

ST PAUL LUTHERAN

NEWSLETTER



December 2023

www.stpaulsanford.org

Volume 77 No.11

Advent Anticipation

Pastor Christopher P. Vossler

“A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’ ... Behold, the Lord GOD comes” (Isaiah 40:3, 10a)

How do you prepare for guests? I’m sure this is a highly-relevant question at this time of the year! How do you get ready when people are coming over for a visit? Perhaps you go on a cleaning spree – getting rid of all the cobwebs and dust that have accumulated since the last time you had company. Perhaps you start cooking and baking, preparing food and drinks for your guests. Perhaps you need to go shopping to replenish staples that are running low. Or if your guests are staying for a few days, you may need to make up a guest room or six for them to sleep. There is a lot to do when you expect company!

Perhaps a more-important question to ask is, “How do you *feel* while preparing for guests?” Are you angry and annoyed, frustrated that you have all this work to do? Or are you excited at the prospect of spending time with people you love, doing activities that you like, while enjoying their company? Perhaps it’s a bit of a mix: preparing for guests can certainly be stressful, but the joy of seeing people you haven’t seen in a long time makes all the stress and exhaustion worth it.

The season of Advent is a time of anticipation – not for your Christmas guests, but for the *greatest* Christmas guest: Jesus. Over these three weeks – four Sundays – think about how you can prepare your heart for His coming, to welcome Him as He has welcomed you. What spiritual disciplines might you refocus your attention on, making yourself ready for our celebration of His first coming on Christmas? Perhaps Bible reading: if you read 1 chapter of Luke per day starting on December 1, you will finish the Gospel on Christmas Eve. Perhaps prayer: set aside time as a family to pray together each day using an Advent devotional book. Perhaps it is with generosity: giving of your time and our treasure to provide for the Christmas needs of someone who would otherwise go without. Perhaps you focus on your worship life: gather with your church family for all of our Sunday and midweek services, enjoying fellowship within the body of Christ while we anticipate Christ’s coming together. Or you can engage in a mix of these and more!

Whatever you do to prepare for the coming of the greatest guest of all time, it is nothing next to what He has already done for you. After all, He put aside everything, emptying Himself to become one of us, wearing our flesh and living with us for time. All so we can come to dwell with Him for eternity.

The season of Advent

The season of Advent is a period of four Sundays set aside for preparation for the celebration of the Nativity. This is a time of anticipation and joy, filled with special music and other activities as we look forward to Jesus’ coming and prepare our hearts for the celebration of His birth. Join us to prepare for the coming of Christ in our worship services this month:

“Collecting Our Prayers”: On the Sundays in Advent, Pastor Vossler will preach about prayer, and how God answers our prayers to shape us and guide us to be the people that He calls us to be.

“To Us a Child Is Born”: During Advent, join us on Wednesday evenings for dinner and fellowship at 6 PM (provided by the church), and stay for worship at 7 PM as we explore who this child is, promised by God and foretold by prophets. Deacon Don Barnard and Pastors Emeriti Samuel Reith and Richard Hoogerhyde will open up for us some of the titles given to this child in Isaiah 9:6- “And he shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

December 6 – “Wonderful Counselor” with Deacon Barnard

December 13 – “Mighty God” with Pastor Emeritus Reith

December 20 – “Everlasting Father” with Pastor Emeritus Hoogerhyde

December 24 (Christmas Eve) – “Prince of Peace” with Pastor Vossler

Our Christmas Eve celebration begins at 6:30 PM as we sing old favorite Christmas Carols in the church sanctuary to prepare our hearts for worship. The worship service will begin at 7 PM as we join together to read the story of Jesus’ birth, sing His praise, and give thanks to Him for what He has done for us. Pastor Vossler will wrap up the Advent Sermon series “To Us a Child Is Born” in his sermon on Jesus as our “Prince of Peace.”

Finally, our Christmas celebration culminates on Christmas Day with worship at 9:30, when Pastor Vossler will conclude the sermon series on “Collecting Our Prayers” by looking at how God answers our prayer to “Set Us Free” from our sins.

St. Paul Stephen Ministry Corner

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”
(Galatians 6:2, NRSV)

“You must understand this, my beloved: Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak” (James 1:19a)

We in Stephen Ministry are striving to create a safe, non-judgemental, caring visit that will allow for a compassionate walk with Jesus to a healing outcome of a personal situation.

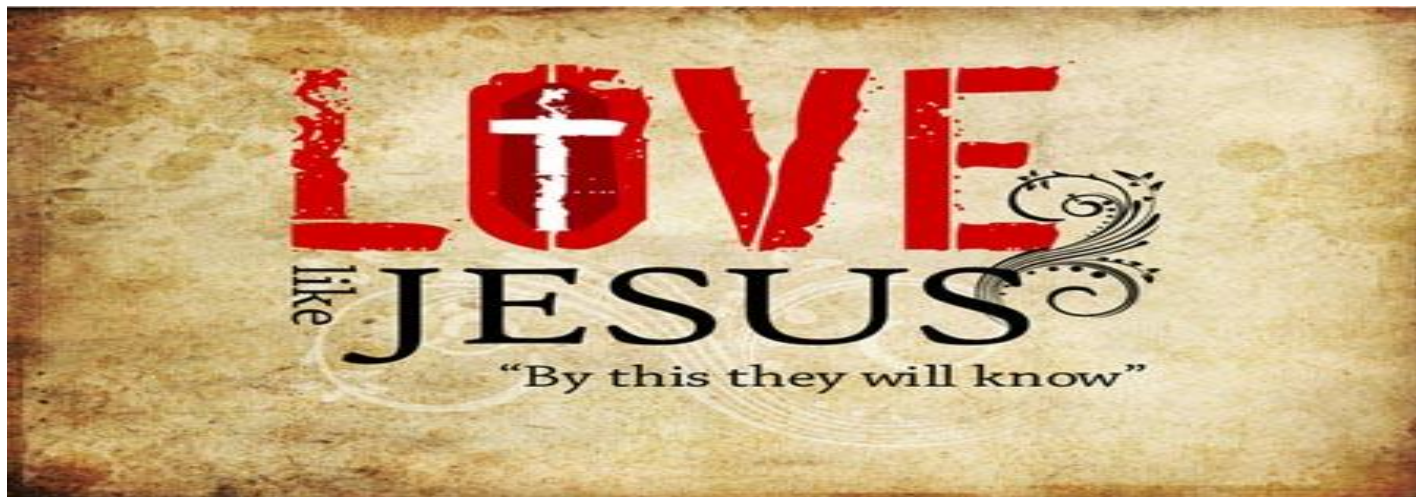
Your Stephen Minister will be actively listening to your thoughts, fears, and feelings of anxiety as you explain your situation to better understand the challenges you are facing and validate those feelings.

Throughout the bible, God listens to His people. He hears our prayers, praise, sorrow, grief, request and complaints. He hears the words in our hearts and minds that we speak and don't speak, and responds! He sent His Son, Jesus, to share our suffering and to guide us to a new life in Him. As Stephen Ministers, we are trained to put aside our personal concerns and focus on the other person's needs. We actively listen to the situation the other person is facing and walk with Jesus to a satisfactory outcome. Jesus is listening, we are listening, let us help.

"Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear"
Isaiah 65:24



Confidentiality is the main foundations of this work and is stressed throughout Stephen Ministry. If you would like to contact a Stephen Minister or are interested in becoming a part of this ministry, please contact Michelle DeCoe 989-513-1736, or speak with Pastor.....also, be sure to visit stephenministries.org to learn more.



“When God tells us He knew us before we were born in our mother’s womb, we can hardly say life doesn’t begin at fertilization. When God tells our days are numbered and He will decide when our life is over, we can hardly ask for our life to be taken prematurely rather than dying a natural death. As you ponder God’s Word and stand up For Life, your witness will have remarkable power and you, only you, will be impactful in your response. So, even if you are going it alone, you can and should contribute to the message For Life, and God will bless your efforts.”



**Save the dates for Life Week 2024!
Join us January 14 - 20, 2024 for Life
Week. Each themed day of Life
Week explores a distinct aspect of
life ministry through local activities,
online educational events, and
interviews.**

**For more information about Life
Week 2024, scan the QR code or
visit lutheransforlife.org/life-week-2024/. Questions? Email
lifeweek2024@lutheransforlife.org**



Virginia Flo, Lutherans For Life – A LifeQuote from Lutherans For Life
• lutheransforlife.org Hurting from abortion? Word of Hope can help.
Word-of-hope.org; 888-217-8679



**Wild Game Dinner-January 19th
@ 6pm
Featuring Guest Speaker: Doug
Roberts “The Deer Professor” of
ConQuest Scents/Farms**

Important Dates for upcoming Ladies Aid activities. We will request volunteers and provide details closer to the dates.

Dec 16, 2023 Holiday Cookie & Gingerbread Decorating

Thank you!

Thank you to all who helped with Sunday School clean-up/clean-out 😊

Thank you to Randy Engblade, Mike Schweigert, Don Retzloff for the craftsmanship of the 3 crosses that will go on display 2/11/24.

Thank you to Ladies Aid for the many things they take on around the church and community. 😊

SOCIAL MEDIA

We are on the web: www.stpaulsanford.org

Social Media and Website-In a continuing effort to keep our church website current and interesting, we are going to begin posting pictures of our members engaged in the various activities held at the Church and elsewhere on google and Facebook. Children will require special permission. If you would prefer not to have any pictures of you posted, please let Linda Mitchell know.

MIDLAND COUNTY NEWSLETTER ONLINE – Subscribe here (very informative):

<https://www.co.midland.mi.us> and search Midland County Newsletter.

MICHIGAN MINUTE: Weekly E-news & Events of the Michigan District, LCMS

<http://www.michigandistrict.org/connect/publications/michiganminute>

SMART PHONE USERS: There are two free apps available for your devices that pertain to your Lutheran Beliefs? LCMS app is free and provides great information including a Daily Devotion. The other is Luther's Small Catechism app which is also free. If you have questions or would like to check it out and need assistance please contact the church office.

The Lutheran Witness is now a free digital app. Once subscribers download the free *Lutheran Witness* magazine app, each new issue automatically will be sent to their newsstands for convenient viewing. Note: While the app itself is free, you will need a paid subscription to the magazine in order to receive it via the app. If you have any questions or would like to see whether the magazine is available for your device, visit www.cph.org/witness to learn more or to download the app. You may also call Concordia Publishing House at 800-325-3040.

Lutheran Service Book - EBook Edition at enews@cph.org **OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA:**

www.facebook.com/thelcms

www.twitter.com/thelcms

www.youtube.com/thelcms

www.lcms.org/socialmedia

KITCHEN GARBAGE Bags: ALL garbage bags removed from the Kitchen **MUST** be placed in dumpster and **NOT** left outside the back kitchen door.
RECYCLING: A large bin for recycling only has been placed outside the back kitchen door ... THIS IS FOR RECYCLING ONLY! We also have smaller recycling receptacles around the church which are marked with a recycling symbol.



LADIES AID

The third Wednesday of every month is set aside for our monthly meetings at 9:00am

Ladies Aid Board

Christy Martin-President / Carolyn Sutton-Vice President

Pam Kastl-Secretary / Vicki Barnard-Treasurer

Questions may be directed to: Christy Martin

817.757.9577 email CKM57@me.com or

Carolyn Sutton 989.631-3953.

BULLETIN / NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

If you have information you would like placed into any upcoming bulletins or newsletters, please submit to the church office via email at stpaul Luther@tds.net, calling 687-2824 or by placing it in the church office mailbox located between the restrooms downstairs. Don't forget to state the date(s) you'd like your information to run.

DEADLINES

Newsletters 20th (monthly)

Bulletins Wednesday's by Noon

Voter's Meeting is 12/10 @ 11am.

Men's Breakfast: 2nd Saturday of the month

Ladies' Bible Study: 4th Saturday of the Month

Euchre Night: 3rd Saturday of Month 7pm

LifeLight Bible Study: Tuesdays @ 7pm and Wednesday @ 1pm

Confirmation Classes: on Tuesday Nights 5-6:30pm.

Joy to the World, The Lord has come!

The Reith's invite the ladies of St. Paul to celebrate an afternoon of Christmas fellowship Thursday, December 7th @ 1pm, 2152 Lynn Rd. Sanford. Please RSVP to Ann Reith, or use the sign up sheet on the bulletin board 😊

Youth Movie Night-

Saturday, December 9th



at 6pm

Pizza/Popcorn/Campfire S'mores for movie discussion. 😊 Featuring "The Polar Express"

Youth servant night December 13th as we are in charge of the Advent Dinner @6pm. All youth welcome😊

We are forming a **Youth Ministry Board** that will focus on the planning of education/activities designed for our congregation's youth. Please let Gerianne or Pastor know if you can help.



For more information about youth group, Sunday School, youth bible study and

events, please use the QR code to get to the form.

Wild Game Dinner-January 19th
6pm. Featuring "The Deer Professor"
Dave Roberts of ConQuest
Farms/Scents

"BECAUSE WE CARE"

Prayer Request: If you or someone you know are in need of prayers please call Edna Rottiers at 989-687-9687. **Those** with additional prayer request please complete a prayer slip and give to one of our Elders before the service or to one of the Ushers during the offering. Your prayers are important and our Lord does promise to answer.

Pastoral Care: Please contact the Pastor @ cell 973-303-8252, office 989-687-2209, or email stpaulrev@tds.net. The Church Office (989-687-2824) / cell (989 859-9300) email stpauldeacon@tds.net, or Deacon Don Barnard (989-751-7726) email: esocidnator01@gmail.com. Or stpauldeacon@tds.net if you or anyone you know are in need of a visit from the Pastor or Deacon whether it's an illness, hospitalization, nursing home or shut-in. It is important to us that we receive these communications to plan a call or visitation. May God's blessings be upon you today and every day!

Our florist is, **HANNAH'S FLOWERS**, in Midland. She will be making us a \$25 arrangement. Please continue to return the vases back to the church to help keep the price lower. All other florist prices were higher. You will continue to make your flower payment to the church. Any questions, please talk with Carolyn.

Thank you,
Carolyn 631-3953

December Altar Guild representative
is Carolyn Sutton-989.631.3953

To our families with small children: Relax! You and your children are welcome to our worship service! Being in worship with you to observe and participate in the service will help them to learn how to behave in church – and they will learn that best by watching you worship on a regular basis! Sit anywhere in the sanctuary that you wish. The last two rows of pews are set aside for families with small children, but you don't *have* to sit there. In fact, sitting close to the front so your children can see what's happening may help them to feel more involved in the service. If they need something to keep



their hands occupied, please ask one of the ushers for a copy of the children's bulletins for them to color. If for any reason you need to take your children out of the sanctuary so they can calm down, feel free to bring them into the bathroom at the back of the church. In addition, at the bottom of the stairs we have a cry room to the right, as well as the fellowship hall to the left. With the speakers in the basement, you will be able to hear the service while your child calms down. If your children don't want to sit still or be quiet through the whole service, there is absolutely nothing wrong with them: they are young and learning. The sound of children in worship is the sound of the Church's future.

Please be on the lookout for "phishing" emails and Texts that look like they were sent from Pastor. If you get an email or text asking for something from Pastor, read the from line at the top to see that it was sent from "**stpaulrev**", **or the Pastor's phone #, or ask Pastor.**

The bad guys are searching trying to scam people.

If you are interested in private Communion

...for whatever the reason. Pastor Vossler and Deacon Barnard are willing to share the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior in a private setting. Please contact at their listing for Pastoral care.

THRIVENT

Thrivent Action Team Dollars: St. Paul Members who belong to Thrivent Financial have a unique opportunity to provide financial help for a project here at St. Paul. Each Thrivent member is eligible to receive \$250 twice per year from Thrivent to contribute to a St. Paul project. Examples of projects include: parades, Wild Game Dinner, Easter Breakfast, Harvest Dinner and many others. If you are a Thrivent Member that would like to help us with Thrivent Action Team Dollars on future projects please contact the church office to be placed on a list. Your help is greatly appreciated!

CHOICE DOLLARS

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO TOOK THE TIME AND MADE A PHONE CALL TO THRIVENT FOR THE CHOICE DOLLARS. I'M ASKING EVERYONE WHO HAS A THRIVENT POLICY TO CALL, EVEN IF IN DOUBT REGARDING YOUR POLICY ELIGIBILITY. CALL 1-800-847-4836 THEN PUSH 1. THIS IS A PHONE CALL, NOT A COMPUTER GENERATED VOICE. THEY EVEN SPEAK ENGLISH AS THEY ARE BASED IN APPLETON, WISC. CALL IN APRIL 2023, JULY, OCTOBER, AND THEN AGAIN IN JANUARY 2024. THESE FUNDS ARE DIRECT DEPOSITED INTO THE CHURCH'S BANK ACCOUNT, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO HANDLE THEM. THESE ARE 2022 EARNED DOLLARS BEING GIVEN IN 2023. NEXT YEAR MAY BE MORE OR LESS DEPENDING ON THE ECONOMY.

-WILLIAM P. MITCHELL



St. Paul Coffee Mugs are available for \$5.00. If interested, please see Linda

Mitchell or Margie Dittmer

Mission of the Month: In December is the **Life Clinic of Midland County.** The LifeClinic, provides information so individuals can make the most informed, empowered decision possible for their physical, mental, and emotional health and that of their unborn child.

LWML 2024 Michigan District Convention- June 28-30, 2024 at Amway, Grand Rapids

LWML Prayer Day/Spring Rally 2024 at St Paul, Sanford. Date to be determined. For more LWML information, Please contact Diana Kausch.

Sanford Food Pantry – Please continue your support of this very worthwhile local ministry. . There are refillable canvas bags from the Midland County Emergency Food Pantry available on the food pantry table in the fellowship hall. The bags have a suggested list of items and instructions. You may take these bags home and place the purchased items in the bag and return it to the church. The bags will be delivered to the Sanford Food Pantry the last week of the month. The empty bags will be returned to the church to be used again. Thank you for all of the items and monetary donations. *Your donations are appreciated, but please note that the Food Pantry does not accept: 1) weight-loss products; nor 2) food items with an expired date. If you prefer to make a monetary donation, please put in the Public Relations Mailbox. Thank you for your consideration in helping those less fortunate. Please make the check payable to Sanford Food Pantry*

Current needs are: Boxed Potatoes- Scalloped, AuGratin, Mashed.

Pictorial directory- Please check with Linda, Margie, Ruth or Kathy to help retrieve yours from the office. ☺

Has your contact info changed? If so, please contact the church office (687-2824) or stpaulutheran@tds.net and provide us with the changed information (address, phone, email or any other information).

BlackTop Project-We are accepting donations for the parking lot work needing to be done. Please make your donation out to the church and note that the amount should be directed to parking lot.

Social Media and Website-In a continuing effort to keep our church website current and interesting, we are going to begin posting pictures of our members engaged in the various activities held at the Church and elsewhere on google and Facebook. Children will require special permission. If you would prefer not to have any pictures of you posted, please let Linda Mitchell know.

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Prayer Request: *If you or someone you know are in need of prayers please call or email Edna Rottiers at 989-687-9687 / hughrottiers@gmail.com . Those with additional prayer request please complete a prayer slip and give to one of our Elders before the service or to one of the Ushers during the offering. Your prayers are important and our Lord does promise to answer*



Advent Services

Sunday Services 9:30am-
Midweek Service 7pm -
Dinner 6pm

First Sunday in Advent 12/03-

Midweek Service Wednesday, 12/6-

Second Sunday in Advent 12/10-

Midweek Service Wednesday 12/13-

Third Sunday in Advent 12/17-

Children's Program 12/17 4 pm-

Midweek Service Wednesday 12/20-

Fourth Sunday in Advent 12/24-

Christmas Eve Caroling/Service 12/24 6:30pm

Christmas Day 12/25-9:30am

December



Birthdays and Anniversaries

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | Sanford Shines Parade 6pm | 9am Christmas Decorating Tom DeCoe |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Advent I Communion 9:30am Scott Gross | | Last Peanut Brittle making 9am Confirmation Class 5pm Logan Brawt Caden Chubb | Advent I Communion 7pm-Dinner 6pm Rene Yarbrough | Pastor Hoogerhyde Bible Study 2:30pm | | Men's Breakfast 8am Youth Movie Night 6pm Michelle DeCoe |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Advent II 9:30am Voter's Meeting 11am | | Confirmation Class 5pm Janet Landskroener | Advent II 7pm- Dinner 6pm Trevor Hulbert | Pastor Hoogerhyde Bible Study 2:30pm Lula Foco Mackenzie Kastl | | Cookie/Gingerbread Decorating 12pm Euchre Night 7pm |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| Advent III Communion 9:30am Children's Concert 4pm | | Confirmation Class 5pm | Advent III 7pm- Dinner 6pm | Pastor Hoogerhyde Bible Study 2:30pm Don Barnard Randy Engblade Trustee Meeting 6pm | Lauren Brawt Gabryella Grubaugh Jonathan Laplow Bill Walser | Ladies Bible Study 9am |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| Advent IV 9:30am Christmas Candlelight 6:30pm | Christmas Day 9:30am Service | Confirmation Class 5pm | Warren Robinson Bob & Charlene Burnison-Annv | Pastor Hoogerhyde Bible Study 2:30pm Conner Smith Youth Board 6pm | | Sandra Hoogerhyde |
| 31 | | | | | | |
| New Year's Eve Service 9:30am | | | | | | |

December Volunteer Schedule

| | 3-Dec | 10-Dec | 17-Dec | 24-Dec | 31-Dec |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ACOLYTES | Jeffrey & Sam | Lucas & Garrett | Bradyn & Deklan | Jackson | Natalie & Madison |
| ALTAR FLOWERS | Open | Open | Open | Altar Guild | Open |
| ALTAR GUILD | Carolyn Sutton 989.631.3953 | | | | |
| GREETERS | Laura Juengel & Marilyn Bowen | Laura Juengel & Marilyn Bowen & Jace Eshleman | Sally Putnam | Bill & Ruth Draves & Deklan Finney | Andrea & Dave MacDonald |
| FELLOWSHIP | Myrna & Christy | Open | Open | Open | Open |
| ORGANIST | Heidi Stecker | Heidi Stecker | Sara Glynn-Dishaw | Sara Glynn-Dishaw | Sara Glynn-Dishaw |
| PROCLAIMER | Pastor Christopher Vossler | Pastor Christopher Vossler | Pastor Christopher Vossler | Pastor Christopher Vossler | Pastor Christopher Vossler |
| SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF | Gerianne Barnard | Gerianne Barnard | Gerianne Barnard | Gerianne Barnard | Gerianne Barnard |
| USHERS | Jack Moellar & Duane Grubaugh | Edna Rottiers & Carolyn Sutton | Edna Rottiers & Carolyn Sutton | Elders | Elders |
| ELDERS | Mark Sprenger, Bob Burnison, Deacon Donald Barnard, Deno O'Connor, Bill Mitchell, Larry Terbush & Mark Burns | | | | |