

**St. Paul**  
EVANGELICAL  
**LUTHERAN**  
CHURCH

Missouri  
Synod

Rev. Matthew D. Troester  
PASTOR  
rtroester@stpaulsonline.org



6201 Vollmer Road  
Matteson, IL 60443  
CHURCH

708-720-0880  
www.stpaulsonline.org

January 25, 2024

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

*"For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation. He alone is my Rock and my Salvation, my Fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken."* Psalm 62:1-2  
We are a church in mission. We are making Disciples as we are going, baptizing and teaching. One thing is certain: Jesus is our Rock and our Fortress. He always is! We are patient in peace, knowing that God is always working; we just don't always notice. With Jesus, we are saved from ourselves, from Satan and from death. Read below about some of the mission and look for ways for you to be in mission also.

**From Vicar Larry's desk.....**

Thank you to all who came out for the call meeting on January 21<sup>st</sup>. I can't express how much your support means to us. I know it may have seemed odd that I didn't accept the call during the meeting. Let me explain. There are two calls when it comes to pastoral ministry. One is the internal call. That's the Holy Spirit calling a man toward ministry. The second is the external call. That's the call from the outside that confirms, via the Holy Spirit, that the call is legitimate. With both of those in place, our meeting was the final confirmation. There was never a question in my mind whether I would accept the call or not. But being that this call originates with the Holy Spirit, I felt it appropriate to pray before making it official. This is His call, administered through the congregation of St. Paul. For that, to God be the glory! It is a privilege to accept the call as Associate Pastor at St. Paul. I pray that God would continue to be my focus, my guide, and my strength. I pray that God would continue to move within our congregation so we can accomplish all that He has planned for us as we serve together. And I pray that as we continue to serve in ministry together, that God would be glorified. See you in church!

**Dennis Pieper, Head Elder**

*Luke 10:2 "The harvest is large, but the workers are few. So, ask the Lord who gives the harvest to send workers to harvest his crops."*

A few words about the harvest: How big is it? Large, so large that there aren't enough workers to bring in the crop. For whose harvest? To harvest His (the Lords) crops. Who are the workers the Lord sends to harvest His crops? Surprise, NOT the disciples who become the Apostles, not the professional preachers, or those in Jesus' 3-year seminary program. It's you and me. We are called to Go and make disciples – students of Jesus. Who is the crop, the harvest of the Lord? Our families, neighbors, and the younger generations. If you are already a "worker" at St. Paul, thank you for all you do. Are you training someone to take your place?

### **Acting Chairperson of St. Paul-Dennis Pieper**

*2 Timothy 1:6 "You received a gift from God . . . Now I am reminding you to fan that gift into flames."* You have a God given gift to serve the Lord. Many of you are and we praise God our Father for you. Look at the Prayer Shaw ladies, the Quilters, those who do maintenance, Teachers of the Bible for both youngsters and older children of God. There are cooks, cleaners, the drivers, those who tend to the Altar and decorations of the church, the office workers, the counters, the singers and musicians, ushers and readers. Some say, "But I can't do it as well as they do." I encourage our older generation to come alongside your own children, grandchildren, and younger people outside your family, they need your experience. Help them feel welcomed. To the next generations, come alongside, step into roles that use your talents. I know you may feel like you're putting on a new pair of shoes but walk in them for a while. Before you know it, they will mold to your feet, protect you, and carry you into life.

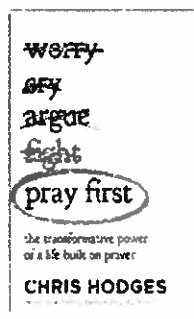
### **Treasurer – Paul Szymanski**

What a year we had. We passed a budget with a large deficit, trusted God, and ended up with a surplus for the year. In addition to all the extra current giving, we still surpassed our budget donations for our mission work as well, so we made up the deficit without sacrificing the ministries of St. Paul's. You honor God and show your trust in Him by your generosity in 2023. We also officially issued a call to Vicar Larry and continue to support him as he ventures further through the SMP program, and we passed another budget with a rather large deficit for 2024. We continue to trust God for his provision and grace.

### **Youth Director – Paul Szymanski**

We are ramping back up our Fellowship Events. Keep an eye on the weekly Bulletin for events and times as we continue to strive for intergenerational fellowship and building a stronger St. Paul Community. Hope to see you soon.

### **Men's Bible Study – Scott Schulz**



How do you approach prayer? Do you worry about doing it "correctly?" Do you feel prayer is an obligation in order to "check the box?" Is it a last resort – kind of an SOS when everything else has failed? In our next Bible study, we will review and discuss ways to spend time in conversation with God – and enjoy every minute of it. You will gain tools to bring joy back into your time with God, explore prayers in the Bible, and discover Biblically grounded methods for making prayer a priority and not an afterthought. So, join other like-hearted men for this 6-week study on Saturday mornings. We meet online and at the church. Please contact Scott Schulz for more information.

### **Voice of Care – Dennis Pieper**

Thank you, St. Paul members, for your support of our ministry, "By and With People with Disabilities". Keep an eye out for information regarding Spiritual Respite Companion Care Workshops which will be offered across the Northern Illinois District. One workshop will be here at St. Paul.

## Grandparents – Scott Schulz



Show love best to your grandchildren by being a safe place for them to share their feelings and ideas without rejection or judgement – model unconditional love in this way. You may have more time to be a good listener than their busy parents, so be attentive and available when they need time to express feelings and happenings in their life. Find a blessing for your grandchildren and more ideas for February activities in your 2024 Grandparenting Planner.

## Prayer Shawl – Peggy Smutny & Diane Wille

Here we are into another year prayerfully creating Prayer Shawls and covers as well as baby hats and blankets to remind individuals that they are loved, cared for, and being prayed for. Each handmade piece is prayed over and blessed before it goes on its way. We love that requests from our church community are coming in for Prayer Shawls and covers. If you are interested in delivering one of these items to a friend or family member in need of it, please fill out a card that is kept in a box in the west stairwell. This enables us to keep our inventory up to date so we will always be able to meet the needs. You can also just ask anyone in Prayer Shawl to help you with the process. As always, we appreciate your prayers and generous donations. Please consider stopping by on a Monday at 12:30pm to see what we're all about or to just say hello. Onward....

## Food Pantry – Rich & Ruth Treichel

The food pantry was closed for a week due to the weather. Greater Chicago Food Depository's trucks could not make the trip. In addition, we are working with Greater Chicago Food Depository and Bill Miller to see if it is possible to scan the individual cards so that our members will not have to be out in the cold for as long a time. We continue to serve around 150 families each week with staples, meat, milk, eggs, fresh vegetables, and fruit. We are thankful for the many volunteers who come weekly to help out. You are always welcome to join us and see what God is doing through us.

## Men

For thousands of years, men have gathered around a fire for many reasons including celebrations and supporting each other. You are invited to join other men **Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM** as we come together to relax, celebrate our victories, and support each other around a fire. You only need to bring your favorite outdoor chair and your favorite campfire consumables (beverage, snacks, etc.). In the event of inclement weather, we will bring the heat into the Fellowship Hall.



## Support the Troops Ministry – Mallory Kelly

Support the Troops Ministry is on hiatus until March. Chaplains are coming stateside and new ones are being deployed but no addresses yet so we cannot send care packages. Please hold off shopping for snacks and hygiene items at this time. Although you can still write undated messages and color pictures.

**From the Mission Quilters – Karen Gustafson**

We want to share some statistics from the work of Lutheran World Relief. We sent about 50 quilts to LWR and we were part of the nearly 195,000 quilts that were sent out last year alone. This ministry of sharing quilts has been going on for 75 years! Just imagine how many blankets have been sent out to warm people all around the world! It is a joy to meet with other ladies who want to help to create these quilts. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month from 9 am until 11 am. There are kits at the back of the church if anyone would like to try to sew a quilt top together on their own. Just take one home to sew together and return it to the quilting donation box when it is complete. We hope that 2024 holds many opportunities for all of us to help others in big and small ways. God bless you!

**In Closing...**

As a church in mission, know that Jesus is Lord and that the Good News is for everyone who will repent and believe. Trust God that He will provide what we need to do His work, as we listen, believe and do what He says. This newsletter is only a portion of the mission that we have from Christ. The church is you, the church is people.

Peace,

*Pastor T.*