



The Monthly Epistle

of St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Volume 69, Issue 12 • December 2023

Your Worship and Music Committee is aiming at making Christmas Eve special and different for you. Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year, so we will celebrate the Lord's Supper in the morning. At the evening service, we will read some lessons and sing some verses from carols, then right before the candle lighting, we will all be served Luther cookies and mulled cider. We will enjoy these treats together, savoring the sweetness of the Father's love in sending us Jesus. Then we will light the candles and sing "Silent Night" in closing.

We are excited at about having a service that is distinctive from surrounding churches this year, and hope you like it and spread the word about this unique Christmas Eve service.

We have a team ready to make the fresh, Luther cookies. Now, I know you are wondering what Luther cookies are. All I will say about that is, you will have to come to our Christmas Eve service to find out. Or you could just wait until after Christmas. I am pretty sure everyone who came will be talking about those cookies by then.

That said, I sure do hope you will come, or we are going to be eating a lot of leftover Luther cookies!

See you in church!

Pastor Ryman

Decorating the Church for Advent

The tree and all other **decorations will be placed on Saturday, December 2, beginning at 9am.** Decorations will be removed on Saturday, January 6, 2024, at 9am. Check your calendar for both dates and call Bonnie Hinson at 704-279-3126 or email her at lwaynehinson@yahoo.com if you'd like to help.

Luminaries will be placed around the front lawn by the Youth and Family Committee, also on December 2, beginning at 10am. You may sponsor a luminary in honor or in memory of a loved one for any amount. Funds go to St. Paul's youth group.

The deadline to order a poinsettia is Sunday, December 3. They will be placed in the church on Saturday, December 23. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia, they are \$13 each.

Order forms for luminaries and poinsettias are in the narthex. A booklet of luminaries and poinsettias will be available on Christmas Eve. (*Gifts in lieu of poinsettias will not be printed.*)

Turkey Cookers Needed

Volunteers are again this year working with *Three Wide Foundation* to provide a Christmas meal for the *Communities in Schools* students and families on December 14th, at First Presbyterian Church in Salisbury. Since we help Koontz Elementary School with various needs, we have been asked to help. We have been asked to cook 12 turkeys this year (last year we cooked 10). I hope we can meet this challenge.

Frozen turkeys will be delivered to St. Paul's on Saturday, December 9th. I will place them in the picnic refrigerator. An aluminum pan will be provided for you to bring the cooked turkey back. After you cook and slice them up, **please return them to the same refrigerator by 1:00pm, on Thursday, December 14th.**

If you can cook a turkey, please let Susan Bernhardt know at 704-637-0155 or srbernhardt@carolina.rr.com. Thanks so much for considering this event to help others.

Make a Joyful Noise for Christmas!

Would you like to spread some Christmas cheer by singing Christmas Carols? The Outreach Committee will be sponsoring a **Christmas Caroling** event on **Sunday, December 3rd**, after church. For those who have signed up, the committee will provide sub sandwiches, chips, drink and dessert before we go caroling.

We will accompany Pastor Ryman to **Autumn Care** for the service, then “Deck the Halls” with more carols. If we could get enough to sign up to go, we would like to take another group to the shut-ins. We know there are a lot of people working on the church concert that day, but if you do not have a part, think about singing with the Outreach Committee.

If you have not signed up yet, please call Susan Bernhardt at 704-637-0155.

Community Food and Clothing Shelter at Organ Lutheran Church

Please bring non-perishable food items to the church and place them in the same plastic receptacles we have been using. Our property brothers will make sure it gets over to Organ Lutheran Church where they are meeting the needs of folks who live on this side of the county. Many needy people in East Rowan have a difficult time getting down to Rowan Helping Ministries, so Organ is now meeting the needs of 107 families. St. Paul's will help them meet the needs of even more of our neighbors.

If you have clothing to donate, please do not bring it to St. Paul's but carry it straight to the shelter at Organ. It would be wise to call ahead to let them know you will be coming over. The church office number is 704-279-3096.

*For God so loved the world
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in him
should not perish
but have everlasting life ·*

Helping Hands

Helping Hands is a ministry of St. Paul's that operates with discretion and privacy. It exists to help our church members when unexpected financial needs arise. The committee also considers needs of non-members who have been referred to the committee by a member of St. Paul's.

Anyone who finds themselves in need should not contact the pastor. He does not make these decisions. All decisions are made by the committee.

The church secretary keeps application forms in the office. Come by to fill out your application and it will be forwarded to the committee for consideration.

The Helping Hands Committee is anonymous but you should know that they act on applications quickly, usually in just a few days. That said, sometimes it can take a week or more for everyone's schedules to allow a meeting.

Our annual Cruise 'n BBQ is the major funding for Helping Hands. However, many members also make special offerings for this ministry throughout the year. If you would like to contribute, make sure your check memo line or the blue offering envelope notes: "Helping Hands."

Missions

Thank you for your generous donation of \$278.69 in October. Through your support of Radical, we can see the nations reached for the glory of Jesus' name together.

We are grateful to God for you,
The Radical Team

We've received your \$198.52 contribution to Focus on the Family and we want you to know how much we appreciate your support for our Christ-centered outreach to families.

We couldn't do what we do without the help of folks like you. Grace and peace to your household.

Sincerely,
Jim Daly

On behalf of the staff and board of Sola Publishing, thank you for your gift of 104.23. You have blessed our hearts with your support of our ministry to provide solid, biblical resources for use in preaching and teaching God's word. Because of your gifts, we are able to keep the cost of our materials low for those churches struggling to keep their ministries viable. We are deeply thankful for your gracious gift.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Steve King, Managing Editor

How wonderful it was to be able to share with you and give an update on Sunday, October 15th, on Naomi's Heart Mission in General Santos City, Philippines.

We have been blessed in so many ways during our two-week visit at St. Paul's. Joining Bible studies, Catechism classes, Vespers on Sunday nights, and even fellowship at Culver's after Thursday night Bible study. It was especially fun getting to know the women in the kitchen who prepared for the Oktoberfest and then baked homemade pound cakes and chicken pies for a church fundraiser. You all are the best cooks!

We are grateful for the generous support you give to us financially, sponsorship of students to attend Naomi's Heart Mission Christian Academy (now a total of 18 students), and our feeding programs.

We have felt so welcome at St. Paul's and count it a joy and privilege to know you, and truly feel a part of this wonderful church family. May God bless St. Paul's in all you do as we serve a great and mighty God together.

We are so blessed and grateful for your generous donations to Naomi's Mission given during your Oktoberfest on October 14th, and offering from the church service on October 15th, when we were at St. Paul's. We do pray for St. Paul's and God's blessing in everything you do as you serve Him and others. You are such a great church family to know and love.

Blessings,
Kristie and Danny

December Calendar of Events

Sundays

- Sunday School, each week at 9:30am
- Worship Service, each week at 10:30am
- Men's Choir practice, each week at 4pm
- Hand Bell practice, each week at 5pm
- Vespers at the Parsonage—fellowship at 6pm; prayer at 6:30pm
- December 3 –Breakfast before Sunday School, 8:30am
- December 3 – Children's Christmas play practice, 9:30am
- December 3 – Lutheran Military Vets visit
- December 3 – Deadline for poinsettia orders
- December 3 – Concert rehearsals, sanctuary, 1-5pm
- December 3 – Christmas caroling at Autumn Care, 2pm
- December 3 – Autumn Care worship service, 2pm
- December 3 – Kathy Ketchie Circle, out to eat
- December 10 – Children's Christmas play practice, 9:30am
- December 10 – Concert rehearsals, sanctuary, 1-5pm
- December 17 – Children's Christmas play practice, 9:30am
- December 17 – Autumn Care worship service, 2pm
- December 17 – Concert dress-rehearsal, sanctuary, 1pm
- December 17 – Children's Christmas Program, 4pm
- December 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7pm

Mondays

- Faith Academy after-school program, 4th and 11th, 1–3pm
- December 4 – Bonnie Bost Circle, 7pm, to decorate tree
- December 4 – Hama Lingle Circle, 7pm
- December 11 – Melissa Lura Circle, Christmas gathering
- December 18 – Council meeting, 6:30pm
- December 25 – Have a Merry and Blessed Christmas;
the church office will be closed

Tuesdays

- Girl Scouts meet, 5th, and 12th, at 6:45pm
- December 5 – Extension Club, 1pm
- December 5 – Grace Ridenhour Circle, Cracker Barrel, 5pm
- December 19 – Friendship Club, 10:30am
- December 19 – Staff meeting, 5pm
- December 26 – Fellowship hall reserved for the day
- December 26 – Church office closed for Christmas holiday

Wednesdays

- Adult Choir practice, Wednesdays, 6:30pm
- Youth Confirmation, 6th, 13th, and 20th, at 7:30pm
- December 6 – Ellen Bumgarner Circle, 11:30am for lunch

Thursdays

- Bible Study, 7th, 14th, and 21st, at 10am and 6pm

Saturdays

- December 2 – Christmas decorating in the sanctuary, 9am
- December 2 – Luminary placement begins at 10am
- December 9 – Fellowship hall reserved for the day
- December 9 – Stephen Ministers Christmas luncheon, Noon
China Grove Family House restaurant
- December 16 – Fellowship hall reserved for the day
- December 23 – Christmas Concert, fellowship hall, 4pm

Lutheran Women Circle Meetings

Ellen Bumgarner–Wednesday, December 6, 11:30am for lunch

Kathy Ketchie–Sunday, December 3, out to eat

Hama Lingle–Monday, December 4, 7pm

Grace Ridenhour–Tuesday, December 5, Cracker Barrel, 5pm

Bonnie Bost–Monday, December 4, 7pm

Melissa Lura–Monday, December 11, Christmas gathering

Thank you

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who so generously donated school supplies for Faith Academy Charter School. We value each and every one of our supporters, and appreciate all the help. Thanks again for your generosity and support.

Sincerely,
Alison Moore
and FACS Staff

I would really like to pass along my profound thanks for the many acts of kindness shown to Travis and myself during my extended illness and prolonged recovery. We appreciate all the cards, calls, texts, prayers, coverage of assignments, meals, and Communion delivered to us. After years of being on the giving end of small acts of kindness through various church activities, it is truly humbling to be on the receiving end.

Thank you for your part in my recovery. It is a blessing to be a member of St. Paul's.

Sincerely,
Cindy Alligood

Thank you so much for the memorials, cards, calls, visits, and mostly for the prayers for me and my family during the time of Haynes' death and funeral.

Sincerely,
Linda Shirley

Thank you for all the cards, gifts, and congratulations for our eighty years of life and sixty years of love, and for celebrating with us. We love our church family.

Judi and DW Honbarger

Thank you to my church family for the calls, cards, visits, and memorials for Chuck. You have been a blessing to me.

Linda Hess

Memorials

Gifts were received in memory of Haynes Shirley for the Capital Building Fund from

Ben and Susan Bernhardt

Patsy Everhart

Susan and Mark Ryman

St. Paul's Lutheran Men

Vaughn and Nancy Wilhelm

Gifts were received in memory of Haynes Shirley for the General Fund from

Terry and Susan Beeker

Joe and Judy Leazer

Eric and Kathy Norris

Jeff and Mita Powlas

Wayne and Johnsie Taylor

A gift was received in memory of Alan Beaver for the Capital Building Fund from

Susan and Mark Ryman

A gift was received in memory of Jack Hendren for the Capital Building Fund from

Susan and Mark Ryman

A gift was received in memory of Bill Reissner for the Capital Building Fund from

Susan and Mark Ryman

A gift was received in memory of Delcie Smith for the Capital Building Fund from

Susan and Mark Ryman

A gift was received in memory of Karen Wilhelm for the Capital Building Fund from
Susan and Mark Ryman

A gift was received in memory of Carole Chilson for the Capital Building Fund from
Susan and Mark Ryman

A gift was received in memory of Bill Behrendt for the Capital Building Fund from
Susan and Mark Ryman

A gift was received in memory of John and Zada Stafford for the Capital Building Fund from
Kim Taylor Echerd

A gift was received in memory of Chuck Hess for the Capital Building Fund from
St. Paul's Lutheran Men

In Honor of...

A gift was received in honor of Dottie Stancil for the Capital Building Fund from
Patsy Everhart

A gift was received in honor of Dana and Crystal Bost for the Capital Building Fund from
Nancy Powell

A gift was received in honor of Wayne and Johnsie Taylor for the General Fund from
Kim Taylor Echerd

November Blood Drive Results

Thanks to all who came to donate blood at St. Paul's last drive of 2023. Thirty-eight registered to donate, and seven were deferred for various reasons. With three persons giving double red blood cells, the church was able to collect 34 units, one short of our goal of 35. However, for the four drives held in 2023, our average collection was 37 units, for a total of 148 units of blood credited to our church for the year. Because each unit of blood can be separated three ways, 148 units can be used to help over 400 persons needing transfusions!

Other statistics to be noted—the church had twelve persons come as walk-ins, which helped make up for the ten who had appointments, but were no-shows. Less than half of those who registered have been church members at each drive, which means that the church still depends on community support to meet our goal. This year, sixty persons donated at least one time and fourteen registered to donate at all four blood drives.

There were five new donors at the November drive. Many of these are one-time individuals who did not make their regular blood drives and may not return in the future. This year, nine persons who have donated during the past years had to be taken off our donor list because of health or medication problems. Therefore, the church is always in need of new donors.

The reason our church is one of the leading collection sites for OneBlood in Rowan County is because of our donors. However, volunteers are also key in making each drive a success. Volunteers help to get the Fellowship Hall ready for each drive, setting the area back in order after each drive, helping with canteen, and helping to get donors checked in.

Please consider giving the “gift of life” in 2024. St. Paul's hosts blood drives the second Monday of February, May, August, and November.

Income for October, 2023

Income for the month: \$42,324 • Year-to-Date Income as of October 31: \$371,728

November income report will be in the January Epistle. Online Giving is accessible at

StPaulsLutheran.Church/give. There is a minimal fee for each transaction

Love One Another

Find the 30 **bold** words from Romans 13:8–12.

E O L A E T S L V R D N N T L
K F I D N T F M A E U I J N M
A F G U U E I E M W G O P E U
W W H L N V A M E H W L H M F
G T T T P R U R T E V O L D U
H E H E E S U R E K R B S N L
R M E R F V O E N R E E S A F
I L L Y O B O O N P H L E M I
S T M O H W W C K O T I N M L
I T M G E M I T P X O E K O L
N M I A R M O R R N N V R C M
W E Y A D K Z Q D L A E A R E
N S A T I S F I E D K D D Q N
X L S L S A L V A T I O N K T
F I L S A P P R O A C H E S L

Owe no one anything except to **love one another**, for the one who loves his **neighbor** has **satisfied** the **law**. For these—you shall not commit **adultery**, you shall not **kill**, you shall not **steal**, you shall not **covet**, and any other **commandment**—are is **summed** up in this statement: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no **ill** to a neighbor. Therefore, love is **fulfillment** of the law. Besides that, you **know** the **time**, that it is already **the** hour for you to **wake** from **sleep**. For is **salvation nearer** to us now than when we first **believed**. The **night** has moved on; now the **day approaches**. So then, let us **throw off** the works of **darkness**, and put on the **armor** of **light**.

Unscramble the verse:

Vstrie otheegtr tihw em ni uory pyarres.



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)

OUR MISSION

A family of faith sharing the gospel and love of Christ

Phone: 704-633-0922

Email: secretary@stpaulslutheran.church

Website: StPaulsLutheran.Church

Facebook: www.facebook.com/StPaulsLCMC

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. – 12 Noon

CHURCH STAFF

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St. Paul's newsletter, the "Monthly Epistle," is intended to keep everyone informed about happenings within the congregation that effect and contribute to our ministry together. In order to maximize reach and minimize cost, the preferred methods of distribution are by email, and posting on our St. Paul's website (www.StPaulsLutheran.Church). All members are encouraged to use the newsletter as a resource to help you consider how God is calling you to be involved in the life of his church. If you are unable to access the newsletter online, or would just like to have a printed copy to refer to, the most cost-effective way to receive it is to pick up a copy from the narthex or church office. We mail copies to those members whom we know don't have online access, are shut-in, or live out of town. If you want to be added to our mailing or email list, please contact the church office.