

Living Waters

February 2026

Words of Wisdom

Pastor Zak

It feels as though this frenetic pacing of the holidays has yet to subside. All of the things that could “wait til’ the new year” need to be addressed as it is indeed “*the new year.*” Multiple deaths of loved ones from our community has led to the need for pastoral care and planning. Annual meetings, reports, and reviews all need to be done to close out 2025 here in the early parts of 2026. This doesn’t even begin to scratch the surface on the unrelenting news—cycle with events occurring in such rapidity that I don’t have time to process one event before the next occurs.

I feel inadequate in my pastoral response to everything happening in the world, as I can hardly find the energy to form a thought on a given topic before it feels like I need to make a declaration on the next. It is in these moments that I am thankful for the words and wisdom of leaders in the church, specifically Presiding Bishop Curry. I wish I had better words of wisdom to offer to respond to everything happening in the world, which is why I want to share with you Presiding Bishop Curry’s words regarding the realities of events in [Venezuela](#) and [Minneapolis](#). Click the links to access the information. Lord have mercy on us, the church, and political leaders in all nations.

Lent at St. Paul

Wednesdays during Lent (February 25th - March 25th) we will gather for simple soup suppers and Holden Evening Prayer as we prepare to enter into Holy Week. This year the suppers will be shared in the **Fellowship Center** (downstairs) at 5:30pm. At 6:15pm, we will transition upstairs to the sanctuary for a candlelight Holden Evening Prayer service. This year, the service will include selected Lenten reflections from Richard Rohr’s “*Wondrous Encounters: Scripture for Lent.*”

Following Ash Wednesday, there will be five consecutive Wednesday night soup suppers starting on February 25 in the **Fellowship Center**. Cindy Johnson and Joelle Soefker are the soup supper coordinators. They have host groups for each of the five suppers but need additional volunteers to donate soups or salads. Click the link below to sign up for a soup or salad online or fill out the soup supper sign-up sheet in the Ministry Corner starting February 1st. Feel free to call Cindy (630-991-3131) or Joelle (630-709-3368) with any questions. Thank you for continuing this meaningful Lenten tradition at St. Paul. All are welcome!

Soup Supper sign up link—click [here](#).



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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...



St. Paul “Bake and Pray” Weekend with Ron Glusenkamp February 13 and 14



Join Ron Glusenkamp, Lutheran theologian, author, and baker for a weekend centered around the theme of “Bake and Pray.” Ron will lead us in baking as a spiritual practice and share how God meets us in the form of bread. Opportunities exist to bake pretzels, hot cross buns, or communion bread. Each opportunity has a specific date and time listed below. Folks do not *KNEAD* any experience to come to any of these sessions. but, they will be transformed by the experience. Please use [this link](#) to sign up!

A Midwinter Blessing

In the heart of winter, when days feel tight,
When hands are cold and nights come early—
Come gather where the oven is warm
And grace rises like good dough.

Tied in knots?

Come, loosen your shoulders, your worries, your soul.
You may *knead to stretch*—
To rest, to laugh, to be gently made new.

Make it, Bake it, Take it—

With floured hands and open hearts,
We shape what we've been given,
Trusting that God is still at work.
Here, we remember:

We are ***Blessed, Broken, Shared—***
Just like the bread upon the table,
Just like the love that never runs out.

For Jesus is the Bread of Life,
Given for the hungry,
Shared with the weary,
Enough for all.
Come as you are.
Come hungry, hopeful, or unsure.
Leave warmed, nourished, and blessed.

Available Sessions

Tied in Knots?

February 13—6 to 7:30pm
Pretzel Baking

Blessed, Broken, Shared

February 14—9 to 11am
Communion Bread

Make it, Bake it, Take it

February 14—2 to 4pm
Hot Cross Buns

...and More!

Community Corner

Lenten Devotional

Devotional messages will be delivered to your email inbox beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 18 through Holy Saturday, April 4. Forty St. Paul members have written reflections on the theme "A Future with Hope." Katie Clot's beautiful photo of the Northern Lights is the daily image. Printed copies will be mailed to our Homebound members. If you would like to add friends and family to the email group, please contact the office.



Lenten Soup Supper

Members of the Congregation Etz Chaim and the Islamic Foundation will be invited to join us for one of the Wednesday night soup supper meals and Holden Evening Prayer services. As a reminder, you can sign up to contribute to the soup suppers on our website or see Cindy Johnson and Joelle Soefker for more information.

Maundy Thursday Dinner

SAVE THE DATE for the Dinner Church on Maundy Thursday even though it's not until April 2. Look for further details in the March newsletter.

Book Club February 2

On Monday, February 2 at 7pm the St. Paul Book Club will meet in the Cafe to discuss *James* by Percival Everett.

All are invited to join the discussion with St. Paul's Book Club on Monday, March 2 at 7pm in the Café. We will be discussing *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden* by Camille T. Dungy. This is the true account of a woman's goal to diversify her Colorado garden and a metaphor on how homogeneity threatens our planet.

Women, Wine, & Word February 3

Women, Wine and the Word will meet Tuesday Feb 3 in the home of Judy Nuehring at 7 pm. Please bring your Bible and join us. All are welcome!

Hands & Feet February 1

Hands and Feet will be open Sunday, Feb. 1 from 2:00-3:45pm. Thank you for all the warm hats and mittens we have received to distribute to our guests. Donation items for February are shampoo and conditioner.

December 2025

Numbers

Giving: \$96,268 (including online: \$27,936)

Expenses: \$46,068

YTD Giving vs. Expenses: \$(76,558)

Other Statistics

Date	Attendance	Viewers
12/7	165	67
12/14	219	111
12/21	150	54
12/24	309	73
12/25	58	58
12/28	72	48

Under 105 February 19

Under 105 resumes in February on Thursday, the 19th, at 11:30 in the Cafe. A variety of soups, salads and desserts are on the menu. Join us for food, fellowship and fun.

Mark your calendar and be sure to R.S.V.P. to [Merry Freedlund](#) by Sunday, February 15.

Family Ministry & Event Photos

Family Ministry Update

Last Chance to Sign Up for St. Paul Family Hockey Night!

The deadline to sign up for the St. Paul family hockey night is February 1. Join us to watch the Chicago Wolves vs. the Texas Stars at the Allstate Arena. Arrive at 6:30pm, game starts at 7pm. The cost is \$18.00 per ticket and it is first come, first served. Everyone receives a Chicago Wolves beanie! Reserve tickets [here](#). Questions? Contact [Roxanne](#).

SAVE THE DATE! Trivia Night—March 21

Join the youth of St. Paul on Saturday, March 21 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!

Photos from LOMC Confirmation Retreat

A great time was had by all at our confirmation retreat at LOMC held January 16—18. There were 12 youth and 4 adults who braved the cold to “Follow Jesus: Stepping Up and Stepping Out” to learn what it means to be called as followers of Jesus.



Photos from New Member Sunday

St. Paul formally welcomed 21 new members on Sunday, January 18. While not everyone is pictured below, we are pleased to share photos of a few of our new members.



Worship and Prayers

Ash Wednesday—February 18 Ashes-to-Go and Service Times

This year Ash Wednesday is February 18th. Ashes-to-Go will be offered by Pastor Zak and Vicar Lyndsay outside of Door #2 from 7am—9:30am. We will hold worship services at 12pm and 7pm. There is no soup supper on Ash Wednesday. Soup suppers begin on February 25th.

The daily email distribution of the Lenten Devotional will begin on Ash Wednesday. If you are not signed up for the devotional but would like to be included, please contact the [office](#).

A reminder that Holden Evening Prayer services will begin on February 25th at 6:15pm in the Sanctuary. We look forward to seeing you there!

Letters from Vicar Lyndsay

The same way this winter is keeping everyone in Chicagoland on its toes (one day it's -5 degrees with snow and ice on the ground, the next nearly 50 degrees and sunny...), so too it feels has been the rhythms of St. Paul lately. Between preparing for Lent, various opportunities for youth fun of all ages, exciting changes to Wednesday morning Bible study, and more, I am grateful for the many corners of this community that continue to enrich our faith and feed our spirits.

In the midst of our full life together, I am excited to see how my internship project has begun to unfold. Many thanks to those of you who came to the pen pal training on January 11—whether you signed up to be a pen pal or just came to learn a little more about the realities of life in jail/prison, I hope you walked away with something to reflect on. And if you would still like to sign up to be a pen pal, it is never too late! Reach out to me and I will get you a pen pal agreement to set you up with someone seeking companionship. Though the youngest members of our community are not able to be pen pals, I am excited that they will get a chance to participate in this ministry as well, with an arts & crafts project in Sunday School on February 8. Lastly, don't forget to save the date for March 29, when we will gather with ecumenical partners outside Cook County Jail for a family-friendly Palm Sunday Prayer Walk.

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

Lindsey Serio, (granddaughter of Marilyn & Marty Plinske), Donna Barnett (sister of Dave Bard), Heather Dow (friend of Judy Wagner), Kelsey Schneider (niece of Judy Wagner), Dalilah Nyquist (friend of Carol Simberg), Ron and Lois Solheid (friends of Carol Simberg), Kelly Saurbaugh, 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, Barb Schreck, Jim Thacker (brother of Cindi Thacker), All Caregivers

Prayers for the Bereaved

Family and friends of Janet Hayden (aunt of Rachel Lange & Jarvis Hayden), Phyllis Mielke (mother of Amy Biggar), Bert Anderson (brother of Lana Pedersen), Joyce Pohl (friend of Alice Ramsay)

Community



Elm Tree News

Welcome to 2026! We are excited to begin a new year together and look forward to all the growth, discovery, and joy it will bring. This month has been full of energy and curiosity as we've settled back into routines and embraced the season with enthusiasm and a sense of community.

Throughout the month, we have been learning all about winter and everything that comes with it—from chilly weather and snow, to animals, clothing, and seasonal changes. Our winter science-themed family night was a wonderful success, bringing families together for hands-on learning and fun. The highlight of the evening was indoor ice-skating on laminated paper, which brought lots of laughter and smiles while letting everyone experience a winter activity in a creative and safe way.

We also welcomed ExceleRate Illinois this month as they completed an evaluation using the ECERS-3 scale and the Program Administration Scale. This was an important step for our program, and we are eagerly awaiting the results as we work toward earning our Silver Level Standard-Distinguished accreditation. We are hopeful to receive the results within the next six weeks and are proud of the hard work our staff has put into this process.

With the cold temperatures keeping us indoors more often, we've been very intentional about avoiding cabin fever. Our days have been filled with fun, engaging activities and plenty of movement and fellowship during large motor time. These experiences have helped keep spirits high, bodies active, and our community feeling connected as we continue to learn and grow together this winter.



February 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 8a Worship 9a Adult Ed 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 2p Hands & Feet 5:30p Espresso Yourself	2 10a Prayers & Squares 7p Book Club	3 7p M.E.N.D. 7p Women, Wine & Word	4 9:30a Bible Study 12p Bunco 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir	5	6	7
8 8a Worship 9a Adult Ed 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 11a Internship Mtg. 11a Youth Comm. 5:30p Espresso Yourself	9	10 2p Rachel Circle	11 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Confirmation 5:30p Wed Dinner 6p Handbells 6p Wired Word 7p Chancel Choir 8p VPYB	12 11a Chair Yoga	13 6p Bake & Pray Pretzels	14 Valentine's Day 9a Bake & Pray Communion Bread 2p Bake & Pray Hot Cross Buns
15 8a Worship 9a Adult Ed 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 5:30p Espresso Yourself	16 Presidents' Day 6:30p Elm Tree Board Mtg.	17 6:30p Council Mtg.	18 Ash Wednesday 7a Ashes-to-Go 12p Worship 1p Under 105 Setup 4:45 Wings Choir 7p Worship	19 11:30a Under 105 Luncheon	20 Living Waters Deadline	21 5:30p Chicago Wolves Hockey Night
22 8a Worship 9a Adult Ed 9a Confirmation 9a Sunday School 9a Wired Word 10a Worship 5:30p Espresso Yourself	23	24 7p WMA Wine Tasting	25 9:30a Bible Study 4:45p Wings Choir 5:30p Soup Supper 6:15p Holden Evening Prayer 6:45 Handbells 7:45 Chancel Choir	26 11a Chair Yoga	27	28



545 S. Ardmore Ave. Villa Park, IL 60181

630-832-5580 | www.stpaulvp.org

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, Sandy Giza

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

Phone: 630-832-5580

Email: office@stpaulvp.org

Website: www.stpaulvp.org

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