

Living Waters

December 2025



Always Getting Ready, Never Ready

Pastor Zak

The season of Advent is a time of getting ready. The church spends four weeks preparing to enter into the Mystery of Incarnation. As a community we are going to spend the coming weeks preparing to welcome the Christ-child in the world once more. Preparing to welcome a child into the world is one of the wildest experiences of my life (especially with the two-for-one deal God blessed us with the second time around). I remember browsing the baby books, collecting the clothes, and renovating the room feeling like we had checked all of the boxes to be adequately prepared for our baby's arrival. Boy were we wrong! The truth is nothing truly can prepare parent(s) for the arrival of a child, especially when the child decides to arrive nearly two months early. All the time in the world could not have prepared us to become parents, it was something we simply had to experience.

In many ways the experience of the Christ-child's arrival feels oddly familiar in that I'm always getting ready, but never truly ready. Truth be told, I am never really ready for Christmas, which somehow seems to arrive earlier and earlier every year. I am overwhelmed by my responsibilities as parent and pastor. Yet, in the midst of the chaos that is the arrival of a child, I find such a sense of hope, peace, joy, and love. Perhaps that is why long ago the candles we light to prepare the way were assigned these meaningful words. A reminder that we are never truly ready for Christ to enter our lives, and yet every day we experience Christ active in our lives. The true gift of Christmas is the reminder that God is here, now, and always—whether or not we're ready. It is perfectly normal to feel as though we're not ready for the busyness ahead, which is why it's important to be reminded it's not about us, but God. The same God who encourages the Psalmist to *"be still and know that I am God,"* which is excellent advice for someone like myself who acts like it is my preparedness that prepares the way of the Lord. The only thing we can truly do to prepare for the Lord is to open our hearts to His love this day, and every day.

Welcoming New Members

On January 18, 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 contact Pr. Zak to schedule a time to meet and discuss this opportunity to grow in community together. He may be contacted by phone (630.534.3123) or email (pastor@stpaulvp.org).



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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...



A Letter from Vicar Lyndsay

"We're gonna keep on moving forward, we're gonna keep on moving forward, we're gonna keep on moving forward, never turning back, never turning back." These were the words I sang on Friday, November 14, outside the Broadview ICE facility alongside clergy colleagues of many faiths as we attempted to bring communion to those detained inside the facility. And as the police arrested and dragged many faith leaders away, one by one, our refrains turned to, "we're gonna keep on singing loudly," "we're gonna keep on loving boldly," and "we're gonna work for change together."

It was a morning that I will not soon—if ever—forget. It was a morning that reminded me that God demands freedom and that God does not bless cages. And it was a morning that reignited my heart's passion for the intersection of faith and justice, which I am eager to share here at St. Paul in a few upcoming ways:

First, on Sunday, December 7 at the 9 am hour, I will be sharing about my time in Palestine serving with the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program from 2019-2020. This will be an informational time to learn more about our Palestinian Lutheran siblings in the Holy Land as well as what life is like under illegal occupation. I hope you will come with a curious mind!

Then, as we turn to the new year, I am excited to share my internship project, which will be a months-long prison ministry campaign. The programming will begin on Sunday, January 11, when a staff member from Kolbe House Jail Ministry (of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago) will offer a training on how to be a pen pal with someone in jail or prison across the state of Illinois. Given the nature of these pen pal relationships, this is only for those 18+, but there will be an opportunity for kids (as well as any adults that might not have space for a sustained pen pal relationship) to write one-time cards ahead of Easter. The project (but not the work!) will then conclude on Sunday, March 29 at an ecumenical Palm Sunday Prayer Walk around Cook County Jail.

More information will be coming as each of those dates gets closer, but in the meantime if you have any questions at all about this project or more largely why I believe this work of justice is an imperative of our Christian faith, do not hesitate to send me an email or find me on a Sunday morning!

Stewardship Update

Dear friends,

We on the Stewardship team and Congregation Council are so grateful for your generous response to our stewardship campaign, A Future with Hope. To date, fifty individuals and families have responded with financial commitments for 2026. Thank you so much!



If you have not yet returned a commitment card, please know there is still time. You can return your card to the offering boxes found by entrances to our sanctuary. You will find extra commitment cards there if you need one. Also, it's possible to complete your financial commitment [online](#) via the QR code found on the back of your card. Your gifts to St. Paul are a reflection the many blessings God bestows upon us daily. Your faithfulness is an inspiration and together, through Christ, we can live into our future with hope.

In Christ,
Kristen Rosenwinkel and Gay Nass

...and More!

Hands & Feet—December 7 2 to 4pm

Hands and Feet will be open Sunday Dec. 7th from 2-4 pm. We are excited to again be able to distribute \$10 Aldi gift cards to each of our families in addition to their chosen products.

Thank you to the members and friends of St. Paul for your generosity in providing these cards which makes this all possible.

Beer & Hymns—December 12 7pm

Join us to sing holiday songs and carols! Let's sing together on Friday, December 12th at 7 pm. We meet in the "back room" at Manny's Ale House - 683 St. Charles Rd., Elmhurst

October Numbers

Giving: \$64,573 (including online: \$22,938)

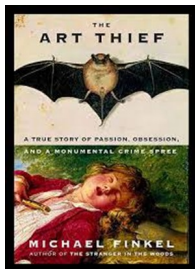
Expenses: \$52,653

YTD Giving vs. Expenses: \$(127,330)

Other Statistics

Date	Attendance	Viewers
10/5	125	38
10/12	107	45
10/19	140	47
10/26	155	51

Book Club December 1 7pm



St. Paul Book Club will meet to discuss *The Art Thief* by Michael Finkel on Monday, Dec. 1 at 7pm in the Cafe area.

Our selection is the true crime story of the world's most prolific thief and his accomplice. This is a psychological thriller with many surprises and an astonishing conclusion. You are invited to attend and bring a friend.

Women, Wine, & the Word December 2 7pm

We will have our December gathering at the home of Judy Nuehring on Tuesday, December 2nd.

For our study that evening we will explore fun and maybe surprising Advent/Christmas realities through activities and Bible study. Bring a beverage or holiday snack to share!

Contact Judy with questions. All are welcome!

Under 105 December 11 11:30am

Join us on December 11 for Under 105. The children of Elm Tree Christian Child Care will perform songs of Christmas at 11:30am in the Sanctuary. We will then move into the Café for holiday Hors d'oeuvres and desserts. Please R.S.V.P. to Merry Freedlund by Sunday, December 7th.

**Mark your calendar and
join in the fun!**

Annual Reports Due December 31st

A reminder that Annual Reports are due by December 31. Please submit your reports via email to the [office](#). Submit a one page word document using one inch margins, Arial 11 font, and no fancy headers. Please contact the office with any questions.



Family Ministry and Community Corner



Sunday School News

December will be a very busy month for Sunday School. Listed below is the schedule Sunday school schedule for the month of December:

- * December 7th—Sunday School
- * December 14th—Christmas Program at 10 am service
- * December 21st—Sunday School will be available during Ring and Sing
- * December 28th—NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Reminder: We will be collecting hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves until Sunday, December 14th. Thank you for bringing in donations.

Family Ministry Update

Annual Christmas Program on December 14

“Love Has Come” is the title of this year’s Christmas Program! The program will be presented during the sermon time at the 10am service on Sunday, December 14. Be sure to mark your calendars and join us in December for this wonderful annual event.

Christmas Program Rehearsal Schedule

- Christmas Program Chimes Practices— Saturday, December 6 & 13 at 9:30am.
- Program Practice—Saturday, December 13, 10—11:00am in the Sanctuary, followed by pizza and a movie in the youth room. There will be a dress rehearsal on December 14 at 9am. Questions? See Roxanne.

First Communion Classes Begin January 7

First Communion classes with Pastor Zak will be held on Wednesday, January 7 and Wednesday, January 14 at 5:30pm. Sunday, January 18 (at 11am) will be a make-up day in the event it is needed. We will celebrate First Communion during both worship services on Sunday, January 25 at both 8am and 10am worship services. Please use this [link](#) to register your child(ren).

St. Paul Family Hockey Night—February 21—Reserve Tickets Now

Join us on February 21, 2026 at the Allstate Arena to watch the Chicago Wolves vs. the Texas Stars for Wolves Country Night. Arrive at 6:30pm, game starts at 7pm. The cost is \$18.00 per ticket and it is first come, first served. *EVEN MORE EXCITING...* 20 spots are available for children to participate in the “Hi 5” line in the tunnel to “high five” the players as they come out! *AND WAIT, THERE’S MORE!* 10 seats are reserved on the “Fanboni” during Pre-Game. Each spot is \$35.00. First come/first served. *AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST...* Everyone receives a Chicago Wolves beanie! Reserve tickets [here](#). Questions? Contact [Roxanne](#).

Save the Date!

The following events are in the planning stages. More information will follow.

Questions—See Roxanne

- * Trivia Night—Saturday, January 10, 2026 from 5:30-8:30pm
- * Second Annual Middle School/Confirmation Retreat at LOMC January 16—18, 2026
- * Youth Worship Service—Sunday, January 25—8am and 10am services



Worship and Prayers

Christmas Season AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday, December 14

"Love Has Come" Christmas Program @ 10:00 AM Worship

Sunday, December 21

Ring Sing @ 9:00 AM

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Worship @ 3:00 PM, 5:00 PM & 11:00 PM

Thursday, December 25

Christmas Day Worship @ 9:00 AM

Sunday, December 28*

Lessons & Carols Worship @ 9:00 AM

*Please note that this is the only worship service on this day

Fall Prayer Vigil Update

"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

The Fall St. Paul Prayer Vigil was held in person on October 24, with 8 greeters and 27 participants, including three walk-ins from the community, plus a group of children and their teachers from Elm Tree Child Care. The sanctuary, filled with a peaceful and reflective atmosphere, became a space that resonated deeply with all attendees as they came to pray in silence. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Thank you especially to the Prayer Vigil Team: Linda Lange, Sandy Olsen, Chris Bard, and Alice Ramsay.

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

Bert Anderson, Molly Bartel, Betsy Fox and the Garcea Family, Donna Barrett (sister of Dave Bard), Kelsey Schneider (granddaughter of Molly Bartel), Carole Batek, Danah Boehmer (niece of Teri Fash), Sheila Bowdish, Melinda Brent, Paige Cady (friend of Carrie Lavorini), Kristy Fash-Alvarez, (daughter of Teri Fash), Margaret Golden, Evelyn Kimble, Barb Schreck, Jim Thacker (brother of Cindi Thacker), All Caregivers

Prayers for the Bereaved

Family and friends of Arnis Jakobsons

Community



Elm Tree News

Grateful Hearts & Giving Thanks

As November comes to a close, our hearts are full of gratitude here at Elm Tree. This season reminds us how thankful we are for our amazing families, staff, and community who support us each and every day. We are especially thankful for the time off at the end of the month that allows our staff and families to slow down, gather together, and make memories with the ones they love.

Our adopted cows, Ivy and Rizzo, are growing bigger by the day! Ivy has grown 1 inch and now weighs 145 pounds, while Rizzo shot up 2 inches and now weighs 168 pounds. The children love checking in on their progress and celebrating these milestones together.

In the classrooms, Christmas cheer is already in the air! We've started practicing all of our Christmas songs and are so excited to perform them for our families and the 105 Club next month. The children have been working hard and can't wait to share their voices with you.

We are also wrapping up our See's Candy Fundraiser. A big thank you to everyone who has already ordered! If you haven't yet, there's still time—please get all orders in by December 8 using this link: <https://www.yumraising.com/store/winter-2025-elm-tree-christian-child-care-3b92/MagFed11906>

We also want to send a heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported our Amaryllis sales and joined us at another successful vendor fair. Your generosity means so much to our school and helps support our programs and scholarship fund.

We are so thankful for each and every one of you. Wishing you and your families a safe, joyful, and relaxing Happy Thanksgiving!

With gratitude—*Elm Tree Christian Child Care*



December 2025

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 10a Prayers & Squares 7p Book Club	2 7p M.E.N.D. 7p Women, Wine & Word	3 9:30a Bible Study 12p Bunco 4:45p Wings 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir	4 5:45 p Elm Tree Christmas Program 6:30p Altar Guild Mt.	5	6 9a Altar Guild Mtg. 9:30a Chimes Rehearsal
7 8a Worship 9a Palestine Forum 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 2p Hands & Feet 5:30p Espresso Yourself	8 6:30p Finance Mtg. 7:30p Exec. Mtg.	9	10 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir	11 11:30a Under 105 Luncheon 7p Internship Mtg.	12 7p Beer & Hymns	13 9:30a Chimes Rehearsal 10a Christmas Program Rehearsal & Party
14 8a Worship 9a Dress Rehearsal 9a Wired Word 10a Worship & Christmas Program 5:30 Express Yourself	15 Living Waters Due 11a Beacon Hill Worship 6:30p Elm Tree Board Mtg.	16 6:30p Council Mtg.	17 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir	18	19	20
21 8a Worship 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 9:15a Ring Sing 10a Worship 5:30 Express Yourself	22 Timesheets Due 6:30p Merry Band	23	24 Christmas Eve Office Closed 3p Worship 5p Worship 11p Worship	25 Merry Christmas Office Closed 9a Worship	26 Office Closed	27
28 9a Worship—Lessons & Carols 10a Wired Word	29	30	31			



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

St. Paul Leadership

Church Council

President, Dan Pedersen
Vice President, Doreen Fritz
Secretary, Kelly Dunkel
Treasurer, Kathleen Murphy

Representatives

Community Engagement, Marti Seaton
Faith Formation, Julie Frakes
Property, Dave Bard
Stewardship, Kristen Rosenwinkel & Gay Nass
Worship Music and Arts, Carol Freidheim
Youth, Lisa Speidel and Ginger Riccio

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Pastor: Rev. Zachary Wagner
Vicar: Lyndsay Monsen
Parish Administrator: Elizabeth Chitester
Administrative & Computer Specialist: Alice Ramsay
Director of Music: Cynthia Viise
Assistant Director of Music: Margaret Colletti
Coordinator of Youth & Family: Roxanne Doremus
Coordinator of Sunday School: 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.



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

Stay Connected

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[Email: office@stpaulvp.org](mailto:office@stpaulvp.org)

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