

# EPIS<sup>+</sup>LE



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

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December - 2023

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### Pastor's Message

#### The Birth of Christ our Lord

*"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." **Isaiah 7:14***

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." **Isaiah 9:6***

*"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land." **Jeremiah 23:5***

*"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." **John 1:14***

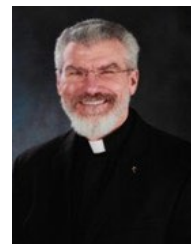
December 3rd is the first Sunday in Advent this year. Advent is a waiting game and we wonder, when is Jesus coming back. But don't feel like you are alone, that question has been around for thousands of years. Isaiah served as a prophet of God 700 years before Jesus' birth. He was given the word of the LORD to announce the coming of the Messiah, the Christ, born of a virgin and would become God, the Prince of Peace. Jeremiah is another Old Testament prophet who served at a very early age. 600 years before Jesus' birth, Jeremiah prophesied the Messiah coming from the line of King David.

John was called by Jesus to be one of his Apostles, John's gospel tells us for certain that Jesus was the Christ, he was and is the Son of God and he lived on earth with his people.

We know that Jesus was born as the ancient scriptures foretold, God in Christ lived with the people and taught them all they needed to know about the kingdom of God.

We know for certain that Jesus will come again and this is what we anticipate for the next four weeks as we enter the season of Advent. We have heard the stories Jesus told of preparation and staying awake, ready for his return. We do not know when it will happen, but we should expect it to happen every day we awaken from sleep. In that way we live as if we will meet Jesus on that day. In that way we remain awake, ready, and will bow before his Glory.

Your servant in Christ Jesus,  
Pastor David Viles



**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 1 Melissa Thompson
- 4 Kent Nelson
- 8 Bill Wyss
- 10 Thea Fischer
- 11 Miranda England
- 11 Ryan Linhardt
- 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 05</i>	<i>95 / 183</i>	<i>\$ 3,157.00</i>
<i>NOVEMBER 12</i>	<i>77 / 100</i>	<i>\$ 2,845.97</i>
<i>NOVEMBER 19</i>	<i>33 / 108</i>	<i>\$ 2,296.00</i>
<i>Thanksgiving Eve</i>	<i>66 / 86</i>	<i>\$ 751.00</i>
<i>NOVEMBER 26</i>	<i>62 / 98</i>	<i>\$ 3,673.00</i>

**Additional Income:**

**Mission Envelope:** \$390.00

**Reformation:** \$405.00.



**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 **50 YEARS**

**Continued prayers for:**

*Jason Wood, Mary Utrecht, Audrey Bunch, Richard Heidbreder, Royal & Evelyn Speidel, Carol Elliott, Donna Viles, Julie Carel, Cecil Knerschild, Linda Huff, and all we hold dear in our hearts.*



I am thankful for St. Paul's Church and the congregation that comes together each Sunday and other days when needed. I'm thankful for the Worship and Music committee who decorated the Altar and other places in the Sanctuary for Thanksgiving, the abundance of items reminds us of how blessed we are by God who has given us all things, but especially each other. Never forget the great love God has for each of you, and the gift of love God has given you to share with others.

Advent Blessings to each of you.

Yours in Christ, Pastor David



**Your Christmas Offering this year will support three beneficiaries: Oaks Indian Center, Samaritan Center, and the River City Habitat for Humanity.**

## **Congregational Council Meeting, November 13, 2023**

† The Minutes for November 13th were collected via e-mail from the Council Members due to the Council President and Vice President being out-of-town on Monday 11/13/2023. An agenda was prepared by Council President Zola Finch and sent to all Council members, to Pastor David Viles, and to Church Treasurer Kay Pascoe.

† Listed for action by President Finch are the following:

1. Action Item: approval of the previous minutes of October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023
2. Action Item: Review of the Church Treasurer's Report
3. Action Item: Pastor's Monthly Report/ Approval of Pastor's Mileage. [\$48.47 reimbursement]
4. Approval of adding additional cameras and monitor for church/parsonage in amount of \$4,759
5. Approval of giving old church front doors to Ryan & Ashley Heidbreder. Currently stored in parsonage garage with no future use planned.
6. Approval of proposed budget increase of Pastor's salary by 5% due to inflation, with a decrease of budget amount for church organist.

**President Finch requested the Council members email their committee reports:**

**Evangelism:** [Delores Vlach] Thanks were given to the ladies of the Margaret Circle for hosting the November Fellowship coffee. Since this was the last Fellowship Hour of the year, a big THANK YOU is extended to all those members who made the Fellowship Hours so very special during the year. The December Fellowship Hour will be replaced by the Advent Dinner to be held on December 10th. This event is sponsored by the Worship & Music Committee under the superb leadership of Kathy Meller. The dinner will begin at 5:30pm with a short program to follow. Please plan to attend. You will not be disappointed. It will instill in all attendees the Christmas Spirit of the season. Due to cold temperatures, our "Trunk or Treat" on Halloween evening was moved inside to the Fellowship Hall to make everyone more comfortable. Some 70+ children in a wide array of costumes were handed treats from 14 decorated stations. Even an adult Witch and Chicken, aka Debbie and Dee Dee blended in with the costumed kids! Everyone enjoyed a "fun" evening.

**Technology:** [Dan Tschirgi] Action Item: Consideration of additional cameras and monitor for church/parsonage.

**Worship & Music:** [Kathy Meller] The Worship and Music Committee meeting was called to order at 9am on November 7th. Pastor Viles opened the meeting with a prayer. Attending were Kathy Meller, Pastor David, Erika Gerth, Abbie Linsenbardt, and Frank Pascoe. Members discussed what they are hearing. Several members of the congregation expressed their pleasure with the Blessing of the Pets service. The All-Saints Sunday Service was also praised. Everyone is enjoying the children playing the bells. They did an excellent job on Sunday, Nov. 5th, playing "We Gather Together". The Thanksgiving service will be on Wednesday, Nov. 22d at 6:30 pm. The Worship Committee will decorate the sanctuary on Saturday, Nov. 18th at 1:00 pm. We will continue to use Setting 4 during Advent. Christ the King Sunday is on Nov. 26th. Advent begins on Dec. 3d. There will be lighting of the Advent Wreath. The day before Christmas is Sunday December 24th. The Bell Choir will perform on Dec. 3d and possibly again on December 24th. Adult Choir will continue to sing during November and December. The Advent Dinner will be held on Dec. 10th, starting at 5:30 p.m. Donita Stubinger has graciously volunteered to cater the meal, with WELCA helping pay for the food. There will be no cost for attending. The program following the meal will be determined by Pastor David. Worship & Music committee plan to decorate on Saturday, December 9th at 9:00 a.m. Our committee will meet again on December 5th at 9:00 a.m.



**Church Improvement:** [Kent Nelson] There was no committee meeting in Oct. We have placed the down payment on the new carpets and the colors have been selected [thanks to Zola]. Our carpet project has been placed on Sommers' list for tentative installation in January. The Safety and Security committee met on Oct. 22d to discuss safety concerns due to the Middle East conflict. The Committee has a desire to install additional cameras at the parsonage and in the sanctuary. They also wish to install a monitor in the narthex for viewing during the service. The Committee contacted Scott Grunden, and he has furnished a bid for the cameras and associated wiring of \$5,279, with a \$520.00 discount if we help pull the wiring. Roger Pennell has agreed to help with the wiring. This project is for Council consideration at this time. I have reached out to BEE SEEN signs to inquire about the neon cross above the entry door to see if the transformer is out. More to follow. I am currently working on replacing the wood door that leads to the coal room at the Parsonage and possibly replacing the storm door in front. Zola Finch purchased a new front screen door at the Parsonage. Church Improvement will need to install it.

**Stewardship & Finance:** [Stacy Bubach] Stacy Bubach presented the proposed 2024 Church Budget. This proposed budget will be presented and discussed at the upcoming annual Congregational Meeting in January 2024.

**Mutual Ministry:** [Jana Thompson] The committee met on October 18th with four members present. The length of terms for our committee members was discussed and two of our members will need to be replaced in the new year. The Venmo account was discussed and background checks for all Church members who work with children will be completed as needed. Pastor David shared with the committee an interest in developing an expanded Altar Guild and what that might entail.

**PASTOR VILES** monthly Report for October: Mileage for Oct. 1 thru Oct. 31st, 2023: a total of 74 miles at 0.655, including Villa Marie Nursing Home [29 miles]; Ministerial Alliance meeting [13 miles] ; Funeral for Steven Dunlap [32 miles] = 74 miles or \$48.47. Pastor Viles detailed ten meetings, including church committee meetings, Lohman City Council, meetings with Lohman City contractor, S.T.A.R.S., area Ministerial Alliance, and MODOT Bridge meeting. Pastor had nursing home visits and counseling sessions, and funeral preparation discussions. There were daily phone and text messaging sessions with our members. Pastor attended the annual Chili Supper. Other activities included the Steve Dunlap funeral, Grunden-Peterson wedding, arranged MODOT meeting in church basement, prepared bulletins and monthly Epistle, and maintained the Church's Facebook page. He presided over two Sunday communion services and three non-communion Sunday services.

**Old Business:** Agreement and support on the six required action items were received from the following members: Jana Thompson; Delores Vlach; Kathy Meller; Frank Pascoe; and Dan Tschirgi. Kent Nelson approved of all but Item #4 [camera additions].

**New Business:** Annual Reports from all committees are to be turned in to the Church Secretary Debbie Raithel by December 15.

The Annual Church Congregational Meeting will be held on the third Sunday in January: January 21st  
New Church Council Members are needed. Begin discussion on recruitment process for new members.

Next Church Council Meeting: December 11th, 2023 @6:00 p.m.

Collected and Edited by Council Secretary, Frank Pascoe.

### **Bell Choir: Kathy Meller**

The Bell Choir will perform on Dec. 3rd playing "Away in a Manger" and possibly again on December 24th playing "Silent Night".

**Mobile Food Pantry: Audrey Bunch**

The Fall weather on November 14th was very nice to volunteer outside at the Trinity Lutheran Church parking lot. This month 176 families were served with 495 people in those families. Some of the items given out were: apples, broccoli, butter, cauliflower, celery, eggs, half and half, lettuce, mandarin oranges, milk, parsnips, sweet potatoes, assorted canned goods, cereals, shampoo, soap, veggie puffs, and waffles. Volunteers from the Lohman Lions Club were Alberta and Gary Zumwalt, and from St. Paul's were Gary Bunch, Rosemary Heidbreder, and Dan Tschirgi. Next mobile pantry will be December 12th at 1:00 P.M.

**WELCA German Christmas Cookie Sale – Trish Russell**

Our annual Cookie Sale will be held Sunday, December 3rd 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. Cookies will be packaged and priced on Saturday, December 2nd. 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.

**Children’s Sunday School: AJ Ferrell and Wendy Barker**

The first Sunday of each month is Sunday school for the children. Wendy and AJ plan to have the children sing a couple of songs on Sunday, December 17, 2023. They will practice on Sunday, December 3rd so be sure to bring them to church on the first Sunday of the month. The children love Sunday school and learn a lot about God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, we did not have any interest in the Christmas Float for the parade in Russellville this year. Hopefully we can plan earlier next year so the kids can have fun.



**Our children praying together in Sunday School led by their teachers, AJ Ferrell and Wendy Barker.**





## Jr. Lutherans and Youth Group: Donita Stubinger

Jr. Lutherans and the Youth Group and their families met Sunday, November 19 to enjoy a meal downstairs with Jason Plochberger leading 29 Christians in prayer, After the meal we car pooled to Harry and Jana Thompson's to construct coffee filter angels and cell phone holders. Jana had 6 preschoolers in her first class and 8 youth in the next assembly. Harry demonstrated how to make the calling holders for the cell phones. It was amazing how much the kids enjoyed this craft and looking at all the neat things Harry had made. They especially liked the barns he built for his grandkids to play with. The grandparents and parents were very interested in his work of artistic ability to make these items. The youth did not want to leave his shop to trade places and make paper coffee filters angels! We thank Harry for teaching us how to sand, stain, cut and laser "God is Calling" onto a block of wood. Jana we enjoyed your craft shop, but I think the older youth voted for Harry's project! Thank you both so much for taking the time to spend the afternoon with our group. In December, we will enjoy the ringing of the bells.

Plan to attend the Ham & Bean Dinner at the Lohman Community Building where the Jr. Lutheran Youth will help serve. We will make plans to go ice-skating in January – watch the bulletin for dates.





### **WELCA Meeting: Donita Stubinger**

The Women of the Church will meet on Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at 1:30 pm to discuss expenses and donations.

### **STARS: Jeannette Fischer**

STARS did not meet in November and will take a break in December and January also.

### **Freundschaft Gruppe: Jeannette Fischer**

Thanks to the 17 creative people who attended the Hanging of the Greens event on Monday, November 27. We enjoyed a delicious dinner catered by Donita and she also treated each of us with a gift bag to take home. Our work load was made lighter thanks to Kathryn and Marie who decorated the outside railing a few days earlier. The Christmas tree will be set up and decorated on Saturday, December 16 beginning at 1 o'clock. Looking ahead, all decorations will be removed on Wednesday, January 3 at 3 o'clock. Afterwards we will again reward ourselves with a wine, cheese and soup supper. Volunteers are always welcome to assist with these activities.

### **Margaret Circle: Erika Gerth**

Margaret Circle members will gather at the home of Debbie Boyce on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 6:00 PM for supper, lively conversation, and Bible study centered on the birth of Jesus and its meaning in our lives. Our group meets six times a year and welcomes women in our congregation, and their friends, to join in our mission of studying God's Holy Word, growing in fellowship with one another and carrying out Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves. Peace, Love and Joy to one and all!

### **St. Paul's Lutheran Travel: Marie Scheperle**

The St. Paul's Lutheran Travel group enjoyed their Christmas Trip to Branson on November 15 & 16, 2023. We were blessed with beautiful weather. Pastor David was on hand to send us off with his special prayer. We saw Queen Esther at Sight & Sound Theatre, which was excellent as always. We then went to Hughes Brothers for dinner followed by an all Christmas music performance with their huge family. Sleep came easily as the group was "worn out". Our motel was Seven Gables Inn, which has been the same for the last several years. The Thursday morning show we attended was Sanders Family Christmas at Little Opry Theatre followed by lunch at McFarlain's Restaurant. This was followed by the Daniel O'Donnell Show, which was rated top performance by many of the travelers. We had 52 passengers with 18 from St. Paul's. We had good input that most thought the trip went well. We thank all our church members that helped in any way to make the trip successful. We thank our Lord for protecting and guiding the bus with a safe return back to St. Paul's.



# Calendar of Events and Schedules

- December 3rd**, Sunday: WELCA German Christmas Cookie Sale, 11:30 am to 4:00 pm. Community Center
- December 3rd**, Sunday: Children’s Bell Choir and Sunday School
- December 5th**, Tuesday: Worship and Music Committee will meet in the basement at 9:00 am.
- December 5th**, Tuesday: Margaret Circle will meet at Debbie Boyce home at 6:00 pm.
- December 6th**, Wednesday: WELCA meeting in the church basement at 1:30 pm
- December 10th**, Sunday: Advent Dinner beginning with Sparkling juice at 5:30pm & Dinner at 6:00 pm
- December 11th**, Monday: Church Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. in the youth room upstairs.
- December 12th**, Tuesday: Food Pantry Volunteers at Trinity Lutheran in Russellville at 1:00 p.m.
- December 19th**, Tuesday: Basement reserved for Lohman City Council meeting at 5:30 p.m.
- December 23rd**, Saturday: Epistle Deadline for News and Articles.
- December 24th**, Sunday: Christmas Eve worship service at 6:30 p.m. with Communion.
- December 25th**, Monday: CHRISTMAS DAY, give thanks to God.

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

## Usher Schedule

Dec. – 03	Stacy Bubach	Kathy Meller
Dec. – 10	Kent Nelson	Jana Thompson
Dec. – 17	Dan Tshirgi	Delores Vlach
Dec. – 24	Frank Pascoe	Stacy Bubach
Dec. – 31	Kathy Meller	Kent Nelson

## Acolyte Schedule

Dec. – 03	Oliver Stoermer
Dec. – 10	Madeline Stubinger
Dec. – 17	Morgan Schroeder
Dec. – 24	Lucas Plochberger x2
Dec. – 31	Mattson Stoermer

## Greeters Schedule

Dec. – 03	Audrey Bunch	Gary Elliott
Dec. – 10	Harry Thompson	Jana Thompson
Dec. – 17	David Russell	Trish Russell
Dec. – 24	Donald Weber	Marie Scheperle
Dec. – 31	Devin Koestner	Jerry Koestner

## Readers Schedule

Dec. – 03	Erika Gerth
Dec. – 10	Michelle Collins
Dec. – 17	Delores Vlach
Dec. – 24	Donald Weber-Marie Scheperly
Dec. – 31	Bill Gerth

## Song Leader

Dec. – 03	Dan Tschirgi
Dec. – 10	Kathy Meller
Dec. – 17	Dan Tschirgi
Dec. – 24	Kathy Meller x2
Dec. – 31	Kathy Meller

## Audio / Video Technician

Dec. – 03	Roger Pennell
Dec. – 10	Dan Tschirgi
Dec. – 17	Roger Pennell
Dec. – 24	Dan Tschirgi
Dec. – 31	Dan Tschirgi

## Organist / Keyboard

Dec. – 03	Zola Finch
Dec. – 10	Zola Finch
Dec. – 17	Zola Finch
Dec. – 24	Zola Finch
Dec. – 31	Zola Finch

## Communionware for the Month

Stacy Bubach & Abby Rhodes

## Communion Assistants

Dec. – 10	Audrey Bunch
Dec. – 24	Kathryn Linsenbardt - Morning
Dec. – 24	Rosemary Heidbreder - Evening

## Altar Flowers for the Month

Kathryn Linsenbardt

**\* Communion Days noted in Yellow**