

Living Waters

January 2025

Less Is More This Year

Pastor Zak

Every year I feel the exact same way—overwhelmed. I'm overwhelmed by the holiday season we have just passed through and all the planning, celebrating, and traveling it requires. I am overwhelmed at the concept of a new calendar and all my plans that will invariably fill it in the coming 365 days. I am overwhelmed at the self-imposed pressure of trying to make this year the year I "do it all," which is how I name this thing more commonly called New Year's Resolutions.

Every year I begin with the collective ambition of an entire lifetime of personal growth, projects to complete, and experiences to experience, which I plan to accomplish this year. This is overwhelming and unfair, to say the least. This is exactly why this year I plan to use my resolution as an opportunity to do less, because less is more. I plan to embrace the spiritual experience of Sabbath, which means finding space to rest (read "do less") to connect more with God and God's people.

This year I know will be full and busy, as every year before it has been, but this year I look forward to finding space for holy rest and renewal, which is perfect timing for the renewal we will share this year through our Lily Foundation Renewal Grant. I am hopeful that I can connect less with technology and more with creation. Engage more in the moment rather than trying to capture the moment. Find space to be more present with God, who is ever-present, especially in our rest. May you find space to slow down and find renewal in the year ahead. Happy New Year!

Someone You Should Know Meeting Biblical Characters

Join us during the weekly Sunday Education hour (January 5th-March 9th) as we explore the Old Testament one person at a time. From Abraham and Sarah to Ruth and Rahab, we will take time to explore and get to know these major players in the biblical narrative a little better.

All are welcome to join the learning taking place in Meeting Room A (off the Café). Contact Pr. Zak for more details.



In This Issue...

- p. 2 Group Updates
- p. 3 A Look at Lent
- p. 4 A Glorious Night
- p. 5 A Note from Vicar
- P. 6 Elm Tree Update

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...

December Under 105 Luncheon

Below are photos from the December 12th Under 105 Luncheon. It was a wonderful afternoon with good friends, delicious food, and plenty of holiday cheer! A heartfelt "Thank You" to the Under 105 committee for making the day a big success!



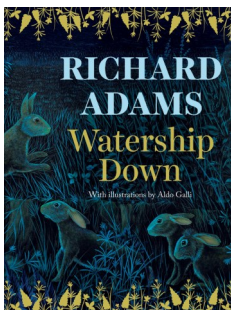
New Members

On January 19 we will be welcoming new members into our community of faith. If you, or someone you know, is interested in learning more about membership at St. Paul, please connect with Pr. Zak to arrange time for a conversation.

Book Club

A reminder that book club does not meet in January.

We will resume our discussion on February 3rd with *Watership Down* by Richard Adams. We look forward to seeing everyone there!



Wine, Women & the Word

We will be meeting at the home of Judy Nuehring on January 7 at 7 pm. This month's reading is *Proud and Free* on pg. 49. All are welcome.

Hands & Feet

Hands and Feet will be open Jan. 5 from 2:00-4:00 pm. We are excited to be sharing the hats and gloves collected by the Sunday School youth this month with our clients. If you are interested in volunteering with Hands and Feet, please contact Judy Nuehring at

handsandfeet@stpaulvp.org.

Under 105

A reminder that Under 105 will not meet in January. The Under 105 Luncheon Group will resume Thursday, February 20th, 2025!

Mark your calendar for 2/20/2025 at 11:30 in the Cafe.

Wayne LaChance will share his experiences working with Kiwanis Club of Villa Park-Lombard over the years.

Our menu will be posted in January. Cheers!

...and More!



“Everyone has a Story”

That’s the theme of the Lenten Devotional Guide this coming year—an online (and printed) daily devotional tool from Ash Wednesday through Easter—March 5 through April 20, 2025. We can all say, “I have a story,” or, “You have a story,” or “God has a story” in the past, present, or future. Everyone is invited to participate by writing a short Lenten message to share with our church family and friends—whether or not you have written before. One of the joys of our St. Paul Lenten Devotional is hearing the variety of voices represented and getting to know one another better. Our organizational team is standing by to assist, answer questions, and edit: Laura Albert, Doreen Fritz, Emy Ishida, Jane Plass, Marti Seaton. We will have more to tell you in our Temple Talks on Sundays, January 5th and 12th. The deadline for submissions will be February 9th.

November Numbers

Giving: \$71,535

(including online: \$20,730)

Expenses: \$38,832

YTD Giving vs. Expenses: \$54,193

Other Statistics

Date	Attendance	Viewers
11/3	207	51
11/10	206	84
11/17	164	49
11/24	144	57
11/24 pm	67	21

January Congregational Meeting - January 19th

Join us for our January Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 19, in the Cafe following the 10am service. The agenda will include a review of 2024 financial reports, approval of the 2025 budget, and a special vote regarding constitutional changes.

Please take time to review the proposed constitutional changes which can be found here, including the [full document](#) as well as a quick reference guide highlighting proposed adjustments to leadership titles and responsibilities. Click [here](#) for the bylaw changes and [here](#) for section changes. These documents can also be found on our website by clicking on the event in the calendar.

Screen Training with Alice

Are you regularly hosting meetings via Zoom and wonder how our new equipment works? Wonder no more! You are invited to a screen training session on January 26 at 11am in the Cafe! This is a wonderful opportunity to learn how to effectively use our new screens for Zoom meetings, as well as displaying slides and videos. You can even bring your laptop so you can dive in and try it out for yourself.

Beer & Hymns

The Christmas spirit continues at our next Beer & Hymns. We will bounce around between requested hymns and favorite Christmas songs. Join us on Friday, Jan. 10th at Manny’s on St. Charles Road at 7 pm. Come early if you’d like to order dinner. We can gather in the back room. Bring a friend!

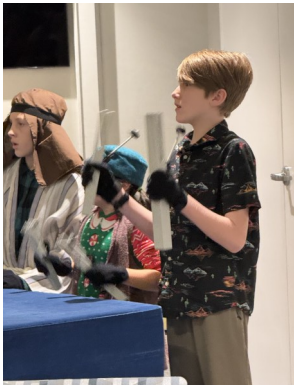
Family Game Night

Join us for family game night on Friday, January 3 from 6-7:30pm in the Cafe. Bring your favorite board game and a snack to share. ALL ages are welcome as we are all part of the St. Paul family. See you there! Questions? See Roxanne.

All Things Family Ministry

“A Glorious Night” Christmas Program 2024

The annual Christmas program was held on Sunday, December 15th. The theme was “A Glorious Night” and what a glorious morning the children/youth of St. Paul provided for the congregation. Below are pictures from their retelling of the birth of Jesus.



Wisemen and wisewomen, animals, and angels joined together to share the Good News of Jesus’ birth. Over 190 people attended the 10am worship service and shared in the magic of this “glorious night”.

Sunday School Update

Sunday School had a busy and exciting month. We will begin Sunday School on Sunday, January 5, 2025 at 9:00 am. A big thank you to all the children and parents for your help. Here's looking forward to a Happy New Year.

Wings Choir News

The Wings had a busy Fall! It started with the Pet Blessing service in October. On Reformation and Youth Sunday Wings added their musical talents to our worship services. With the arrival of December, the Wings moved into “high gear,”----singing for Communion on the day of the Christmas Program, singing three selections for the Ring Sing, and serving as the “official” choir at the 3:00 pm Christmas Eve Service. The Wings are focused on the importance of serving by using their musical talents. Our prayer is that the Wings and their songs will bring glory to God and help the congregation experience God’s love through the songs they sing. It’s never too late to join the Wings! Wings Choir is open to all children in Grades K-8.

Rehearsals are held on Wednesday afternoons from 4:45-5:30 p.m.. Wings members are encouraged to invite a friend—all are welcome! For more information, please contact Ms. Margaret at margaret@stpaulvp.org or 630-253-9691.

Worship & Prayers

A Note from Vicar Nicholas

Greetings Beloved Community

Jesus Christ is born, Hallelujah! I pray all of your Christmas plans with family or friends went well where hope, peace, joy, and love were celebrated in abundance. However, if it was also a time of difficulty and sadness, I pray there were supportive people to be present with you through it. As this joyous, complicated, and busy season is wrapping up, let's not forget we are now on the cusp of a new year, 2025. I don't know about all of you, but there is something that feels significant to me about reaching the quarter mark of this century.

New Year's resolutions are common around this time, where we reflect on the areas of our lives that we'd like to improve upon and then take actionable steps to make it a reality. I'd like to encourage everyone to first look back at this year and ask yourselves, "Where have I witnessed God at work in my life and in St. Paul throughout 2024?" After reflecting, I'd also encourage you to praise God and spread the Good News of these moments to your loved ones. It can be a fun exercise to journal a list down, have a dinner conversation with family about it, or have a discussion at fellowship.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)



Thank You for the Amazing Holiday Collections

Thank you to everyone who donated to the troops and the holiday collections. We had over 40 pounds of items that were sent to the troops for the holidays. We collected over 400 items for the local groups. The items were distributed to the various organizations the week before Christmas.

Thank You from the Wezeman Family

Hank Wezeman and the Wezeman family would like to say thank you for all the cards and well wishes. They look forward to celebrating Carole's life in a service that is currently scheduled for March 29, 2025. Details will be made available closer to the date.

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

Danny (friend of Mary Agrusa), Kelly (friend of Mary Agrusa), Wayne Kossow, George Alajoki, Carole Batek, Sheila Bowdish, Melinda Brent, Paige Cady (friend of Carrie Lavorini), Chris (Elm Tree employee), Andrea Dauksas (friend of Carol Freidheim), Kristy Fash-Alvarez (daughter of Teri Fash), Michael Glabicki (son-in-law of John & Carol Freidheim), Margaret Golden, Arlene Jensen, Evelyn Kimble, Beverly Parks, Janice Peacock (friend of Carol & John Freidheim), Cal Root (father of Kevin Simberg & Keith Root), Daniel Rubalcaba, Kelsey Schneider (granddaughter of Molly Bartel), Ruth Sear, Steve Simberg (brother of Carol Simberg), Jim Thacker (brother of Cindi Thacker), Anita Zielske, All Caregivers.

Community



Elm Tree News

The staff and students at Elm Tree have had quite the busy month in December! We opened the month by partnering with the Youth Group and Sunday School by making ornaments for our adopted tree on the Prairie Path. We were located by the “fish park” on Central and Harvard if you had the chance to check it out! The children spent the month learning about different holiday traditions around the world. Some of these traditions included Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Santa Lucia Crowns, Los Posadas, and Christmas around the world. Did you know that if you were spending Christmas in Australia, you would need to pack your beach clothes because it is summer there? Some other highlights from this holiday season would be our

performance for the Under 105 luncheon, our performance for our families, and our holiday party and visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. We were all excited for the upcoming Christmas holiday, and our winter vacation. We will see you all in 2025, and from everyone at Elm Tree, staff, and students alike, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!!



Our tree on the Prairie path was adorned with ornaments decorated by the children of Elm Tree and the St. Paul Sunday School.



Learning more about our adopted cow, the farm, and holiday celebrations around the world

Our holiday party and visit from Santa & Mrs. Claus!



January 2024

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 New Year's Day Church Office Closed Elm Tree Closed	2	3 6p Family Game Night	4
5 8a Worship 9a Someone You Know Class 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 2p Hands & Feet	6 10a Prayers & Squares 6:30 Finance 7p Espresso Yourself	7 6:30p Special Council Mtg— via Zoom 7p M.E.N.D.	8 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 7p Chancel Choir	9 5p Elm Tree Family Night	10	11
12 8a Worship 9a Someone You Know Class 9a Wired Word 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Youth Comm.	13 7p Espresso Yourself	14 1p WMA Mtg 7p Council Mtg	15 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 7p Chancel Choir	16	17 Confirmation Retreat	18 Confirmation Retreat
19 Annual Mtg Confirmation Retreat 8a Worship 9a Someone You Know Class 9a Wired Word 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Annual Mtg. 4p Mayer Recital	20 MLK Jr. Day Living Waters Due 6:30p Elm Tree Board Mtg 7p Espresso Yourself	21	22 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 7p Chancel Choir	23	24	25 10:30a VPYB Mtg.
26 8a Worship 9a Someone You Know Class 9a Wired Word 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Zoom Training	27 7p Espresso Yourself	28	29 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 7p Chancel Choir	30	31	



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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 Commissioner: Shirley Jensen
Congregation and Community Commissioner: Emy Ishida
Education Commissioner: Julie Frakes
Property Commissioner: Dave Bard
Stewardship Commissioner: Karen Egan
Worship, Music, and Arts Commissioner: Cindy Johnson
Youth Commissioners: Ginger Riccio/Lisa Speidel

Staff

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

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



Stay Connected

Phone: 630-832-5580

Email: office@stpaulvp.org

Website: www.stpaulvp.org

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.