Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School – Bremen, IN

The EPISTLE December 2026

Address:

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Bremen, IN 46506

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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, T, W, F

8:00 – 11:30 am

From Pastor Wonnacott's Keyboard:

I would like to begin with a question: What preparations are you making for Advent and the Christmas season? I know that many will say, "I must get the house clean for the extra company that we'll have". Always be ready for the people who don't call but just show up! Then there is shopping in stores or online for family, friends, and co-workers. Don't forget to decorate inside and out! Will I have enough money to do everything this year?

Where does Jesus fit into the season? Well, some say, "I'm giving Him Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. That's enough, right?" We need to remember that Advent is the time to get ready to celebrate when Jesus came as the Babe of Bethlehem. But don't stop there – we also look forward to Jesus coming back in the clouds with all power and might to bring His dear children home for all eternity (Revelation 1:7).

Christmas is that time we celebrate Emmanuel – God with us! (Matthew 1:23). We see Jesus' humble

beginning on earth as He took on human flesh. Jesus, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets. This is a time when we should grow in our faith, observing Advent and Christmas.

How can we be prepared and how can we grow? **First**, be regular in worship (Sundays and Wednesdays) to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper. The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace for us to grow in our faith. (Hebrews 10:25). **Secondly**, go to Bible class and bring your children to Sunday School to listen to what God has to say through His Word (Luke 11:28). **Finally**, open your Bible at home as an individual and as a family to put on the full armor of God to fight the good fight of faith. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Then we will be ready and equipped to go out and make disciples of all nations. Your help is needed for our congregation to grow; the time is now! Let's start by calling or visiting a fellow brother or sister we haven't seen in the pews for a while. We need everyone to work together, remembering that we are "Saved by Grace through Faith in Jesus," and then be prepared to do the works of God that He lays before us! Let's go! We need everyone!

THE DEADLINE FOR JANUARY EPISTLE IS DECEMEBER 2OTH!!! 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!

Church Office Hours

The hours for the church office are Monday through Friday from

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and also possibly working from home on some Fridays.

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.

Worship Anew can be viewed on Sunday mornings at 11:30 am on: Dish Channel 26 or Direct TV channel 377. For you travelers, you can view anytime at <worshipanew.org>

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.

Preschool Postings

Our students and their families enjoyed delicious stone soup before Thanksgiving break because the children brought in a wide variety of vegetables and chopped them up themselves! We're very thankful for the volunteers who helped out and for our fellowship that day. We started this month by learning about Advent and how we prepare for our Savior's birth. God's blessings to your family this Christmas and throughout the New Year!

School Corner

Merry Christmas from St. Paul's Lutheran School! Thank you for all the blessings you have provided this last year, through donations, volunteerism, and especially prayer. We appreciate
all of you and the joint mission we have of providing a Christ-centered education.

The Children's Christmas Service is December 16th, 7:00pm! Students are to arrive by 6:40pm, in their classrooms to prepare. **All are invited** to celebrate the meaning of Christmas with St. Paul's School!

Additional pre-Christmas opportunities: **December 4th and 5th**- Bremen Holy Walk, 6:00-9:00pm (see bulletin board for ticket QR code); **December 7th**- 5th-8th Grade Band Christmas Concert, 7:00pm, BHS Auditorium; and **December 14th**- HS Band and Choir Christmas Concert- 7:00pm, BHS Auditorium.

The next **PTL meeting** is December 7th, 6:00pm. **Other dates for December include**- December 8th- 2nd and 3rd Grade Field Trip to "Annie" at the Wagon Wheel, December 17th- Pizza Day, and December 18th- PTL hosted School Christmas Party. **Christmas Break is December 21st- January 1st.** School resumes January 4th.

The Federal SGO opens January 2027! This provides additional benefits to donors, and to the students! The Federal SGO will also provide a 100% tax credit, just like the state SGO. There is a $1700 maximum tax credit provided per taxpayer. Watch for more details.

You can continue to give to the state SGO! Last school year, we provided over $53,000 in scholarships from the SGO Fund and we anticipate the same need this year! As **Choice only provides for 77%-83% of tuition costs**, we use the SGO to **"close the gap"** between our tuition fee and the Choice Scholarship. This has enabled our families, most of whom have financial concerns, to receive education at St. Paul's for nominal cost. **Please consider donating to the SGO!** Donors receive a 50% state tax credit and deduction. More information is available in the tract rack and can be found at ***https://lutheransgo.org/donate***.

Enrollment is always OPEN! *Please encourage family and friends to learn more about St. Paul's!* We offer a Christian alternative to education for Preschool through 8th Grade, not only focusing on core curriculum, but also providing a Biblical, Christ-centered focus. **With our comprehensive scholarship program, a Christian education can cost little or nothing.** *Scholarships are even available for Pre-K!* Word of mouth is the best form of advertisement, so please encourage your family/friends to check us out! Families can contact the school office, 574-

546-2790, for registration information and a tour. Information can also be found at **www.stpaulsbremen.church/school.**

We are starting to save natural wood and mulch for the new playground. If you are interested in joining the committee, volunteering, or have items to donate, please contact Beth Miller, 260-519-2884.

Our Sunday School continues to send $75.00 each month to a mission.

December Mission of the Month: AbleLight, formerly Bethesda Lutheran Communities

Through Christian love, AbleLight whole-heartedly supports and advocates for all people with developmental disabilities to ensure they have security, dignity, and hope.

Advent and Christmas Schedule 2026

December 2nd	Our Midweek Advent Service at 7:00 pm; dinner at 6:00 pm
December 9th	Our Midweek Advent Service at 7:00 pm; dinner at 6:00 pm
December 16th	Our Children's Christmas Service at 7:00 pm
December 24th	Our Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 pm
December 25th	Our Christmas Day Service at 9:30 am

Our theme for Advent – "The Coming of Jesus" and Christmas is "Emanual, God with Us."

Everyone is welcome!

Congregational Christmas Caroling

December 13th at 4:00pm

You are invited to come and make a joyful noise unto the Lord and to the shut-ins of our church and community…

We will meet in the Bethany room at 4:00pm to break up into groups and then go



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out and sing. Also, at 6:00pm we will return to the church for dinner and fellowship. Please bring a dessert to share at the meal. **All children must be accompanied by an adult.**

Come and Share the Good News of Christmas!!!

Christmas Card List for Some of Our Seniors 2026

1. Cleon & Wanda Felton	151 Oakmont Drive, Bremen, IN 46506
2. Carol Hardy	155 Beechwood Drive, Bremen, IN 46506
3. Keith Bellman	206 Beechwood Drive, Bremen, IN 46506
4. Betty Sahlhoff	500 S. Montgomery Apt 217, Bremen, IN 46506
5. Roberta Meiring	525 Yellowstone Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563
6. Peggy Miller	500 S. Montgomery Apt 111, Bremen, IN 46506
7. Wilodene Chaffin	306 East Lincoln Street, Bremen, IN 46506
8. Joann Wonnacott	Nursing Home 316 Woodies Ln. #202, Bremen, IN 46506
9. Beverly Snyder	630 E. South Street, Bremen, IN 46506
10. Elaine Young	4151 Filbert Trail, Bremen, IN 46506
11. Carol O'Connell	Miller's Merry Manor, 1630 S. County Farm Road, Room # 44, Warsaw, IN 46580
12. Rita Stanifer	Miller's Merry Manor, 635 Oakhill Ave., Plymouth, IN 46563
13. Bob & Troy and Andrew Yoder	2824 Michigan Rd., Plymouth, IN 46563
14. Lillian Salyer	24550 Riley Road, North Liberty, IN 46554
15. Mel Jones	St. Paul's Community, 3602 S. Ironwood, South Bend 46614
17. Leon & Bev. Schalliol	14205 New Road, Mishawaka, IN 46544



Parenting Corner

This month continues with the next chapter from the booklet, “The Ideals of a Young Lutheran.” The next chapter is “My Private Devotions” and some information from an email devotion from Lutheran Church Charites titled, “Intimacy, Dependency, Obedience.” Regular and faithful church attendance is needed for spiritual development. There is a special blessing from hearing God’s Word and from Christian fellowship. Private devotions and time with God in prayer is also vitally important. We are to follow the example of Jesus when he spent time alone with His Father in prayer. The Psalms and hymns can be a good resource for prayer time.

Having an intimate relationship with God requires three things, which are desire, discipline and delight. We must have a desire to have a close relationship with God and have the discipline to spend time with God in prayer and Bible reading each day. In Psalm 37:4, we are promised “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” We must realize our dependence on God. Even Jesus knew he couldn’t accomplish anything of significance without His Father’s direction and power. The LCC article included this thought- provoking quote, “You’ll never know that Christ is all you need until Christ is all you’ve got.”

Evangelism Board

This month we will be sharing from the pamphlet "What Lutherans Teach".
Our topic this month is 'Creeds'.
Lutherans teach that a creed, as the word itself implies (credo-I believe), is simply a statement of what one believes; that every professing Christian has a creed whether he admits if or not; that a true creed is not an addition to the Bible, but only a necessary emphasis of the truth against those who misuse the Bible for the support of their false teachings; and that without a creed a church will be engulfed in a flood of errors.
References - 1 Peter 3:15, Matthew 10:32.

We will be holding our next food ingathering for Grace Food Pantry from November 29th through December 13th. There will be cards in the Narthex beginning on the 29th with Grace's requested items, like canned pineapple, pickles, cereal, toilet paper, and Kleenex. After purchase, items should be placed on the Narthex table by Sunday, December 13th. All collected items will be delivered to the food pantry the week of the 13th. The food pantry will be open for the last time this year on December 16th. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

The voters approved revisions to the Constitution and By-Laws for St. Paul's congregation which result in a simpler organization structure with fewer boards. Part of the changes focus on revisions to the treasurer position. The Treasurer position has now been redefined as "Financial Accounting" and is no longer a position that must be held by a male member of the congregation. This "Financial Accounting" function could be carried out by a single individual or a group. The duties and organization of Financial Accounting are as follows.

a) The Financial Accounting shall be responsible for accurate recording of congregational receipts and disbursements and budgeted and actual expenditures according to proper accounting procedures and, as deemed advisable, shall suggest for congregational consideration improved methods and systems for keeping financial records.
b) The Financial Accounting can be accomplished by one or more members of the congregation working singly or as a committee or it can be contracted to an accounting firm outside the congregation.
c) The Financial Accounting shall report to the Executive Director of the congregation or other church board or congregation member designated by the Executive Director.
d) The Financial Accounting shall provide to the Executive Director a summarized, written, financial report for Voters' Assembly meetings and Parish Planning Council meetings.
e) The Financial Accounting shall provide pertinent financial records for annual financial position verification procedures via audit.

f) The Financial Accounting shall be responsible for monthly remission of offerings for missions and church agencies and for prompt payment of salaries and bills authorized by the congregation or the boards and directors as duly constituted sources.
g) The Financial Accounting shall receive from the Financial Secretary a report of all monies received through worship services, special offerings, or any other source and duly record it. Financial Accounting shall have available for all boards a current record of their disbursements and budget allotment.
h) The Financial Accounting, if consisting of congregational member(s), shall designate an individual to be a member of the Salary and Wages Advisory Committee. Other members are the Director or a selected member of the Board of Stewardship, Elders, Church Properties, and the School Board. This advisory committee shall meet during the months of the annual budget preparation. In the event of Financial Accounting function being outsourced to an entity outside of the congregation, the Assistant Executive Director shall be a member of the committee. The Director of the Board of Stewardship shall chair and initiate the meetings of the committee.
i) The Financial Accounting shall be responsible for remission of any applicable personal property, payroll, state and federal tax compliance filings.
j) The Financial Accounting shall be responsible for remission of annual financial data required by the Indiana District.

It is the intent to implement the revised Constitution and By-Laws commencing with the Election of Officers and Boards in June of 2027. WE ARE PRESENTLY SEEKING MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION WHO ARE WILLING TO SERVE IN THE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING FUNCTION AS EITHER A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL OR AS A MEMBER OF A FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING GROUP.

If you are willing to serve in this capacity, please contact Dave Burcham at 574-520-9118 or dburcham67@gmail.com. If we do not have members willing to serve in this manner, we will need to hire an accounting function outside of St. Paul's congregation and include this expense in the 2027 budget proposal to the

Voters in November of this year.

Christmas All The Time

"For David says concerning Him [Jesus], 'I saw the Lord always before me, for He is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. You have made known to me the paths of life; You will make me full of gladness with your presence.'" Acts 2:25-26, 28

The pastor took the death of his young son very hard.

Even though he had other children, it seemed like all the joy in his life had disappeared. No longer did he look forward to preaching or doing the things that once had brought him fulfillment. His depression got even darker as Christmas approached. He thought he ought to take a few days of vacation, but his commitment to duty obliged him to stay on task.

The day after the holy day, his family was gathered together at the dinner table. Conversation was marked by long periods of silence. It was then that one of the other children said, "Papa, this was brother's first Christmas in heaven." And another one quickly added, "It's Christmas all the time for him now." The pastor's sadness and sorrow lifted.

In the days after Christmas, surrounded by torn wrappings and discarded bows, many people truly believe Christmas is over. For them, it's back to the disappointments of life.

It doesn't have to be like that. For those who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior, every day can be Christmas. In Jesus every day can be filled with happiness and joy.

So, if you're feeling a bit down, perk up. The living Lord is with you. If you know the gladness that comes from sins forgiven, please share it when the calendar no longer says it is Christmas, but it ought to be.

Sunday School -- Winter Quarter Offerings

On December 6, <u>all</u> Sunday School Classes will meet in the Bethany Room for devotions and a special service project led by DeAnn Napper. Adults and children will work together to make Christmas ornaments and cards that will be

given to shut-ins. Come and be part of the Christmas festivities and fellowship, 8:30-9:15 a.m!

Pre-K – Grade 2 (Nazareth Room)

Bring your little ones to hear the Good News of our loving Savior, Jesus! Children learn God's Word, sing Bible songs, make crafts, participate in activities, and have a snack! Lessons in December will center around the birth of Jesus.
. . . . taught by Wendy Coxey . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m.

Grades 2-8 (Meet in the Day School)

For the remaining Sundays in December, Jeanette Rettinger and Barb Middaugh will lead discussions on the following topics: "The Trinity," "The Hope of Christmas," and "God's Word Guides Us." . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m.

High School (Emmaus Room)

Seminarian Thomas and various volunteers will lead class during the Winter Quarter. The topic will be announced. . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m.

Adult Bible Class (Bethany Room)

"Prepared for a Reason" is a study in apologetics – how we defend our faith with truth of Scripture in today's world where Christianity is under constant attack. Learn to be more confident in the truth of God's Word, recognize the lies of this world – whether old or new – and seek ways to share the hope that is in us with the people who are held captive by those lies. The study will be led by the team of Dave Burcham and Terry Miller. . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m.

More Opportunities for Bible Study:

Men's Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Join in on lively discussions every other Wednesday morning at the Bremen Hospital cafeteria! . . . . . 6:30-7:30 a.m. (December 9, December 23)

Thursday Morning Ladie's Bible Study (Emmaus Room)

Barb Middaugh is currently leading a study entitled, **Wherever Love May Lead.** This class meets every Thursday morning, 9:30-10:45 a.m. All ladies are welcome!

ALTAR GUILD

It is time to think about poinsettias to adorn the church for the Christmas season. If you would like to donate towards the poinsettias please see any Altar Guild attendant or place your gift in the offering box. Thank you!

Any member of communicant age, who is willing to learn the work of the guild may express that desire to any attendant. Director Mel Schmutz will see that you are paired with a "veteran" attendant for training. Afterward, you can be added to the calendar if you so desire!

The flower chart for 2027 will be posted soon outside the Guild room in the Narthex. To donate flowers just sign up on any open date (please give the occasion). If you wish any help in finding a florist, ordering or picking p please contact the attendant whose name is listed on the Epistle calendar. They will also explain how to get your flowers after services have concluded!

Help us spread some cheer!

Please join the Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML) ladies in filling cheer tins of goodies for our shut-ins. These will be delivered during the congregation Christmas caroling on December 13th. Please provide 24 individually wrapped items (cookies, candies, etc) and drop off in the kitchen Sunday am. Your help and your treat-making skills are appreciated.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

December 2026

ANNIVERSARIES

10 Larry & Beth Enders

12 Anthony & Katherine Barts

22 Ken & Lori Knigga

28 Brad & Ada Sahlhoff

31 Wayne & Tara Andrews
Tony & Melonie Venable

BIRTHDAYS

1 Doug Aurand

4 Lindsi Knigga

5 Sara Sahlhoff

8 Karen Matthew

10 Annette Knepper
John Stayton

11 Lisa Clark

13 Kandice Ernsperger
Joe Ervin
Christie Wonnacott
Christina Wright

14 Grace Barts
Noah Youngman

15 Tammy Britt
Mark Cope

16 Anthony Barts
Noelle Cannon

17 Steve Fox

18 Conner Barts

19 Jayden Potoczky
Elaine Young

20 Elijah Kulcsar
Wyatt Wildauer

21 Emiliano Mejia

23 Dawn Schmeltz

24 Traci Pullman

26 Katherine Goze
Matthew Ringle

27 Patty Bowen
Rhonda Owens
Ethan Tjernagel

29 Katie Lynch

31 Larry Britt
Alexia Cannon
Candace Wright

Silent Night,



Holy Night

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6