

# St. Paul Lutheran Church & Preschool Newsletter

December 2019

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FROM PASTOR PAUL

## WHY Christmas?

Christmas is a season when a lot of crazy things can happen. We may find ourselves asking the “Why?” question often in December. Sometimes we ask in exasperation: “**Why** does the family Christmas dinner have to be at our house every year? Can’t someone else take their turn for once?” Other times we ask in worry: “**Why** are there only four weeks left to shop, wrap, decorate the house, attend all the work and family parties, bake, attend the children’s band concerts and Christmas program at church, do the Christmas cards, and help with the campaign to gather toys for kids in foster homes?” Or we can ask in disbelief: “**Why** in the world would someone ever think that Grandma getting run over by a reindeer is a fitting topic for a Christmas song?”

When we as Christians stop and ponder the reasons why God the Father chose to give His Son for the human race we may fall silent in amazement. After all, we are sinful, ungrateful, rebellious people. Why should God love us so much that He would choose to save us at such great personal cost to Himself? The ancient hymn from the 400’s AD “*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent,*” captures a bit of this stunning amazement. The lyrics of the hymn ponder why the King of kings and Lord of lords, worthy of eternal glory, has come to earth in the form of a peasant baby laid in a manger. These days people might exclaim “Shut your mouth!” as a way to say that something is so wonderful, it’s beyond words. When we view Christmas this way, wondering why God loves as deeply and sacrificially as He does, we have no answer that words can express.

“**Why?**” may also be a question of intention. To the young man picking up his date for an evening out we might ask, “Why did you buy a sprig of holly to carry in your coat pocket? What’s the activity on your date that you desire to have holly with you?”

When we consider the outcome God intended through Christmas, He is clear: “*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but have eternal life*” (John 3:16). We may not ever understand the depths of God’s love that would move Him to come to save us, yet we do understand His purpose. “Why Christmas?” Because God wants heaven full of people He made and loves. He wants hell depopulated. To put it another way: “*God wants all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (John 3:16). Jesus came to bring people into a relationship with Him in which they trust Him and receive His forgiveness of all sin.

At St. Paul we have just concluded six weeks of learning about “Natural Evangelism.” We compared each person’s spiritual journey to the game of golf. In the game of golf, the goal is that the ball eventually land in the hole. God’s goal is that each person land in the “hole” of a saving

relationship with Jesus as personal savior. Just as a golf ball can be several hundred yards from the hole, people can be very distant and resistant to God. A golf ball may also be on the green needing just a tap from a putter to nudge it to the hold. People also can be very eager to learn more about Jesus and come to trust in Him.

We discovered that as a golfer uses different golf clubs depending on the ball's distance from the hole, so we use different approaches to nudge a person closer to Christ. We serve friends and neighbors with surprising acts of kindness. Through our listening, and asking about their lives with loving interest, we build relationships with people who do not trust Jesus. We also share personal stories of times in our lives when we experienced God working to bring peace, forgiveness, freedom, and wholeness.

How is "the Why of Christmas" like what God has been teaching us this Fall season? This December when you share God's love through serving others, listening, asking them about their lives, and sharing what God has done for you, aren't you simply cooperating where God is already at work? Jesus came into this world to be our Savior so that your sister, the family next door, the friend at the gym, and the person who sits at your lunch table at work could spend forever with Christ in heaven. These are the people God loves and wants saved. No less of an event than the joyous, grand celebration of Christmas is dedicated to the saving of your friend.

December is, indeed, a season when a lot of crazy things can happen. It is also a season full of opportunities to show surprising touches of love to others. It's a season with personal interactions to listen to others, ask about their lives, and perhaps, God willing, share your story of a real God who makes a real difference in the life of a real person like you. Just think! In doing these things you are participating in God's eternal purpose for the world, and His loving purpose for your friend. God wants all to be saved and come to know the truth of Jesus, our grace-filled, hope-giving Savior. This is why Christmas is.

Blessed Christmas to you and yours,

***Pastor Paul Werner***

**St. Paul Lutheran Church  
where living Grace[d] & Families Cross**

That catchphrase sums up the emphasis of this congregation. What does it mean?

- We will live God's grace in our words and actions.
- We can't give out what we don't have in us. We commit to living "graced" – that is, we will be receivers of God's love to us in Jesus in worship, Bible studies, Holy Communion, and Baptism.
- We will share God's loving grace with all people, especially focusing on the needs of family life.



## Sundays in December

The Christmas story is a story of many families. Come Sunday mornings in December at 8:30 AM & 11AM to discover the difference God's promises and hope make in our family lives ... even today!



### Classic Christmas

Classic Christmas Stories and their  
Meaning in God's Plan for our Lives

**Wednesday Evening, December 4<sup>th</sup> @ 7 PM**

*"Repentance: Even Scrooge Can Change"* Matthew 3:1-12

**Wednesday Evening, December 11<sup>th</sup> @ 7 PM**

*"What a Misfit Rudolph teaches us about Following Christs"* Matthew 21:1-9

**Wednesday Evening, December 18<sup>th</sup> @ 7 PM**

*"Don't let the Grinch Steal Your Joy"* Matthew 1:18-25

### Blue Christmas

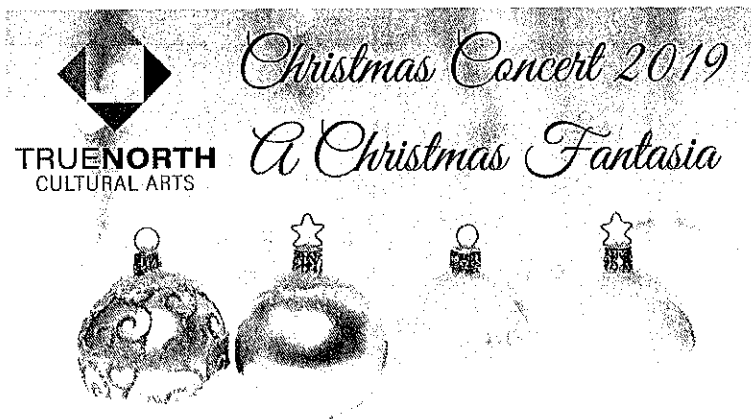
A service of Hope and Healing for those who find rejoicing hard  
Honor your loss .. Embrace His Hope

*Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> @ 4 PM*

**Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> from 2-5 PM – Parents' Afternoon Out**

We are offering FREE baby-sitting for a few hours so parents can get some shopping done, connect with a friend or even just take a nap! We will be doing a craft, playing some games and telling the Christmas story! We will need volunteers to help make this event a success! Sign-up sheet is available in the narthex.





**Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM**  
 Returning this year here at St. Paul.  
 The TrueNorth Chorale and Chamber  
 Orchestra  
 Under the direction of Rick Fortney and  
 Anthony Trifiletti.

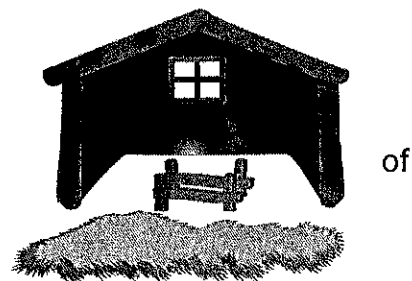
Featuring the music of Mack Wilberg, Ralph  
 Vaughan Williams, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky,  
 Jerry Brubaker, John Williams, and Randol  
 Alan Bass

Tickets \$15.00 Adults / \$10.00 Children – Youth  
 Tickets available 30-minutes prior to the concert.

Pre-sale Tickets Available through:  
 TNCA Chorale and Chamber Orchestra Members  
 The TrueNorth Gallery

**Sunday, December 15, 11 AM - IMPROV at the STABLE**

Do you have a future STAR in your family? Does your child love to pretend? IMROV at the STABLE is what you've been looking for! Bring your whole family to help tell the Christmas story! And who knows? When you arrive, you may be asked to play a part (IMPROV, course!). Following IMPROV at the STABLE, your family can take a family photo in the stable AND have a delicious breakfast in our fellowship hall! Sign-up sheet is available in the narthex.



**CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

**Preschool Christmas Presentation**  
*Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> @ 6 PM*

**Christmas Eve Family Service**  
*Tuesday December 24<sup>th</sup> @ 4 PM*

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service**  
*Tuesday December 24<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 PM*

There will be no worship services Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, & New Year's Day  
**INVITE FRIENDS, RELATIVES, & NEIGHBORS!**

## Sunday Worship Time Changes

# KIDS worship

**Sundays @ 10 AM**

**BEGINNING SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020**

Starting the first Sunday in January, St. Paul's Sunday morning schedule will change.

The 8:30 AM traditional style worship service will remain the same. The 11:00 AM more contemporary style worship service will have a new time, beginning at 10 o'clock on Sundays.

The reason for the change in worship time is in response to St. Paul's ministry vision to reach families with children. Families have responded favorably to the 10 AM worship time. Over time we will create a more family-friendly worship experience at our 10 AM service.

Starting in January, Sunday School will become "Kids Worship." Children will join their families in the worship for the beginning of the worship service. Before the sermon, kids will be invited to go to follow the adult leader to the upper level where Kids Worship will happen. There, children will have fun and active songs, Bible lessons, and crafts. Parents will go pick up their children when the main service is ended.

This means that Sunday School will no longer be offered at St. Paul as it had been for many years. This change will also mean that an Adult Bible Study at 9:45 am cannot be led by Pastor. Instead a member will lead the Adult Bible Class.





***“This Time Around” ( YOU’VE GOT A SECOND CHANCE )***  
**New Series of Sunday Sermons coming after Christmas**

Every year we promise to change. This time around the calendar what will be different for you? Join us as this time around we will ask God for the strength to Recognize the Lies, Take Responsibility, Refuse to Rationalize, and Forgive the Wrongdoers.



**NEW STUDY SERIES**

**A Man Named Martin** You’re invited to come and discover a 15th-century religious reformer from Germany who broke ranks with the Catholic Church. This Bible study is the first of a three-part series devoted to Martin Luther – a monk whose Spirit-inspired grasp of God’s justification of sinners through faith in the Savior has changed the course of human history.

**Tuesday mornings December 3, 10 & 17 @ 10AM in upper level. All welcome.**

***NEXT VOTERS’ ASSEMBLY MEETING***

Sunday, November 24th the Voters’ Assembly approved a new Constitution and By-Laws for St. Paul, and elected members to the Board of Directors. The Voters were not able in the time allotted to vote to put a 2020 church budget in place. Instead, the Voters requested more information and to meet again this year. The next Voters’ Assembly will be held **Sunday, December 22, 2019, at 9:45AM** in St. Paul’s Fellowship Hall. The matters for the Voters to decide at this meeting will all relate to next year’s church budget, which includes retaining at full-time or reducing to part-time the D.C.E. staff position, and managing the congregation’s endowment fund. Look for information prior to the meeting in your email and distributed on Sundays in the narthex. Thank you.





## Preschool Update

We are excited to celebrate Christmas this month with our preschool family!! We will spend the entire month learning about the birth of Jesus and preparing for the holiday.

Our preschool will receive three visits from Mrs. Stanley from the Amherst Public Library this month. We always love our visits from Mrs. Stanley!!

Our Christmas program will be held on Tuesday, December 17, at 6pm. In the near future, look for a sign-up to donate cookies and/or your time to help us with this program! We invite anyone to attend the program as well! A big thank you to Sue Bungard, whose granddaughter is in our Tuesday-Thursday class, for teaching us signs for one of our songs!!

Santa will visit the preschool on December 19th and 20th. Each student will receive a gift from the preschool and participate in a pajama and hot chocolate party on that day.

As always, thank you for your support of our program. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Blessings,  
Beth Naro  
Preschool Director  
[preschool@stpaulamherst.com](mailto:preschool@stpaulamherst.com)



## St. Paul Women's Ministry

Women's Small Group meets on Tuesday evenings from 7-8:30 PM. All women from the congregation are invited! We will be studying Joshua: Winning the Worry Battle through the month of December. Any questions, please contact Kendis at [dce@stpaulamherst.com](mailto:dce@stpaulamherst.com).



The high school group at St. Paul is called The Next Step, because it the "next step" after confirmation! **Interested in getting more information – text Kendis Bender at 967-1792!**

The Next Step meets on Sunday afternoons – 12:15 (or whenever late service ends) until 2:30. Lunch will be provided! Parents are asked to help coordinate meals!

**Upcoming Dates:**

**Sunday, 12/1 – No Next Step!**

**Sunday, 12/8 – Next Step meeting from 12:15-2 PM**

We will meet to finalize our mission trip site and select names for our Christmas potluck! **\*\* Parents are needed to provide a meal \*\*** Please plan on staying for our **Baby-sitting event – 2-5 PM**

**Wednesday, 12/11 – Christmas Shopping for Families in Need 3:30 PM**

We will meet at church at 4 PM to plan our trip! After shopping we will head back to church to wrap, eat supper and go to church at 7 together! Bring some \$\$ for supper!

**Sunday, 12/15 – Improv at the Stable (10 AM) Help needed for Christmas Program @ 11 AM**

**\*\* Christmas Potluck \*\* Details TBA**



**H3**

**12/1 Sermon Summary Due**

**12/4 Advent Worship at 7PM**

**12/11 Service Project – Family Christmas Shopping/Wrapping/Supper/Worship**

We will meet at 4 PM at the church to make our plans for shopping! Once we are done, we will wrap our gifts and have some supper then plan on worshipping together at 7 PM! Parent drivers are needed! Please bring \$\$ for supper!

**Sunday, 12/15 – Christmas Potluck/Gift exchange – Details TBA**

**12/18 Advent Worship at 7PM**

**12/25 CHRISTMAS**



**On Wednesday, December 11th**, our youth and adults from confirmation will be shopping for gifts for families that need help during the Christmas season. With a generous donation from Thrivent, we will shop and wrap to make this season a bit easier for families that are struggling.



### **St. Paul Youth Group Fundraiser**

Our youth are raising money for a mission trip this summer! Cost per person is about \$1,200! We know that Christmas is coming, and you may be considering getting/using gift cards! Our youth sell SCRIP gift cards to raise funds.

SCRIP are gift cards from your favorite retailers purchased through our youth group, who receives a percentage from each card purchased! SCRIP cards are just like the cards you get at Giant Eagle, but the percentage or "perk" gets donated to our youth group at St. Paul!

Please consider not only using SCRIP at Christmas, but year-round as we can order cards anytime! Going to Disney? We have SCRIP for that! Need a gift card for an out of state retailer – check the master list – we probably have SCRIP for that! Going out to eat? We have SCRIP for that! **See full list of brands and get started at [ShopWithScrip.com](http://ShopWithScrip.com) on desktop or [MyScripWallet](http://MyScripWallet.com) on your phone!**

**We will be taking an order for Christmas! It will be placed on Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Just return your order form and cash or check made payable to St. Paul Youth and your order will be placed. See our SCRIP Family Order Form to see our most popular retailers!**

There is a master list of all the retailers offered if you don't see the one you are looking for! And as always – **if you have any questions, please contact Kendis Bender at [dce@stpaulamherst.com](mailto:dce@stpaulamherst.com)!** Thank you for supporting St. Paul Youth Ministry!



We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of Pam Obbey who was called to her eternal on November 17, 2019.

A gift was given in memory of Jim Hamilton by Paulette Walts.

A gift was given in memory of George Berrington by Jack & Joyce Trottier

### **Powerful Quote –**

**O, dearest Jesus, holy Child,  
Please make a bed, soft, undefiled,  
Within my heart, that it may be  
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.**

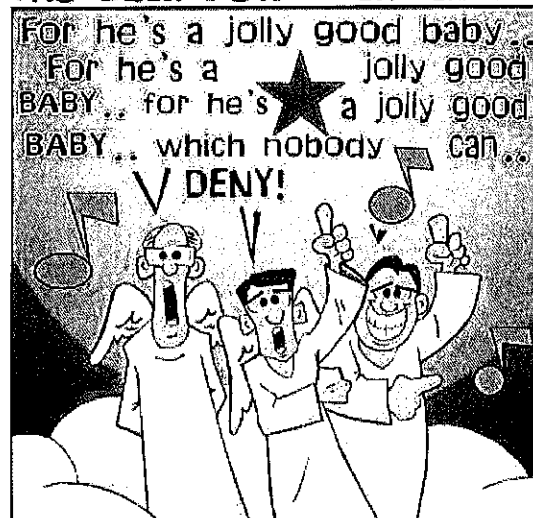
~ Adapted from the hymn *“From Heaven Above  
to Earth I Come”*, by Martin Luther

### **Forgettable Fact**

Your body is creating and killing 15 million red blood cells per second!

### **Parting Shot**

#### **The Back Pew – Jeff Larson**



The REALMS OF GLORY Choir tryouts for the first Christmas night included this spirited ditty. But.. as we all know 'For he's a jolly good baby' never became a Christmas classic.

## SERVANTS DURING THE WORSHIP OF GOD'S FAMILY FOR NOVEMBER:

Service	Elders	Readers	Acolytes	Greeters	Altar Guild	Ushers	Sound Room
12/1 8:30 AM	Harold Gibson Jeff Phan	Jack Green	Tabitha Krupp	Tony & Lynn Jiovanazzo	Fran Draga Debbie Smith	Dan Streza Chuck Draga Danny Kemery Bob Kemmerle	Bruce McGlothlin
11:00 AM		Beth Albrecht	Ashton Draga	Ted & Sally Krause		Josh Gallo	Cheryl Street
12/4 7:00 PM		Cheryl Street	Katie Steindl	John & Brenda Cartmell	Fran Draga Debbie Smith	Harold Gibson Joe Hamby Jeff Krupp Jeff Phan Steve Warnock	
12/8 8:30 AM		Christine Krupp	Jacob Schneider	Judy Starbuck	Edna Klenz Wanda Aschenbach	John Kirschner Ben Kirschner John Cartmell Ron Klein	Priscilla Harden
11:00 AM	Ron Fisher John Schick	Laurie Beran	Makaya Thomas	Emma Sekerak		Laurie Beran Deby Lasko	Darren Conley
12/11 7:00 PM		Molly McGlothlin	Shane Hargreaves	Diane Coffman	Edna Klenz Wanda Aschenbach	Dan Streza Chuck Draga Danny Kemery Bob Kemmerle	
12/15 8:30 AM	Harold Gibson Jeff Phan	Marty Offineer	Gwen Krupp	Nancy Beran Ruth Williams	Donna Kemmerle Diane Coffman	Joe Hamby Jeff Krupp Steve Warnock	Laura Kreger
11:00 AM		Josh Gallo	Ashton Draga	Karen Anderson		Dean Koch Dave Timbs	Bruce McGlothlin
12/18 7:00 PM		James Steindl	Ruari Dever	Ron & Cindy Klein	Donna Kemmerle Diane Coffman	Josh Gallo	
12/22 8:30 AM		Jack Green	Jacob Schneider	Chuck & Fran Draga	Ann Conley Linda Hargreaves	John Kirschner Ben Kirschner John Cartmell Ron Klein	Bruce McGlothlin
11:00 AM	Ron Fisher John Schick	Cheryl Street	Nathan Draga	Grace Card		Josh Gallo	Bruce McGlothlin
12/24 4:00 PM	Harold Gibson Jeff Phan	Christine Krupp	Gwen Krupp Nathan Draga	John & Brenda Cartmell	Karie Coffman	Joe Hamby Jeff Phan	Bruce McGlothlin



**St. Paul Lutheran Church Calendar December 2019**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> Food Collection 8:30 Holy Communion 9:45 Bible Study 11:30 Worship	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 10 Seasoned Saints 7 Elders Meeting 7 Women's Ministry 7 NA	<b>4</b> 6 Advent Supper 7 Advent Worship	<b>5</b> 6:15 Handbells 7:30 Choir	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:30 Decorate Church
<b>8</b> 8:30 Worship 9:45 Bible Study 9:45 Sunday School 11 Holy Communion 12:15 Next Step 2 Parents Afternoon Out 4 Blue Christmas	<b>9</b> 12 @ Applebees Willing Workers Luncheon	<b>10</b> 10 Seasoned Saints 6:30 Board of Directors 7 Women's Ministry 7 NA	<b>11</b> 6 Advent Supper 7 Advent Worship	<b>12</b> 6:15 Handbells 7:30 Choir	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 7:30 TrueNorth Christmas Concert
<b>15</b> 8:30 Holy Communion 9:45 Bible Study 9:45 Sunday School 11 Improv At The Stable 12:15 Baptism	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 10 Seasoned Saints 6 Preschool Program 7 NA	<b>18</b> 6 Advent Supper 7 Advent Worship	<b>19</b> 11:15 Preschool 6:15 Handbells 7 Autism Group 7:30 Choir	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 9 Altar Guild
<b>22</b> 8:30 Worship 9:45 Voter's Mtg 9:45 Sunday School 11 Holy Communion	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 4 Christmas Eve 7 NA 10 Christmas Eve Church Office Closed	<b>25</b> Church Office Closed	<b>26</b> Church Office Closed	<b>27</b> Church Office Closed	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 8:30 & 11 Worship 9:45 Bible Study 9:45 Sunday School	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 7 NA				

