

Living Waters

December 2023

Putting the Christ in Christmas!

Pastor Zak

Every year around this time I am bombarded by well-meaning invitations in the form of bumper stickers, spam emails or holiday displays to “*Keep the Christ in Christmas*” or “*Remember the Reason for the Season.*” These (not so passive) aggressive reminders are generally well-intentioned, but if the intention is to invite people to reflect on their faith in this season, I wonder why such evangelism is limited to only a season. While Christmas may be a day we look forward to in the life of the church with its busy crowds, special music, candles and traditions, it’s import to remember that Christ is at the center of everything we do communally or individually. Every time we gather to worship we recall the incarnation as and celebrate Emmanuel, “God with us.” God is truly present where two or more gather as we celebrate Christ’s “Real Presence,” as Luther called it, in the breaking of bread and passing of the cup. Christ is at the center of each and every day as Luther reminds us in the Small Catechism where he states “[The] old Adam in us should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, in turn, a new person daily come forth and rise from death again.”

We do ourselves a disservice when we limit the miracle and mystery of incarnation to a single season or day. In reality this miracle of God’s presence in our midst defines us as people each and every day of our lives, and leads us into the hope of a new life in the resurrection found therein. May you and your loved ones have a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year, surrounded by the love of God in Christ incarnate each and every moment of each and every day, now and forever



Stewardship 2023

So many “joyful noises” were shared in November as we focused on making pledges for 2024, as well as giving in other ways. Thank you to everyone who responded. We are continuing to receive pledges through the end of the year. Pledge cards can be found in the church foyer. Pledges can be submitted via U.S. mail, by calling the office, or by clicking [here](#). Your continued generosity is truly appreciated. God’s blessings!

Karen Egan
Stewardship Commissioner



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Worship Information

In Person

Sundays

Worship in the sanctuary at 8am and 10am.

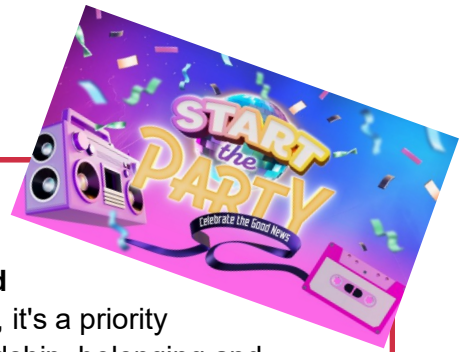
Online/Livestream

Watch the service live on [YouTube](#), or anytime after that!

Altar Flowers Sign-Up

Sign up now using our [digital sign-up](#)! Two bouquet slots available for each Sunday; each bouquet is \$30.

Congregational Life...



Lutherdale Family Retreat: February 16-18, 2024

Save the Date! St. Paul's Family Retreat weekend at Lutherdale is coming up February 16-18, 2024! Our theme will be **"Start the Party! Celebrate the Good News!"** It's time to celebrate and everyone is invited! It's not just ok to have fun, it's a priority and Jesus is the life of the party. Join us for a weekend of family fun, faith, friendship, belonging and abundance!

While programming is geared towards families with children 5th grade and younger, all families are welcome to join the fun! The cost is \$50 per person, with a maximum cost of \$185 per family. Please use this [registration link](#) to secure a spot for your family. Registrations are due by December 31st. Once registered, online payments may be made using this [link](#). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Roxanne Doremus (youthdir@stpaulvp.org) or Pr. Zak (pastor@stpaulvp.org). We look forward to seeing you at the retreat!

Recent Events at St. Paul



Fall Prayer Vigil



All Saints Service



Cereal Box
Collecting for
Outreach
House



Hat &
Mitten Tree
Decorating



First Communion (L-R): Madilyn Bodnar, Max Whitis, Katarina Dunkel, Adeline Reinecke

...and More!

Under 105 Luncheons

In December we meet the second Thursday of the month which is December 14th. We will meet at 11:30AM in the Sanctuary to hear the Child Care students sing Christmas Carols.

Lunch will be served at noon. We are having a guest chef from The College of DuPage prepare our main meal. Members of the 105 Club are supplying appetizers and desserts.

Please RSVP to Merry Freedlund (630-258-0291) before December 10th if you are planning on joining us. Hope to see you there!

Hands & Feet

Hands and Feet will be open on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 2-4 pm. The next time we will be open is Jan. 7, 2024.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Judy as we will be creating the 2024 schedule in January. All are welcome and invited to serve. Also we have doubled the number of families we are seeing each month so any donations are appreciated.

Wine, Women & the Word

Women, Wine and the Word will be gathering at the home of Toni Dornacher, 509 S. Riverside, Villa Park at 7pm on Tuesday, Dec. 5th. We will be discussing *Good and Worthy of Love*, pg 15.

Altar Guild Meetings November 30th & December 2nd

Hello Members, It's time to schedule the next six months for Altar Duty. Please come either Thursday, November 30th at 7PM or Saturday, December 2nd at 9:30AM to choose your volunteer times. Thursday we will meet in the cafe and Saturday we will meet downstairs in Fellowship Hall.

Not a member of Altar Guild but would like to join? If you are interested in helping to set up the Altar for Sunday services come to one of our meetings and learn about it! We need a few more members and would appreciate your help!

October Numbers

Giving: \$55,822 (including online: \$23,929)

Expenses: \$47,991

YTD Giving vs. Expenses: \$6,600

Other Statistics

Date	Attendance	Viewers
10/1	127	41
10/8	109	25
10/15	162	36
10/22	87	37
10/29	178	51

Book Club

You are invited to join the St. Paul Book Club on Monday, December 4 at 7pm in the Cafe for a discussion of the novel *March* by Geraldine Brooks. This is the story of a father, based on a character from the well know book *Little Women*, who leaves his family to aid the Union cause in the Civil War. Everyone is welcome!

Please note that Book Club will not meet in January.

Beer & Hymns December 15 7pm

Beer & Hymns will celebrate Advent on Friday, December 15th at 7 pm at Manny's Ale House. A few Christmas songs may slip in there, too. *Come sing with us! Bring a friend or two!*

St. Paul Lutheran Villa Park and First Church of Lombard co-host this event - spread the word and bring your friends!

All Things Family Ministry

Manger Tales Coming December 10th at 10am!

Please join us for our Christmas Program, *Manger Tales*, during the 10am service on Sunday, December 10th. Children are working hard on learning the songs during Sunday School and our youth are busy practicing their speaking parts. Come see all the effort they have put in!

On Saturday, December 9th at 11am (immediately following our Christmas Program rehearsal), we will be showing the animated movie *The Star*. We will have sack lunches and snacks. Please join us!



Thank You!

Laura Albert and Roxanne Doremus would like to thank the St. Paul community for their overwhelming support of the following:

*Cereal Collection for Outreach House—80 boxes collected & donated.

*Flamingo Fundraiser for the Youth Gathering—17 lawns visited with \$825 raised. Thank you for your generosity St. Paul!

Holiday Collection

We are collecting hats, scarves, gloves and mittens for the Outreach House and Hands & Feet ministries.

We will have two trees, one downstairs and one in the Café to place your donations.

Collections will be accepted from November 19th thru December 10th. Contact [Laura Albert](#) with any questions.

Collection for the Adult Christian Care Center

We are collecting items for the Adult Christian Care Center in Elmhurst. Those items include sugar, coffee stirrers, gallon size baggies, hand pump sanitizer, and other items. A complete list will be in the café.

Collection is from November 19th thru December 10th. Questions? Please contact [Laura Albert](#).

Christmas Glass Blowing Party for High School Youth



Sunday, December 17th
1:00pm—2:200pm
Hosted by Bob & Doreen Fritz
636 Rochdale Circle. Lombard

Meet Roxanne in the parking lot at 12:30pm to caravan over. For those in the neighborhood, we'll meet you there.

High School Winter Retreat Lutherdale Bible Camp

Join us Friday, January 19 thru Sunday, January 21, 2024 for our annual retreat. We'll be preparing for the New Orleans Youth Gathering in July. Cost is \$119.00, which includes housing and meals. Pray for snow so we can go tobogganing! We'll need drivers and a male adult sponsor. Contact [Roxanne Doremus](#) with any questions or if you are interested in attending or helping.

Wings Choir News

Preparation for the Advent and Christmas seasons has begun! The Wings are looking forward to participating in the worship services on December 10th and 24th, as well as The Ring Sing on December 17th. We always welcome new members—please join us! Wings Choir is open to all children in Grades K-8. Rehearsals are held on Wednesday afternoons from 4:45-5:30 p.m. **NOTE: THERE IS NO REHEARSAL ON DEC. 27 or JAN. 3.** Wings members are encouraged to invite a friend—all are welcome! For more information, please contact Ms. Margaret at margaret@stpaulvp.org or by phone at 630-253-9691.

Worship & Prayers



Advent and Christmas Season at St. Paul

Sunday December 10th

8am & 10am Worship
Christmas Program at 10am

Sunday December 17th

8am & 10am Worship
9am Ring Sing

Sunday December 24th

Advent 4/Christmas Eve Worship 10am
Christmas Eve Worship at 5pm
Christmas Eve Worship at 11pm

Monday December 25th

Christmas Day
10am Worship
(One Service Only)

Sunday December 31st

New Year's Eve Day

10am Lessons & Carols

Pray Without Ceasing: 12 Hours of Continuous Prayer at St. Paul

On November 3, from 7am to 7pm, our sanctuary was the setting for continuous prayer, involving a total of 30 people over that time. The Prayer Vigil Team created a beautiful welcome area in the Café to help people prepare for their prayer time. Even the kids from the Elm Tree Christian Child Care came up and prayed for 20 minutes. Each participant was greeted by one of our 12 greeters and given all the information and help they needed to be blessed by praying in the sanctuary.

Thank you to everyone who participated! Thank you especially to the Prayer Vigil Team: Linda Lange, Sandy Olsen, Chris Bard, Shirley Jensen, and Alice Ramsay.

The next prayer vigil will be March 15 from 7am to 7pm, so save that date! We will also have a virtual vigil on Saturday, March 30.

"And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." — 1 John 5:14

Prayer List

Names will remain on the prayer list for three weeks, or longer by request. To submit a prayer request please use the online [Prayer Request form](#), email prayers@stpaulvp.org, or contact the church office.

Prayers of Healing and God's Presence

Gene Nosek (friend of Carol Simberg), Jery Agrusa (mother of Mary Agrusa), Dora Rock (friend of Carrie Lavorini), Bill Bartel, Carole Batek, Melinda Brent, Paige Cady (friend of Carrie Lavorini), Kristy Fash-Alvarez, Sheila Bowdish, Margaret Golden, Arlene Jensen, Chris (Elm Tree employee), Linda Long (Evelyn Kimble's daughter), Daniel Rubalcaba, Tommy Shallcross, Laurie Stearns (cousin of John Lavorini), Mark Szerzinski (father of Alex Szerzinski), Nina Thompson (daughter-in-law of Vince & Jacky Fagin), All Caregivers

Prayers for the Bereaved

Carol Magura, Gertrude Whelan (aunt of Tom Brooks), Jeannette Barczak (former parish nurse)

Community



Elm Tree News

Hi all, Seasons Greetings from Elm Tree!

As always, our November has been jammed packed with much learning, fun, and holiday-themed activities. We have spent much of November talking and thinking about what we are thankful and grateful for. We have also been focusing on manners, and putting good manners into practice, so we are prepared for the holidays with loved ones. These themes have also shown us a sense of community in our school, as we have come together to gather new and gently used books to donate to Sophia's Little Library. The Pre-K class snuck in a fun camping theme this month as well. They really enjoyed making a s'mores snack mix and sitting around their self-made "campfire."

On behalf of Elm Tree, we wanted to send out the biggest thank you's to everyone who came out to check out the craft and vendor fair, and to everyone who purchased bake sale items. Your support of the day care means a lot to us, and we were over the moon with how successful the event was for us!

Maybe your holidays be blessed this December,
Ms. Maggy and the Elm Tree Staff

*Sophia's Little Library is a great cause and helps put new and gently used books into NICUs and PICUs for families to read to their kiddos. If you would like to help, there is a book drop off at the bottom of the stairs at Door 2.



St. Paul Provides a Welcome for Refugees

Recently, St. Paul members delivered Welcome to America Packs, in partnership with Exodus World Service, for refugee families beginning life here. We provided two families with donations for their apartments on the north side of Chicago: a grocery pack for an Afghan family of four, and household goods for a Rohingya family of five. They will get a good start on their new lives here.



About 45 St. Paul members donated materials and Exodus representatives truly appreciated the donations. Heartfelt thanks go to everyone who participated by organizing the project, donating, or making deliveries.



December 2023

All events subject to change. [View the calendar at www.spaulvp.org](http://www.spaulvp.org) for more information and Zoom links, or contact the church office.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 8a Edward Jones 9:30a Chimes Rehearsal 9:30a WMA Mtg.
3 8a Worship 9a Sunday School, Confirmation 9a Luther Class 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 2p Hands & Feet	4 10a Prayers & Squares 7p Book Club 7p Espresso Yourself	5 7p M.E.N.D. 7p Wine, Women & the Word	6 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p D&D w/Pastor Zak 6p Handbells 7p Chancel Choir	7 6:30p Finance Mtg	8 6p Seaton Private Event	9 9:30a Christmas Program Rehearsal 11a Christmas Program movie & lunch
10 8a Worship 9a Sunday School, Confirmation 9a Luther Class 9a Wired Word 10a Worship with Christmas Program	11 7p Espresso Yourself	12 2p Rachel Circle 7p Youth Commission Mtg.	13 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 7p Chancel Choir 8p VPYB Mtg.	14 11:30a Under 105 Luncheon 6:30p Elm Tree Christmas Program	15 7p Beer & Hymns—Advent & Christmas	16
17 8a Worship 9a Ring Sing 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 10a Additional Photo Session	18 6:30p Elm Tree Board Mtg. 7p Espresso Yourself	19 7p Council	20 Living Waters Due 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 7p Chancel Choir	21	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 9a Wired Word 10a Worship—Advent 4 & Christmas Eve 5p Christmas Eve 11p Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day 10a Worship Office Closed Elm Tree Closed Timesheets Due	26 Office Closed Elm Tree Closed	27 Elm Tree closed	28 Elm Tree closed	29 Elm Tree Closed Annual Reports Due	30
31 New Year's Eve 9a Wired Word 10a Worship—Lessons & Carols 11a HS Waffle Brunch						



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Loved by God, we grow, care, give, and share in Jesus' name.

St. Paul Leadership

Church Council

President: Marti Seaton
Vice President: Gay Nass
Treasurer: Alex Szerzinski
Secretary: Chris Bard
Caring Commissioners: Shirley Jensen
Congregation and Community Commissioner: Emy Ishida
Education Commissioner: Julie Frakes
Property Commissioner: Joel Johnson
Stewardship Commissioner: Karen Egan
Worship, Music, and Arts Commissioner: Cindy Johnson
Youth Commissioners: Wendy Biggs

Staff

Pastor: Rev. Zachary Wagner
Vicar: Katie Mueller
Parish Administrator: Elizabeth Chitester
Administrative & Computer Specialist:
Alice Ramsay
Director of Music: Cynthia Viise
Assistant Director of Music: Margaret Colletti
Director of Children & Families (Interim):
Laura Albert & Rachel Hauser
Director of Youth (Interim): Roxanne Doremus
Social Media Coordinator: Katie Briseno
Worship AV Techs:
Fiona Kordyban, Tony Clavio, Keith Root
Nursery Attendants: Nina Matthis & Katie Priest

St. Paul Lutheran Church is a
congregation of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America and a
Reconciling in Christ community.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Stay Connected

Phone: 630-832-5580

Email: office@stpaulvp.org

Website: www.stpaulvp.org

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information from St. Paul!

