

The **Epistle**

**January 2020**

St. Paul's Lutheran

From the desk of Pastor Rohde:

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**Website:**

stpaulsbremen.org  
facebook.com/stpaulsbremen

**Church Office Hours:**

M,W,Th, F 8:30 – 11:30 am

**Sunday Schedule:**

Worship: 9:30 am  
Sunday School & Adult  
Bible Class: 8:30 am

**Pastors:**

Rev. Roger Rohde  
Office Hours:  
M & Th 8:30 – 11:30  
1-574-209-0306 (H)

Rev. Neil Wonnacott  
Office Hours:  
W & F 8:30 – 11:30  
1-574-301-9291 (H)

If you know anything about diamonds, you know that their value is determined by four “Cs”: Cut, clarity, caret, and color. God also has His own set of four “Cs” to note the value of our lives.

The Bible says in Genesis 1:27: “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Our worth to God begins with the fact that He **created** us. We are each unique in His sight. We read in Psalm 139: “For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (verses 13-14).

The second “C” that shows our worth to Christ is that He **cleansed** us. Isaiah tells us that Jesus would be “pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4-5). By the cleansing blood of Jesus, all of our sins are washed away.

The third “C” that shows us our worth to Christ is **crafted**. Jesus Who made us and then redeemed us has through water and the Word crafted us into new beings. In II Corinthians 5:17, we read: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

The fourth “C” that shows us our worth to Christ is **called**. The Lord has called us to use our time, talents, treasures, and tongues to share the good news of Christ Jesus with the world. We read in I Peter 2:9: “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him, Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

A diamond is one of the best known gems in the world. Its value is determined by cut, clarity, carat, and color. Have you ever considered yourself as a great gem to God? We are, not because of our own worth, but because of the worth God gives us as He created, cleansed, crafted, and called us. Be the gem the Lord made you to be and bring Him glory throughout this New Year.



### A Message from Parish Planning Council

*Greetings in the name of God's holy gift from above, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

*The end of each calendar year marks an opportunity to look back on the many blessings God has bestowed upon us as a congregation. It is also a time for optimism as we look ahead to what our Lord has planned for us in 2020. God has so richly blessed St. Paul's, including the ability to financially support the various programs and services offered throughout our ministry and beyond and carried out by His faithful servants – our Pastors, Teachers, Staff, and others we support with our gifts.*

*To recap some key decisions that were made at our early December Voters meeting, Voters approved the following:*

- To enact several short-term measures to address our recent financial shortfall*
- A 2020 annual budget of \$675,095, which represents a decrease of 5.7% compared to 2019*
- To fully support this budget, weekly giving would need to average approximately \$13,000*

*Those could certainly be some daunting numbers and at times we may wonder "How is this all going to work out?" However.....*

- Did you know that based on our current state of approximately 115 giving units in the congregation, an increase in giving of \$10/week per giving unit would return our General Operating Fund balance to 2018 and prior levels and allow us to fully fund our District and Mission support, among other programs?*

*Since our congregational Open Forum in mid-November, we have already seen God's people respond to the needs presented. We pray that we sustain these increased levels of giving as we continue to return to the Lord that which he has already blessed us with.*

*Of course if you have any questions about our budget, please speak with a member of our Parish Planning Council. We ask for your continued prayers for St. Paul's and the ministry God has entrusted to us here as we seek opportunities to spread the Gospel message to others. May you have a blessed 2020!*

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY EPISTLE IS JANUARY 21ST!!!** Epistle articles, comments, ideas may be deposited in the epistle box in the Narthex mail slots or better yet e-mailed to Deb Burcham at [dburcham@stpaulsbremen.org](mailto:dburcham@stpaulsbremen.org). I appreciate all of your articles, ideas and comments!

*Thank You to the members of St. Paul's and their families* for all the love, prayers, gifts and support given to the Pastors, Teachers, and Staff over the past year. May God continue to bless us to work together in His Kingdom, believing that we are "Saved by Jesus to Serve" Ephesians 2:8-10

*A Special Thank You and Praises to God* for all the help and support given to Pastor Wonnacott this past year with all the extra things that God had us do in the community and church. These included the Ice Cream Social, Hope Ministries Dinners, Liberian Children's Ministry Dinner, Advent and Lenten Meals, delivering food to our shut-ins, Oktoberfest booth, Thanksgiving Dinner, Hope Clothing Drive, peanut butter for Bremen Bags, Cardinal House Picnic & Christmas Party, helping people move, cleaning yards, visiting our shut-ins. Also, thank you to those who used their Thrivent Action Team Cards to fund these and other projects. May God bless us to seek and find even more ways to serve together in His Kingdom in 2020!

### **Mark your calendar!**

### **Next Scrip Order is Sunday, Jan. 5th!**

We also have many gift cards available for quick purchase from the school or church office during the week, and at the Scrip table monthly (visit [www.ShopWithScrip.com](http://www.ShopWithScrip.com) for the complete list of almost 800 retailers that participate in the Scrip program for many more that are available to order).

You don't have to wait to place your orders. Enroll in our organization at [ShopWithScrip.com](http://ShopWithScrip.com) (**Enrollment Code: BA9E468A59681**), place orders online, and submit your cash or check payment to: St Paul's PTL Scrip, or use Presto Pay to submit payment if you enroll in this added benefit. Enrollment is free and makes ordering from Scrip fast and easy, or reload previously purchased cards through Reload, and ReloadNow. Contact your Scrip Coordinator, Heidi Wildauer or Angie Hughes, if you need assistance!

*Every purchase from Scrip earns money for our St Paul's Scrip program. Plan ahead and shop for groceries, hotels, gas, clothing, and restaurants you may like to visit, and help our youth ministry efforts here at our church and school...St. Paul's Scrip appreciates your support!*

Pastor Wonnacott and family will be on vacation

December 26<sup>th</sup> through January 5<sup>th</sup>



## **Board Briefs:**

### **Christian Education:**

In 2020 our Sunday School will continue to send \$75.00 each month to a mission.

#### **January Mission of the Month: Women's Care Center, Plymouth, IN**

History: Women's Care Center was founded by Dr. Janet Smith in 1984, when she was a young professor at the University of Notre Dame. Founded in a tiny blue house on St. Louis Boulevard in South Bend in 1984, Women's Care Center is now the largest pregnancy resource center in the United States.

About: Women's Care Center provides free, confidential counseling, support and education to women facing unplanned pregnancies. Free pregnancy testing and ultrasounds help determine viability and dates (prenatal medical care and abortions not provided). We serve 28,000 women annually from 32 centers in 11 states, including Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania & Wisconsin.

Mission: Our mission is to help pregnant women from our communities choose life for their babies, have healthier pregnancies, become better parents and take first steps to self-sufficiency.

"Every other baby born in Marshall County now starts with Women's Care Center."

### **Church Office:**

Baptism: Remington Atticus Rayne Leslie

Deaths: Leonard Filewicz

Released to church of choice: Matt Fox

### **Parish Fellowship:**

It is time to reboot our Euchre parties in 2020! New Day of the Week – Thursday – January 16, 2020! The Euchre parties are sponsored by the Parish Fellowship Board and are designed as a night of fun, fellowship and cards. We ask that you bring a snack to share, and drinks will be provided by the board. The parties begin at 7pm and run until 9pm for people 20 years old and older. It's a great night to invite a friend!!!

Men's Group takes place on Sundays, January 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> from 3-5pm for all men ages 15 and above. We will meet in the gym for basketball and fellowship and will close with a prayer.

Parish Fellowship Meeting after church on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### **Stewardship:**

**All of us are investors-the question is, in what do we invest and how long will it last? Will our investments make a difference in eternity?**

**You have made an investment in the Lord's work here at St Paul's Lutheran Church. Giving that is done for God's glory is accompanied by eternal dividends that are credited to your heavenly account in this life and in the life to come. You have used that which God has entrusted to you for the sake of the Gospel and so that others might experience His life-changing grace for themselves. Or as A.W. Tozer expressed it so well a**

generation ago, “Any temporal possession can be turned into everlasting wealth. Whatever is given to Christ is immediately touched with immortality!”

True and proper giving can only come  
From a Christ-centered heart.

“...The Lord does not look at the things man looks at.  
Man looks at the outward appearance,  
But the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7)

**Altar Guild:** Attendant for January is Deb Burcham.

Altar Flowers in January:

5  
12 Elaine Young  
19  
26

The Altar Flower Chart for the 2020 Liturgical Year is hanging in the Narthex (North side), just outside the altar guild room door. Please look it over and sign up for flowers.



Come Join the “Feast” !!!

Then Jesus declared, “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.*” John 6:35



Every two weeks, a group of men from St. Paul’s meet for breakfast and Bible study at Bremen Community Hospital in the cafeteria conference room. The discussion and fellowship make this a great way to start a day by feeding our physical and spiritual needs.....it’s been rumored that laughter and friendship have been carried from the breakfasts!

Come, join us and bring a friend along. We start at 6:30 AM and finish at 7:30 AM.

The schedule for 2020 is as follows;

1/15, 1/29, 2/12, 2/26, 3/11, 3/25, 4/8, 4/22,  
5/6, 5/20, 6/3, 6/17, 7/1, 7/15, 7/29, 8/12, 8/26,  
9/9, 9/23, 10/7, 10/21, 11/4, 11/18, 12/2, 12/16

If you have questions, feel free to contact Dave Burcham (574-520-9118).

*Praise*  
and give thanks to *the*  
*Lord*

# SCHOOL NEWS AND NOTES

e-mail: [schools@stpaulsbremen.org](mailto:schools@stpaulsbremen.org)

The SCHOOL THEME for the 2019-2020 school year is JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN. It is based on I Thess. 5:16-24: "Be joyful always; pray continually..."

## **About Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization!**

As a well-traveled LCMS church and school worker, I have gotten accustomed to many different districts. As an English teacher, I try to avoid hyperbole and the use of superlatives, but I must say that the Indiana District does the best job of providing for its workers and schools.

Without the state legislature, we wouldn't have the ability to help families in need in the form of the SGO (Scholarship Granting Organization). Together with the Indiana District of the LCMS, the state allows us (as parishioners, taxpayers, etc.) to donate to the SGO and receive half of our donation back as a state tax credit! It just so happens that we have our own SGO for Lutheran schools ([lutheransgo.org](http://lutheransgo.org)).

A donation to St. Paul's SGO can create 3 beneficiaries:

- You, as a taxpayer can earn half of your donation back as a state tax credit.
- The family that applies for and receives SGO tuition dollars has to put aside less of their personal finances toward tuition
- The church can designate funds to other areas of need, as the SGO can replace past tuition assistance programs.

Corporations, not just individuals, can also benefit from this tax credit.

Alleviation of financial woes is possible; this state and district are nearly unparalleled in their commitment to keeping private education viable and affordable for all families.

Because of Him+,

Mr. Reid A. Otto

***Starting January 1, 2020 you can begin making donations at [lutheransgo.org](http://lutheransgo.org) for 2020! Go on line and check out their site!***

**Basketball Season is in full swing!** Our Eagles won first place in the December 7<sup>th</sup> Tournament held at our school! Come cheer the Eagles on as they continue their season. Go Eagles!

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## ***Postings from Preschool:***

Happy New Year! The Christmas season was full of activities for our students- we played lots of fun games with "snowflakes," musical chairs, parachute and hunting for ornaments.

The children made gifts and ornaments to take home throughout the month, and we learned all about the birth of Jesus, the angels' announcement to the shepherds, and the journey of the Wise Men. This month we're looking forward to making pizzas and participating in National Lutheran Schools Week. God's blessings to you in 2020!

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## January Devotion: "Something Wonderful Happened Here!"

*And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this Child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. Luke 2:17-19*

Pondering.

The first European eyes ever to look upon the Grand Canyon were men who were with the Spanish Conquistador, Coronado. That was way back in the 1540s. Since that time, millions have come to see that 277-mile-long gorge. Every generation has been amazed at its fantastic shapes and multi-colored peaks, canyons, ravines, and layers of rock -- and at what has been called the most "awe inspiring of Earth's spectacles."

Not so long ago, a man stood with his young son at the edge of the Grand Canyon. Pondering the beauty which lay before them, the boy said to his father, "Dad, something must have happened here!"

With Christmas gone, we, like Mary, may find ourselves pondering the events of these last weeks. It is my belief that if a stranger had seen our churches, our homes, our tables, our lights, our trees, our cards, our presents, he might also be moved to say, "Something has happened here!" If he thought that, he would be right, wouldn't he?

Something has happened. Of course, that which happened will not be found in strings of lights, in the Muzak which was constantly blazing, in the wrapped presents or exhausted shopping malls. If a stranger wanted to understand what has happened, they would do well to go and talk to Mary.

After everything had happened it says, "Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart." Mary pondered how something had happened in Rome and Bethlehem and Nazareth and Jerusalem and Egypt. She pondered something which she knew would *change the world*.

With Christmas over and most of the decorations put away, it is time for us to join her in that pondering. It is time for us to ponder a love so great it can skip over oceans and span centuries. It is time for us to ponder a light so bright it still shines after all the Christmas strings are unplugged and put away. It is time for us to ponder a gift so profoundly personal it should never be set to the side or stuffed away for some other day.

It is time for us to ponder a Savior who has lived, died, risen and remains with all those who -- with a repentant heart -- see what He has done for them. **THE PRAYER:** Dear Lord, the season of Christmas may be over, but the story of the Savior continues on. It continues on in my life -- in every minute and every day of my life. May I give thanks and continue to ponder how, because of Jesus, something happened here in my heart. In Your Name. Amen.