



THE PROCLAIMER

December 2022

The mission of St. Paul Lutheran Church is to hear, share, and proclaim the Word of God.

FROM THE PASTOR

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’” (KJV)

Dear friends in Christ,

As the angels in the Gospel of Luke proclaimed their message of “peace” and “good will” on that night of our Lord’s birth into the world, surely prayers for peace should be foremost on our minds this year. Warfare is raging in Europe between Russia and Ukraine. Sporadic violence continues in middle eastern countries. Tragic shootings continue to plague our own country and sometimes other countries. Countless lives have been affected for generations to come. We must not give up praying for peace.

On a beautiful, frosty-white, moonlit Christmas Eve night in 1914, barely five months into World War One, many cold and weary soldiers in Europe were hoping the war would not last long. British, French, and Belgian soldiers were on duty in their trenches with only 100 feet of “no man’s land” separating them from the enemy German troops in their trenches. They could hear the other side’s voices. They could smell their cooking.

Pope Benedict the Fifteenth had called on the leaders of both sides to declare a Christmas truce, but all high-level leaders and officers had rejected the suggestion. Suddenly, no one knows exactly where or how, the troops began singing carols across the “no man’s land” to each other, about 100,000 troops over a vast area of Europe, probably at least two-thirds of all the soldiers!

As one British soldier described it (according to The New York Times and Time Magazine), “First the Germans would sing one of their carols and then we would sing one of ours, until when we started up ‘O Come, All Ye Faithful’ the Germans immediately joined in singing the same hymn to the Latin words *Adeste Fideles*. And I thought, well, this is really a most extraordinary thing—two nations both singing the same carol in the middle of a war.” The next morning, in some locations, a few soldiers began actually shouting “Merry Christmas” in their own

languages to the other side. Then some climbed out of their trenches and held up signs reading, “You no shoot, we no shoot.” Many came out of their trenches to greet their enemies. There was a report of a soccer ball being kicked about. One account mentioned a British soldier surprisingly meeting up with his pre-war German barber, who gave him a quick haircut. Gifts of cigarettes, food, buttons and hats were shared. This Christmas truce also allowed both sides to bury dead comrades whose bodies had laid out for weeks.

A number of soldiers felt that this truce happened not just as a sign of polite civility but as an act of resistance against the warlords of this world – to declare that the soldiers were not fighting the same war or for the same reasons as their superiors. As one British soldier later said, “I then came to the conclusion that I have held very firmly ever since, that if we had been left to ourselves there would never have been another shot fired.” Yet a young Bavarian German Corporal said, “Such a thing should not happen in wartime. Have you no German sense of honor?” That man was Adolf Hitler. (Time Magazine, 12/24/2014) How unfortunate that an entire nation would later follow that madman who failed to appreciate the beauty of that incredible and rare Christmas truce of 1914.

Alas, the truce was wide-spread but short-lived. But what if it had been allowed to continue past Christmas? What kinds of peaceful dialogues might have taken place to save the lives of between 15 to 22 million common, ordinary people who just wanted to live life well and wish each other a Merry Christmas each year? World War One continued until November 11, 1918, with our United States troops joining the Allied Powers and finally helping to end it.

If we believe in the power of prayer and spreading good will, now is the time to fervently do so. May the angels’ words at the birth of our Savior inspire us to live, love, and serve in the name of the Prince of Peace --- JESUS, God’s REASON for the SEASON!

Grace & Peace in Christ,

Pastor Fred Krebs



ADVENT MUSIC FESTIVAL

Advent Music Festival will be held at First United Methodist Church on Sunday, December 4th at 2:00 pm. The Mason Community Choir, directed by Lynn Reichenau, will present the Christmas Cantata, “Jesus: There’s Something About That Name” Everyone is invited to attend this special event.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



Each Christmas season the Altar Guild uses poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary. As in past years, you are invited to purchase a poinsettia(s) in love or memory of a loved one.

Order envelopes will be inserted in the bulletin on Sundays, December 4th and December 11th. Please fill out the information on the envelopes, place your payment in it and insert it into the marked box in the narthex. Deadline for orders is Wednesday, December 14th.

WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY

Christmas Brunch for women of St. Paul will be held Wednesday, December 7 at 10:00am at the home of Sherie Clarkson, 305 Spruce St. Ann Mahnken will present the program.

Members of the Morning Bible Study group are asked to bring a brunch type food item to be shared. Join us for a Christmas gathering.

2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES

2023 offering envelopes will be available to members on Sunday, December 18th. Envelopes will be placed on the table in the narthex. If you would like to use the envelope system and haven’t in the past, please let the church office know.

JANUARY PROCLAIMER ARTICLES DUE EARLY

Articles for the January “Proclaimer” will be due on Wednesday, December 14th. This is a week earlier than usual and is due to the Christmas holidays.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- Del Roy Reichenau, chair of the Stewardship Committee, presented the 2023 Ministry Plan in the amount of \$265,128.
- Selection of Mark Lehmborg as a new member to the Audit Committee was selected and approved.

CHRISTMAS LUMINARY

As we celebrate Advent and prepare our hearts for Christ’s birth, the annual St Paul Lutheran Church sponsored Christmas Luminary drive-through is scheduled for December 11, from 6:00 – 7:00 P.M. in the City Park. Ten Luminary scenes with live characters tell the story of Jesus’ birth, beginning with the Prophecy, through the family’s flight to Egypt. Celebrate the season and support this community outreach event as you listen to Christmas music during your drive-through the Luminary.

The Evangelism Committee is thankful for the collaboration with the Parish Education committee for organizing the characters and costumes and with the Parish Life committee for providing food. The Evangelism Committee also needs your help to make this event possible.

Assistance is needed in the following areas. High school students who lend a helping hand can count their time as volunteer hours!

· Loading-up and setting-up the scenes: please meet in the parking lot by the church parsonage garage at 2:30 P.M.

· Bringing small cuttings of cedar, or yucca plants, for scene decorations: bring the cuttings to the City Park at 3:00 P.M.

· Taking down the scenes in the City Park after the Luminary finishes: meet at the City Park at 7:00 P.M.

· Needed: members to prepare sandwiches for the people who set up Luminary scenery and sweet treats for the kids and youth in it. (Call Ann Mahnken or Helen Habecker if you can help.)

Your help is greatly appreciated. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, contact Janet Schmidt at janetschmidt2@gmail.com

MASON MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE CYCLE OF PRAYER

The Mason Ministerial Alliance is asking congregations and faith-based organizations to pray for each other during the year, on a rotating basis monthly. For December 2022, we are all asked to pray focused prayers for St. Joseph Catholic Church.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual reports will be due in the church office on Thursday, January 5, 2023. All committees and organizations of the church are expected to turn in reports. If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

ST. PAUL CELEBRATES DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Kinsley Atchison
Cindy Bowden
- 2 Bridget Langdale
- 3 Paulette Keller
- 5 Lynda Harris
Nicholas Gierisch
- 7 Ty Allen Martin
- 8 Charlotte Rode
Reece Evans
- 9 Bonnie Schmidt
- 11 Christian Gammill
- 12 Sherry Martin
- 16 Zachary Langehennig
- 23 Mike Parrish
- 25 JESUS
- 26 Carolyn Loeffler
- 28 John Preston Parrish

If your birthday or a family member’s birthday is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please let Deb Probst know @ 325-597-2832 or dcprobst@hotmail.com. Thank you for helping us with this project.

FEELING THANKFUL/ CHRISTMAS WITH GOD

How fast the days of November are moving! I am amazed each year with how easy it is for some to overlook the blessing of Thanksgiving and be drawn into the frenzy of the Christmas season without taking the time to “Be Still and Know That I Am God.” A wise man named John Auer once told me as I sat at his desk conversing, listening, and learning, “My dear Ann, we can never do enough to repay God’s gift to us, but what we can do is to show our thankfulness and give our lives in service.” As flawed as I am, I embrace these words each year in November. I want to remember the gifts of history: my ancestors leaving for a new land; the courage to endure hardships, making friends with those who are not just like us; and finally giving all glory, thanks, and praise to the God who created and walks beside us all as Our Emmanuel. I am not worried about the gifts I need to buy because I have received and can share, the greatest gift of all-JESUS. And, when Thanksgiving is over, and the Christmas rush has begun, I want to stop, take a deep breath and find ways to experience quite moments with God as Psalm 46:10 says, made so rich by the knowledge of what lies ahead for our worshipping community. As traffic increases, calendars fill up, and tempers flare, I invite you to focus your heart and mind on Him and renew a right spirit within us for the days ahead.

Let’s look at what is available at St. Paul as we celebrate Thanksgiving and enter into the beautiful season of Advent as we “wait for the coming of Jesus. One of my family’s traditions of Christmas is the celebration of Advent, a heart preparation for

the coming Savior. If we are willing to save money for Christmas gifts, to make a mailing list for Christmas cards, to shop for weeks, and to schedule holiday get-togethers, surely, we can make time to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Emmanuel by Spending Christmas with God. Here is a list of ways we can do that:

1. Music is a beautiful way of receiving the message: be present at the Community Choir’s presentation of “Jesus: There’s Something About That Name” on December 4. Hear the lovely music played by Scott Zesch, directed by Lynn Reichnau, narrated by Ron Birk and Melany Canfield, and sung by a faithful group of singers. What a glorious way to spend time with God and move into the season of Advent.
2. The next Sunday provides 2 opportunities to worship and embrace the faith of our children and youth. On December 11, during church, our children and youth will share a program to make you smile, but more important, to draw each of you into the story of Advent, waiting for the coming of Jesus. Then, on the very same day, come drive through the Mason Park for our Christmas Luminary.
We are in need of people to prepare sandwiches for the people who set up the scenery and sweet treats for the kids and youth who present the story. If you are called to help in this way, please call Ann Mahnken or Helen Habecker.
3. And finally, the very important preparation that takes place by being in attendance for regular Sunday School and Worship.

In closing, I invite each of you to take the Journey to Bethlehem: each day, spend quiet moments with God. Read, Pray, Reflect. Savor memories—old and new. Focus on the love and laughter that make Christmas so special. *Prepare your heart for His coming. This year, let’s spend Christmas with God—we won’t regret it!*

In the love of the one we wait for,
Ann Mahnken

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR OCTOBER

Congregational Giving: \$15,430.69
Expenditures: \$19,258.91

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The Church Office will be closed will be closed December 24 through January 1. In case of an emergency you may contact LeEster Burch at (512) 751-4497 or Heather McFarland (325) 456-6959.

Have yourself a Holy little Christmas

The “Christmas season” seems to begin earlier every year. Some stores had Christmas stuff on the shelves weeks before Halloween. What madness! We go dashing through the stores to the beat of Jingle Bells; and we go “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” until we crash from exhaustion.

Revelry and gift-giving are fine and fun, but if we’re not careful they can snowball out of control. Stewarding a Holy and meaningful Christmas means balancing the commercial with the spiritual. Here are some tips:

Observe Advent: The four weeks before Christmas Day comprise the Advent Season, a time to prepare for Christmas through prayer, song, worship, and spiritual disciplines. Lean into the spirit of Advent. Advent devotionals can help (I recommend Richard Rohr’s Preparing for Christmas).

Observe the Christmas season: The church calendar lists the season of Christmas from Dec. 24 to the feast of Epiphany on Jan. 6. Until the 20th century, these 12 Days of Christmas were the time for celebration and partying. Make them special in your life and family.

Cut the consumerism: Limit your shopping and spending by setting a strict budget or gifting the people in your life with homemade presents, favors, or ways to spend time together.

Party hardly: For some, Christmas is an excuse to overeat and drink to excess. Moderate your consumption.

Most importantly, pray: Ask God to help you and your family craft a meaningful and joyful Advent and Christmas. Ask God to send you wisdom, resources, and people who can journey through the spiritual season with you.

By carefully stewarding your faith life, Advent and Christmas can be a time for real spiritual growth.

--Rob Blezard

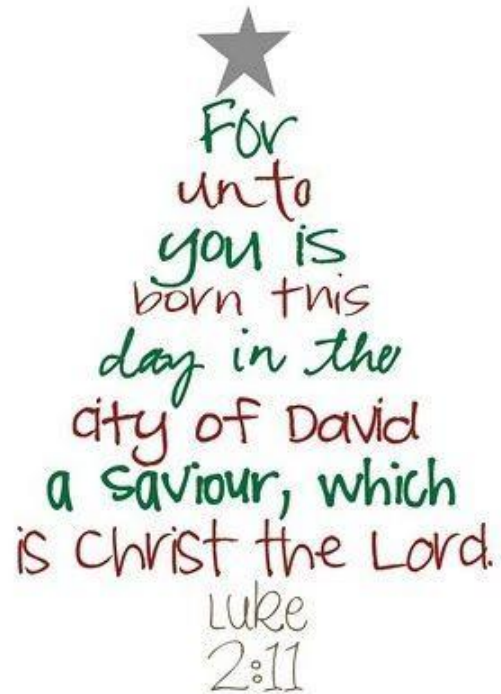
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CHURCH DIRECTORY

The Rev. Fred Krebs Pastor
Mrs. Heather McFarland Church Administrator
Mrs. Ann Mahnken Youth Director

Church Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 8:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
(325)347-5582 (Office) (325)347-8420 (Fax)
Email: stpaulmason@gmail.com
Website: www.stpaulmason.com



For
unto
you is
born this
day in the
city of David
a saviour, which
is Christ the Lord.
Luke
2:11

*Wishing you the comfort of His love,
And the presence of His peace.*

*Merry Christmas
From the Staff of St. Paul Lutheran
Church*

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTORY FOR DECEMBER

Lay Reader: Jenna Jacoby

Communion Assistants: Kathy Krebs and
Helen Habecker

Council Rep. on Duty: Josh Brooks

Bell Ringer: Mark Lehmborg & Mike Goff

Speaker System: Bob Vacek and Mark Lehmborg

Ushers: Mike Goff, Josh Brooks,

Cynthia Bauer, and Jerry Bearden

Property Person on Duty: Committee Members

Acolytes:

(12/4)

(12/11)

(12/18)

(12/25)

(12/24)

Altar Guild:

Flower Chairman: Sherie Clarkson

Parament Chairman: Connie Smith

Communion Chairman: Bonnie Schmidt

Women’s Bible Study:

Morning Bible Study (10:00 AM)

(First Wed. of Month)

Bible Study Leader: Ann Mahnken

Hostess: Sherie Clarkson

Memorials: Church Office 347-5582