

From Pastor Wonnacott's keyboard:

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Church Office Hours:

Monday – Friday
8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday Schedule:

Sunday School: 8:30 am
Worship: 9:30 am

Pastor Neil Wonnacott

Office Hours: M, W, TH & F
8:00 – 12:00pm

We will celebrate Epiphany on January 8th. Epiphany is one of the oldest seasons in the Christian Church Year, second only to Easter. Epiphany is when the Gentile Magi come to worship Jesus, which shows that everyone now has access to God. Now all people, Jew and Gentile, can come to God's temple to worship, because Jesus is the new temple: God in the flesh.

In the last year we have been singing hymn number 411, "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light." During every service I pray that we would walk (live) as children of the Light; wanting to follow Jesus, look at Jesus, be with Jesus. We should see that in Jesus there is no darkness at all and the Holy Spirit causes the Light of Jesus to shine in our hearts. The hymn is based on the following Scripture verses:

1 John 1:5 *This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.*

Hebrews 12:1-2 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and*

perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Revelation 21:23 *The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.*

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.*

As we enter 2023 may we walk in the Light of Christ and reflect His Light and Love to all people!

THE DEADLINE FOR THE FEBUARY EPISTLE IS JANUARY 20TH!!! Epistle articles, comments, ideas may be deposited in the epistle box in the Narthex mail slots or e-mailed to Eric Thornton at firemanet@yahoo.com. I appreciate all of your articles, ideas and comments!

Ushers: It is very important that you find your own replacement if you are not going to be able to usher during your assigned time. Please take the time to do this so that we always have ushers available to assist our members and visitors. Thank you.

Your Past Does Not Define Your Future

New Year's is a celebration of the past and the future. We take stock of the past with thanksgiving and sometimes even relief (that it's over), and we look to the future in hope and anticipation, and perhaps with some worry, for what it holds.

The point is that New Year's celebrations remind us of who we are as opposed to who we would like to be, what we have done in comparison to what we want to do. It reminds us of our accomplishments, but mostly it reminds us of our failures. What we've lost. Who we've lost.

New Year's is our own version of Charles Dickens' classic, *A Christmas Carol*. And we all play Scrooge. We are visited by the ghosts of our pasts, presents and futures.

St. Paul writes: "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (2 Cor. 9:6–15).

St. Paul tells us that the Lord will both supply and increase what we need to give to the church for its work in the world. He tells us that this work God does in us will enrich and bless us in every way, and through this, will produce thanksgiving to God. With this in mind, here is

some practical advice to help you take stock of your giving in years past and change what needs to be adjusted, improved, or done away with altogether.

First, attend the Divine Service to receive God's gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. If you've not been faithful in attending worship to hear the preaching of God's Word, to receive forgiveness and feast on the rich food of our Lord's body and blood for the eternal benefit of your body and soul, then repent and come to receive the gifts God freely gives. God doesn't want your money. He wants you — all of you (Matt. 22:20–22).

Second, pray for the Lord's help. Your right as a Christian is to speak with your Father, the King of all creation, freely through His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength and wisdom to follow His bidding faithfully (John 15:1–16).

Third, consider what the church is and what the church does. The church is a place of mercy. It inhales the mercy of the Father by the death, resurrection and ascension of His Son through the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments. It exhales this mercy in love toward neighbors. You are a member of the church, of God's family. Thus, you are not only a recipient of God's mercy, but a bearer of that mercy for the life of the world. You spread that mercy through the generous giving of your income to support the work of the church in the world, as the Israelites did in the Old Testament (Lev. 27:1–34).

Fourth, take stock of your current giving in light of the New Testament's teaching on supporting the work of the church. Are you giving of your first fruits, taking it out of your paycheck first, or does God get what's left over? Are you giving voluntarily and cheerfully? Are you giving proportionally and generously? The Old Testament required a tithe, or ten percent. The New Testament gives freedom to be generous, to give more for the Church's work. Are you relying on God's promise to provide and increase what you need to do His work? If your answer is no to any of these, repent. If God gave you His only Son, will He not provide for you all things, even physical things? Trust Him, His Word, and heed it.

So, don't let your past define your future. Rather, commit for the year a generous proportion of your income, which is God's gift to you for this body and life.

This is the 4th in a series of articles outlining the duties and responsibilities of the various St. Paul's Board in order to improve awareness. This month we look at the Board of Evangelism.

A brief overview of the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Evangelism includes:

- 1) To bring the Gospel to the unchurched.
- 2) To enlist all of God's people in the work of spreading the Gospel.
- 3) To deepen the faith and activity of all members of the congregation.
- 4) Proper soul accounting

Also, please be aware that this Board has a current vacancy in the Directorship of this Board. If you would have interest in serving on this Board or any other Boards please feel free to communicate your interest to the Pastor or any member of the Parish Planning Council.

Let's Join Together in Prayer

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread **and to prayer**. Acts 2:42

Have you ever struggled to be disciplined in prayer? Have you ever wondered how God would use your faithfulness in prayer to change things? To change us?

Concordia Publishing House offers a great little resource called, Lutheran Book of Prayer. Currently being printed in its 5th edition, it can be a wonderful tool for personal devotions and for congregational unity. This text is a smaller volume of prayers for every occasion: prayers for the festivals and seasons of the church, prayers for our nation, world and community, prayers for the sick and prayers for ourselves. It also offers guidance in preparation for confession, worship and communion.

The highlight of this book, however, is a guide for 28 days of morning and evening prayer. These prayers can stand alone or be a starting point for your personal times of prayer. The

prayers focus on praising and thanking God for the gifts He so richly bestows, seeking and receiving His forgiveness, and asking for His empowering Spirit in the work of the church.

The Board of Christian Education is making this resource available to all interested members of the congregation during the month of December. It is our hope and prayer that we could join together as a congregation in 28 days of morning and evening prayer beginning January 1, 2023.

Books will be available in the Narthex in the coming weeks. (Suggested donation \$15)

Postings from Preschool

Happy New Year! Our preschool students are enjoying their Christmas break at this time, but we can't wait to welcome them back to class. After a busy month of Christmas crafts, games, special events, and practices for the children's service we are ready for a regular schedule! This month the children will learn about the beginning of Jesus' ministry and about the men He called to be His disciples. We're looking forward to celebrating National Lutheran Schools Week later this month. Please continue to keep our staff, students, and their families in your prayers.

OUR OFFERINGS TO THE LORD FROM HIS BLESSINGS TO US

Offerings remind us of the blessings God has given us and are an opportunity to thank Him for what He has done in our lives. Please place your offerings in our Offering Box located in front of the water fountains in the narthex of the church. You may also choose "e-tithing" by having a weekly deposit to St Paul's from your bank account. If you have questions on e-tithing, please contact the Church Office.

Amazon Smile Reminder

Attention Amazon shoppers: Choose Amazon Smile and designate St. Paul's as the charitable recipient on your account. Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchases to our church and school. Please note this doesn't cost you anything, but is a charitable donation made by Amazon. Thanks for supporting St. Paul's through this program.

SGO DONATIONS

Please don't forget to donate to St. Paul's SGO (Scholarship Granting Organization)! This last year we disbursed almost \$21,000 in scholarships to assist students with tuition in St. Paul's Lutheran School. This is a huge blessing to them and a way to minister to others!

Plus, donating to the SGO benefits you! Your donation will be given a 50% state tax credit as well as being eligible as a deductible.

For more information, contact Jennifer Harman at the school office (547-546-2790) or pick up a pamphlet from the tract rack in the narthex.

Mission of the Month

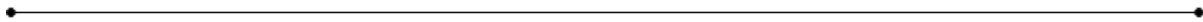
In 2023 our Sunday School continues to send \$75.00 each month to a mission.

January Mission of the Month: Women's Care Center

About: Women's Care Center provides free, confidential counseling, support and education for pregnant women. Free pregnancy testing and ultrasounds help determine viability and dates (prenatal medical care and abortions not provided). We serve 30,000 women annually from 34 centers in 12 states, including Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, 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.

Our January Sunday School Mission of the Month donation of \$75 will go to the Women’s Care Center in Marshall County, 224 N Michigan St., Plymouth IN.



I would like to thank all those who lifted me up in prayer for my shoulder surgery and for the cards and Christian love you have shown to me as I continue to heal. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! In His love, Gloria Kiefer.

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Sunday School - Fall Quarter Offerings

Pre-K -Grade 2 Nazareth Room

This class will study the life and times of Jesus and its application for daily living. The class will meet in Mrs. Thornton’s Preschool classroom and be taught by Wendy Coxey. 8:30-9:15 am.

Grades 3-5 School Classroom

We will pick up on our “Life in Christ” series as we study Old Testament History – the fall of Adam and Eve through the early years of Joseph – noting the plans and promises God has for His people. This class will be taught by Heidi Wildauer and will meet in the Day School. 8:30-9:15 am.



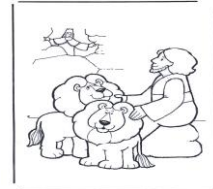
Middle School grades 6-8: Early Christians read God’s Word aloud together in community. Bring your Bibles and come ready to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. Gather in gym Mezzanine 8:30 am.-9:15 am.

High School Jerusalem Room

Bill Rogers will continue with a video series discussing situations that effect today's teens and how Christians should respond according to God's Word. The class will meet in the Jerusalem Room. 8:30-9:15 a.m.

Adult Bible Class

Terry Miller will continue leading the Bible study and discussion on the book of Daniel . . . meets in the Bethany Room, 8:30 am.-9:15 am.



Men's Bible Study: Men (ages 18+) meet at the Bremen Community Hospital cafeteria to enjoy breakfast and fellowship while studying God's Word and various topics. The group meets every other Wednesday, 6:30 am.-7:30 am.

We look forward to seeing you

The Board of Christian Education Thanks all of the teachers that have given of themselves to teach this last quarter.

"Come, follow Me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." Mark 1:17

Words powered by deeds demonstrate the Christian's witness to his Savior. Living our lives as He directed -- helping others, praying for God's will to be done, uplifting those who are downcast and scorned -- is where the rubber meets the road.

What did Jesus say? What did Jesus do? What did He mean for us when He said, "Follow Me"?

Here are a few of the things Jesus said to those who would follow Him:

· "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:27b-28).

· "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:35-36).

· "Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. . . ." (Luke 6:37-38a).

These are challenging words that prompt action from us in response to the sacrificial love Jesus showed for you and me. These words also say that when we act like our Heavenly Father's Son, we show ourselves to be His children. If we call ourselves children of God, when people look at how we act, do they see the nature of our Father?

Birthdays & Anniversaries - January 2023

ANNIVERSARIES

1	Hank & Gloria Kiefer	18	Terry & Ardith Ahlemeyer
8	Doug & Rhonda Owens	31	Joshua & Deana Miller

BIRTHDAYS

6	Eric Foster Rebecca Mejia Erin Sarber	22	Thomas Harman Giovanni Mejia Josephine Miller
7	Jaylyn Dobbins	23	Keith Miller
9	Brody Beasley Goldie Buckner Sandy Kiefer	24	Aiden Eby Cody Miller Elliott VanSoest
10	Terri Bickel Keith Russell Beth Schmitt	25	Carter Miller Candy Perkins
11	Jerry Smith	26	Jared Nielsen
12	Janet Miller	27	Carole Sahlhoff
14	James Mitchell	30	Conner Perkins Dorothy Walter
15	Sharon Latzke	31	Angela Hughes
16	Marian Yoder Melody Farnsworth		
17	Kayli Ann Miller Phyllis Sahlhoff		
18	Brittney Pittman Tony Venable		
19	Keegan Robbins Lilly Rogers		
21	Carly Dietl Kyle Hinds		
22	Thomas Harman Giovanni Mejia Josephine Miller		
23	Keith Miller		



St. Paul's Lutheran Women's Missionary League

*As Lutheran Women in Mission, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions,
and equip women to honor God by serving others. Adopted 2021*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2023

Program: **Bible Study “In the Father's Arms”** led by Pastor Wonnacott
PACK “GOODIE BOXES” for college students. **YOUR STUDENT'S
ADDRESS MUST BE TURNED INTO THE CHURCH OFFICE
BEFORE JANUARY 22, OR THEY MAY NOT RECEIVE A BOX!!!!!!**

If anyone wishes to donate for the boxes, please bring 1 dozen individually-
wrapped items to the Church Kitchen on Sunday February 5. Better yet, come to
the Bible Study & bring them along. Refreshments served afterward.

**Special Meeting Time: MONDAY, MARCH 27,
2023** Program: **Holy Land Highlights** from 1, or more, of
the four ladies from St. Paul's who traveled to Israel recently.
Refreshments served afterward.

40th LWML Biennial Convention at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 22-25,
2023 Theme: “Celebrate the Lord of the Nations”

If anyone would like bus information, contact Elaine. Registration info
should be available in the next “Good News,” Quarterly, or online.

St. Paul's 177th LITURGICAL YEAR † January 1, 2023 – January 31, 2023

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Unless noted

- Jan 1** 2nd Christmas Sunday
- Jan 8*** Epiphany Sunday
- Jan 15** 1st Sunday after Epiphany: THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD
- Jan 22*** 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
- Jan 29** 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

January Minor Festivals: **18** The Confession of St. Peter • **24** St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor • **25** The Conversion of St. Paul • **26** St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor •

Commemorations: **2** J. Johann K. Konrad Wilhelm Loehe •

10 Basil The Great of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, & Gregory of Nyssa •

20 Sarah • **27** John Chrysostom, Pastor 347-407

The Feast of The Epiphany of Our Lord (*actual date is Jan. 6*). A festival of rejoicing and gladness as, “the light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of the people Israel,” as Jesus Christ reveals Himself to the nations. *Luke 2:32* • The Word epiphany is from the Greek, meaning manifestation. • Epiphany once overshadowed Christmas, but in the Western church (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed), Christmas is now considered the major festival. In the West, the emphasis is placed on the visit of the Gentile wise men. The Eastern Church (Orthodox Catholic) emphasis remains on Jesus’ baptism; which on our calendar has its own day on the 1st Sunday after Epiphany. • The Season of Epiphany has 7 Sundays this year (it may have as few as 4, or as many as 8, depending on Easter's date). • Epiphany Season

continues to carry the color of Christmas: white, mainly because of its three feast days: Epiphany Sunday, and the Christological festivals of Jesus' Baptism and His Transfiguration. In each festival, Jesus reveals more and more of who He is as our King, the Son of God, and our Savior. • The 5-pointed Chrismon Epiphany Star with Rose represents the personal union - True God and True Man - of Jesus Christ. The Star for His divine nature, and the rose for His human nature. The reference to Jesus as a rose is from The Song of Solomon 2:1 (Rose of Sharon).

The Confession of St. Peter, January 18; color white. Commemorates Peter's response to Jesus question, "He [Jesus] said to them, '**But who do you say that I am?**' Simon Peter answered and said, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" Matthew 16:15-16 • May this ever be our confession as well.

"...in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism

(not the removal of filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" I Peter 3:20b,21



I was baptized, happy day. All my sins were washed away.



God looked down on me and smiled. I became His own dear child.