



The Messenger

"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message,
and the message is heard through the word of Christ."
(Romans 10:17)

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School

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Ready or not – 2020 is here! by Pastor Sims

Ready or not – 2020 is here. 2019 has been a blur for many of us, especially if we have hit the four- and five-decade mark. The news items have kept us hopping from one emotion to the next. The church events have provided some highs and some lows. Family life has had its blessings and challenges. The job has given us morale boosts and moral dilemmas.

Some of you who had a lot of difficulties during 2019; knowing that the Lord got you through, are happy that a new year is here.

But what will happen during 2020? Is it a year that you have something special scheduled? A confirmation or wedding? Graduation or that long-awaited special vacation? Will it be a good year? Will sickness come to you and your family? Will there be major surgery? Will it be your last year on earth? What will happen to the economy?

Life and the future seem so full of uncertainties. To many the future seems like rolling the dice and seeing what numbers come up. But there are certainties among uncertainties. For many, life is nothing but chance.

What's going to happen in 2020 doesn't come from the local palm reader, who can't see the future anyway. Nor does it come from people who with a lot of study and information make forecasts about things, because the wind can change directions in an instant. This information about the future comes from our Almighty God who holds time and space and us in his hands.

Listed are but a few facts for 2020:

- Our sinful nature will continue to act up in 2020, as it has in the past. We will need to keep spiritually strong by regularly hearing and reading the Scriptures and communing frequently.
- We will be guilty of sinning. We will do, say, and think things we should not, and not do, say and think what we should. There will be no excuse for this, but God will forgive the repentant sinner.
 - There will be false teachers and teachings, as long as this sinful world remains – we must be aware of this fact and watch out that we are not sucked in by them.
 - The devil will continue to harass us and our fellow believers. He will seek to lure us and pry us away from God. Be on guard!
- God will give you many opportunities to serve him. Although you might miss some of these opportunities, you will serve him.
- God will take care of you. Therefore, do not worry about 2020 or in 2020. God has a lot of experience in taking care of his people.
- The Lord will continue to love you. He who gave his life for you on Calvary's cross is on your side. *If God be for us, who can be against us?*
- *All things work together for the good of them that love God.* That's the Lord's promise to you, written in Romans 8:28.
- If 2020 is the year that Christ returns, or the year that you die, you shall be going to the glorious home of heaven.

Hebrews 13:8
Jesus Christ
is the same yesterday
and today and forever.

The life of the Christian is full of many certainties. Let us enter another year in which God will bless us with full confidence and joy.



We have exciting news!

Right now 52 pledges have come in for a total amount of \$390,300. On top of this, we were approved for a grant of \$25,000 by the Antioch

Foundation. This brings our total to \$415,300. **This means we have reached our goal of \$409,000!**

Give thanks to God that he has moved our hearts, heard our prayers, and gone over and above what any of us thought possible.

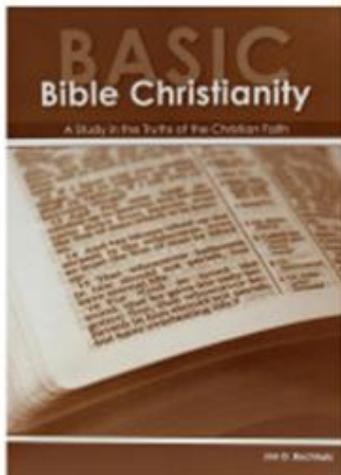
Furthermore, with the amount of funds already coming into the Restricted Fund we have been able to pay **all** of Jeff Davis' services. We should also have enough to begin masonry repairs this spring or possibly even sooner. Our trustees are currently talking to the masonry contractor about when we can start.

Look for a "Preserving Our Great Heritage" letter to come out sometime in January or February giving details about when the masonry repairs will commence.

Finally, give thanks to God for his love toward us. And don't stop praying for his help concerning these restorations, for "unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain" (Psalm 127).

Bible Basics

- ❖ Start date is January 16, 2020
- ❖ Meets Thursdays at 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ In the upper room over the church offices – follow the signs
- ❖ Length is **8 weeks for non-member school parents** and 15 weeks for those interested in membership
- ❖ Teachers will be Vicar Matthew Steinfeldt and Pastor Snowden G. Sims.



Kindergarten Call

Miss Sandra O’Laire declined the Divine Call on December 21st to teach kindergarten here at St. Paul’s. At the writing of this newsletter, no date for another call meeting had been set.

Offering Envelopes The 2020 offering envelopes are set out in the narthex. Members are asked to pick up the box(es) for your family.

Installation of Church Officers will take place in both services on January 5, 2020. The newly elected or re-elected officers will be joined by those who have another year to serve in their current positions.



Class Trip

This Year’s Class Trip to New York City will take place on March 12th-16th. Watch for students selling Anthony Thomas candy bars as a fund raiser to help with their cost for the trip. Be watching for more suggestions of ways that you can help with this activity.



- Jan. 6 School begins after Christmas
- Jan. 13 Teacher Inservice – No School
- Jan. 20-21 Pastor/Teacher Conference
No School
- Feb. 14 Valentine’s Day Parties
- Feb. 17 Presidents’ Day – No School
- Feb. 24 Teacher Inservice – No School
- Mar. 6 School Activity Day
- Mar. 13 Pi Day
- Mar. 20 End of 3rd Quarter
- Mar. 26 Parent/Teacher Conferences
Noon Dismissal from School
- Mar. 27 Parent/Teacher Conferences
No School



Evangelism

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the

kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’” – Matthew 9:36-38

In last month’s update on evangelism, the Evangelism Team stressed that they needed help in distributing invitations to our community to attend our Christmas services. We thank our Lord for those who came willingly and helped but we fell far short of our goal. Hundreds of people around St. Paul’s church never received an invitation. Jesus’ words ring true, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.”

Among the many truths this text teaches, two seem to really speak to our present circumstances. First, “Jesus had compassion on them.” Jesus loves people. He loves the people of this community. He wants them to hear that he is their Savior from their sins. He doesn’t want anyone to be lost or condemned.

The second truth is this, “He said to his disciples . . . Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers.” Jesus wanted his disciples to pray that he might send them out. Why? Because it is a high honor and privilege to evangelize. It is not a right.

Jesus wants us to pray to him too. He wants us to ask him to send us out to our community and speak of his compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. He wants us to ask him for courage to place an invitation at someone’s door.

So how can our community be invited to hear of Jesus, if there are not enough workers to invite them? How can they believe if they are never given an opportunity to hear of Jesus? How can we evangelize, if we don’t ask Jesus to send us out? “Here am I. Send me!” Isaiah said. (Isaiah 6:8)

Right now, Jesus is having compassion on this community by the fact that our congregation is

still gathering together on the corner of Bruck St. and Stewart Ave. May his compassion fill our hearts to pray for the privilege of sharing his compassion with this community.

Other events coming up: **Chili Cook-off – January 12 at 5:30pm**

- *Pastor Schrimpf*

ORGANIZATIONS



The Altar Guild will have their next meeting on Thursday, March 5th at 7:00 PM in the auditorium.

The new Altar Flower

Calendar for 2020 is posted. At this time you can start to sign up for the new year. The cost is \$25.00 for the altar vases and \$15.00 for special flowers after the altar vases are taken.

The Altar Committee for January is Kim Frye, Dawn Howell and Suzanne Geiger.

(*Pat Ratz, president*)



Evening Women's Guild

Recap of the Christmas Luncheon

Last month the Evening Women’s Guild of St. Paul’s hosted their annual Christmas party. The women of the congregation enjoyed an Advent devotion, Christmas caroling, fun-filled games, and a fine meal with tasty desserts. The festive afternoon even produced two winners of our crazy Christmas hat contest.

A big thank you to those who brought food to share and the willingness of so many to take a Christmas gift to our shut-in members of St. Paul’s.

January 10th Evening Women’s Guild Meeting

The next Evening Women’s Guild meeting will be hosted by Victoria Schrimpf at 2346 Boston Mills Drive in Grove City. The 6:30 PM meeting will take place on Friday, January 10th, 2020.

Our meeting will consist of a devotion, an ongoing Bible study series on the women of the Bible, and a discussion of Mother/Daughter themes and entertainment options. Refreshments will also

be served during our time of fellowship. All women are invited to attend.

Thank You Notes from our LWMS Befriend a Mission Partners

This past fall many St. Paul's members wrote greetings and well wishes to our home and world missionaries. Thank you notes were sent back in response to our greeting cards & Amazon gift cards. They wrote:

11-22-19

Members at St. Paul's,

Simply a note to say thanks for your card and gift that was sent last month. Your prayers and support mean more than you'll ever know. The Lord bless you and keep you today and always.

Thank you.

Pastor Paul Biedenbender of Christ Lutheran Church in Denver, Colorado

12-3-19

Dear St. Paul's Members,

Thank you for the Amazon.com Gift Card! Sorry that it has taken me so long to reply. I use Amazon a lot to buy things that are useful for the ministry here in Malawi and also for some personal items. So, the gift cards are always useful and appreciated. Thank you!

Lutheran Bible Institute Religion Professor Pastor Mark Panning of Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa

2020 LWMS Convention in Athens, Georgia

The 57th Annual Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) Convention will be held June 25-28, 2020 in Athens, Georgia at The Classic Center, 300 N. Thoms St. Athens, Georgia. Join with 1000 fellow mission supporters for a Christian gathering that will include worship services, workshops, speakers, displays, fellowship, and fun. Hotel rooms will open in January of 2020.

If you are considering attending the convention, it would be wise to make hotel reservations as soon as the rooms are available since the convention hotels often fill up in a matter of days. Check the lwms.org web site for more information or contact Melinda Sims. Note: Stipends of up to \$250 are available for first-time attendees depending on availability.

Young at Heart



We will meet on Thursday, January 16, at 10:00 AM in the church library. We will continue our study of Church Fellowship led by Vicar Steinfeldt. Call Joyce Larger at 614-314-7571 with questions.
(Joyce Larger, coordinator)



New Year, New Youth Group...plans! The Youth Group will meet together Sunday, January 19th after the 10:30 service to play some board games. The board games will be provided, but if you'd like to bring your own favorite board game, that would be appreciated as well. It's been a long time since we've met. We'll have a lot of catching up to do!

Get ready Youth Group! We have an excellent opportunity to meet together once again as brothers and sisters in Christ, our newborn King.

-Vicar Steinfeldt

Annual Chili Cook-Off

This year's Chili Cook-Off will be held on **Sunday, January 12th at 5:30 PM.**



Sign up on the bulletin board at church or call the church office to enter your chili. Those entering are asked to bring a crockpot or kettle of chili and arrive 20 minutes early to make preparations for the judging.

Once the "People's Choice" judging is complete, everyone can get a bowl or two of their favorite. If you plan to attend, please bring a side dish to add to the meal: chips, salsa, salads, cookies for dessert and beverages to share.

We will have games available for anyone who would like to join in after checking out the chili!



The WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership is founded upon twin convictions.

The gospel is the power of God for salvation. It alone has the power to create and sustain faith in Jesus Christ. There is no way to God except through Christ. Therefore, the mission of the Church is to proclaim the gospel, carrying it to every corner of the world.

God expects the Christian to use his reason and intellect, gifts God himself gives as part of his image, to formulate how to best proclaim the gospel in his corner of the world.

Lutheran leadership is at the nexus of those convictions. The Lutheran leader trusts firmly in the efficacy and sufficiency of God's Word. However, he also understands that he has the responsibility to assess and plan ministry so that the congregation might do all it possibly can with God's Word to disciple the faithful, seek the lost, and pursue the straying.

Thus, Scripture says, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account" (Hebrews 13:17 EHV).

The National Conference on Lutheran Leadership seeks to encourage congregational members and leaders in those twin convictions. In the plenary sessions, we will discuss larger strategic issues that are relevant for all congregations. The breakout sessions are more tactical in nature. Some share "best practices" for various types of ministries. Others address challenges that are applicable only to some congregations.

The National Conference on Lutheran Leadership will also provide the opportunity to network with leaders from other congregations: for encouragement, for the sharing of wisdom, and for Christian fellowship.

The Need for Lutheran Leadership

The preacher says, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Mankind's greatest problem will never change. The solution to that problem is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. That does not mean that the challenges

before Christian churches are completely identical in every time and every place. Far from it.

American Christianity is at a crossroads. Postmodernism has destroyed the notion of truth. Secular humanism has convinced two generations that they can obtain purpose and satisfaction apart from religion. Atheism has doubled in the last generation. Some have declared that America is now a post-Christian nation.

Among those who are still religious, there have been seismic behavioral changes. The way Americans consume content has evolved. Consumption is now asynchronous. No one watches a TV show at a specific time on a specific day anymore. They binge-watch whatever they want whenever they want. Consumption is now illocal. You do not have to go to a store to get what you need anymore. You can purchase anything you want off the Amazon app on your phone while sitting on your couch. Thus, the notion of having to be in a certain place at a certain time to consume religious content is antithetical to current American culture. "Why go to church? I can listen to sermon on YouTube and put together a Christian music playlist on Spotify."

So, American culture is becoming increasingly non-religious. Even among those who remain Christian, there is the perception that church attendance is unnecessary and church membership of little to no value. Is it any wonder that most Christian church bodies in America are unraveling?

Man's biggest problem and the solution to that problem will always be the same. However, the cultural and strategic challenges before Christian churches are not identical in every time and place. That is why Lutheran leadership is necessary. Leaders have the responsibility to think through how to apply God's unchanging Word to a culture that is radically different than even just one generation ago.

The National Conference on Lutheran Leadership exists to help your congregation do just that. May God grant us the faith to trust all his promises and the wisdom to apply them well to our time and place!

Our congregation will be represented at the conference by Pastor Sims, Principal Galecki and Miss Sarah Larger.

