ST. PAUL LUTHERAN MESSENGER

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church & Pre-School
6201 Vollmer Road, Matteson, IL 60443

August/September/October 2015 VOL 1 ISSUE 5

"Glorify God by sharing Jesus' love and forgiveness through serving, teaching, and growing in faith."

- *Come worship with us! Service Schedule:*
  - *Saturday: 5pm*
  - *Sunday: 8am and 10:45am*
  - *Sunday School: 9:30am*
- *If you are unable to attend worship, you can make your donation online. Visit http://www.stpaulsonline.org and click on the link for Contributions or just point your smartphone here:*
- *You can also make your contribution by text message. Simply text your contribution to: 708-315-6262.*

Have a suggestion or an article to submit? Send an email to news@stpaulsonline.org

- OR –

Contact a member of the communications committee: Nicole Choksi, Pam Choksi, Bradley Coen, Dawn Coen (Chair), LaShawn Hill, Bill Miller, Arlene Olson, Lynn Patriarca, Jenna Schulz, Mark Valek

Country Fair 2015 - 40th Anniversary

Country Fair was held on September 12th and 13th, and was a great success! This year we celebrated our 40th year hosting the Country Fair. Country Fair started out as a small event when we worshiped in our old church building across Vollmer Road and grew out of our need to expand. Back then, Country Fair was much smaller and it has grown and changed over the years. The Country Fair continues to be one thing we are known for by our neighboring congregations and neighbors, because we do that 'big garage sale in the Fall.' When Country Fair started In 1975, we had just built the Fellowship Hall and needed to raise money to pay it off. Over the years Country Fair proceeds have helped to retire three building debts–the Fellowship Hall, the Education Building and the new Church. Country Fair proceeds have helped to pay various building repairs and upgrades as well as help to fund various mission projects along the way, such as relief for those hit by hurricane Katrina, to mention just one. It takes a lot of work and many people to set up and run each year and we benefit in the work we do together, the witness it is to our community, and also in helping to fund portions or our ministry.

~Submitted by Pastor Troester

Country Fair 40th Anniversary Committee

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Church Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday 8-3; Friday 8-10
Rev. Matthew Troester – Senior Pastor - rtroester@stpaulsonline.org
Rev. Nathan Schieber – Associate Pastor - nschieber@stpaulsonline.org
Laura Cellini – Office Administrator - churchsec@stpaulsonline.org (M-Th)
Diane Norcutt – Secretary - sec3@stpaulsonline.org (M-F)

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Get Involved!

- **Scrip:** There will be two Scrip days before Christmas - Nov 22nd, and Dec 6th. Please help our preschool by using Scrip for your holiday gift giving!
- **National Youth Gathering 2016 in New Orleans** - 7/16-7/20

Committees at Work

The Mission Board has been very busy this past couple of months! We filled boxes with candy for Trunk or Treat, and then passed them out to 200 children who came and enjoyed the fellowship and treats! They also loved the hot dogs that were also provided.

The Mission Board held another Blood Drive on November 1st, and had 14 members donate. Thanks to all who made these two events a success!

Filling the boxes for Trunk or Treat

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Our Seekers group, led by Nancy Eberling, met October 28th, and had a wonderful time carving pumpkins! Thank you, Nancy, for always having great activities for this group!

~Submitted by Kay Meyer & Dawn Coen

Featured Small Group of the Month:
St. Paul's Softball Team: The Mules

The St. Paul's Softball Team (known as the "Mules") had a very good season! Winning more than losing, the co-ed team made it to the second round of the playoffs for the first time! The team was scheduled for 10 games for the season, but 2-3 were rained out. The group consisted of St. Paul members and guests, and rotated participation from game to game with a group of 18-20 participating over the season. The group is looking forward to next season, and welcomes anyone that wants to come out and play!

~Submitted by Dawn Coen

Jon Vanderwall and Paul Szymanski take their best shots for the Mules!

Ben Vanderwall takes a shot

Post-game congratulations

Sunday School News

Sunday School began with Rally Day on September 20th. Our theme this year is "ears." "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:28) is our theme verse. We are learning how to listen to God's Word and apply it to our lives. The year has begun with the study of Joseph and Moses. God freed the Israelites from Egypt just as Christ freed us from sin, death and the devil! We also made "Thanks" posters for the Pastors' doorways for Pastor appreciation month and are beginning preparations for the Christmas service and Christmas Bible School! Christmas Bible School will be on December 5 from 9-12. Watch for registration forms in the narthex. The Christmas service will be on Sunday December 20 at 9am. Rehearsals for the service will be on December 12 and December 19 from 9-11. Put those dates on your calendar please! Our teachers this year are Janet Garuckas, Diane Norcutt, Donna Brunell, Kay Meyer, and Nancy Eberling. Under the leadership of our superintendent Kate Habenicht, we pray that we can lead your children through a wonderful year of learning about Jesus and developing a closer relationship with Him! Volunteers are always welcome to substitute teach or to help out with special events.

~Submitted by Nancy Eberling

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

~Matthew 18:20
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Meet Your Church Family

Our featured family this edition is the Choksi family.

The Choksi family joined St. Paul in May of 2000 because they were looking a family friendly church environment for their young children. Their family consists of Pam, Vijay, Nicole (19) and Alyssa (15).

Pam graduated college from Concordia University in Nebraska, with an education degree but now is a manager at the family construction company. Vijay graduated from Marist High School and then attended trade school and runs the family construction company. Nicole graduated from Illinois Lutheran High School in 2014 and now attends Arizona State where she is currently working towards getting a degree in Sports Journalism and will be adding a degree in Sports and Media in the fall. Alyssa is a sophomore at Illinois Lutheran High School and loves to golf.

The Choksis love the friendliness and the family feel at St. Paul's the most. Pam and Nicole are both on the communication committee at St. Paul. Pam also has been organizing the college care packages. Nicole and Alyssa are both actively involved in Summit 4:12, as well as Alyssa plays the saxophone for church whenever given the opportunity. All three ladies are part of the co-ed softball league and help out at VBS in anyway that they can.

Outside of church the Choksi family loves the travel (mostly for sporting events), golf, playing sports and attending sporting events. As a family they love attending both White Sox and Blackhawks games, and even get in a few rounds of golf (Nicole participates by driving the cart when she can).

The Choksi's mostly attend the 8 a.m. service because they really enjoy the service and the music. Also because Pam grew up always attending a 8 a.m. service and continued the tradition with her children too.

~Submitted by Nicole Choksi

Alaska Mission Trip

St. Paul's Took off to the Great White North

Go North, The Rush is On!

Johnny Horton was talking about a gold rush in his famous song, North To Alaska, but to St. Paul's the rush is to spread the example of Jesus Christ through our mission works. The second of three Alaska missions embarked in July to help Pastor Todd Roeske of Mt. Drum Lutheran Church in Copper Center.

One, of many, of Pastor Roeska's outreach efforts is to the Athabascan people of Mentasta Lake. The goodwill Pastor Roeske generated garnered an invitation for the representatives of St. Paul's to attend the once a year culture camp. The purpose of the camp is to pass on the skills and traditions of the Athabascan people to the next generation. Extending an invitation to outsiders is a very rare event; an honor that every member of the mission team keenly felt.

Most of the mission team spent the week at culture camp blending with the native people. Impromptu sports like frisbee and volleyball sprouted up among the youth and young of heart at all times. More familiar to most Lutherans are the more structured VBS activities like crafts and the afternoon sing-a-long that were shared with camp attendees.

While most of the St. Paul's crew were at culture camp, a small group performed a service project. The members of Mt. Drum Lutheran church are supporting a community member breaking the cycle of alcohol addiction. While attending an inpatient treatment program, the church cleaned and repaired this person's home. The St. Paul's representatives painted the whole interior of the house in two days. The goal was to really give a fresh start on the road to recovery.

The mission team left favorable impressions and came home with indelible memories of clear air, tall peaks, and spiritual people.

~Submitted by Scott Stahl

This year's group, packed and ready to head to Alaska!
Back row: Scott Stahl, Drew Nemeth, Laura Spader, Merek Spader, Emily Pieper, Neil Spader, Ashley Francis, Amanda Pieper, Isabelle Stahl, Bradley Coen, Diane Troester, Paul Szymanski, Mitchell Troester. Front Row: Emily Francis, Alaina Spader, Bob Lessman, Ian Troester, Laura Baker, Ray Finernon, Pastor Troester.

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Summit 4:12 Events

Our Summit 4:12 youth group has been meeting regularly on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. But, on top of that we have had an opportunity to serve the members of St. Paul with Spaghetti and with art. On the evening of October 10th we were able to serve Spaghetti, provide music and even sell pieces of art made by the Summit 4:12 youth. On October 25th, we attended Six Flags Great America's Fright Fest. We had an excellent turnout with 21 people attending. The group is looking forward to a roller skating outing in November!

~Submitted by Pastor Schieber

Bradley and PJ at game night

Merek playing dodgeball

Dodgeball!

Spaghetti Supper - Summit 4:12 Fundraiser

On October 10th the Summit 4:12 youth held a spaghetti dinner to raise money for their trip to The National Youth Gathering in New Orleans next summer. While this event was only one night it took a few months of planning. It started with Kay Myer who suggested that the dinner would be a good way to gain funds. With Kay's help we set a date and started to get flyers and ticket information together. These flyer were posted around church as well as sent over to numerous churches in the area. Mike Jones even sent out a special flyer to all police and fire stations in Matteson. As we got closer to the date of the event we started to receive donations for raffle items from members of our congregation. In addition to these items our youth decided that we should paint pictures to auction off. Thinking this was a great idea we bought all the supplies and spent a whole night painting. We all created one to two paint each making a total of twenty one paintings and drawings. Every single one was absolutely beautiful and everyone had a great time. The day of the event was filled with setting up tables, setting places, and cooking. Thanks to Dave Wurster we were able to serve over one hundred people salad, spaghetti, meatballs, garlic bread sticks, and homemade apple pie donated by Elliott Fasel. After everyone was full and all the raffle and auction items had been won we counted our profits. Thanks to all our supporters we were able to raise seven hundred dollars toward our trip. Over all it was a wonderful night that was enjoyed by all.

~Submitted by Shelby Boettger

Summit 4:12 youth serving dinner to their guests

Chairman's Corner

May I ask you a question: What is your definition of paradise? Is it a warm, sandy beach with a blue ocean as far as the eye can see? Perhaps paradise is attending an event featuring your child or grandchild. Or maybe it is a relaxing time with friends and family. What is paradise to you? Take your idea of paradise and multiply that by a thousand if you can. No, wait. Multiply it by a million. That is what Jesus left behind when He came to be Emanuel - God with us. Jesus left the ultimate Paradise to be born in a smelly, dirty stable on a cold night in Bethlehem. As we prepare to celebrate Christmas with friends and family, let us remember and rejoice why Jesus came down to earth: to redeem you and me and all believers so that we may live with Him in the real Paradise for eternity. On behalf of Kathy and Matt and Jenna, I wish you and your family a joyful and blessed Christmas celebration!

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."Luke 2: 10 & 11

~Submitted by Scott Schulz

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Meet Your Elder

This edition's featured elder is Matt Schulz.

Matt Schulz has been serving as an elder for two years. He grew up in Tinley Park and attended Trinity Lutheran for grade school. He graduated from Tinley Park High School in 2007. Matt completed his Bachelors of Science degree from Valparaiso University in Indiana, where he studied actuarial science. To continue his growth, Matt is attending Concordia University in Chicago, to complete his Master of Education degree. Currently, Matt works as a math teacher at Harold L. Richards High School in Oak Lawn. He is extremely passionate about mathematics and enjoys working with his students on a daily basis. Although Matt is a very popular face around the church, there are things you may not know about him. Matt is a newlywed, as he got married on July 11th, 2015. He met his wife, Jenna, in grade school and even attended the same high school! In his free time, Matt enjoys playing hockey, video games, and the occasional game of softball. Matt's wife, Jenna, is also a member of St. Paul. She transferred churches in 2012 with her parents because some of her family also attends Saturday service. Jenna is also in the education field as a Teacher's Assistant at Shepard High School, however, she prefers the Language Arts and Sciences. In her free time, Jenna enjoys reading, crafting, and watching Grey's Anatomy. Similarly, Jenna is a mentor to a seventh grader in this year's confirmation class. She also enjoys working with Summit 4:12, and often attends their events as a chaperone. She serves on both the mission board as well as the communications board. Originally, Matt joined St. Paul in 2006 when his mom and dad decided to transfer from their previous church. Both parents are current members of the church. Scott is the Chairman of the congregation, while Kathy remains an active member and volunteers her time for multiple activities around the church. As a member, Matt is also part of the church softball team and is a mentor to an eighth grade student in confirmation. He enjoys working with Summit 4:12 by volunteering for certain events including: game nights, lock-in's, and retreats. Seeing students grow in their faith is something he aims for every year with this program. Matt typically attends the Saturday evening since it is when he is able to worship with his wife, parents, and his wife's family (both parents, Jenna's aunt, and her grandmother). If you would like to get in touch with Matt, please feel free to reach out to him. He would love to meet you and help you with any need!

~Submitted by Jenna Schulz

Summit 4:12 Fright Fest

Sunday, October 25th, our Summit 4:12 youth group along with some of their friends spent a day at Six Flags Great America for Fright Fest. After morning service we all packed into two vans and headed toward a day of fun. Once there all of our kids split up into groups and in headed into every direction riding only the more terrifying of roller coasters. The day was filled with fast rides, golden sunshine and fun! However, when night fell things got a little scary. When 6pm came around all of the most terrifying creatures emerged from the darkest pits all with one goal in mind -- Scare everyone! The next five hours were spent screaming on rides and running from our darkest nightmares come to life. While it may have been terrifying, it was a great day had by all!

~ Submitted by Shelby Boettger

Sean and Matt at Fright Fest

Emily and Shelby

Coming in December - Advent by Candlelight

Advent by Candlelight will be held on Sunday, December 13 at 6:00. The theme this year is "Keeping Christ In Christmas".

This event is FREE to attend and is one of the most wonderful programs we have found yet! The purpose of Advent By Candlelight is to set aside a special time to prepare our hearts for the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Jesus. This evening combines an inspirational message, Christmas hymns and music, fellowship and some great appetizers and desserts which are all always a part of the Christmas season.

You can hostess a table and decorate it in your own creative way, simple or elegant, it's up to you. If you don't wish to hostess a table, we will have plenty of tables, so just sign up to attend. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity for fellowship. You won't believe how beautiful our hall looks lit only with hundreds of white Christmas lights and many candles.

Please remember that this evening is reserved for ladies high school age and up only.

See Nancy Eberling, Lisa Vanderwall or Arlene Olson for more information or to register to attend. Sign up sheets are on the table in the Narthex.

~Submitted by Arlene Olson

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Meet Your Church Family

This edition we are also featuring the Vanderwall family.

The Vanderwall family, John, Lisa, Ben (15) and Brooke (7), joined St. Paul around times of marriages. Lisa joined in 1988, when her mom was getting remarried and John joined in 1995, shortly before he and Lisa got married. John and Lisa are high school sweethearts and met while both working at the Tinley Park Roller Rink in 1988.

As a family, the Vanderwalls really enjoy going roller skating, camping, hiking and going to the movies. Brooke really enjoys crafting and playing with legos. Ben is also a part of the high school football team. Outside of church they enjoy spending time with their family and friends, going roller-skating, hiking and camping. They love love love going to Disney World, even though they do not make it there as often as they would like to.

They love St. Paul because of how friendly everyone is and that everyone is willing to help each other out in the times of need. The Vanderwalls are rather involved at St. Paul. Lisa is part of the Women's Ministry and the Fellowship committees. Ben is also a member of the fellowship committee (mostly because mom made him join) as well as being a part of the Summit 4:12 youth group. John helps out in any way that he can. Brooke is a member of Kids Khoir and loves going to Sunday School.

The Vanderwalls most often attend the 8 a.m. worship because they enjoy the music and even after attending Sunday School, they still have their whole day ahead of them!

~Submitted by Nicole Choksi

Appreciation for Pastors (and Preschoolers)!

October 11th was Pastor Appreciation Day, and the preschool children made these wonderful displays for Pastor Troester and Pastor Schieber's doors to let them know how thankful they are to have them at our church! I believe that the congregation at St. Paul's shares their feeling! They also made cute little turkeys that are reading bibles and very creative pictures for Veteran's Day! The preschoolers have been busy so far this year!!

~Submitted by Dawn Coen

The pastors' doors, Bible-reading Turkeys, and the 2015-2016 Preschool class picture

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Trunk or Treaters!

Howard says, "Welcome to the 40th Annual Country Fair!"

Mitchell, Drew and Bradley in Alaska!

Spaghetti Dinner

It's tough to be an auctioneer....but Don Blume does it so very well!

Bob with the Alaskan pipeline

Alaina creating a painting for the spaghetti dinner fundraiser

Selfie on a glacier in Alaska!

Taking a well-deserved break after Country Fair!