



"St. Paul's

"Epistles"

January 2026

Volume 42 No. 2

FROM THE Pastor's Desk

The following is a portion from a New Year's Eve sermon preached by George Stoeckhardt. Stoeckhardt taught Old and New Testament at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis from 1887 until his death in 1913. Some of his work has recently been translated from German into English for the benefit of the church. This excerpt is taken from one of those recently translated works - *Grace upon Grace: Gospel Sermons for the Church Year*. Although over one hundred years old, solid preaching is timeless.

The close of the year is the time for settling accounts. A smart businessman examines his books and checks to see how much profit he made in the old year, and he is happy when he is able to take a surplus with him into the new year. So also a Christian at year's end should seek a little quiet and open the book in which his works, good and bad, are recorded, reach back into his memory and conscience and determine whether he has been as fortunate and successful in spiritual matters as he was in temporal; whether he in his Christianity has moved forward or gone backward. If we candidly examine our conduct in God's light, then shall we no doubt slam the book closed and bemoan the fact that the heavenly treasure entrusted us yielded so little gain, such meager fruit. Not just this or that moral lapse and failure but our laziness and negligence in fulfilling our heavenly calling, our inactivity and unfruitfulness will come home to our conscience...

We must all today fall down before the King who reckons with us in order to pray for mercy, saying: Lord, have patience with me, I am in your debt! However, we do not want to engage in such foolishness as did the unfaithful servant in the parable [Luke 13:6-9] and add: I will repay you! We would from the very start spoil the new year were we to take along with us the old year's liabilities. No, we would rather today set everything right.

*But how is that possible? Well, we have a Friend and Companion who stands at our side as we enter the new year, who travels through the years with us. It is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever. He is our Surety and Mediator. He foots the bill for us. He has settled accounts for us. He cancels the guilt record of the past year with his blood. He prays that God will have patience with us and give us additional days of grace. Not an extension so we are able to make good the harm done – that he did; but an extension, so we might continue to work in the power of the Lord and take away with us from earth at least some fruit. And so we go, although with great trepidation, in the hand of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ comforted and cheerful out of the old year into the new. (Stoeckhardt, George; *Grace upon Grace: Gospel Sermons for the Church Year*, trans. E. Koehlinger, Steadfast Press 2023, p.57-58.)*

O, Lord Jesus, walk with us again this new year and be the cause and goal of our lives!

In Christ,

Pastor Suggitt

Our Seminarian Noah Dunsmore

LIFE UPDATE



Dear Friends in Christ at St. Paul Lutheran Church,

I hope this letter finds you all healthy and well! Moreover, I pray that each of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving, whether you traveled or stayed close to home. We have much to be thankful for here in the Dunsmore household, but we are especially thankful for the continued prayers and support from all of you during this final year of seminary. Your support has certainly meant a great deal to our family, and though we haven't met, we are comforted to know that you are all thinking of and praying for us, just as we are praying for you. It is hard to believe that the first quarter of my final year of seminary is already complete! Time is certainly moving quickly!

This quarter was certainly a busy one, as I took 17 credits worth of classes! I'll admit that it was a little rough getting re-adjusted to being a full-time student after spending a year away from the classroom on vicarage. As Pastor Suggitt can attest, when you're working in a congregation, your work is singularly focused on the needs of the people entrusted to your care, or in my case as a vicar, the needs of the people and the feedback and instruction from my supervising pastor. You get used to the

rhythms and the workload. As a student, your focus is a little more varied as you give attention to lectures, homework, family life, and life as an attendee of a local congregation with perhaps some additional opportunities for preaching and teaching scattered along the way. Although switching gears can be difficult and was for me, I am still grateful that the seminary formation is structured in this way. Having had a taste for life in a congregation, I now come to class with different questions and thoughts. In a way, fourth year is a year of tying up loose ends, but it is also a year of prayerful meditation on the Office that I will, Lord willing, assume in just a few short months. Whereas before vicarage, many of my questions and thoughts in class dealt with the "what" of theology and practice, now they often deal with the "so what" of theology and practice. Of course, you can't have one without the other. One must continue to learn the "what" in order that the "so what" may have a firm foundation.

In addition to staying busy with classes, I've also taken on a couple additional responsibilities. This year, I am the Student Government Association's chair of Spiritual Life. This means that I am in charge of putting together a joint Advent and Lent devotional with my counterpart at Concordia Seminary St. Louis. As part of this position, I'm also tasked with organizing fireside chats. So far, Rev. Dr. Adam Koontz has given a presentation entitled "Expository Preaching: From Graebner's Day to Ours." Theodore Graebner was a professor at Concordia Seminary in the early 20th century who wrote a book entitled, *The Expository Preacher*, hence the title of the presentation. The gist of Dr. Koontz' presentation was that the primary purpose of preaching for much of Lutheran history was to exposit the biblical text. This does not necessarily mean commenting on it verse-by-verse, but simply to say what the text means. Application of course flows out of this, but Dr. Koontz' point was that sometimes

preaching can jump right to application without first unpacking the meaning of the biblical text, like putting the cart before the horse. I greatly enjoyed the presentation, and I look forward to the future fireside chats I plan to schedule.

As far as our family goes, we have lots to be excited about. The most exciting thing is that we have now begun the placement process for my first call out of the seminary. April 29th is the big day, but there's a lot that happens between now and then. I filled out my placement application back in September, as well as my SET (this is sort of like a "pastor profile" that congregations receive when they are looking to call a pastor). Just this past week, Rachel and I met with the placement director here at CTSFW to talk about our previous experiences in the congregations we've been part of and what we're hoping for in terms of location, setting, etc. Now, all that remains is for me to have my final theological interview which will happen sometime in December or January, continue working on my classes, and patiently wait for April 29th.

Rachel and Eleanor are both doing well. Rachel continues to work as a data analyst for Essex Brownell here in Fort Wayne, a company that distributes magnet wire and other industrial supplies. While she does enjoy some of the work she does and the people she works with, she's ultimately looking forward to staying home full-time with Eleanor once I'm finished with seminary and serving as a pastor. It's not easy to balance work and home life, but I greatly admire the way she's been able to do so this year and am beyond grateful for her love and support during my time in seminary. At the same time, I look forward to her being able to fulfill her dream that she's had even before we were married of being a stay-at-home mom.

Eleanor continues to keep us on our toes every day and bring us immense joy. She's

now walking (more like zooming) around, and it's been so fun to watch her continue to explore the world around her. Although she's not saying many words yet, she loves to say "hi" and "hello," babble, and "read" out loud. She's recently begun to make a lot of word associations which are exciting to see. For example, if you ask her if she wants to go outside, she'll make a beeline for the front door. We are so blessed to be her parents and are excited to watch her grow as the year progresses.

Once again, we can't begin to express just how thankful we are for your love and care for our family. If you ever have any specific prayer requests, please reach out to us. All of you are in our general prayers always. Have a blessed Advent and Christmas!

Peace and Blessings in Christ,

Noah Dunsmore

(248) 212-8149

3517 Redbird Trail

Fort Wayne, IN 46835

nfdunsmore@gmail.com

P.S. Now that I'm back in school, I've also attached a class and textbook list for those interested in seeing what I'm learning at the seminary this final year!

Fall Quarter 2025 Class and Textbook List

Major Prophets (Walter A. Maier III)- This class was essentially a survey of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. In here we spent extensive time translating and discussing key passages from the Hebrew text, with some discussion of the surrounding history of Israel and overarching themes of the books sprinkled in along the way. The textbooks were: Walter A. Maier III, *Class Notes for Major Prophets*; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*; J.A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*; John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel*.

Sem: Luther Text (Roland Ziegler)- This class was just what it sounds like: a seminar style class studying key texts of Martin Luther. Each

student took turns leading the classroom discussion by presenting an outline of the reading for the day and providing discussion questions. The final assignment was a 10-12 page research paper on anything in Luther's theology. Mine was entitled "'From the Pastor as from God Himself: Luther's Doctrine of the Ministry according to His Sermons on John 20:19-31.'" The texts we read from Luther were: "A Brief Introduction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels," "How Christians Should Regard Moses," "Avoiding the Doctrines of Men," "Preface to Romans," and *Great Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*. These works are in volumes 35 and 37 of the American Edition of *Luther's Works*.

Additionally, we read Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* alongside Desiderius Erasmus' *The Freedom of the Will* (what Luther was responding to in *The Bondage of the Will*). These are grouped together in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, edited by Gordon Rupp.

Homiletics III: This final preaching class covered several topics including wedding and funeral sermons, children's sermons, and extemporaneous prayer and devotions. In this class we also conducted a number of classmate sermon analyses. The textbooks were: Donald L. Deffner, *Sermons for Special Days and Occasions* and Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of a Sermon*. Additionally, we read selected wedding and funeral sermons from Martin Luther, Norman Nagel, and David P. Scaer.

Dogmatics III: In this final Dogmatics class, we covered the doctrines of the Church, the Office of the Ministry, and the Sacraments. We spent the bulk of the time examining the Scriptural and Confessional testimonies for these doctrines and made use of a variety of articles along the way to aid in understanding the material. The textbooks for this class were: C.F.W. Walther, *Church and the Office of the Ministry*; Franz Pieper, vols. 2 and 3 of *Christian Dogmatics*; Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert,

eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*.

Theologia II: Preaching- This final class is a little hard to explain but it is the second in a series of three classes on pastoral acts: Baptism, preaching, and the Lord's Supper. This class focused on the theology of preaching, particularly the preaching act itself. It was divided into three units: Preaching as a Theological Act, Preaching as a Rhetorical Act, and Preaching as a Performative Act. Various professors give lectures on different topics pertaining to these units, then in small groups we spent time discussing the plenary lectures and reading various sermons from preachers throughout Church history, especially the early church fathers. The textbooks for this course were: St. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* and Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church*. Some of the sermons we read were preached by: Rev. Dr. Chad Kendall, Martin Luther, John Chrysostom, Hesychius of Jerusalem, Pseudo-Chrysostom, Pseudo-Athanasius, Proclus of Constantinople, Hippolytus of Rome, Melito of Sardis, Augustine of Hippo, and Amphilochius of Iconium, and Gregory Nazianzen.

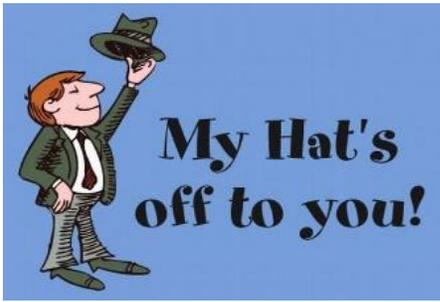
PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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.



- The choir members did an exceptional job this Christmas season. Please take the time to thank them for their dedication.

A thank you also goes to the Ellery Fritz family. After Ellery passed away, Shirley and her family made a generous donation to the choir fund. I used the money to purchase all new Advent and Christmas music. We called this season, Ellery's Christmas. Merry Heavenly Christmas Ellery! We're sure you're having the time of your life celebrating in heaven!

If you are ever looking for an organization to donate money to, the St. Paul Choir would be grateful to be the recipient.

Faye Errer

- Thanks to the Christmas Committee for doing such a wonderful job decorating the church! You guys did an exceptional job again! The poinsettia cross on the north narthex tree is beautiful!
- Thank you to Tonya Haldane for keeping the church and fellowship hall clean and tidy each week.
- Thanks to Jodi Reinhardt for always doing such a great job as our financial treasurer. You've been doing it for a long time, and we know you're hoping to pass the torch, but until then please know how much you are appreciated!

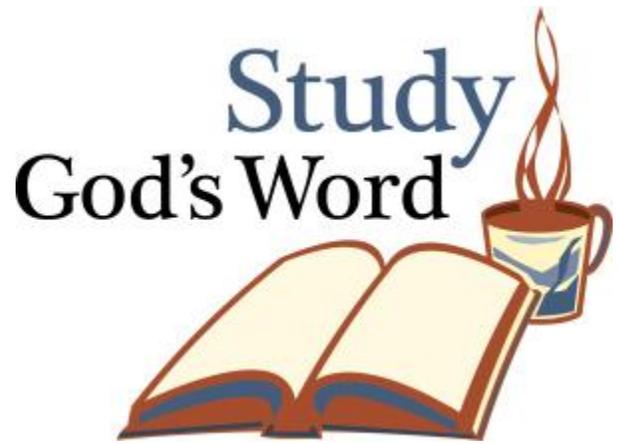


Don Fibranz Satchell's Christian Foster Care Home 2662 E. Caro Road Caro, MI 48723	Peggy Kelly 6282 Pine Street Cass City, MI 48726 (989) 872-5086
Wilma Kovach 2700 Knotter Road Owendale, MI 48754 (989) 678-4439	Bonnie Nowaczyk 7305 Main Street Owendale, MI 48754 (989) 553-4286 or (989) 678-4286
Dennis & Linda Schweitzer 2875 Shebeon Road Sebewaing, MI 48759 (989) 883-9197	Jeannine Ziehm c/o Jennifer Scott 5318 Indian Trail Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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



The deadline for the February issue of St. Paul's "Epistles" is Sunday, January 18, 2026. You can place them in the newsletter mailbox or email them to Sandy at salcido.sandy8@gmail.com.



Come and grow in faith as we continue to read and digest God's Word on Wednesday nights at 6:30 p.m. beginning on January 14, 2026.

My deepest and most sincere thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Christmas family adoption effort such a success. Your generosity—through purchasing gifts, wrapping supplies, and gift cards; donating funds; and delivering items to the designated schools—made a meaningful difference for the families we supported.

Because of your kindness and collective effort, this initiative was an incredible success. Our congregation's compassion and willingness to come together was truly inspiring, and it was wonderful to witness such teamwork and care in action.

Every contribution, no matter the size, was deeply appreciated. Thank you for helping spread hope, love, and generosity to those in need.

With sincere gratitude,

Wendy Ewald



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 lhm.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.



The regular monthly meeting of St. Paul Ladies Aid was called to order by President Ruth Fluegge on Sunday, November 2, 2025, immediately following our worship service.

The Mission Statement of St. Paul Lutheran Ladies Aid Society was recited by all. The Minutes of the prior meeting were read and accepted by all.

Ruth Kumaus presented a Recap of the 2025 Bazaar. After expenses, the net earnings for 2025 as of the date of the meeting were \$21,055. This amount compared to \$16,528 for 2024.

The Recap presented a breakdown of earnings by sales areas such as Cookie Walk, Lunch, etc. A goal will be to try to identify earnings for most categories as a means to evaluate possible changes. For example, crafts produced only \$200 in sales. Therefore, should crafts be discontinued in order to gain floor space for areas with greater sales potential or to gain more space for other areas? Overall, the Bazaar has received many positive compliments. Not having enough room to move around or to better view items for sale was the most noted negative.

The Ladies also discussed other issues such as lack of help. The challenge given was to identify issues and possible solutions. These issues will be addressed at our next regular meeting in February. Ruth Kumaus presented a Financial Agenda with various topics for discussion. (A copy of the Financial Agenda is included with the actual Meeting Minutes and can be provided upon request.)

1. Sunday School Bazaar Sales
The Sunday School sold \$788 in cookies. Ruth Kumaus proposed to issue a check to the Sunday School in the amount of \$1,000. Our practice has been to issue a check for that amount, even though sales have been lower. Melissa Deming seconded the motion. Approved.
2. Seminary Student Payments
The Ladies Aid did not issue payment to a student in January. Ruth Kumaus raised the question as to whether a payment should be made to our new student for two semesters or just one payment for the current semester. We had no assigned student for January and thus no payment was issued. The Ladies discussed the issue. The consensus of the group was that a student would only be supported for the current semester. If there were no student for a semester, then no payment would be made for that period.
3. Thank You to Lunch Supervisor
A new Lunch Supervisor assumed duties this year. This change involved a significant learning curve as well as a significant commitment of hours. After discussion, Ruth Fluegge proposed that the Ladies Aid present Brandy Gunsell with a thank you in the amount of \$500. Shirley Fritz seconded the motion. Motion passed.
4. Kitchen Flooring
The Kitchen Flooring has become a risk factor due to several tiles breaking, becoming loose from the foundation and chipping. Therefore, Ruth Kumaus proposed that the Ladies Aid replace the current kitchen flooring. The Trustees estimated the flooring would cost \$7,000 to replace. (This amount is just a general estimated and not supported by an actual flooring quote.) Ruth K. stated that our 2025 budget had these funds available. Wanda Dubs seconded the motion. Ruth K. will ask the Trustees to obtain a formal proposal. If it is \$7000 or less, the Trustees will be instructed to

proceed. If it is greater than \$7,000, the Ladies Aid must meet to reconsider the amount as any amount over \$7,000 will be charged against next year's budget. Wanda Dubs seconded the proposal. Motion passed.

5. Charitable Donations

Ruth Kumaus presented a list of proposed donations for consideration. (A copy of the listing is on file with the formal minutes. A copy is available upon request.) The listing was reviewed with no suggested changes. Ruth Kumaus stated the 2025 budget included funds sufficient to cover all the proposed donations. Margaret Timmons seconded the proposal. Motion passed.

Ruth Kumaus stated that the Savings Account has a balance of \$15,701. The Funeral Special Projects Fund amounts to \$3,745. Ruth noted that if we had to replace the double wide refrigerator and the smaller stove, the estimated cost would be about \$14,500. So, the Savings Account lacks sufficient funds to cover the amount.

Ruth Fluegge called for any New Business.

Joyce Metzger raised several questions/issues for discussions.

1. Thank you to donors. Joyce asked if anyone sends Thank Yous to our donors such as the Sugar Company. No one was sure but would check with Sandy to see if she is doing so, if she needs help or if someone needs to volunteer to send Thank Yous.
2. Altar Flowers – confirmed that all flowers in the refrigerator should be set out somewhere. Sometimes the flowers from a prior week are still useable. These flowers should also be put out somewhere where they can be seen.
3. Refrigerators – Comments were made that the basement refrigerator has now been fixed and is running at a consistent temperature. The Ladies preferred to use the basement for flowers. Ruth Fluegge made a motion to change. Joyce Metzger seconded. Ruth Kumaus volunteered to clean out both

refrigerators and switch out the flowers and horseradish.

Several other Bazaar issues were raised such as where to position greeters. Perhaps not just at the main entry doors but also have a greeter at the entry to the Fellowship Hall.

Bazaar Signage was also discussed. Ruth Fluegge stated the wooden signs that are put out at various road intersections are getting old and new ones are needed. Ruth Kumaus stated the signs used at the various areas are also getting old. Ruth Fluegge volunteered to locate places that produce signs and obtain costs for the group to review.

Melissa Deming introduced the question that she and Brandy Gunsell had been discussing – should the Bazaar be discontinued and replaced with stand-alone soup sales, bake sales, can good sales, etc. The issue is getting help, having space, etc. Ruth Kumaus stated that if we decide to make the change, please give at least one year's notice. She has already been buying basket items and baskets are not conducive to a standalone sale. The Ladies will discuss this again in February. However, most wanted to at least go forward with a Bazaar yet in 2026.

Running out of product such as Take N Bakes and soups after a short time is also an issue. Because of limited stove and refrigerator space, increased amounts cannot be made. A suggestion was made that we don't allow our church members to buy on the date of the Bazaar. Instead, at a different time, soup and Take N Bake sales would be made to our members and their friends. Yes, our members could have lunch, but they just would not be allowed to buy pre-orders or take-outs. The downside is that more work would be involved as an additional cooking date would be needed. This issue will be further discussed in February

Wendy was on the Altar Committee and came into the meeting stating that the flower vases were looking terrible. In discussion, the suggestion was that new vases could be purchased as a memorial for our recent members such as Janet Truemner, who passed away. Wendy made the motion. Marge Weisenbach seconded the motion. Motion passed. The meeting closed with singing the Doxology and reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Kumaus, Treasurer

IN HIS SERVICE

ELDERS

January 4 – Ken Haley & Joe Salcido
11 – Ron Tabar & Matt Reibling
18 – Josh Sprague & Joe Salcido
25 – Ken Haley & Robert Haag

GREETERS

January 4 – Ron & Diane Dubs
11 – Matt & Kari Ricker
18 – Wendy Ewald & Boys
25 – Derrick & Paula Holland and Family

ACOLYTES

January 4 – Brettly Ewald
11 – Saige Ondrajka
18 – Anna Haag
25 – Sadie Swartzendruber

JANUARY SNOW PATROL

January 4 – 8:30 a.m. **Fluegge**
11 – 8:30 a.m. **Deming**
18 – 8:30 a.m. **Volunteer**
25 – 8:30 a.m. **Timmons**

TITHE COUNTERS

January 11 – Liz Reehl & Kim Krohn
January 25 – Jen Timmons & Brandy
Gunsell



At the present time we are short one trustee. Therefore, we would appreciate it if some of our members would volunteer to be in charge of snow removal on the sidewalks

and steps around the church occasionally. If you are willing to volunteer for this chore, please sign up on the Snow Removal calendar at the south entrance. Your help would be greatly appreciated.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 1 – Elaine Renn

1 – Josh Sprague

3 – Terrance Dubs

Renley Lee Ricker

4 – Titus Sprague

6 – Donald Fibranz

8 – Zachory Gilbert

10 – Barbara Adams

10 – Richard Metzger

13 – Maxwell Albrecht

13 – Robert Haag

14 – Lyle Osantoski

15 – Miranda Becker

17 – Ron Wissner

18 – Connor Becker

19 – Marge Weisenbach

20 – Jan Stoeckle

21 – Derrick Holland

22 – Eugene Kady

22 – Patti Reinhardt

23 – Judy Wright

23 – Austin Bruce

26 – Hadley Dean Ricker

26 – Silver Sprague

26 – Meleah Timmons

31 – Aaron Gaeth

31 – Jim Roe

31 – Wayne Tabar

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

January 18 – Chuck & Kim Dorland

25 – Richard & Char Metzger

26 – Robert & Amy Haag

30 – Richard & Lucille Welchner

January

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				1	2	3
4 8:30 AM Service 9:30 AM SS /Coffee Hour 1:30 PM Catechism	5	6 6:15 PM Elders 7:00 PM Council	7	8	9	10
11 8:30 AM Service 9:30 AM SS /Coffee Hour 1:30 PM Catechism	12	13	14 6:30 PM Bible Study	15	16	17
18 8:30 AM Service 9:30 AM SS /Coffee Hour Voter's Mtg. 1:30 PM Catechism 7:00 PM Youth Bible Study	19	20	21 6:30 PM Bible Study	22	23	24
25 8:30 AM Service 9:30 AM SS /Coffee Hour 1:30 PM Catechism	26	27	28 6:30 PM Bible Study	29	30	31

2026

St. Paul's "Epistles"



*St. Paul Evangelical
Lutheran Church*

*7292 Kilmanagh Rd.
Pigeon, MI 48755*



Epiphany

