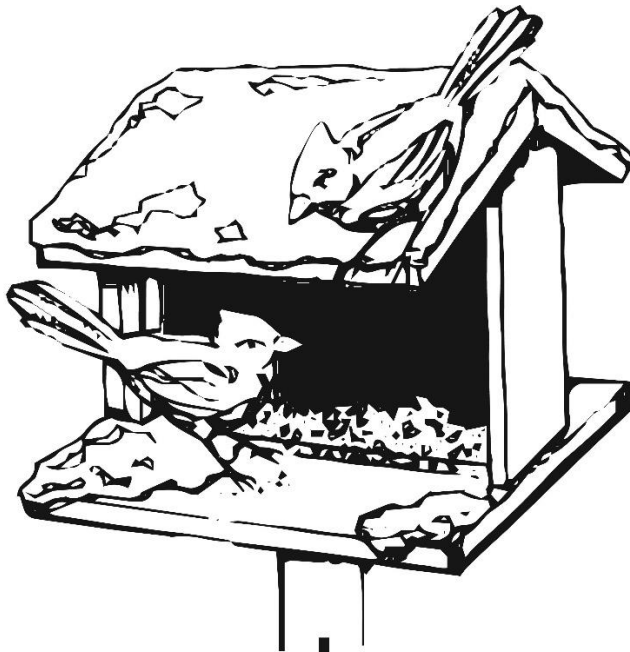


The Epistle

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

December 2024



December

Gathered to Go . . . to study God's Word, Worship together; and to walk with Christ by loving, serving and nurturing all God's people where ever they are and whatever their circumstances.

From Pastor Lori

Dear Siblings in Christ,

I'm curious...what are your hopes for this Advent and Christmas? Where do you expect to meet Jesus in your celebrations? Where would you like to meet God in your daily life?

At the heart of Christmas is the simple truth that God comes to meet us in Jesus Christ, and in coming into our lives, saves us from sin and death by reconciling us to God. At the heart of Advent is the expectation of Jesus' coming ... and our watchful, hopeful, waiting for his appearing. As you celebrate these sacred seasons, I encourage you to think about how God is preparing you to meet Jesus in the days and weeks ahead. Keep awake and alert for signs of God's kingdom. Keep faith in God's presence in all situations. Keep hope that God brings good out of evil. At the same time, expect to be surprised by the unexpectedness of the meeting.

By the time Epiphany rolls around, we may discover that our best hopes for Advent and Christmas failed to come about. We may discover that instead of doing the stuff we wanted to do, we ended up doing things we never anticipated doing. And yet, if we enter these seasons open to God's will and movement in our lives --like Mary and Joseph and the shepherds-- we may also discover that God came into our lives in the most amazing, unexpected and life-changing ways.

After all, maybe our best hopes for Advent and Christmas have nothing to do with decorations or presents or family gatherings, but instead our prayers are answered when by God's grace, love and mercy, we discover that God's kingdom has come among us, and God's will has been done for us, as well as in and through us.

We have a lot planned at St. Paul's in the next month. It's my prayer that God uses each item on our calendar to strengthen your faith and deepen your love for God. Invite your friends to join you. After all, you never know how God might work through your kindness and compassion to answer your neighbors' prayers and fulfill their best hopes for this month.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Lori

A Quote from Martin Luther

“This is what is meant by ‘Thy king cometh.’ You do not seek him, but he seeks you. You do not find him, he finds you” -

Martin Luther

Church Council News

Staff Christmas Gifts

In with your weekly giving envelopes there is an envelope for Staff Christmas Gifts. If you wish to donate to these gifts, please place your donation in the envelope/or an envelope between December 1 and December 22. These gifts will be given to the staff (Pastor, Jennifer, Cathy, and Peter.) at the end of the year. Thank you.



Faith Formation

During Advent we will be looking at four words that are often associated with the season: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. We'll discover what they mean from a Biblical Perspective as well as the role they play in our life of discipleship.

Classes meet on Sunday mornings at 8:30 am and on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 am. You pick the time that works best for you! (The Wednesday option is hybrid. Please see our website for the Zoom link)

In January... The Sunday morning class will start a 12-week study on three of the Old Testament Prophets, Jonah, Joel and Amos. Join us to learn what these minor prophets have to teach us about the importance of slowing down and making time for God in our lives. Classes start **January 5th**.

The Wednesday morning class will be doing an 8-week study called, Forgiveness: Received from God, Extended to Others. Classes start on **January 8th**.

Contact Pastor Lori if you would like to reserve a book for one of the January studies, or if you have any questions about Faith Formation at St. Paul's.



Social Ministry

Angel Tree



We have “adopted” a family in our community this year for Christmas. There is a Christmas tree in the Narthex with white angel tags. “Boy” or “girl” and ages and ideas will be listed on the angels. There are also family angels with ideas for the family. We ask you to take an angel and fill the item on the angel. You could ask a friend to help. Please wrap the package and attach the angel tag to the gift and place under the tree. We are asking to have all packages to the church by December 22nd for delivery. If you have any questions,

please contact



Thank you for your

support for this family.

Hunger Offering for December

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me in.
Matthew 25:35

Each month we collect an offering to help feed hungry people and help hurting communities in our county and around the world. Sixty percent of the offering is used to combat world hunger. Forty percent is given to local organizations to help them “feed” people either physically, emotionally or spiritually. This month, the local part of our hunger offering will be given to **Yates County Food Program/ProAction.**



Your offering can be placed in the offering plate at the back of the sanctuary or mailed directly to church. Remember to designate the amount you want to give on the hunger line of your envelope or write “Hunger Offering” on the memo line of your check.

Thank you for helping to care for our neighbors near and far!

Grab and Go Lunches

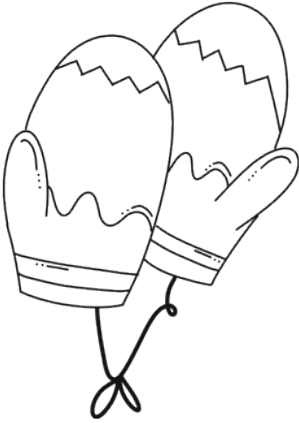
We will be serving Grab and Go lunches **December 13th and 27th**. I know December is a busier time of year and we appreciate any help you will be able to give. **December 13th we will be serving Beans and Franks**. We have a package of hotdogs for each crockpot. We also will need 5 dozen individually wrapped dinner rolls, 5 dozen individually wrapped cookies and 5 dozen apples. **On December 27th we will be serving goulash** and we have hamburg for each crockpot. We will need 4 crockpots, 5 dozen individually wrapped cookies and 5 dozen apples. You may contact [REDACTED] if needed. The signup sheet will be on the bulletin board. Thank you for helping with these lunches.



Paul's Place

An update on one of our newest ministries: Over the past several months, Paul's Place has acquired 2 new guests and 2 new volunteers. We continue to provide food, fun, games, music, pets, stories, and exercises for those Individuals who come to stay for 4 hours each month; thus giving their caregiver a period of time to do whatever they enjoy but are not always free to do. A new guest came to us this past Thursday and his wife seemed more relaxed when she later came to pick him up. I asked if she had an enjoyable "free time". She was all smiles when she answered, "Oh, yes, I went to sit by the lake and read a book". We are thankful to God for this opportunity to serve, and the Holy Spirit for guiding us on how we serve. Please contact [REDACTED] if you would like to volunteer or if you want more information.

The Sharing Shed



Thank you so much for the monetary support given the Sharing Shed recently. The shelves look well stocked for the time-being! Thank you also for continuing to bring in items to be put into The Sharing Shed to help our neighbors during the month. Thank you also to all who are helping to manage The Shed in one way or another. All help is appreciated. The weather is changing and getting so much colder. During the month of December, we are asking for hats, mittens, scarves, and warm children's socks. There is a great need for these items so if we can help in a small way with our Sharing Shed that would be wonderful! These items can be left in the box next to the Social Ministry table in the Narthex. Of

course, hearty soups are also welcomed! Thank you so much!

A Global Social Ministry Advent Opportunity **Core Values: Service, Connectivity and Generosity**

During Advent and Christmas, we will be participating in Bishop Miller's Advent Giving Challenge for Ambulances for Zimbabwe.

Starting December 1st, churches across the Upstate NY Synod will be raising money to ensure that our Siblings in Christ in our Sister Synod of Zimbabwe can receive proper medical care. Each ambulance cost \$40,000. Our Synod is striving to raise enough support for up to four vehicles. The first 20 congregations to donate \$1000.00 will have their donations matched!!!

You can use one of the specially marked envelopes on the information table in the narthex for your donation, or mark the "Other" line on your offering envelope with the word: "Ambulance". We will be collecting donations through January 5th.

Watch the ambulance travel from Upstate New York to Zimbabwe on the poster near the Social Ministry table.

Thank you for your generosity!



Ring the Bell

We are ringing the bell for The Yates Christmas Program on Friday, December 20th. Our time is 9:15 AM - 1:15 PM at Morgan's Grocery store. The signup sheet is on the bulletin board.

Worship

December News from the Pews

Advent has arrived and the time for preparing for Christmas is upon us. Pieces of our liturgy will change with this season of candle lighting and preparation. Join us for this beautiful time of year.

As we light the Advent wreath each week, we will sing two verses of the hymn: *"We are Waiting for Jesus"* found in the new hymnal supplement, All Creation Sings. Our Gospel Acclamation will be the second verse of a favorite hymn: *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*. In place of the Apostle's Creed, we will be using an *Advent Credo* which is a responsive reading. The Offertory Hymn is entitled *"Unexpected and Mysterious"* which is sung to the tune of *"Hymn of Joy"*. Our Communion pieces, *Holy, Holy, Holy*, and *Lamb of God* are taken from Setting Ten in the ELW. We will not be reading from the Psalms and our Gospel reading will be from the Gospel of Luke.

These changes are not meant to confuse us or make worship difficult, but as we sing or say the words of these different pieces, may they enhance the meaning of the Advent Season for each of us as we wait with expectation for the beautiful gift of Christmas.

First Sunday of Advent December 1, 2024

Jeremiah 33:14-16

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Luke 21: 25-36

Hymn of the Day: "My Lord, What a Morning" ELW 438

Second Sunday of Advent December 8, 2024

Malachi 3:11-14

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6

Hymn of the Day: "Hark A Thrilling Voice is Sounding" ELW 246

Third Sunday of Advent December 15, 2024

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

Hymn of the Day: "Now the Heavens Start to Whisper" ACS 901

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 22, 2024

Micah 5:2-5a

Hebrews 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-55

Hymn of the Day: "No Wind at the Window" ACS 906

Christmas Eve Tuesday December 24, 2024 8:00 PM

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-20

Opening Hymn: "O Come, All ye Faithful"

Hymn of the Day: "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

Hymn of Praise: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Communion Hymns: "Away in A Manger"; "O Little Town of Bethlehem", "The First Noel"

Candle Lighting: "Silent Night"

Sending Hymn: "Joy to the World"

No Christmas Day Service

First Sunday After Christmas Sunday December 29, 2024

A Service of Lessons and Carols

Brunch Church with an invitation extended to the members of St. Mark's Episcopal to join us that morning.

"Come Worship the Lord, for WE are His people, the flock that He Shepherds."

Worship Leadership

	12/1	12/8	12/15	12/22	12/29
Assisting Ministers	████████	████████	██████	██████	██████
Ushers (2)			██████	██████	
Greeters	██████	██████	██████		
Readers	████████	██████	██████	██████	
Altar Guild					
Sound Board	██████	██████	██████	██████	██████
Computer	██████	██████	██████		██████
Counters	██████	██████	██████	██████	

Christmas Eve Service Survey Results

In order to accommodate the needs of our members, the Worship and Music Committee asked the congregation for its input about the time of our Christmas Eve service. The times offered for worship at St. Paul's were 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM Christmas Eve, December 24. The survey was made available for two Sundays during the month of October, with the results being announced at the November Annual Meeting. The Worship and Music team asked that each person fill out just one survey.

35 surveys were returned with the results being 15 votes for 4:00 PM and 20 votes for 8:00 PM. This vote was very close as you can see, but the Worship and Music team felt that with the higher number of votes for 8:00 PM that would be the worship time set for Christmas Eve. We have been invited to join St. Mark's Episcopal members for worship at 5:00 PM that evening which is an earlier option if one wishes to worship earlier than 8:00 PM.

In addition to the 8:00 PM Christmas Eve Service, there will be a joint service of candlelight and Holy Communion with St. Marks' Episcopal Church held at St. Paul's on Christmas Eve held at 11:00 PM.

On the survey was also the consideration of a 10:00 AM Christmas Day service. Out of 35 surveys there were only 5 votes for a Christmas Day service. This led the Worship and Music Team to make the decision that there would not be a Christmas Day service held at St. Paul's this year.

We would like to thank everyone for their input and making this decision one that reflects the feelings of the congregation for Christmas Worship.



★ Saint Mark's Episcopal ★
Saint Paul's Lutheran

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

SERVICE OF STILLNESS

December 18th, 6:30 p.m.
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church

CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24th, 5:00 p.m.
Saint Mark's Episcopal Church

December 24th, 8:00 p.m.
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church

December 24th, 11:00 p.m.
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church

LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 22nd, 5:30 p.m.
Saint Mark's Episcopal Church

December 29th, 10:00 a.m.
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church

Opportunities to Help with Christmas Worship

Christmas Flowers: We will once again be collecting donations for Christmas Poinsettias to adorn the sanctuary for Christmas and to remember our loved ones. If you would like to remember someone with a poinsettia, please include your monetary gift in the offering plate marked "Poinsettia". Please have the name/names of your loved ones to Jennifer by Sunday December 15 so they can be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

Christmas Eve Worship: There will be a signup sheet for Worship Leadership on Christmas Eve. It is separate from the regular sign up. If you are willing to help, please sign up on that sheet.

Christmas Tree Decorating: The two Christmas Trees will be up and ready to decorate on Saturday December 21. Everyone is invited to help decorate them at 10:00 AM with the "Chrismons". The decorating generally takes about an hour.

Brunch Church: Watch for a signup sheet for Brunch Church which will be a service of lessons and carols on Sunday December 29 at 10:00 AM. We will worship and then join together for a meal...so look up those delicious recipes and bring them along to share! The members of St. Mark's Episcopal will be invited to join us that morning for worship and brunch.

Save the Date for Brunch Church!

Join us on Sunday, December 29th at 10:00 am for a service of Lessons and Carols and brunch! We will be joined by our Siblings in Christ from St. Mark's Episcopal Church. A sign-up for bringing a dish to share is available on the bulletin board across from the church office.



Congregational Care



Church Directory

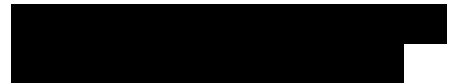
An updated **church directory** will be available in January. This is a wonderful tool for contacting your fellow members at St. Paul's. Please take a moment to check your information and let Jennifer know by the end of December if there are any changes/additions to your address, phone number or email.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays



Anniversaries



"Shower" Each Other with Messages of Love

Each month, we will "shower" someone from St. Paul's with messages of love. Please take a moment to send the person/s listed below a note of encouragement. May God use our communications to remind the recipient of God's faithful presence and love.



Memorials

Dick Nielsen

Phil Darrow

Charles Christensen

Clem Nielsen

Arlene Stillwell

Dan and Karen Malte

Greg and Sheila Disbrow

Les and Wanda Wood

Virginia Wagner



IN LOVING
Memory

Reminders

Prayer Requests in Public Places

Prayer is an important part of our faith. It is one of the ways we support each other during times of illness, crisis and grief. This is a faithful and powerful practice. Our intentions are often in the best place. However, some people prefer to keep their situation private. If you would like to include someone on the prayer list in the bulletin, during worship or through an email, please ask for their permission to make it public. Thank you.

Office Hours for the Month of December

Please check the weekly announcements for the office hours!

Community Events

Penn Yan Area Council of Churches
Ecumenical Prayer Service
Preparing for Advent

Tuesday
December 3, 2024
12:15pm

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
135 Hamilton Street
Penn Yan

All services are posted on the Penn Yan Area Council of
Churches YouTube page

Thank You Notes

The family of Charles Christensen family would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for the wonderful luncheon that the parish life committee provided after the funeral services for our father. The generosity of everyone involved was greatly appreciated. *Doug, Dale, and Mark Christensen, Ritchie and Debbie Lent, and Diane McIntee.*

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Hope Offering. We were able to give a gift of \$1750.00 to help towards Elyse Calder's medical expenses!

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gift
\$1610.00 to support The Well.
Your generosity and faithfulness
is greatly appreciated. Thank
you for shining your light -
Sara

NEWS FOR THE JANUARY 2025 EPISTLE IS DUE DECEMBER 20TH