

The Epistle

A newsletter for the Members and Friends of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Greetings to you during this Advent and Christmas Season!

I will always be grateful to those who give their time, talents, and treasures here at St. Paul's. I see God at work among us, as I have been touched to hear many stories of faith by those people, I encounter in my ministry among you. I have been blessed to be welcomed into people's lives in both the good times and the bad, and in those moments, to get to know people better and hear how God is present in their lives. Each year in pastoral ministry brings me gratitude for my faith community, and I stand in awe at how God equips and guides us.

There are specific things you can measure to determine the health of a congregation. During our church council meetings, we see many of these specific things through our council reports, such as our income and expenses, our asset balances, how many new members we have received, students affirming their baptism, 3rd graders receiving their bibles, and how many homebound and hospital visits are being made. The list can go on and on. But one indicator that is harder to measure (but is so very critical to the health of the ministry) *is the way people feel about the ministry*. People feel good, bad, and indifferent to many things, but if people don't feel that something good or positive is happening, then moral can go down, and the ministry is impacted. My sense is that the church is to be a place that feels and acts differently, because living the Gospel is very different from the ways we would normally engage with the world and others. This place is to be a refuge, a light on the hill, an island in the sea, and it is to be a place that is filled with love, caring, kindness, generosity, and hospitality. Because Jesus embodied these actions, as his disciples, we are to do likewise.

And so, I pray each day that God will lead us to be bold in our vision and where we are fearful, doubtful, or uncertain we will see the doors that God opens for us. Although things may seem impossible, with God, all things are possible.

Finally, with Sunday being Christmas Eve, the worship and music committee and church council attempted to find the best middle ground for worship times. You will see in this newsletter the times of the Christmas Eve worship services, as well as a simple worship service on Christmas morning. I pray you will find the time to give thanks for the simple joys of life and work toward a loving peace in your hearts for the good of the world. I give thanks to God in my prayers for each of you, and for our shared ministry.

Gracious God, you are before us, inviting us to the promise of your kingdom, you are behind us, moving us to trust your promise. We bless you for your Spirit in our midst. We bless you for the experience of communion. We bless you for the relationships and shared vision growing during these days. Amen.

In gratitude,
Pastor Bill Coleman



**December 2023
and January 2024**

PASTOR

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FEAST & CELEBRATION

DIRECTOR

Mike King

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CONGREGATIONAL

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Jim McMichael

267-885-8026

council@stpaulstelford.org

SEXTON

Al Lightner

215-368-0374

**Church Council
Contact
Information**

Church Officers

Jim McMichael,
President
267-885-8026

Ray Landis
Vice President
610-287-5499

Cathy Hurley
Treasurer
215-258-1211

Wayne Young,
Secretary
610-287-8897

**Committee
Chairpersons**

Cemetery
Dale Souder
215-527-4709

Christian Education

Janet Farrington
267-733-8725

Evangelism

Deb Bitner
267-664-0039

Fellowship

Vacant

Finance

Cathy Hurley
215-258-1211

Property

Greg Fosbenner
215-257-4707

Social Ministry

Barbara Mandato
215-460-5473

Stewardship

Wayne Young
610-287-8897

Worship and Music

Vacant

Youth

Vacant

Finance Update



Checking Account - Monthly	
Beginning Balance 10/1/23	\$5,470.64
Deposits (monthly)	\$28,383.43
Beginning Bal + Deposits	\$33,854.07
Expenses (monthly)	\$27,718.87
Ending Balance 10/31/23	\$6,135.20

Checking Account - YTD	
Beginning Balance 1/1/23	\$37,296.47
Deposits to date	\$251,420.37
Beginning Balance + Deposits	\$288,716.84
Expenses to date	\$282,581.64
Ending Balance 10/31/23	\$6,135.20

Ending Fund Balances 10/31/23	
Memorial Fund	\$37,273.33
Capital Reserve	\$65,452.29
Benevolence	\$3,356.23
Specials	\$26,543.31

Liabilities as of 10/31/23	
Mortgage Balance	\$12,681.47

This information is the most up to date available at time of printing. More up to date information can be found in the Sunday bulletins, or by calling the church office.



**Thank You
Notes**

Thank you for the beautiful flowers given to me as my husband, Harvey, was admitted to Shepherd's Way at the Lutheran Community. Thank you also to Pastor Coleman and all of the members of St. Paul's who have been so kind and caring. God bless all of you.

Sandy Groff



**Church Family
News**

You are invited to pray for the families and friends of...

Ann Schweinfurth, who died on November 14, 2023



Just a friendly reminder...

Reminder!

Please remember that if you have any changes to your address, home phone number, cell phone number, email address, etc., please let Ashley in the church office know so that we can continue to keep our church records as up to date as possible.



Altar Flower and Bulletin Sponsorships for 2024

Sign up charts are now available in the narthex for Flower and Bulletin Sponsors for 2024! You can sign up by writing your name on the chart in the narthex or by using the sign up genius link in the weekly email announcements.

When signing up, please take a card from the bulletin board (pink for flowers or blue for bulletins), fill out the date of your sponsorship, who/what you would like the sponsorship to be in memory of honor of, and your name. Then please place the card and your payment in the offering plate or in the church office. The cost of flowers is \$40.00 for a full sponsorship, and the cost of bulletins is \$34.00 for a full sponsorship. Checks can be made out to St.

Paul's. If you have any questions, please contact Ashley in the church office.



www.stpaulstelford.org and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/StPaulsLutheranChurchTelfordPa/

Christmas Worship Services



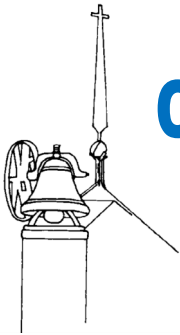
This year, December 24 is both the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve. We will begin our day with *one worship service at 9:30 am for the Fourth Sunday of Advent*. In the afternoon we will hold our Christmas Eve worship services. Then we will hold a simple Service of Word and Sacrament on Christmas morning.

You can find the worship times for Christmas Eve and Christmas morning below.

Christmas Eve Worship Services—December 24 at 3:00 pm and 8:30 pm
Both of these services will be streamed on Facebook Live and will be posted on our website

Christmas Day Worship Service—December 25 at 10:45 am

St. Paul's Annual Congregational Meeting



Sunday, January 21, 2024
Beginning at Approximately 10:45 am
In Person and on Zoom

This year's congregational meeting will take place after worship on January 21, 2024. The meeting will begin at approximately 10:45 am. If you would prefer to participate on Zoom, a link will be sent out via email by Friday, January 19.

Annual Reports will be available at church and through email by **Sunday, January 7, 2023**.

Attention All Staff, Committee Chairs, and Special Groups!

Please submit your annual reports to the church office no later than **December 15, 2022!** It would be very helpful if you would please submit your reports electronically, either in an email or as a Microsoft Word attachment. If you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact Ashley in the church office.

Thank you!

Hanging of the Greens



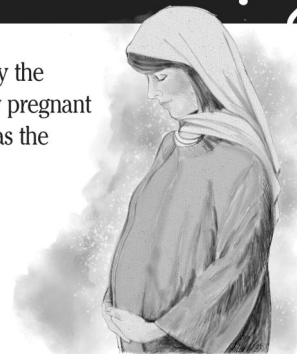
Sunday, December 17
immediately following worship

Join the festivities as we decorate the church for Christmas: putting up and decorating trees, setting up the outdoor manger scene, hanging garland and more. Something for all ages!

Bible Quiz

Elizabeth, an older relative of Mary the mother of Jesus, was miraculously pregnant at the same time as Mary. What was the name of Elizabeth's husband?

- A. Aaron
- B. Zechariah
- C. Joseph
- D. Simeon



Answer: B (See Luke 1:5, 39-41.)

Poinsettia Orders

Please remember to turn in your Christmas Poinsettia Orders to the church office no later than **December 3!** Poinsettias are \$10.25 each this year, and are available in Red, White, Pink, and Marble. Forms were mailed out with the November newsletter, or are available in the Sunday bulletins.

Advent 2023 Flames for the Faithful

Our 2023 Advent series takes its themes from the traditional names of the candles on the Advent Wreath:



Prophecy Candle, Bethlehem Candle, Shepherds Candle, Angels' Candle.

Weekly sermons and Bible studies will represent each of the candles to form a living Advent wreath.



Wondering & Wandering

Tuesday mornings in the Library at 9:30am
(except 12/26 & 1/2/24)

December 5 – Prophecy Candle
December 12 – Bethlehem Candle
December 19 – Shepherds Candle

In January we will continue in Genesis with the stories of Jacob.

We won't walk the streets & alleys of Telford if it's too cold or inclement weather!

Thursday Afternoon Bible Study



December 21 from 12:00—1:30 pm.

Come and join us in Christian Fellowship for this informal time to reflect, discuss and learn. Make sure to bring your own lunch!

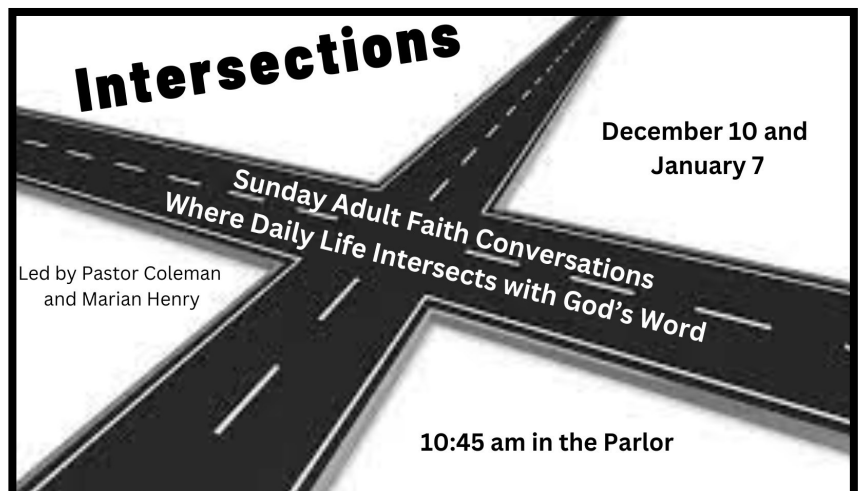
A Different Advent Calendar!

The first Sunday in Advent marks the beginning of the new church year. As we enter the new lectionary year, we enter the year of the Gospel of Mark.

Beginning December 1, read one chapter from the Gospel of Mark each weekday.

On Christmas Eve we will have read the entire account of Jesus' life and wake up on Christmas morning knowing WHO and WHY we celebrate Christmas!

Chapters to read can be found on the back the BLUE calendar of this newsletter.



Intersections

December 10 and January 7

Sunday Adult Faith Conversations
Where Daily Life Intersects with God's Word

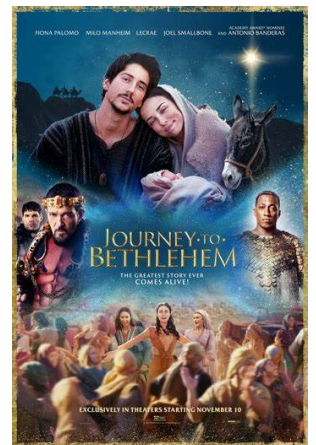
Led by Pastor Coleman and Marian Henry

10:45 am in the Parlor

Friday Night at the Movies!

Friday, December 15 at
Souderton's Broad Theater

Journey to Bethlehem



This live-action Christmas musical adventure for the entire family, weaves classic Christmas melodies with humor, faith, and new pop songs in a retelling of the greatest story ever told, the story of Mary, Joseph and the birth of Jesus.

Wednesday Night Kids Club!

December 6 & 20 – God’s love is growing in me.

January 3 & 17 – The love of Jesus helps me face challenges



For kids ages 5 years old through 5th grade

6pm pizza dinner

6:30pm – music enrichment with Mrs. Fosbenner

7pm – digging into the Parable of the Sower with Mrs. Henry & Mrs. Cassel

7:40pm – dessert & pickup

SPIFFY's Grand ADVENTURE



Friday, December 8 from 6-10pm

Our evening will include helping at Telford’s Tree Lighting ceremony, baking Christmas cookies for December 10 fellowship time after church, making our own advent wreath, and free time in the youth room & snacks!

For youth in 4th – 6th grades. YES! Friends are invited!



CONNECT

WINTER CAMP AT BEAR CREEK CAMP

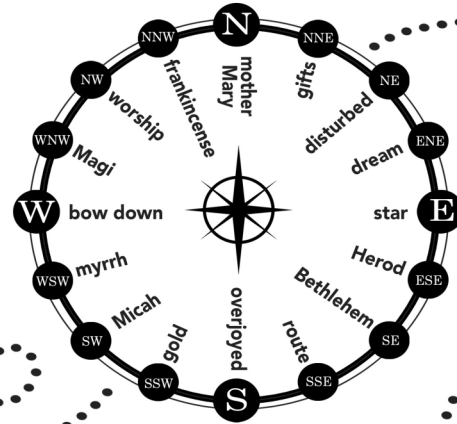
Bear Creek Camp
Winter CONNECT Retreat weekend

January 12-14, 2024

For youth in 4th through 12th grade
Registration deadline is December 27

To help raise money to cover the registration fee, we will hold our annual Super Bowl Hoagie sale! Hoagies will be sold during the month of January and handed out Sunday, February 11. Look for sales slips in the January bulletins!

Puzzle!



Use the compass guide (and read Matthew 2) to answer questions about special visitors to young Jesus.

- Who was king at the time of Jesus' birth? _____ (ESE)
- Who came from the East to worship the one born king of the Jews? _____ (WNW)
- How did King Herod feel about Jesus' birth? _____ (NE)
- Which prophet did the chief priests and teachers of the law quote when King Herod asked where the Christ would be born? _____ (SW)
- In what city would Christ be born? _____ (SE)
- King Herod lied to the wise men, telling them to search and report back so he, too, could do what to Christ? _____ (NW)
- What did the Magi see in the east and follow to find Jesus? _____ (E)
- When the star stopped, how did the Magi feel? _____ (S)
- Who else did the Magi see with Jesus? His _____ (N)
- Before they worshiped the child, what did the Magi do? _____ (W)
- Name the three treasures the Magi brought for Jesus. _____ (SSW) _____ (NNW) _____ (WSW)
- These three treasures were all brought for Jesus as _____ (NNE)
- What warned the Magi not to return to Herod? A _____ (ENE)
- The Magi had to return to their country by another _____ (SSE)

Answers: 1. Herod; 2. Magi; 3. disturbed; 4. Micah; 5. Bethlehem; 6. worship; 7. star; 8. overjoyed; 9. mother Mary; 10. bow down; 11. gold; 12. myrrh; 13. gifts; 14. dream.

Family Fun Night



Saturday, January 6
from 5-7pm in the Fellowship Hall
An Epiphany “Light the Night” Party!

Our evening will include a large group game, dinner, free time in the Youth Room for kids, parent time with Pastor Bill, ending with dessert! All families with children and youth are invited!

St. Paul's Free Market



The Free Market is back!!

Do you need to organize your attic, basement, or garage but you don't know what to do with the excess stuff? Have you been holding on to items that need to be donated but you haven't had the time to take them anywhere yet? St. Paul's Annual Free Market is the PERFECT place to bring them! This year's Free Market will take place from **Sunday December 3rd – December 10th**. Please drop off items on *Saturday, December 2 from 9:00 – 10:30 am*.

Popular items that can be donated include toys, games, sports equipment, books, DVDs, china, glassware, knick knacks, photo frames, framed artwork, jewelry, holiday decorations, tools, and SO MUCH MORE! Due to limited space in the Fellowship Hall, *we do not accept clothing or furniture*. So start getting your items ready that you've been meaning to donate! All proceeds will go to the Pastors' Discretionary Fund. If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Green Team or the church office.

Pre-Christmas Clean Up at the Cemetery

If you have decorative items or mementos on the graves at St. Paul's cemetery that you would like to keep, please remove them before **Saturday, December 16, 2023**. The cemetery committee will be cleaning the cemetery grounds, weather permitting, on that day at 9:30 am in preparation for Christmas. Items remaining on the grave sites as of December 16 will be considered disposable.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Secret Pals 2024!

Because it was successful in 2023
we will do it again in 2024!

The Secret Pal program is designed to introduce Children's Ministry kids to active teen and adult members of St. Paul's



After being paired with one of our kids, your commitment is to secretly put a card or a small gift in the child's "mailbox" each week during the month of February.

Teen and adult volunteers should sign up by Sunday, January 21. Watch for more details in December & January bulletins.

American Red Cross

Blood Drive



**Tuesday, December 12
from 2 -7 pm**

The next American Red Cross Blood Drive at St. Paul's is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12 from 2:00 - 7:00pm. Please contact Barbara Mandato for more details or to make an appointment. (Appointments are highly recommended). You can also make an appointment by going online to www.redcrossblood.org and using the sponsor code `stpaulstelford` to find our upcoming blood drives.



Every Fourth Tuesday of the Month at Free Will Brewing Co., Perkasié
Next Meeting: January 23 at 7 pm (No meeting in December)

For the past several years, members from several local congregations have been gathering on the 4th Tuesday of every month for Pub Theology. Each month features a different leader and topic. Conversations are always lively and thought-provoking. Won't you consider joining us?

No previous Bible knowledge needed!

Rocky Boy Gift Cards

It is time to remember the families of Our Savior's Lutheran Church on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation in Box Elder Montana. The Green Team is kindly requesting that you gift a Wal-Mart card by choosing a gift tag from the donation tree in the Narthex. The tag will serve as a reminder to you and, when attached to your gift card, will indicate the value of the card.



Please return the Wal-mart gift card together with the gift tag to the St. Paul's office, or to any member of the Green Team by **Sunday, December 17**. The cards will then be sent to help needy families living on Rocky Boy's Reservation.

The Green Team and the families of Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation thank you for your kindness.

A special Bible Study this January...

MOTHERS AND MAYHEM: The Hidden Genealogy of Jesus

Researching family history can be fascinating. We all have one or two ancestors that are unique. By looking back we can learn more about ourselves.

Join us during January as we do some "family research" and explore the genealogy of Jesus as found in the Gospel of Matthew. We will become acquainted with several interesting ancestral mothers included in the genealogy who have been seen as rather controversial figures. True "skeletons in the closet". As their stories unfold we will begin to understand how their stories are part of our own faith stories.

Led by Kristina Ahlman and Carol Detweiler, the class will meet the four Thursdays of January: January 4, 11, 18, and 25 at noon (the regular bi-weekly class will take a brief break that month). Please bring a bag lunch to enjoy! For those who can't attend on Thursdays the sessions will be repeated on Sunday mornings at 10:45 a.m. on January 7, 14 and 28. (No Bible Study on Sunday, Jan. 21 due to Annual Meeting) Can't make all the sessions? Not a problem! Come when you can!

We hope you'll join us and allow these extraordinary, unorthodox foremothers of Jesus to come out of hiding!

Prayer List



The following prayer list is current as of November 22, 2023. Please contact the church office with any changes. Names will remain on the prayer list for four weeks unless notified otherwise. Thank you.

Please Pray for...

Lisa Bealer	Gayle King
Susan Farrington	Stacey Lusk
Harvey Groff	Gene Moyer
Lorraine Guarino	Diane Planutis
Leslie Harpel	David Somers
Cheryl Hutchison	Betty Jean Way

Please Continue to Pray for...

Dick Clark	Anna Long
Maxine Detweiler	Todd Maranelli
Carolyn Evans	Teddy Mayer
Roland Fernandez	Karen Money
Suzanne Fernandez	Ken Newman
Linda Flynn	Shari Nyles
Emily Fulmer	Joanne Romano
Tim Greiser	Robert Scott Sr.
Bob Grisley	Dean Shollenberger
Gloria Harpel	Jeff and Heather Spillane
Jim Hurley	Paul Stover
Roger Jones	Andrew Strauss
Elijah Klingman	Claudette Strauss
Al Landis	Linda Tierrmo
Keith Landis	Luke Touhill
Bruce Lawhon	Jan Trievel
Tracey Leinen	Fred Wahl
Bill Lincoln	

Please Continue to Pray For...

Family and Friends of Bev Gibson
(Friend of Betty Shoemaker)

Family and Friends of Ann Schweinfurth

Family and Friends of Monroe Williams
(Niece of Jim and Cathy Hurley)

**If you would like a name added to the prayer list, please fill out the "Prayer Requests" section of the weekly bulletin insert, or speak to Pastor Coleman or Ashley in the church office.*

Volunteer Serving in December 2023 and January 2024

ALTAR GUILD

December 2023—Ruth Sommers, Ron and Sandy Schneck, Becky Fritzes

January 2024—Pat Hammer, Jeanette Johnson, Karen Money, Barbara Mandato, Judith Hercek

ASSISTING MINISTERS

December 3— Dawn Krown

December 10— Wayne Young

December 17— Diane King

December 24 (9:30 am)— Denny Detweiler

December 24 (3pm) - Cathy Hurley

December 24 (8:30 pm) - Wayne Young

December 31—Wayne Young

January 7— Dawn Krown

January 14— Diane King

January 21— Ashley Bromley

January 28—Wayne Young

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

December 3— Ray Landis and Shirley Schimpf

December 10— Denny Detweiler and Brittney Jones

December 17— Dale Souder and Amanda Zeppenfeld

December 24 (9:30 am)— Jim McMichael and Cathy Hurley

December 24 (3pm) - TBD

December 24 (8:30 pm) - Jim McMichael and Ray Landis

December 31—Ray Landis and Amanda Zeppenfeld

January 7— Denny Detweiler and Brittney Jones

January 14— Jim McMichael and Cathy Hurley

January 21— Dale Souder and Shirley Schimpf

January 28—Ray Landis and Amanda Zeppenfeld

FLOWER DELIVERY

December 3— Judy Kraus

December 10— Jeanette Johnson

December 17— Pat Hammer

December 24 — Joan O'Conner

December 31—Joan O'Conner

January 7— Marian Henry

January 14— Ron and Sandy Schneck

January 21— Wayne Young

January 28—Sandy Groff

GREETERS

December 3— Meg and Brody Mills

December 10— Kristina and Tors Ahlman

December 17— Ruth Sommers

December 24 (9:30 am)— TBD

December 24 (3pm) - Betty Shoemaker

December 24 (8:30 pm) - Frank and Donna Bucher

December 31—TBD

January 7— Jayne and Richard Poole

January 14— Sandy and Bill Baker

January 21— Meg and Brody Mills

January 28—Karen and Ron Money

LECTORS

December 3— Danielle Brasch

December 10— Bob Bell

December 17— Frank Bucher

December 24 (9:30 am)— Amy Coleman

December 24 (3pm) - Addison Parvin

December 24 (8:30 pm) - TBD

December 31—Mallory Prediger

January 7— Addison Farrington

January 14— Pat Young

January 21— Joan Votta

January 28—Peg Moyer

USHERS

December 3— Jim McMichael, Randy Groff, and Joan O'Conner

December 10— Ron Money, Fred Johns and Joan O'Conner

December 17— Greg Fosbenner, Brian Garges and Joan O'Conner

December 24 (9:30 am)— Richard Poole, Tors Ahlman and Joan O'Connor

December 24 (3pm) - TBD

December 24 (8:30 pm) - TBD

December 31—TBD

January 7— Ron Money, Fred Johns and Joan O'Conner

January 14— Richard Poole, Tors Ahlman and Joan O'Connor

January 21— Greg Fosbenner, Ray Landis and Joan O'Conner

January 28—Jim McMichael, Dale Souder and Joan O'Conner