

EPIS⁺LE



*St. Paul's Lutheran
The Church On The Hill*

Volume 66 No. 12

December - 2022

Pastor's Message

"Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour." Matthew 24:44

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go!" Robert Meredith Willson (1951)

This time of year is wonderful and exciting. I see Christmas trees in windows as I drive along the streets. Our Christmas tree sits in front of the north window, perhaps you will see it as you come from Lohman. Max, our youngest pup thinks every brightly colored decoration is his own personal toy. He sits and barks at them wanting to play. Children everywhere are counting down to that special day when they get to open presents on Christmas Eve or morning.

We celebrate Christmas because it commemorates a special time in our history when God was born incarnate. Through the Holy Spirit and a virgin girl named Mary, Jesus the Christ comes to us as fully human, and fully God. Jesus comes to save his most beloved creation who are unable to save themselves. Jesus shows us God's face of love, compassion, healing, and peace for all people regardless of their poverty or riches, social standing, health, or abilities.

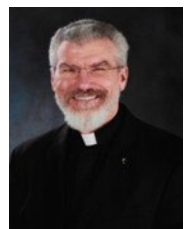
As we follow in Jesus' footsteps through the New Testament scriptures we are taught what it is that God would have us do according to his will. We are taught to love everyone as Jesus did, to forgive everyone as Jesus did, to care for everyone as Jesus did. We are taught love, compassion, and peace. Jesus came to us to teach us what the kingdom of God looks like and that as a human it is possible to bring God's kingdom to this world. Even for God in human form it was not easy and for us to be perfect it is impossible. But we can strive to come as close as we can to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

During this time before Christmas we celebrate a similar season called Advent. Just as the people of God waited for the Christ to come thousands of years ago, we now wait for Jesus to come again now. Like our ancestors then, we do not know when he will return. Jesus tells us it will be at an unexpected hour. "About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Although we do not know when the hour is for Jesus' return, we do know he will come again. He will not come as a humble babe in a manger, wrapped in swaddling cloths. He will come as a mighty force to judge the living and the dead.

The judgement of the righteous who are faithfully waiting, watching, and yearning for his return will be caught up with Jesus to live forever in paradise. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) But the wicked will be destroyed. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

"Therefore you also must be ready."

Your servant in Christ Jesus,
Pastor David



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

4	Kent Nelson
8	Bill Wyss
10	Thea Fischer
11	Miranda England
11	Madison Williams
12	Natalie Kalaf
12	Gage Ferrell
16	Elda Pistel
16	Leroy Plochberger
19	Adam Grunden
24	Mark Meller
25	Jana Thompson
25	Shawn Hillen
28	Larry Koestner
30	Julie Carel
31	Tony Miller

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Month/Day	Attendance Phys./Virtual	Offering
<i>NOVEMBER 06</i>	<i>110 / 127</i>	<i>\$ 5,108.50</i>
<i>NOVEMBER 13</i>	<i>78 / 96</i>	<i>\$ 1,965.31</i>
<i>NOVEMBER 20</i>	<i>74 / 88</i>	<i>\$ 3,959.00</i>
<i>NOVEMBER 23</i>	<i>28 / 113</i>	<i>\$ 537.00</i>
<i>NOVEMBER 27</i>	<i>71 / 100</i>	<i>\$ 1,976.75</i>

Additional Income:

Missions Envelope: \$783.00 to date.

Reformation Envelopes: \$334.00 to date.

Memorials:

Beverly Pace & Bruce Nelson: \$130.00 Basement Remodel

Barbara Hickey: \$40.00 Basement Remodel

\$1,040.00 St. Paul's Church

Basement Remodel: \$2,300.00 Richard & Rosemary
Heidbreder

Gift: \$1,000.00 from Jim & Debbie Linsenbardt



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

13	Jim & Cynthia Loesch	1975
13	Bill & Sharon Wyss	1996
16	Brian & Leann Hager	1989
27	Tony & Connie Miller	1997
28	Dave & Debbie Boyce	2011
29	Wilfred & Jennifer Plochberger	1990
29	Don & Becky Weber	1973

Ask The Pastor

Question: What is the "Priesthood of All Believers"?

Answer: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

1 Peter 2:9

"It's not my job" has become a saying that lets us off the hook when we do not want to do something no matter how right, easy, or hard it may be. It may be a time when you are busy and need to do something else at the moment, "It's not my job." It may be something you feel unqualified to do, "It's not my job." Maybe you are just a little shy and do not want to be put on the spot in front of others when asked to do something, "It's not my job."

As a Pastor I see this once in a while. There are times when I am the best choice to do many things in the church. Baptisms, marriages, funerals, personal confessions, preaching, and counseling are a few instances where I should never say, "It's not my job."

1st Corinthians 12 tells us we all have different gifts but they come from the same Spirit which is Holy. Each of you are children of God, baptized in water and word, and a disciple of our Lord, Jesus the Christ. When you see someone in need, you know to give them a helping hand. If you see someone is struggling you know to be kind to them. You can easily cheer someone up with a word or deed that shows them the face of Christ in your actions.

You do not have to be a Pastor or a Priest in order to do the right, or righteous, thing in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. You only need to be a 'Believer' and the Holy Spirit will guide you to do all things through his wisdom and strength.

Blessings to you,
Pastor David Viles

Congregational Council Meeting, November 14, 2022
Respectfully submitted by Frank Pascoe

✠ A regular monthly meeting of the Church's Congregational Council was held on Monday evening, November 14th at 6:00 pm. Presiding member Laurie Koestner called the meeting to order. Members present were Stacy Bubach, Jana Thompson, Kathy Meller, Delores Vlach, Frank Pascoe, and Laurie Koestner. Absent were members Zola Finch, Mitch Plochberger, and Dan Tschirgi. Also present was Pastor David Viles.

✠ The meeting opened with a prayer offered by Pastor Viles. Acting President called for approval of the previous Council minutes of October 10th. The minutes were approved upon a motion offered by Jana Thompson, seconded by Stacy Bubach, and agreed to by all present.

✠ The Chair of the Council's Stewardship & Finance Committee, Stacy Bubach, presented to the members the monthly Financial Summary prepared by Church Treasurer, Kay Pascoe. The Council members and Pastor Viles examined in detail the various monthly expenses and balances.

✠ Pastor Viles presented his monthly report of activities. His October mileage totaled 98 miles, including hospital visits and a funeral. Upon a motion offered by Stacy Bubach, seconded by Kathy Meller, his mileage request for \$61.25 was approved via voice vote of all present. Pastor's October meetings totaled nine individual events, including in-house events and community affairs. He conducted six counseling sessions. His other activities included set-up for Bird's Eye View presentation at STARS and the flu shots given on that occasion; attending the Rhymer's Ridge Pumpkin Patch event; Open House at his new home; the Trunk 'n Treat event in St. Paul's parking Lot; preparation of Sunday Bulletins; updating of St. Paul's Website and Video streaming; and the creation of the October Epistle. Pastor conducted two Sunday Communion services and three non-communion services. All services are in-person and online with Facebook Live.

Laurie Koestner then called upon the various Council Chairpersons present to give a summary of their October activities:

Evangelism: Delores Vlach thanked Richard & Rosemary Heidbreder and Gary & Audrey Bunch for hosting the November Fellowship Hour. This event was the last Fellowship coffee for this year due to the basement repair and the cancellation of the Advent Dinner. Delores thanked everyone who hosted the Fellowship Hours during 2022 and emphasized that the time and efforts have been much appreciated by all. Delores commented on the perfect weather for the Halloween "Trunk or Treaters" event held in the St. Paul's parking lot. Over 70 costumed children attended, there were 16 trunks opened, as well as two Fire Trucks on display for a grand time for all attending.

Worship & Music: Kathy Meller commented on the wonderful service of Sunday the 6th of November with 110 persons attending the confirmation of Mandy Miller and Mattson Stoermer. She reported that the choir will continue to sing during November and December. The Thanksgiving Eve service will be November 23d at 6:30 pm. The Christmas Eve communion service will be at 6:30 pm on December 24th and there will be no Christmas Day service. The sanctuary will be decorated on Saturday, November 19th by her Committee members. Hymns have been chosen for the December Sundays. She thanked Harry & Jana Thompson for the American flags displayed on Sunday the 14th. A gift of handbells for children has been made to St. Paul's Church. The church organ is scheduled to be tuned soon. Some attention will be directed to increasing the volume of the choir's song when viewing and hearing online.

Parish Education: Laurie Koestner reported that five children have been attending the Children's Church event the first Sunday of the month. A total of 42 children and parents attended the Rhymer's Ridge Pumpkin Patch event. The children will participate in a Christmas Ornament making event on Dec. 11th. No Christmas Program is scheduled for this year.

Church Improvement: Mitchell Plochberger submitted an e-mailed report for the Council detailing recent Committee activities. Cleaning out the church basement is progressing. Several workers recently moved more items from the basement work areas and removed some of the ceiling tiles. These were taken to the Lohman Community building for eventual reuse. The door installations are complete except for some finish work. Matt Bridges will continue this work. The windows for the upstairs have not yet arrived. Matt Bridges will possibly begin basement demolition later the week of Nov. 14th. Council members present discussed access to bathrooms during the basement remodeling, and how to alert members to any hazardous construction spots was briefly discussed.

Stewardship & Finance: Stacy Bubach presented to the Council two proposed budgets for the coming year, one with a 5% increase in selected items and one with a 6% increase in certain items. After discussion by the Council members, the decision was made to approve the 6% increase detailed budget. The motion was made by Laurie Koestner, seconded by Jana Thompson, and passed by voice vote by all present. The 2023 budget will increase compensation for Pastor and other salaried employees.

Mutual Ministry: Jana Thompson said her committee has continued to discuss how to continue and to improve the staff evaluation process. The Committee members would greatly appreciate more continuous input from Council members and congregation members on how to evaluate our paid staff, since the once-a-year, sit-down sessions do not allow for a totally satisfactory process. Various suggestions were voiced by the members present. It was suggested that the monthly Epistle and Time & Talent Annual Survey might be employed to expedite the process. Jana's committee will continue to look for ways to deal with this question. There was brief discussion of the question of the use and presence of alcohol on Church property. It was again reiterated that no alcohol should be present within the Church sanctuary, and the sanctuary consisting of the main floor and balcony. Alcohol use anywhere else should always be with Council and pastoral approval.

Laurie Koestner, presiding member, called for any Old Business: Utilization of storage in the former Parsonage was briefly addressed. The Council's hope is that storage should be in the basement and not continue in the main rooms; and that storage would continue only through the remodeling of the church basement. The alarm system seems to be working as hoped. There are additional door keys available to members who need them.

Moving to New Business: It was noted that the current Council Nominating Committee should be notified to begin contemplation of prospective new Council nominations. Current Committee members are Debbie Boyce, Devin Koestner, Paula Linsenhardt, and Becky Weber.

Pastor Viles reported to the Council that a request to bow-hunt deer on church property has been made to him by a non-church member. After brief discussion by the Council members, the request was declined. Pastor will notify the person of the Council decision.

The Council Meeting was concluded at 8:00 pm. Pastor led the members in a recitation of the Our Father.

Mobile Food Pantry: Audrey Bunch

The November 8th weather was good to be outside serving at the Mobile Food Pantry. We served 172 families with 486 people in those families. Items served (produce boxes) with apples, carrots, peaches, pomegranates, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, milk and yogurt. Other items; bags of dog food, bags of potatoes, frozen biscuits and frozen assorted chicken. Volunteers from the Lohman Lions Club were Alberta and Gary Zumwalt, and from St. Paul's were Rosemary Heidbreder, Dan Tschirgi, Gary and Audrey Bunch. The next Mobile Food Pantry will be December 13th at 1:00 P.M.

STARS: Jeannette Fischer

About 30 STARS attended our November meeting and enjoyed a very interesting presentation by Roger Pennell concerning his 24 years with the United States Army.



He displayed uniforms, helmets, awards and reported on all the locations he was stationed. He said that after 24 years, he decided it was time to hire a new travel agent. We will not meet in December, but look forward to 2023 with another year of interesting programs and delicious food and happy fellowship.

Freundschaft Gruppe: Jeannette Fischer



On Monday evening, November 28, we gathered to enjoy the Hanging of the Greens with 13 adults and 2 youth in attendance. Donita treated us to a delicious soup and sandwich supper in our very limited situation due to renovation of the basement.



Our workload was made much lighter because Les, Kathryn and Marie had previously trimmed the ramp railing outside and set up the tree at the foot of the hill.

We will need to complete window decorations after work continues in the basement as all windows will be opened to allow fumes to escape. Thanks to Marlene for designing and assembling all the new pew decorations. The Christmas tree will be set up and trimmed on Saturday, December 17, at 1 o'clock p.m. If you are available, we welcome you to join us.

Thanksgiving Decorations



This was as beautiful as always. The show of a plentiful harvest is a great example of how much God blesses our lives. Thank you to everyone who put this wonderful decoration together. Pastor David always looks forward to this.

WELCA German Christmas Cookie Sale – Trish Russell



Our annual Cookie Sale will be held Sunday, December 4th from 11:30 am to 4:00 pm at the Community Bldg. Your home baked cookies, breads, candies, etc. are needed to make the sale successful. Please package your baked goodies on paper or plastic plates and we will price them. Please bring your items to the Sunday School Rooms upstairs on December 3rd, Saturday morning, from 8:00 am until 10 am. We will still accept donations on Sunday morning. We appreciate all our great bakers and hope you will consider coming out for the Ham & Bean – Chicken Noodle Supper downstairs at the Community Bldg. Serving will be from 11:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Margaret Circle – Erika Gerth

Members of Margaret Circle will gather at the home of Debbie Boyce for the Circle's annual Christmas meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. We will share a meal, sing some Christmas carols and engage in the study of God's Holy Word. During the business meeting we will make decisions regarding the recipients of the evening's offering and set meeting dates for the year 2023. As always, keep in mind that Margaret Circle is open to all women of the church! Call Erika Gerth at 635-6681 for more information.

Jr. Lutherans and Youth Group: Donita Stubinger

Jr. Lutherans will meet on Sunday, December 11, 2022 around 11:00 am to make pinecone angels and a Santa Claus to hang on their Christmas tree. We will meet in the Sunday School Class rooms upstairs and enjoy lunch and drinks. Families and our Youth Group are invited to help the Jr. Lutherans with their art and craft projects. Please plan to attend. Phone calls will be made as a reminder to attend.

Thankoffering Service - November 20, 2022: Erika Gerth

"With Our Whole Hearts We Give you Thanks", the theme for this year's Thankoffering Service, was a wonderful opportunity for St. Paul's Women of the ELCA to share with the congregation the history of Thankofferings and its relevance for today. WELCA's roots date back to 1837 when the first American Lutheran Women's Society was founded, now known as the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. St. Paul's WELCA is one of 7,000 congregational units in the U.S. which are subdivided into Synods and Clusters. Women come together for fellowship, Bible study and to learn about justice, discipleship and stewardship. The Thankoffering received during this service was sent to the national office of Women of the ELCA to be used to foster goals of education and service at the national, synodical

and local level. Thank you to Marie Scheperle and Pastor David for their assistance in planning this service, and thanks to all of St. Paul's women who so ably participated: Marlene Carlson, Kathy Meller, Laurie Koestner, Donna Viles, Audrey Bunch, Jeannette Fischer, Jana Thompson, Kathryn Linsenbardt, Julie Nelson, Marie Scheperle, Trish Russell, and Erika Gerth. Last, but definitely not least, a special thank you to Pastor David for his very meaningful sermon, "Called to serve, Stewards of Life".

\$120,000.00 Goal Fundraiser for Basement & Kitchen Project



The current total received for the basement and kitchen remodel is currently at \$101,240.00.

Construction or De-Construction has begun in our basement. It is going fairly smooth and quickly, at least this phase of it. Hopes and dreams for an expanded kitchen and new equipment have been ongoing for years. The new floor plan will create a lot more space to cook and work while also having a better arrangement for serving. New floors will also be installed in both the Fellowship and Friendship halls. Also new ceiling tiles, lights, and a better cooling duct for the kitchen. Please contribute whatever amount you can joyfully give.



Confirmation 2022: Pastor David Viles



This year we did a new thing for confirmation studies. Instead of a two year program with summer vacations off as well as Christmas, Easter, Spring Break, and Thanksgiving weeks off, we spent one year in study. In order to do this, Mandy Miller and Mattson Stoermer attended confirmation classes year round as much as possible. We chose to do this on Sunday afternoons as both students were in town for church normally.

December Giving Opportunities: Christmas Treats – Current Fund for Candy Sacks; Christmas Eve Offering: 25% each to: Heisinger Bluffs Benevolence Fund, Oaks Indian Center, River City Habitat for Humanity, and Samaritan Center.

St. Paul's Lutheran Travel: Marie Scheperle

Due to the pandemic, we were unable to travel to Branson for our annual Christmas Trip the past two years. We finally were able to travel this year on Wednesday and Thursday, November 16 and 17. We had good weather – a little on the cold side.



All 50 people who had signed up were able to travel. Twenty of those 50 are members of St. Paul's. We traveled by Arrow Motor Coach from Kansas City who sent a very good driver. Pastor David gave us his "send off prayer" before we departed the church parking lot.



The shows we attended were the Hay goods, Dutton Family, Clay Cooper and ELVIS – Life of the King. They all performed well. We also had plenty of food to eat – sometimes too much, of course.

We thank all our members that helped make the trip a success especially Marvin for corralling the group guiding us to the parked bus on the show lots. Thanks to Ashley Meyer for designing the bulletin and nametags and to Pastor David for printing the mailing labels. McDonald gift certificates were given away and our own Melvin Stubinger won our special "STEVE'S" gift certificate. Joan was more excited than Melvin was! A special thanks to Stacy Bubach for sending Pastor David all the pictures.

Samaritan Center Donations: Audrey Bunch

Thank you to all who continue to give egg cartons and plastic bags for the Samaritan Center. This is a big help to distribute eggs, food, and clothing to the people who are in need.

Calendar of Events and Schedules

- December 3th**, Saturday: 8 am to 10am Bring Cookies to Sunday School Rooms upstairs.
- December 4th**, Sunday: 11:30 am to 4:00 pm WELCA German Christmas Cookie Sale.
- December 4th**, Sunday: 11:30 am to 4:00 pm, Ham & Bean / Chicken Noddle Supper downstairs at the Community Bldg.
- December 6th**, Tuesday: 9:00 am Worship and Music Committee Meeting.
- December 6th**, Tuesday: 6:00 pm Margaret Circle hosted by Debbie Boyce in her home.
- December 11th**, Sunday: 11:00 am Jr. Lutherans art and crafts upstairs in Sunday school rooms with lunch.
- December 12th**, Monday: Church Council meeting at 6:00 pm in the youth room upstairs.
- December 13th**, Tuesday: Food Pantry Volunteers at Trinity Lutheran in Russellville at 1:15 p.m.
- December 17th**, Saturday: 1:00 pm Set up and decorate the Christmas tree.
- December 18th**, Sunday: 5:00 pm Meet at the church parking lot for Christmas caroling.
- December 20th**, Tuesday: Basement reserved for Lohman City Council meeting at 5:30 p.m.
- December 21st**, Wednesday: Mutual Ministry will meet at 5:00 pm in the church basement.
- December 24th**, Saturday: 6:30 pm Christmas Eve Service with Communion.
- December 26th**, Monday: Epistle Deadline for News and Articles.

Bulletins are normally printed on Wednesdays.
 Pastor David normally plans Fridays as his day off.

Usher Schedule

Dec. - 04	Delores Vlach	Frank Pascoe
Dec. - 11	Laurie Koestner	Stacy Bubach
Dec. - 18	Kathy Meller	Mitchell Plochberger
Dec. - 24	Jana Thompson	Dan Tschirgi

Acolyte Schedule

Dec. - 04	Madeline Stubinger
Dec. - 11	Mackenzie Linnenbrink
Dec. - 18	Lucas Plochberger
Dec. - 24	Oliver Stoermer

Greeters Schedule

Dec. - 04	Frank Pascoe	Donald Weber
Dec. - 11	Audrey Bunch	Gary Elliott
Dec. - 18	Devin Koestner	Jerry Koestner
Dec. - 24	David Russell	Trish Russell

Readers Schedule

Dec. - 04	Carol Elliott
Dec. - 11	Nicole Benne
Dec. - 18	Frank Pascoe
Dec. - 24	Marie Scheperle

Song Leader

Dec. - 04	Kathy Meller
Dec. - 11	Kathy Meller
Dec. - 18	Dan Tschirgi
Dec. - 24	Dan Tschirgi

Audio / Video Technician

Dec. - 04	Dan Tschirgi
Dec. - 11	Dan Tschirgi
Dec. - 18	Roger Pennell
Dec. - 24	Roger Pennell

Organist / Keyboard

Dec. - 04	Zola Finch
Dec. - 11	Zola Finch
Dec. - 18	Zola Finch
Dec. - 24	Kathy Meller

Communionware for the Month

Stacy Bubach & Abby Bubach

Communion Assistants

Dec. - 11	Laurie/Jerry Koestner
Dec. - 24	Kathryn Linsenbardt

Altar Flowers for the Month

Kathryn Linsenbardt

*** Communion Days noted in Yellow**