



St. Paul's

"Epistles"

December 2024

Volume 40 No. 1

What are you doing for Christmas? Going somewhere? Staying home? Having family over? People are going to ask you these questions all month long. What will you say? What are your plans?

I hope part of your answer will be "I'll be in church on Christmas!" That's a beautiful statement and witness to what the celebration of Christmas really is. People like to say Christmas is about Jesus but they never really let that make a difference in what they do or where they go. Tell someone why you'll be going to church and invite them along for one of the most profound and dramatic things that they'll ever hear. They'll hear of a promise made long ago that God would send a Savior for us wretched men because we could never save ourselves from our fallen condition. They'll hear that that Savior miraculously took up residence in the womb of a virgin for nine months. They'll hear that she was visited by an angel and humbly embraced this role that God called her to and considered herself blessed to be with child. They'll hear of the bravery of a man who risked everything to stay with girl and protect her and the baby she carried in a town that rejected them. They'll hear of an angelic choir of heaven shattering the silence and darkness for some unassuming shepherds. They'll hear that God in the flesh allows Himself to be born among animals and manure. And, most importantly, they'll hear that all this was done - for them.



That will change someone's perspective on Christmas. Does it change yours? I hope so. Let it make a difference on what you say and do. Be bold and invite someone to come along for the first time. Invite someone to return. There's a ton of people who think this season is about stores getting into the black or make it "just about the kids" and are totally missing out on something that can change their life. Let them see that it changes yours. The Savior was born among us and for us. Come, let us adore Him. The heavens declare His handiwork - let's get in on that. In a time when anxiety, depression, and hopelessness plagues so many, the church needs to declare where people can find hope and healing. The one born in the manger. We point them where to go by we ourselves leading the way. He's the climax to the most profound and dramatic thing we have ever heard and we have a reason to rejoice. Embrace it. Share it. Rejoice in it.

What are you doing for Christmas?

In Christ,
Pastor Suggitt

On The Position of Acolyte

The position of acolyte is somewhat of a confusing thing. Practices and the use of acolytes seem to be very different from place to place. In some places, if you're in Confirmation class you have to sign up to acolyte because it's considered part of the class. When class is done, you're done. Other places, it's a volunteer position for those in Confirmation. Some have the elders light the candles. Some have a Vicar (a seminary student placed to serve there for a year) as acolyte. Near the Seminary in Fort Wayne where I was, some congregations have a field worker (seminary student assigned to a local church) as an acolyte. Some places have whoever shows up do it.

But the office of the acolyte has a history. It was one of the historic orders of service in the church since the 3rd century. The major orders were: priest, deacon, subdeacon; while the minor orders were: acolyte, exorcist, lector, and porter. These minor orders were filled by men already in the ministry who may at some point be appointed to the priesthood. Acolyte means "to follow," and this designation indicated that the acolyte would follow the priest (or pastor as we call it) who was conducting the Divine Service. They were to assist the pastor in various liturgical observances while being an extension of the pastoral office. As such, the acolyte was vested in liturgical garments (we often call them "robes") as he served in the chancel.

Today, the acolyte can still serve a great purpose. In assisting the pastor in the Divine Service, the acolyte can help promote order, reverence, and the awareness that something special is happening when God gathers His people to receive His gifts. The church doesn't look like the world, thanks be to God, when she gathers around holy things. It's different. The movements, gestures, and ceremonies of an acolyte are on purpose and seek to bring honor and attention to the holiness of Christ who comes to us in the Divine Service. We have had more processions and Gospel processions in the last couple of years where a team of acolytes have conducted themselves with reverence in service to Christ and you, His church. This is good. I hope you have thought so as well.

However, some may not like what comes next. You might get upset at me. I understand. Please hear me out. I desire to return the acolyte position to be for the boys alone as it has historically been. We want and need our young men to lean into learning the virtue of serving. To not only serve their congregation but to become men who are comfortable serving their families the things of God. To not look like the world. To step up and lead the way in things that are holy, beautiful, and true. To be introduced, in a small way, to serving the church in the chancel and as an encouragement to consider the Holy Ministry. For centuries, the acolyte was the first exposure of young men to the masculine role of leading worship, an opportunity to serve with the pastor and the other men (deacons, elders) by being vested, by praying, and by visibly leading the Divine Service. Serving as an acolyte gave young men the opportunity to consider the pastoral office as a possible vocation. It may seem small to you, but asking girls to vest similar to the pastor and serve in the chancel can be confusing. We have enough confusion of boys and girls in our culture. Boys are having a hard time figuring out where they fit in and what roles to embrace as the young men God created them to be.

This is not to denigrate our girls. You all know that I have four daughters whom I adore dearly. They are wonderful young women capable of many things and serve in many ways. Yet they realize that God gives different roles to men and women and they embrace that as the best way because that's

how God has set it up. They know that the role of pastor is reserved for men according to 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Corinthians 14:33-35. They know men are given charge to be the head of the family and sacrifice their lives in service to their wives and household (Ephesians 5:22-33). Our women do countless acts of love for our congregation and serve so many roles whole heartedly and for that we are blessed. The beautiful women of our congregations have picked up the slack in many places while sometimes men have sat on their hands. But the distinction of roles is not a bad thing - it's a godly thing. To dress the girls like the pastor and put them in the chancel is confusing. It was a reaction to what the world was doing so as not to seem too different from the world. But we are different from the world. We see the uniqueness and distinction in God making us male and female and embrace it. For that, we need not apologize

Mothers, I want to help raise up godly husbands for your daughters and pastors for your grandchildren. I've started the Young Men's Group with this in mind. The group, informally, is called *Sons of St. Paul*. When we meet, we read God's Word and talk about what biblical manhood looks like. It looks like the fear of the Lord and serving and loving someone other than self. It looks like caring for your church and leading where you can. The acolyte is one of those places for them. We rehearse for the procession and Gospel procession when we meet because we want to do it well as a band of brothers who seek to glorify Jesus with our actions and deeds. Are they nervous? Yes. That's good. To get them out of their comfort zone to serve the congregation is a healthy exercise. We want them to do it. Many young men are too comfortable hiding behind a screen and living in perpetual adolescence as the young women ask, "Where are all the good men?" To confess the name of Jesus is a big deal and we want our young men to embrace it and be formed for the future. As they grow into being godly men, I pray they grow into leading their homes in that same Name and are great husbands and fathers. Our girls and women deserve it. And who knows, maybe someday one of these young men will seek to lead a congregation as a pastor. We need that, too. May God grant it.

The acolyte position will be open to boys in 6th - 12th grade and will be a volunteer position. No one is mandated to serve. This is to say that a boy must enlist. He must commit to the duties and responsibilities and be accountable to the team he works with. They will have a goal - the goal of reverently extolling Christ and serving their congregation. Right now, lighting the candles and processing by themselves or with a team encompasses the duties in the Divine Service. But there are more things that could be added with time. What our boys could use from you is encouragement. Tell them they did well (if indeed they did!) Tell them you're glad to see young men stepping up and taking things seriously in service to Christ's church. We want responsible young men for our daughters, for our church, and for our community. I believe any of our boys who dare to accept the role will, at least in some small way, be the better for it.



IN HIS IMAGE

Navigating Christian Sexuality in a Post-Christian Culture

With the legal redefinition of marriage, the confusion regarding gender, and rapidly changing sexual mores in society, biblical educators, pastors, singles, couples, and parents are looking for guidance in articulating and promoting a positive view of the Christian vision for marriage and sexuality.

Saturday, February 22

8:30am Registration
9:00am Prayer Office
9:45am Session 1
10:45am Break
11:00am Session 2
12:00pm Lunch - Provided
1:00pm Session 3
2:00pm Break
2:30pm Session 4
3:30pm Q&A
3:45pm Closing Prayers

Topics include:

The Christian Worldview and Sexuality; GPS Essentials for Traveling Through Demanding Conversations; Caring for the Child who Identifies as Transgender - Understanding the Big Picture; Christian Responses to Conflict in a Sexually Toxic Culture

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH, LINKVILLE

7292 Kilmanagh Rd. Pigeon, MI 48755

989.453.2271

*Please register on the sheet located at church or call St. Paul

This one-day conference is presented by *DOXOLOGY* - a Recognized Service Organization of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. *doxology.us*

It's LUTHERAN WITNESS time!



It's time to subscribe to THE LUTHERAN WITNESS to ensure a discounted rate. The Lutheran Witness is the official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is published 11 times a year. The new subscription year doesn't begin until March 2025, but orders need to be sent to the District office by December 15, 2024 to take advantage of a discounted District rate of \$21.20/year. (Individual subscriptions ordered directly from CPH are \$24.99/year.) **Make your check out to 'St. Paul Lutheran Church' and place it in the basket on the desk in the church office no later than December 8, 2024.** Late orders will be charged an additional \$2.

ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES



This time of year, the world hustles from one thing to another, always busy and having no rest. The Church, however, makes wise use of her time, grounds herself in Christ, and has peace. As part of your Advent preparations and rest, gather with the Church to receive the peace of our coming Lord as we hear His Word, pray, and sing as ones who long for the King to come even unto us.

LIFE QUOTE

If heaven had been our home, would we have wanted to enter a world of grief and pain, of evil and death? Yet enter it Jesus did to give us His home to be ours forever. So, He loved us in undeserved grace. And so will we sing in the heavenly Jerusalem a refrain like that of our choirs: Hail, thou ever blessed morn, Hail redemption's happy dawn, Sing through all Jerusalem: 'Christ is born in Bethlehem. ' Alleluia.

*A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life •
lutheransforlife.org*

Wed. 12/4 at Good Shepherd,
Caseville
7pm Vespers

Wed. 12/11 at St. Paul, Linkville
6pm Supper
7pm Vespers

Wed. 12/18 at Good Shepherd,
Caseville
7pm Vespers



Sunday School and Youth Group is Busy!!!

St. Paul had 28 people attend *The Greatest Christmas Pageant Ever* at the Cass Theatre on Sunday, November 10th. It was a fun family day outing, and the movie hit on the true meaning of Christmas – Jesus came FOR ALL OF US.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the Adopt-a-Family Thanksgiving boxes. Whether you donated money, or groceries, or helped deliver the packages; your generosity made a huge difference to five families in our community! We are truly blessed to be able to share a bit of what we have with others who need it.



The Sunday school kids and adult choir are busy working on songs for Advent and Christmas. They did a great job singing and playing bells on November 24th. We are singing a few more songs in December, so I would really appreciate having the kids practice at home and at church every Sunday. We will sing in church on December 8th and again on December 22nd.

Giving Manger – last year, each of the Sunday School families received a Giving Manger. It's a faith-based interactive family tradition that encourages acts of kindness and focuses on the joy of giving. It honors the real reason for Christmas: Jesus' birth. Advent season is the perfect time to set up your manger and use it with your family each day in preparation for The Lord's Birth.

Advent Supper will be provided by Sunday School and Youth Group on Wednesday, December 11th at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is invited for dinner and then worship at 7:00 p.m. We will be having homemade soups, fresh-baked bread, veggies, and desserts. I will be making the soups and baking the bread at church that day. Youth and Sunday school families are asked to provide: chocolate milk, white milk, veggies and dip, and desserts. There will be a free-will offering (and we will be selling extra quarts of soup) to raise money for the Christmas Adopt-a-Family gifts. Kids will be asked to help with setup, serving, and cleanup. We will also be putting together Christmas gift bags that evening to pass out to some of the older members of our congregation.

Sunday school will be hosting a **Christmas Hymn Sing** on Thursday, December 19th at 6:00 p.m. The sing-along will last about 30 minutes. Then we will head to the fellowship hall for pizza, cookies, and a family activity. I am hopeful to have all the Adopt-a-Family gifts ready to box up that evening too. We should be done by 7:30 at the latest. Everyone is invited, but I would appreciate it if you'd sign up, so I can order enough pizza.

No class on Sunday, December 29th. But we will resume classes on Sunday, January 5, 2025. Check the coffee hour schedule. We have had a great turnout each week. Lots of folks are enjoying coffee, snacks and Christian fellowship while the kids are in class. If you'd like to provide treats, please sign up for the date of your choosing. I recommend 5 dozen snacks (kids, teachers, parents, and others)

Remember JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!

Susan Schember
586 246-4567

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS UPDATE

St. Paul was represented at the Sebewaing Spirit of Christmas vendor sale on Saturday, November 23rd. Thanks to a great group of volunteers, we were able to sell grave blankets, gift baskets, crafts, canned goods, horseradish, and pies. Most of these items were left over from the bazaar. A special thank you to Jeramy Deming, Rich & Ruth Fluegge, Amy Haag & her kids, Norbert & Liz Reehl, and Josh & Lisa Sprague for helping haul racks and all the items to and from the event; to Josh Sprague for letting us use his enclosed trailer; to Brandy Gunsell for acquiring our spot and manning the tables; to Lucille Welchner for making bows; and to the crew who came in and helped make the grave blankets! This extra sale raised about \$1400. Great job everyone!

The gift baskets that contained food items were taken apart after church on Sunday. Canned good items will go in Christmas adopt-a-family boxes. Grocery store items were placed in the food pantry box. There are still baskets available for Christmas shopping if you're interested. We also still have a few dozen jars of horseradish in the basement refrigerator if you need more.

St. Paul's "Epistles" is published monthly by St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, 7292 Kilmanagh Road, Pigeon, MI, 48755.

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Church Email: lvlpaul40@gmail.com
Secretary's Email: salcido.sandy8@gmail.com

Sunday Worship: 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

From the Small Catechism: Confession

What is confession?

Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

Private, or individual, confession and absolution is available by appointment with Pastor Suggitt. You may call him at 989.551.3976 to set up a time.



Congratulations to Henry Haag and Cade Truemner for making it to States for Cross Country. Henry placed 183 out of 256. Cade placed 47 out of 256. The Lakers team scored 19th overall. Great job boys!

Thank you to Tonya Haldane for replacing the Keurig in the kitchen. Pastor Suggitt and the Elders love having a cup of coffee available in just seconds (without having to turn on the big coffee pots).



You've probably heard this classic Christmas song made popular by Andy Williams back in 1963. Its upbeat music and energetic lyrics suggest just how busy this season can be.

And yes, it just gets busier as Thanksgiving ends and the Christmas season begins. We all get pulled in different directions with increased pressure to get things done, AND to be in several places at the same time.

Whoa! Slow down a bit! Stop! It truly is 'the most wonderful time of the year'. As Advent begins, each day brings us closer to the celebration of the birth of The Savior who was born to save us all.

Our greatest need is forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior. So, when you're feeling rushed, I suggest you slow down, take a deep breath and remember *He is the Reason for the Season* and he's here for you.

Hope to see you at this year's Advent services and on Sundays as well as Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Unto us a Child is Born,

Joe Salcido, the Elder Elder



Braelyn Schwartz

Daughter of Angie (Wildman) Schwartz
Granddaughter of Diane & Jerry Wildman

We so often take little things for granted. Everybody has underwear and socks, right? Not always so.


Braelyn's 'other Sunday School' at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Bay City collected undies and socks for kids for Orphan Grain Train. They collected over 700 items! The kids decorated the boxes.

It's the small things that count.....
Truly a blessing.

It is more blessed
to *give* than to *receive*.

Acts 20:35



Don Fibranz Satchell's Christian Foster Care Home 2662 E. Caro Road Caro, MI 48723	Peggy Kelly 6282 Pine Street Cass City, MI 48726 (989) 872-5086
Wilma Kovach 2700 Knotter Road Owendale, MI 48754 (989) 678-4356	Beverly Liedke 160 Country Bay Drive Room 308 Pigeon, MI 48755 (989) 453-3637
Bonnie Nowaczyk 7305 Main Street Owendale, MI 48754 (989) 553-4286 or (989) 678-4286	Dennis & Linda Schweitzer 2875 Shebeon Road Sebewaing, MI 48759 (989) 883-9197
Jeannine Ziehm c/o Jennifer Scott 5318 Indian Trail Ypsilanti, MI 48197	

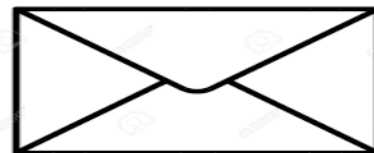


The Lutheran Hour is heard Locally on WLEW Bad Axe at 11:10am Sundays and WSAM 1440 Saginaw at 8:30 a.m. Sundays. OR listen to it anytime anywhere on the Lutheran hour APP on your phone. Download the Lutheran Hour Devotions app and click on Lutheran hour sermons. You can also find the Lutheran hour sermons on the Lutheran hour website at lh.m.org. You can also dial 1-800-944-3450 and you will get the recorded instructions. Hit 3 then 1 and the whole Lutheran hour sermon will play just like you are receiving a phone call.

Keep them in your prayers, maybe give them a call and/or visit them.

NewsLetter
DEADLine

The deadline for the November issue of St. Paul's "Epistle" will be **Sunday, December 22, 2024**. You can email them to Sandy at salcido.sandy8@gmail.com



Your Christmas donation envelope has been included with this issue of the "Epistles". You may place it in the collection plate and any service or mail it to the church. Extra envelopes are available in the church office

IN HIS SERVICE

DECEMBER ELDERS

1 – Joe Salcido & Ken Haley
8 – Ron Tabar & Matt Reibling
11 – 7:00 p.m. Advent
Ron Tabar
15 – Josh Sprague & Robert Haag
22 – Joe Salcido & Ken Haley
24 – 7:00 p.m. Christmas Candlelight
Josh Sprague & Joe Salcido
25 – 8:30 a.m. Christmas Day
Ron Tabar & Ken Haley
29 – Matt Reibling & Joe Salcido

DECEMBER GREETERS

1 – Dale Kunder
Laura, Chase, and Sadie Swartzendruber
8 – Robert & Amy Haag and Family
15 – Annette Prich
22 – Norbert & Liz Reehl and Girls
29 – Marc & Jodi Reinhardt

DECEMBER TITHE COUNTERS

8 – Patti Reinhardt & Kari Ricker
29 – Jylan Shope & Chris Gettel
Brandy Gunsell & Jen Timmons

DECEMBER ALTAR GUILD

Sandy Salcido
Margaret Timmons

DECEMBER ALTAR FLOWERS

Sandy Salcido
Susan Schember

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Dec. 4 – Mitchell Schaper
5 – Wayne Dubs
6 – Cory Ornowski
8 – Ron Dubs, Jr.
12 – Angie Marie
12 – Harold Haag
13 – Joe Salcido, Sr.
14 – KatyAnna Kruse
14 – Suzanne Fritz
15 – Zachary Schember
15 – Grace Suggitt
17 – Kristin Rifenbark
20 – Krissia Krohn
21 – Tammy Timmons
22 – Cody McGee
22 – Ryan Tabar
23 – Richard Fluegge
24 – Matt Reibling
25 – Morris Dubs
26 – Anyssa Mandich
28 – Dennis Schweitzer
28 – Kimberly Krohn
29 – Norbert Reehl
29 – Brady Renn
30 – Kyle Truemner
30 – Randy Dubs
31 – David Gilbert

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Dec. 8 – Dennis & Linda Schweitzer
Dan & Dedra Sherman
28 – Michael & Anyssa Mandich

December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
1 No Catechism	2 6:00 PM Choir	3 6:15 PM Elders 7:00 PM Council	4 7:00 PM Advent Vespers @ Good Shepherd	5	6	7
8 8:30 AM Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 1:30 PM Catechism 7:00 PM Youth Bible Study	9 6:00 PM Choir	10	11 6:00 PM Supper 7:00 PM Advent Vespers @ St. Paul	12	13	14
15 8:30 AM Service 9:30 AM SS / Coffee Hour 1:30 PM Catechism	16 6:00 PM Choir	17	18 7:00 PM Advent Vespers @ Good Shepherd	19 6:00 PM Hymn Sing Along Pizza Pary	20	21
22 8:30 AM Service 9:30 AM SS & Coffee Hr. No Catechism	23 6:00 PM Choir	24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00 PM @ GS 7:00 PM @ St. Paul	25 8:30 AM Christmas Day Service	26	27	28
29 8:30 AM Service No SS No Catechism	30	31				

2024

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