

Living Waters

January 2026

Making All Things New

Pastor Zak

*And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."
(-Rev. 21:15, NRSVUE)*

This time of year I often find myself trying to make plans for myself, both personally and professionally, to take advantage of the clean slate of a new year to make all parts of myself new. I'll say to myself that I will do things differently this year, knowing deep down that odds are most of these promises to myself are indeed neither *"trustworthy, nor true."* There's nothing wrong with starting anew or trying to improve upon oneself. I think that's one of my favorite parts of growing older each day, that I get to apply what I have learned each day to make the next day better.

The words from John of Patmos in Revelation are a reminder that God, and God alone, knows perfection, and can therefore truly *"make all things new."* In this new year, I pray that you find new opportunities to open yourself to God in your daily life. This is bigger than a self-imposed deadline of reading the Bible cover-to-cover in the next year (although that's a fine challenge if you're up to it), but is uncovering how it is that God is present in your daily life. May you have a blessed new year!

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).

"Someone You Should Know" Returns

During Sunday morning Education Hour beginning January 18 you are invited to get to know some important people in the New Testament. That's right, we're bringing back our popular "Someone You Should Know" class, New Testament Edition! From Simon Peter to the sheep, Mary, the mother of Jesus, to Mary and Martha, friends of Jesus, we have so many people we'll get to know better. Bring your bible, bring your curiosity, bring your friend! We will meet in Café Meeting Room A at 9am.



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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...

Letters from Vicar Lyndsay

Advent greetings! This is a time of year where we hold so much—the excitement and busyness of holiday activities, winding down our responsibilities ahead of a much-needed break, and perhaps other places of pain and grief where the spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. Yet through it all, we are blessed to set our eyes on the promise of the gospel, where God comes to be with us in human flesh, certainly understanding all of these complexities of being human.

I am so looking forward to celebrating Christmas here at St. Paul (especially preaching on Christmas morning in my pajamas, that will be a first!) and everything else that is to come in this season of our life together.

Prison Pen Pal Training

As part of Vicar Lyndsay's prison ministry internship project, there will be a pen pal training on Sunday, January 11 at 9am in the Cafe. This training will be led by staff from Kolbe House Jail Ministry of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, and answer all your questions about how to write to someone in jail or prison. After the training, you will be paired with a pen pal in a facility somewhere in Illinois who is looking for someone to communicate with.

These pen pal relationships are sometimes one of the only life-giving things for people on the inside, and thus can be a very meaningful way to put Christian faith into action. Because of the sensitive nature of these relationships, this training is only for those 18+. There will be another opportunity for youth, as well as adults that cannot commit to a sustained pen pal relationship, to write one-time cards later in the spring.

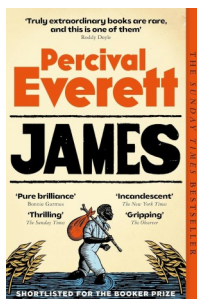
Questions? Contact [Vicar Lyndsay](#).

Book Club

Book Club will not be meeting in January.

We will resume on Monday, February 2 at 7pm in the Cafe to discuss *James* by Percival Everett. This Pulitzer Prize winning novel is a reimagining of the character Jim, of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*.

Full of satire and dark humor, the book is sure to provoke a great discussion.



Women, Wine, & Word January 6, 7pm

Wine, Women, & the Word will meet on Jan. 6 at 7pm in the home of Pat Bolin, 50 N. Princeton, Villa Park. Vicar Lyndsay will lead the study. All are welcome.

Hands & Feet—Jan. 4

The collection item for January is toothpaste. Your overwhelming generosity in the Aldi gift card collection allowed us to provide every visiting family with an extra gift this holiday season. Thank you to everyone who participated and provided 125 gift cards!

Under 105

Thank you all for making our December luncheon a success.

The next Under 105 luncheon is Thursday, February 19th, at 11:30 in the Café so remember to save the date on your calendar.

We will post the menu and program in January.

Happy New Year,
Under 105 Committee

...and More!

Beer & Hymns Friday, January 16 at 7pm

Cold getting to ya? Come out and warm up your voice AND your spirit. Our next Beer & Hymns event will be on Friday, **January 16th** at 7pm. In the “back room” at Manny’s Ale House - 683 St. Charles Rd., Elmhurst. Bring a friend or two. Come early to order dinner, if you want.



The three finalists for the coveted Name-That-Tune mug at our December gathering.

November 2025 Numbers

Giving: \$44,781 (including online: \$20,898)

Expenses: \$45,210

YTD Giving vs. Expenses: \$(126,758)

Other Statistics

Date	Attendance	Viewers
11/2	175	54
11/9	133	N/A
11/16	153	56
11/23	158	38
11/23 pm	75	9
11/30	89	70

Community Corner Updates

The Lenten Devotional Guide project is launching again in January to prepare for publication during Lent, beginning Ash Wednesday (February 18) through Easter Sunday (April 5). Temple Talks on January 4 and 11 will invite folks to write a short devotional message on the theme of “Hope for the Future.” That will sound familiar, as it was the theme for our fall Stewardship campaign as well. These messages will reach your email every morning; paper copies will also be available upon request. Many of us have added friends and far-flung family members to this email list, and you are welcome to contact the Office to widen the circle of readers. You are welcome to contact the Devotional committee with questions: Marti Seaton, Laura Albert, Emily Ishida, Doreen Fritz, Jane Plass, and Liz Chitester.

Etz Chaim has invited St. Paul to join their congregation on Sunday, January 11 from 11:30-1:30 for the Garry Gardener Memorial Hungry Bowls fundraiser. Come for lunch of a warm bowl of homemade soup, bread and a drink. All proceeds will go to the St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry at Christ the King Parish in Lombard, DuPage PADS, Islamic Circle of North America’s Food Pantry, Walk-in Ministry at First Church of Lombard, and People’s Resource Center. \$12/child, \$18/adult, \$54/family. (The Empty Bowls project is an international grassroots effort to raise both money and awareness in the fight to end hunger. <https://emptybowls.com>. Dr. Garry Gardner was an EC congregant and Darien/Downers Grove pediatrician who organized this event for many years.) RSVPs through Marti Seaton to Kathie Bender by January 6.

St. Paul is wonderfully blessed with an amazing and dedicated Staff. It still “takes a village” of volunteers to support and implement our wide array of events and ministries. Please join us at St. Paul’s Annual Meeting on January 25 for a special feature – photos of the many volunteers that participated in events and ministries throughout the year. It’s an opportunity to thank folks for their service and to encourage others to consider finding some new connections.

Family Ministry and Community Corner

Wings Choir News

The Wings had a busy Fall! It started with the Pet Blessing service in September. Reformation and Advent Week 1 were two other times when the Wings added their musical talents to our worship services. The year ended with the Wings singing for the Sunday School Christmas Program, participating in the Ring Sing, and serving as the choir at the 3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service. Our prayer is that the Wings and their songs bring glory to God and help the congregation experience God's love.

It is 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. in the Choir Room. Rehearsals resume on Wednesday, January 7. 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.

Sunday School

A reminder that Sunday School resumes on January 4 at 9am. See you then!

Family Ministry Update

Trivia Night

Join the youth of St. Paul on Saturday, January 10 from 5:30-8:30pm in the Fellowship Center for our annual Trivia Night. Categories have been selected and it's going to be a fun (and challenging) evening! The cost is \$10/person, with Mulligans priced at \$1.00 each with a maximum of 10/\$10.00. Teams are encouraged to dress up with a theme. Prizes will be awarded to 1st place winners and the team with the best theme!

“Come, Follow Me” Middle School Weekend Retreat at LOMC

The annual middle school retreat weekend is scheduled for Friday, January 16 to Sunday, January 18. Registration forms have been emailed out. Cost is \$125.00 per student, which includes food and housing in the Freedom Tree Village Lodges. We'll prepare meals together. Cost also includes 2 staff-sponsored activities. Drivers are appreciated.

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](#).

“Love Has Come” Christmas Program Recap & Pictures

We have the cutest and most talented children & youth who, once again, knocked it out of the park! Special thanks to Margaret & Cynthia for teaching the songs. Hugs to Ken Dornacher, Joel Johnson, Dave Bard & Mark Freedlund for helping to set up the stage. And a new addition to this year's celebration of Jesus' birth was a coffee hour following the service provided by the Community Engagement Committee. Thank you to everyone who participated. It couldn't have happened without all of you! Pictures on next page.

Worship and Prayers

“Bake and Pray” Weekend—February 13-15



Save the date! February 13-15 Lutheran theologian, author, and baker Ron Glusenkamp will be joining us for a weekend centered around the theme “Bake and Pray,” where we will get to learn about baking as a spiritual practice and how God meets us in the form of bread. There will be a chance to bake everything from pretzels to communion bread to hot cross buns. More information to follow, including sign-up sheets. Come hungry!

Photos from “Love Has Come”



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

Linda Ferg (sister of Carol Freidheim), Linda Pisko (friend of the Freidheims), Tim Frakes, Nora Murphy, Bert Anderson (brother of Lana Pedersen), 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 Dorothy Hadrava

Community



Elm Tree News

December was an exciting and joy-filled month at Elm Tree! We packed so many special moments into these past few weeks, and we're thrilled to share some highlights with you.

Our adopted calves, Ivy and Rizzo, have been growing fast and are officially *two months old*! Ivy gained an impressive 90 pounds and 3 inches, and Rizzo wasn't far behind with 89 pounds and 7 inches. We love watching them grow and learning about farm life right along with the children.

The children worked so hard practicing many Christmas songs throughout the month. Their dedication truly shined as they performed for their families at our Christmas program and again for the members of the Under 105 Club. We are so proud of their joyful voices and confidence! We were delighted to welcome author Robin Currie, who shared her book *Just Enough Room for Christmas* with our classrooms. The children loved listening to her story and asking questions—what a special experience! Our Christmas party was filled with fun, laughter, and plenty of holiday cheer. Santa even stopped by for a visit! We were incredibly blessed to receive a book donation from Anderson's Book Store, which provided a special gift for every child. We are so grateful for their generosity. Throughout the month, the children worked hard creating handmade gifts for their parents as well as for many friends at St. Paul. Their creativity and caring hearts were on full display, and the joy of giving was felt by all. We also decorated our adopted tree on the Prairie Path. The children loved adding their ornaments and seeing our Elm Tree spirit shine for the community.

Another highlight this month was a visit from our farmer pen pals! They taught us about their farm, the animals they care for, and the ingredients in their animals' feed. They even helped us make our own "pig feed sacks" to symbolize those ingredients. Of course, *our* bags were extra special and included: Cheerios (carbohydrates), Raisins (minerals), Multicolored candy canes (vitamins), Peppermint (water), Sunflower seeds (protein), Hershey Kisses (fat). It was such a hands-on, memorable learning experience!

Thank you for being a wonderful part of our Elm Tree community. We hope your family had a blessed Christmas season, and we look forward to all that the new year will bring!

With gratitude—*Elm Tree Christian Child Care*



January 2026

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 Office Closed	2	3
4 8a Worship 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 2p Hands & Feet 5:30p Espresso Yourself	5 10a Prayers & Squares	6 7p M.E.N.D. 7p Wine, Women & Word	7 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p 1st Commun. 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir	8	9	10 5:30p Trivia Night
11 8a Worship 9a Pen Pal Training 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 11a Youth Comm. 5:30p Espresso Yourself	12 6:30p Finance	13 2p Rachel Circle	14 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p 1st Commun. 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir	15 6p Elm Tree Family Science Night	16 LOMC Confirmation Retreat 7p Beer & Hymns	17 LOMC Confirmation Retreat
18 LOMC Confirmation Retreat 8a Worship 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 11a 1st Communion 5:30p Espresso Yourself	19 MLK Jr. Day 6:30p Elm Tree Board Mtg.	20 Living Waters Due 6:30p Council	21 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir	22	23	24
25 8a Worship 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 11a Annual Mtg. 5:30p Espresso Yourself	26	27	28 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed. Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir	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

Staff

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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[Website: www.stpaulvp.org](http://www.stpaulvp.org)

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