

worship *Nurtured & Equipped To Witness & Serve* prayer love mission

December 2020

This newsletter is a monthly publication of St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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**CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**Join us – on line – for Christmas worship:**

**Christmas Eve –**

- ◆ *Family Christmas Eve service* (includes our kids' virtual Christmas Program)
- ◆ *Traditional Christmas Eve service*

**Christmas Day -- [or the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas (Dec. 27)]**

- ◆ *A Lessons and Carols service*

**New this year! An Outdoor Candlelight service!**

\*\*Dress warm... and join us in the parking lot at 4:30pm or 9:00pm. We'll gather around campfires and share Christmas greetings – with face coverings and physically distanced, of course.

We'll hear the beloved Christmas story, light candles, and sing "Silent Night."

We'll celebrate the gift of Christmas in all its simplicity – the gift of Emmanuel, "God with us!"



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**COVID-19 TASK FORCE**

Greetings to you all from the COVID-19 task force. At the 11/16/2020 council meeting, we were in unanimous agreement to immediately retract in person worship, continuing with our communion services only at this time. This decision was not made lightly. Your pastor, council, and Covid task force routinely follow the daily and weekly local and regional Corona Virus data available. As the numbers have continued to increase in the past few weeks, keeping everyone's safety at top priority, we have followed recommendations from local and regional organizations, including the Sauk County Health Department. While we want nothing more than to worship together in our sanctuary, we must look at the big picture, putting all collective needs above individual wants and desires.

(continued on page 4)

## Pastor's Reflections...

You will name him **Jesus**... he will be called the **Son of the Most High**... he will be called **Son of God**... his name shall be called **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**... they shall name him **Emmanuel**...

This is just a sampling of the rich variety of names attributed to Jesus throughout the bible. Each one adds something more to how we understand him. Each one gives a clearer and larger picture of *who* this One is that we wait for. Of all these names, the one that has struck me, the one that has captivated my thoughts and ponderings as we prepare to enter into the seasons of Advent and Christmas this year, is **Emmanuel** – “*God with us*.”

The implications of the name **Emmanuel** are both comforting and unsettling, I think. It is comforting because it reminds us that Jesus has come to share the danger as well as the struggle of our everyday lives... that he wants to weep with us and to wipe away our tears...and that Jesus, the Son of God, longs to share in and be the source of our laughter and joy, too! On the other hand, it can also be a bit unsettling. It is one thing to claim that God looks down upon us from a safe distance and speaks to us—via long distance, we hope; but to say that God is right here, in our midst... is to put ourselves and God in a totally different situation. God is no longer the benevolent, calm observer “in the sky”...the kindly caricature with a white beard. The image of God becomes that of Jesus—the One who laughed and wept, who fasted and feasted, and who, above all, was fully present to those he loved. He was there with them! He is here *with us*!

Time and again, both in sorrow and in joy, I have been very aware of God's presence in my life. How about you?

...Listening to a child tell a story, seeing the intensity of joy and life sparkling in his/her eyes.

...Sitting at the bedside of a beloved member knowing he/she only has hours or days to live.

...Sharing in the struggles of a friend's or family member's medical diagnosis and prognosis.

...Laughing and sharing stories around a crackling campfire.

...Listening to and praying for healthcare workers pleading with people to “stay home, wear masks.”

...Hiking along a mountain trail or snowshoeing in the freshly fallen snow.

...Praying with and for those who are grieving the death of loved ones.

The list could go on...and on...and on...

By calling Jesus, **Emmanuel**, we recognize that God is committed to living in solidarity with us—

to sharing our joys and our pains...to defending and protecting us...to suffering and celebrating all of life with us. This “*God with us*” is a very close God—even when it feels as if God is far away.

Throughout all time...throughout the scriptures, God has shown a desire to be in close relationship with humanity...has promised to *be with* God's people. Just think about it...

When Moses was bartering with God about going back to Egypt to free the Israelites, what does God say? “*I will be with you...*” (Exodus 3:12).

And God was with him. God worked through the plagues to get Pharaoh to relent and free the people. And when they left Egypt, God was still with them, leading the way with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night...sustaining them with manna and quail and fresh water during their wilderness travels.

Then Joshua replaced Moses as Israel's leader and the Promised Land lay before them...but it was not going to be handed over to them on a silver platter. Would God do through Joshua the same mighty things that God had done through Moses? This is what God said to Joshua, “*No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.*” (Joshua 1:5).

And do you remember Jesus' final promise to his disciples in Matthew's gospel? “*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*” (Matthew 28:20). That is the promise of **Emmanuel** to us—even TODAY...on the brink of Advent and a holiday season that will not be what any of us want...in the midst of a deadly pandemic that has taken the lives of at least 255,000 people in the United States alone!

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to always be *with us*. The Christ child whose birth we will soon celebrate is **Emmanuel**, “*God with us*”—God's promise to be *with us*—in the tough times and trials of this life...in the ordinary moments of life...and in everything in between. The Christmas story—the story of Mary and Joseph, and the baby, Jesus—is the story of God choosing to come and dwell *with us*. It is the story of our God who loves us so much that God became *one of us* – to take our lot upon God's own self...to be *with us*...to give us life!

Dear friends, God is *with us*... and God continues to come to us in simple, ordinary ways... offering extraordinary gifts—new life and forgiveness in baptism...gracious words to guide us on life's path... welcome food for the journey of faith...and fellowship and support and encouragement along the ways in the body of Christ, the church—whether we are together or separated. Let us never forget – in Jesus, the One we call **Emmanuel**, God is *with us* – now... and forever! Blessings! *Pastor Karen*

## From Your Council President

### The Simple Things...

*It's all about Jesus, asleep in the straw. This infant, this King...this Savior for all. So I don't need bells to be ringing...because I'll join with angels singing, "Gloria!"*

-Third Day, Christmas Offerings Album

I have been working my way through a book of daily readings taken from the sermons of Martin Luther. One of the Advent readings is from a 1522 Christmas sermon (a few years back!). But the beloved story, as you know, remains vital in its simplicity. A simple young girl living a simple life. Nothing noteworthy by earthly standards, certainly. And yet...her simple willingness to have faith changed the world. A more than simple birth that went largely unnoticed by the "important" people of the day, yet it had what Luther called "heavenly implications" for the hope and love born into that little family and to us all!

Faith, hope, love, family. Simple words...but, oh, extraordinary meaning! Words engraved on my own mother's gravestone...but have I really grasped why those words meant so much to her? It hits me with more clarity this year. Maybe because plans are different. Life has HAD to become simpler. For every time I have said, "I wish it was simpler," have I ever really made the effort to make it so? Not really. It's so difficult to say no to requests for my time. God only knew I would need an extreme push to make that leap...and it still is hard, almost painful, to simplify. But, this year, choices have to be made with more intention and purpose.

Becoming more prayerfully "intentional" has become somewhat of a theme for our council, the re-opening Task Force and the Music and Worship Team this year. I pray that you can feel the deliberate, purposeful, and loving intent behind the decisions that these groups and Pastor Karen have made.

I want to outline a few recent worship decisions for you here.

1. All large group indoor, in-person worship services in our sanctuary and gathering space have again been suspended until further notice. Recorded website services continue.
2. Communion only services (by appointment) continue to be offered weekly.
3. Yes, this means Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will look different than usual:
  - \*\*\* Two Christmas Eve services will be pre-recorded and posted on our website (a family style service and a more traditional service)
  - \*\*\* We intend to offer two short OUTDOOR Christmas Eve services at 4:30 and 9:00. We will have fire pits aflame, hear that beautiful Christmas Story read, and light candles as we sing Silent Night outdoors under the stars. Simple.
  - \*\*\* Christmas Morning Lessons and Carols service will be pre-recorded and posted.
4. Church offices will be closed for Christmas/New Years, so no communion services will be scheduled for December 27 & 30. Pre-recorded services will be posted.
5. Pastor Karen, individual musicians, small tone chime and bell choirs, decorators, and the service technology guy will be working hard to offer you all of these meaningful options for your "simplified" Christmas celebrations.

It is our hope that these different service models, while not as grand as usual, will offer a way for you and your family to enhance your faith experience of the simple peace, joy, hope, and love of the season. The council extends a heartfelt "Merry Christmas" to each member of our church family and those dear to you.

On behalf of council,  
Cheryl Warming, Council President



Call Alice at the church office at 356-3230 or Pastor Karen at 434-3397 to learn more and make your appointment.

**Sunday 8:30, 9:30 or 10:30 am**

**December 6, 2020  
December 13, 2020  
December 20, 2020**

**\*\*No Communion Service on  
December 27, 2020**

**Wednesday 5 pm, 6pm, or 7pm**

**December 2, 2020  
December 9, 2020  
December 16, 2020  
December 23, 2020**

**\*\* No Communion service on  
December 30, 2020**

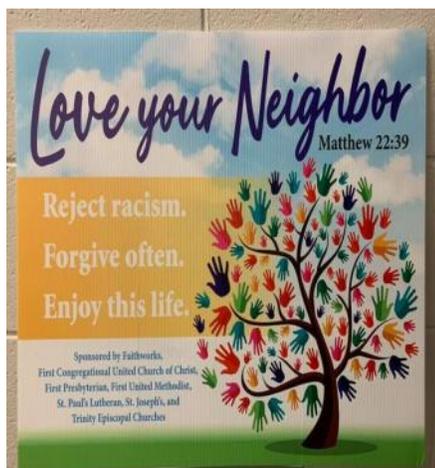
**\*Sunday services will continue to be recorded and posted on the website.\***

**COVID-19 TASK FORCE** (continued from page 1)

We appreciate the continued support we receive from the congregation and community and know you understand the tough position we are all in during this trying time. We will continue to keep you posted with updates as more decisions are made. Please trust these decisions will continue to be based on current data and recommendations. We are comforted knowing you understand our decisions are based on the safety of all. Please note: **EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY ALL WORSHIP WILL BE BACK TO COMMUNION SERVICE ONLY** in the gathering space. As you call the church to sign up, we will indeed make sure you understand. Again, we appreciate your understanding and the reasoning behind it and we truly hope to have better news for you soon.

Yours in Christ, your COVID task force

Pastor Karen Hofstad, Cheryl Warming, Kelly Rodenschmit, Jim Larson, Becky Brenson



**New Yard Signs  
Still Available.**

Join us in sharing a positive and needed message in our community. You can pick up a sign during church office hours...or if you would like one delivered, call us at 356-3230.



**American  
Red Cross**

**American Red Cross Blood Drive**  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
727 8th Street  
Baraboo WI

**Friday, December 18, 2020**

**11:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

**By Appointment Only**

## Prayer List

(Updated November 2020)



### *Sympathy to the family and friends of:*

Tom Madland and Keith Stich

### *Health concerns, etc.*

Shelley Born  
 Sue Clingman  
 Amber Squires (Sheri Marsh's daughter)  
 Kendra Miescke  
 Kathy Anderson (Ralph Heiser's sister)  
 Laurie Carpenter (Linda Jenks' niece)  
 Bev Mickelson  
 Bob Smelcer  
 Joan Lord (Trish Jackson's aunt)  
 Tom Karls (Trish Jackson's uncle)  
 Mark Steinhorst (Lorraine Steinhorst's son)  
 Rita Zimmerman (friend of Penny Snyder)  
 John C. Drescher (John P. Drescher's son)  
 Richard Beckwith  
 Loretta Christian (Glenda Volz's mom)  
 Melissa Schadde  
 Kyle Jensen (friend of Ron & LaVonne Bruni)  
 Sharon Madland  
 Lori Rudolph  
 Doug Howard (Sam Howard's brother)  
 Gene Harms  
 Marjorie Ahlf  
 Julius "Jay" Henke  
 Scott Roblee  
 Jerry Drescher  
 Jane Vlaak (Karen Schubring's mother)  
 Kevin Schell  
 Jack Woodward (Alice's father-in law)  
 Jon Hofstad (PK's brother)



### **In the military:**

Sawyer Gard  
 Noah Reppen  
 McKenna Smith  
 Sierra Bowden  
 Jacob Warren

## Council Summary

### November 2020

**Financial Update** – October income was \$8803 less than expenses. Giving was \$17,277 and expenses were \$26,080.

The proposed budget for 2020 required weekly contributions of \$6,247.17 – The actual weekly giving income to date is \$ 4910.72

### **A comparison through : October**

Net Cash last month 51,888

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Income	215,210	211,161
Income w/LSS	236,100	231,661
Expenses	239,699	226,559
Prin. Reduction	20,272	81,427
Accounts Payable	440	350
Balance on Hand	7,141	38,922
Mortgage	136,786	23,370
Inc. vs Expenses	(3,589)	5,102
Checkbooks	71,293	113,401
Net Cash	6,701	38,572

- Yard signs are still available at the church.
- Discussed the 2021 spending plan/budget.
- Need to fill 3 council positions in 2021.
- Annual meeting is set for January 31, 2021
- Youth Committee is seeking feedback and input from congregations members regarding youth programming.

The net council meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

\*More complete council information can be located on the bulletin board. *Current* financial and committee reports and approved minutes from the previous month are posted on this bulletin board as well.

## Parish Nurse Notes

Christmas 2020

Christmas 2020 probably will not resemble any past Christmas. Large gatherings with family and friends will be curtailed. Church services will take on a different mode. Many traditions will be gone.

What are we to do?

To connect with those who usually gather try a zoom gathering. If no internet, try a conference call, when all try to talk at the same time resulting in a few laughs. Try a new tradition, such as a craft that has been waiting for you over the years. Get out the recipe book and give one of those involved recipes a try. Never know what you might have been missing.

Take out your church directory and send a greeting to all who live alone. If you need stamps let me know. Or better yet, try calling and singing "We Wish You A Merry Christmas". Who cares if you can't carry a tune. It might bring a smile to both of you.

Spend time outside. Even a few minutes in the crisp air will boost your mood and lower your stress level.

NOW is the time for self care. Self care is a radical art that many have lost sight of. Pour yourself a cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate and notice the sunlight, the winter birds, or many even a deer passing through. Fill a tub with hot water and just relax. Find that book you have been meaning to read for the last year. Turn on some music and sit quietly and listen, a lost art. Try dancing to the music. Who care who sees you.

And don't forget to take time and read and reread the beautiful Christmas story found in your Bible in the book of Luke. When all is said and done, that is the true meaning of Christmas, born in a stable to live among us and to show us how to live.

Merry Christmas 2020 to all and a Blessed 2021.

Take care of your health and it will take care of you.

Yvonne



The Property Committee is in need of volunteers for snow removal from the sidewalks and entryways. We have a snow blower, shovels and ice melt that will be provided. This responsibility would be a week to week basis. Questions call Duane Steiner at 356-7467.

If you would like to volunteer call the church office at 356-3230 to have your name placed on the volunteer list.



## Altar Flowers

If you have signed up to sponsor altar flowers, the cost is \$20.00 payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Please write altar flowers on the memo line.

December 6 PK in gratitude to St. Paul's

December 13 Memory of Lavona Adams and Jason Higgins by Alice Woodward

December 20 Memory of Nancy Esser by Kelly Rodenschmit



## SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE NOTES

The Helping Hands offering in December will go to the Baraboo Food Pantry which serves those in need in the Baraboo School District. If you or someone you know, can benefit from this service during these uncertain times please either phone or go online for more

information. The Baraboo Food Pantry is located at St Vincent de Paul, hours are Monday and Thursday 9-12.

Recent Helping Hands offerings were collected for the new homeless shelter and St. Paul's was able to send \$430 to the shelter from your donations Thank You!

Also, thank you to all who participated in GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS - a wonderful opportunity to serve the community. Several members who signed up have not turned in their projects. If you are unable to finish your projects, please call Alice Woodward at church office 356-3230 so that we know what's happening.

Please have a Joyous and Blessed Christmas and find comfort in God's everlasting wisdom and love!

The Social Ministry Committee.

Alice Woodward, Kathy Plamann, Nancy Sleight and Karen Hinze



**SPY'S**  
(St Paul's Youth—Elementary)

**Hello St Paul's Families!**  
**Lesson packets available in Church office for Pick-up!**

Please contact me if you have any questions or if you want to start meeting for church school.

I look forward to hearing from you all and growing your child's faith.

Kariann Bauman Bailey  
[stpaulsspys@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsspys@gmail.com)  
608-609-6981



- Dec 2 Moses & Pharaoh
- 9 Wilderness to the Promised Land
- 16 CHRISTMAS BREAK
- 23 CHRISTMAS BREAK
- 30 CHRISTMAS BREAK
- JAN 6 Intro. to the Commandments
- 13 Commandments 1-3
- 20 Commandments 4-6
- 27 Commandments 7-8



**NEEDS YOUR INPUT**

The children of the church not only learn from their class leaders, but by the actions and teachings of everyone they see within the church community. We, as a committee, have met and have some ideas for the youth programming at every age, Pre-k-High School, but we would LOVE to have your input! **Everyone**, not just parents of youth. In the near future you will see information in bulletins and via email. There will be a 3 multiple answer questions and 3 opportunities for your personal input. No names are required, but as always, you can use your name if you would like to.

Thank you in advance.

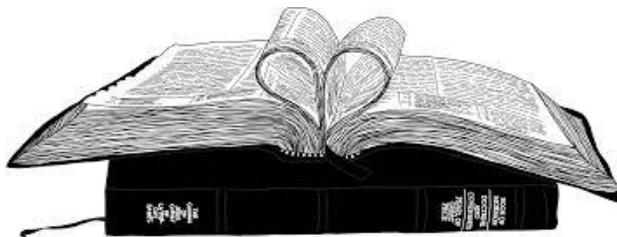
We appreciate your willingness to give insight to our youth programs.



(St Paul's Lutheran Amazing Senior High)

**Meets on the 1st and 3rd  
Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm  
in the SPLASH room.**

**Kelly Rodenschmit**



**DECEMBER  
SCRIPTURE READINGS**

- Dec. 6, 2020 Mark 1:1-8
- Dec. 13, 2020 John 1: 6-8, 19-28
- Dec. 20, 2020 Luke 1:26-38
- Dec. 24, and 25 2020 Luke 2:1-14[15-20]
- Dec. 27, 2020 Luke 2:22-40

*December 23, 2020*



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**CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL**

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<b>Alice Woodward V.P.</b> 608-393-3685 <b>Faith Formation/Growth &amp; Education</b> Adult Education <b>Stewardship of Resources</b> Stewardship <b>Community and World Outreach</b> Social Ministry	<b>Nicole Knuth</b> 608-393-7315 <b>Stewardship of Resources</b> Endowment <b>Community World Outreach</b> Evangelism Thrivent Rep.	<b>Kelly Rodenschmit</b> 608-963-4154 <b>Stewardship of Resources</b> Finance Stewardship
<b>Steve Schick, Sec</b> 608-434-4311 <b>Faith Formation/Growth</b> Adult Education	<b>Karen Schubring</b> 608-393-9927 <b>Community and World Outreach</b> Fellowship	<b>Glenda Volz</b> 608-963-7484 <b>Worship</b> Worship & Music
<b>James "Andy" Larson</b> 608-448-7499 <b>Stewardship of Resources</b> Property	<b>Karen Hinze</b> 608-963-2120 <b>Community &amp; World Outreach</b> Social Ministry <b>Stewardship of Resources</b> Personnel	<b>Molly Brenson Youth Rep.</b> 608-393-7895 <b>Community &amp; World Outreach</b> Evangelism <b>Stewardship of Resources</b> Personnel
<b>Ryan Liegel Youth Rep.</b> 608-393-9465 <b>Stewardship of Resources</b> Property	<b>Council Email:</b> <a href="mailto:council@stpaulslutheranchurch.us">council@stpaulslutheranchurch.us</a>	<b>Find us on</b> 

<b>St. Paul's Staff</b>	Organist/Keyboard	Susan Lappin	Splash	Kelly Rodenschmit
Pastor	Adult Choir Director	Gerald Stich	Parish Nurse	Yvonne Smith
Treasurer	Youth Education	Kariann Bauman Bailey	Admin. Assistant	Alice Woodward
Financial Secretary				

**Web site:** [www.stpaulsbaraboo.org](http://www.stpaulsbaraboo.org)

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