me and Mandy and Gian.

May you wake up each day with a song of gratitude in your heart and like the birds who sing their symphonies, make a joyful noise to the Lord! For His abundant blessings ~ To God be the Glory! For all the beautiful cards, phone calls, text messages and emails I've received, my heartfelt thanks to all! Happy Spring! Christ is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Hallelujah!

My Love ~ Sandy

### MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF EVANGELISM/PARISH EDUCATION

Wasn't it wonderful to see so many people in church on Easter! I'm sure we would like to see that every week. It was great to hear all those little voices chiming in - maybe when it wasn't the most appropriate time, but nevertheless music to the ears. We would love to see them at Sunday School. Speaking of Sunday School, we are well underway. There are ten children attending Sunday School right now. We are always on the lookout for little ones. If you know of anyone who has little ones aged three to ten, please encourage them to attend Sunday School.

We have started to plan the Parking Lot Party and would like any suggestions to please the crowd! We try to have something for everyone. Once again, we will have bingo, photo booth, blowup for the kids, face painter, hopefully comfort dogs (not always available at the last minute), crafts, and more. As in the past, hot dogs, potato chips, ice cream sundaes and soda will be available. All at no cost!! The date is Saturday August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1pm to 4pm. Add this to your calendar! If the weather does not cooperate, we will move everything inside. The weather is not a problem. Everyone is welcome! Please invite your family, friends, neighbors, and anyone you meet along the way.

Sunday mornings immediately following the Service there is an adult Bible Study! You might think that you need to know your Bible, but that is why we are all there. Right now, we are studying Psalms. It is a very laid-back atmosphere. We invite everyone to see what we're all about. Grab refreshments from the center hallway and join us in Room 6. We would love to have you.

Well, I'm done for now but please keep Sunday School, The Parking Lot Party and Bible Study on your mind and consider taking part in any or all of them!



# OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

## MESSAGE FROM FAITH IN ACTION/SOCIAL MINISTRIES

FIA would like to thank the St. Paul congregation for their contributions of non-perishable food items and monetary donations during April and the Easter holiday season. For Easter, we served 88 families. These bags included everything needed for an Easter dinner including a pork tenderloin, ham, or leg of lamb. We thank Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry for their 350# of frozen Easter meats to share with our clients. We also thank you for your constant support of our missions.

Our next big annual event is almost here, the "Stamp Out Hunger" USPS 2025 food drive! ♡ So circle this date on your calendars, Saturday, May 10th. We have the Timothy room reserved during the week of May 9th-16th. Your help would be much appreciated, and we thank you ahead of time for your patience. We need drivers to pick-up the food and deliver the bags to St. Paul the afternoon of Saturday, May 10th. Please contact Mike Will if you are interested in helping with pick up. If you cannot help us that day, we also need help sorting and marking groceries through May 16th. We thank God for this blessing and also want to thank our Oak Lawn post office and the USPS in Bridgeview for sponsoring this event in our community. In 2024, we collected 1,837 pounds of much-needed food items, and were able to restock our shelves for the season.

Spring has arrived, the daffodils are in bloom in the St. Paul garden, and God has blessed us with wonderful weather. We rejoice! **"...for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land."** Song of Solomon 2:11-12 ...and we prepare for the next season. The gardens are getting a jump start inside while we prepare seedlings of tomatoes, peppers, and lettuce. The gardens are being weeded and being prepared for our May plantings. Please pray for a successful season as we grow fresh vegetables for our pantry clients. If you would like to help with the gardens this year, please contact Mike Will. We still can use flower pots, so before you recycle them bring them to the Founders Room and place them in the FIA baskets.

In April, we also collected 1,537 pounds of rescued food, including Panera, Operation Blessing, Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry, and Immanuel Hillside. These items include meat, milk, produce, deli, bread, pastries, & chips.

Through you and our sponsors we have been blessed to serve those in need. In **April**, we served 90 families and 252 individuals, and received 2 new clients. **The BEDS cook team** cooked for 20 individuals; April's meal was sponsored by Glen Hicks as a Thrivent Action Team project. We also thank Sue Browne for delighting our guests with dessert.

Please also keep in your prayers the Hawn family, who experienced the sudden death of 3 year old Violet. We pray that God will offer His peace and comfort to the family. We are thanking God for holding Violet in His arms till the family reunites in heaven.

## OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

A tribute to our food pantry client Ron Stokes:

Ron passed away in April, and we will miss him greatly. Ron was a long time client with the St. Paul Food Pantry, and loved chatting with the volunteers. Mike would take his order by phone every month, and Ron appreciated everything he received. Please keep Ron's family in your prayers. Ron, we will miss you until we are reunited one day in heaven.

A tribute to Marge Noffke with a heavy heart: FIA remembers the giving life of Marge, as she served our social ministry board and so many other committees of women at St. Paul. We especially remember Marge as she was a pivotal leader in helping struggling individuals facing homelessness. She was one of the ladies that helped cook for the homeless in the beginning stages of our PADS program in the Marquette Park neighborhood. We were happy to help the Southwest Chicago PADS ministry of Sister Therese Del Genio at Holy Family Lutheran Church on 53rd and Maplewood. When that church closed its doors serving the homeless because of a focus on a different ministry, FIA and Marge continued serving PADS in the Oak Lawn area at Pilgrim Faith. Marge continued cooking meals and preparing lunches, but also was a very willing volunteer for the morning shift 5:30-8:00 am. She helped wake the guests, serve breakfast, and helped clean the shelter for the opening of the church's activities. Marge was a Bible class leader and one of our prayer chain warriors for years. She also was an active LWML member. She always trusted in the Lord and His guidance. We missed Marge when she moved to Lisle, but she continued to be in our hearts and thoughts. We will miss you Marge, our dear friend, but now you are in glory with Jesus and Vern. 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 THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

JUST DO IT

Many thanks to our Adult Choir, Celebration Ringers and instrumentalists who prepared and performed music for our Holy Week and Easter services. We are blessed to have people who serve by sharing their talents and making our worship beautiful and meaningful. And I am blessed to have them. More are always welcome, just speak to me (Jeff Kiel) if you are interested.

When I play hymns in a service, I always enjoy hearing the people sing because it's how I know that I am doing my job well. Occasionally I have heard a voice that doesn't quite blend in and stands out from the rest. While this person may not be looking to join our choir, their desire to sing hymns with the congregation is certainly a welcome thing. God always loves to hear the praises of the faithful, especially when they come from a heart that wants to express thanks and devotion to Him. And as an organist, it is my privilege to assist you in doing just that.

Martin Luther recognized the need for us to express ourselves in worship when he said, "He who sings prays twice," and this participation does not require you to be an opera singer. So if the Spirit moves you to sing, just do it.

# OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Lutherans have historically been called “the singing church.” There is no doubt that music has been a major component in the theology and practice of the Lutheran church. Luther once remarked about music, “We can mention only one point, namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise.” Music has a power and purpose that cannot be understated in our worship and the life of the congregation.

But music does more than touch the emotions. Music is a vehicle that carries both the musician and the hearer deeper into connection with the truth of the Scriptures. This is true of the most complex Bach chorale and even the simplest of songs like “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know.” Each musical selection within the church shapes the thoughts, minds and faith of the people who experience them.

This is also true of stewardship hymns. We are currently considering the verses of “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (*LSB* 788) as it shapes our understanding and practice of stewardship. This month we take a deeper dive into verse two:

Teach us to thank you, Lord, for love and grace  
For life and vision, for a purpose clear,  
For Christ Your Son, and for each human face  
that shows Your message ever new and near.

The stanza begins by touching on the truth of the Law. Thankfulness is not a natural posture for fallen humanity. For sinners curved in upon themselves, thankfulness for love and grace is something that must be taught. We are those who hoard and clutch. Our confession of our shallow thankfulness highlights the need for us to learn thankfulness to God.

Thankfulness also points to what we are stewards of: love and grace! All the things we have traditionally called stewardship aren’t actual stewardship. Rather, what matters is how we steward the one, true and only treasure: the love and grace of God revealed to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So, all stewardship is stewardship of the Gospel! How can we gaze at the cross and empty tomb and not be thankful?

The LCMS defines stewardship as “the free and joyous activity of God’s family — the church — in managing life’s resources for His purposes.” God’s love and mercy give us a clear purpose as we live out our Baptism and practice this joyous stewardship. All we are, all we have entrusted to us, and all we are called to do is to connect others with the love and mercy of God revealed in Jesus!

The faithful steward sings with lips and life of this love and mercy that is ever new and near. In the Scriptures. In the Lord’s House. At the Lord’s Table. This is where our stewardship song starts and ends. Our family, our co-workers and classmates, and our world need to hear this song!

(This article was originally posted by the LCMS Stewardship Ministry Board for use in our congregations.)

# **OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY**

## **MESSAGE FROM OPERATION BARNABAS**

May is Military Appreciation Month, a special month for those in and out of the military. There is Memorial Day, Monday the 26<sup>th</sup>. We get off from work signaling the official start of the cookout season, or a chance to go to a Cubs or Sox baseball game or just sitting in our yard relaxing and enjoying the day. Pause for a minute to remember all those who have fallen in our nations' battles and all the veterans who have passed, from Concord to today. Thank GOD for these individuals who gave us and protected our freedoms and liberty. Then pay tribute to them by enjoying the rest of the day, however you do it. I'll be cooking out and having a cold one.

There is another day of appreciation, Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, a day to remember and honor those currently serving in all branches of the U S military and those who have served. Our congregation, on the 17<sup>th</sup>, will be hosting a box lunch of a pulled pork sandwich and mac-n-cheese for the residents of the Manteno Veterans Home.

### **The National Observances during National Military Appreciation Month**

**National Day of Prayer Thursday May 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**VE Day (WWII Victory in Europe) Thursday May 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**Military Spouse Appreciation Day Friday May 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**Armed Forces Day Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**Memorial Day Monday May 26<sup>th</sup>**

Thank you for your continued support of our ongoing care package program. We are sending care packages to troops in Eastern Europe from Poland to the Black sea, the Middle East in Syria Iraq and other locations, and the Far East in South Korea, Okinawa, Japan and at sea. Thank you to all who contributed to Operation Barnabas. Know that St Paul Congregation has touched many troops and Veterans.

**GOD** is beyond great and **may He bless us all.**

## **MESSAGE FROM THE LADIES GUILD**

Thank you to Terry Hornburg who led the women of the Guild through an interesting demonstration of flower arranging at our April Guild meeting! Following the discussion, each woman created her own beautiful arrangement of different flowers to be taken home and enjoyed!

Our **May 27<sup>th</sup>** meeting begins at **6 PM**, an evening potluck dinner meeting and all women are invited! There will be a signup sheet on the counter outside of the church office by Sunday, May 18 to indicate how many are coming and, if you are able, what food item you will bring. Please come and enjoy an evening of fellowship with us!

# OUR ST. PAUL CHURCH FAMILY

## THANK YOU!

Thank you, St. Paul Congregation, for the beautiful musician's cross given to me after services one Sunday earlier in April! I also appreciated all the messages written to me by members who were here that day. I have been blessed to again have been St. Paul's director of music since Tim Degen accepted his call to Ft. Wayne, IN – but it really is time for me on Sunday mornings to just sit in the pew – and perhaps sing with the choir. Thank you, one and all, for your gift (I have a picture of the cross on my phone if you did not get a chance to see it) – and for your love and support! Ruth Sievers

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact the church office (708-423-1040) or email [sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org](mailto:sbarry@stpauloaklawn.org) if you have recently moved or if your phone number or email address has changed. We want you to be able to receive the latest St. Paul news and also keep our records up to date. Thank you!

The Sunday worship video is available each week on our website [www.stpauloaklawn.org](http://www.stpauloaklawn.org). To access the video, just click on the Sunday date – or church services - on the homepage.

## MEMORIALS AND THANKOFFERINGS

### MEMORIALS

#### Given by:

Elaine Lebron  
Edith Raddatz  
Dolores Musser  
Joyce Mondry

#### In Memory Of:

Dana Lebron  
Debbie Fielding  
Harry Musser's Heavenly B-Day  
Patsy Mondry

#### Designated for:

General Fund  
General Fund  
General Fund  
General Fund

### THANK OFFERINGS

#### Given by:

Sandy Barry  
Linda & Warren Miller

#### For:

Blessings Received  
Pastor Gregg Ramirez

#### Designated for:

Faith In Action (FIA)  
General Fund

**St. Paul Lutheran Church - Oak Lawn, Illinois**

**May 2025**



April ← → June

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 6:00 pm Elders Dinner (reservations required)	3
4 9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Sun School & Bible Study 10:30 am Celebration Ringers rehearsal	5 7:00 pm SW Lutheran Chorus rehearsal	6 10:00 am Bd of Elders 6:30 pm Bd of Trustees 6:30 pm Bd of Evangelism/Parish Ed 6:30 pm Faith In Action	7 <b>FOOD PANTRY</b> 12:00-4:00 pm Food Pantry 7:00 pm Choir rehearsal	8	9	10 USPS Food Drive "Stamp Out Hunger"
11 9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Sun School & Bible Study 10:30 am Celebration Ringers rehearsal	12 7:00 pm SW Lutheran Chorus rehearsal	13	14 7:00 pm Choir rehearsal	15 7:00 pm Special Voters Meeting to call a Pastor	16	17
18 9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Sun School & Bible Study 10:30 am Celebration Ringers rehearsal	19 3:00 pm BEDS Cook Team 7:00 pm SW Lutheran Chorus rehearsal	20 7:00 pm Voters Meeting	21 NO Food Pantry 7:00 pm Choir rehearsal	22	23	24
25 9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Sun School & Bible Study 10:30 am Celebration Ringers rehearsal	26 7:00 pm SW Lutheran Chorus rehearsal	27 6:00 pm Ladies Guild Potluck & Meeting	28 7:00 pm Choir rehearsal	29	30	31