

St. Paul
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Missouri
Synod

Rev. Matthew D. Troester
PASTOR
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April 25, 2024

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

We have a new sign out front of church and I continued to be amazed at how many people going by our church find out about things happening because they've seen it on our sign. There are many ways for us to communicate, one being the sign out front of church, but also through this monthly newsletter. I pray that it helps keep you to be informed as we, together, continue to be God's church here in this area. This newsletter is for all of you, but not everything will catch your eye, only those things that are unique to your gifts and passions. Read it all and know that the Holy Spirit will peak your interest in a unique way, and call you to be involved. We are the body of Christ, working together, each a unique part of that body, and together doing God's work here.

From the desk of Vicar Larry

"He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!" There are times for me when writing these notes is very easy. Other times, it's very hard. Right now, it's very hard. There are the joys and struggles of life, the day-to-day grind, the expectancy of wonderful futures, the pain of illness. In times like these I go back to the very basics for comfort and assurance. Christ died and rose to forgive me of my sins, and for that, He is to be praised. While I have a multitude of other blessings I could list, it starts with Christ. I simply wish to point you to Jesus, the One who suffered more in one day than we could suffer in our lives, the One who found it joy to go to the cross, to the One who hears our prayers, and the One who has called me to be a reminder to you that...HE IS RISEN. HE IS RISEN INDEED! Thank you for your continued prayers. See you in church.

Elders - Dennis Pieper

Take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."

Joshua 4: 3, 7

On May 27th we celebrate Memorial Day. Often people visit gravesites and leave flower, taking time to remember the impact of that person on the lives. Ever wonder where the idea for headstones started? In Joshua 4 we are told about the crossing of the Jordan River on dry land. God tells them to collect 12 stones to erect as a monument to memorialize the event. So they will remember when they pass by that place. Imagine children asking, "What's going with this pile of rocks?" They're not here by accident. Someone must have made them this way. Why? What happened that was so special here? An opportunity to share the power, and love of God. We should be looking at the Cross in the same way. Teaching the young – this was no accident. God did something special here and it has impacted the whole world.



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Treasurer – Paul Szymanski

As you can see from the financial summary, we are in the black despite being budgeted to have a deficit for the year. You are to be commended for your continued generosity in response to God's gifts to you. We are thankful for your trust in leadership at St. Paul to be a good steward of your donations.

Youth Director – Paul Szymanski

School activities are wrapping up and there are end-of-the-year events, concerts, and ceremonies to attend. Couple this with graduations, Mother's Day, and Memorial Day and May gets pretty hectic pretty fast. For this reason, there will be no youth event in May, but watch for announcements coming up for our events over the summer which include Top Golf, Great America, and a back-to-school pool party and some activities geared towards families. This summer we will also begin preparing for the National Youth Gathering in 2025. There will be an informational meeting to give you details and begin preparations for what that trip will look like. Watch for save the date notices which will be sent to all eligible youth and their families.

Social Gatherings – Paul Szymanski

I have really enjoyed the fellowship that we have developed at our game nights, faith and film nights, and other events where we can come together and be social. If you have not been able to attend one of these events, you really are missing out on some fun. One of the reasons I enjoy faith and film night so much is that I get to share things with people that they probably wouldn't normally watch on their own and get to see their reactions to those films. Maybe you have a film that you are passionate about that you would like to share with others. Maybe you have an idea for a social event that would be a great opportunity to invite family and friends to join us. So, let me help you get this organized and planned. You can pick the movie and I can help with advertisement, food, and discussion. If you have a reason for people to get together, I can help with set-up, coordinating tacos with LaShawn Hill, and anything else you might need. This would let you take some ownership in your church as increasing the scope of our outreach. Contact me at 708-539-6259.

Children's Ministries

Sunday School meets each week in the PreK classroom from 10:30–11:30 a.m. All children age 3 to Grade 6 are welcome. No preregistration required. Our Sunday School year will wrap up on May 19.

As the summer months approach, we're beginning to plan for **Vacation Bible School!** Mark your calendars for **June 17-21** for a week of laughter, music, friends, and Jesus! Many adult and teen volunteers are needed to make this special week a success. If you are interested in volunteering before or during VBS, please contact Kate at homeschoolingmom@aol.com.

Food Pantry – Ruth & Rich Treichel

The St. Paul Food Pantry continues to grow. For the last month, there have been over 200 families receiving food each week. In addition to our delivery from the Greater Chicago Food Depository, the Matteson Menards had a food drive and Hickory Creek School District in Frankfort Square had a food drive. The food pantry was the beneficiary of both of these food drives. We also received a large supply of meat from one of the local churches. Our list of volunteers continues to grow, with everyone enjoying the time with each other and with the individuals being helped. We have volunteers from St Paul's, volunteers from the neighborhood, and volunteers from those receiving food. The distribution begins with all the workers gathering together in

prayer. Please note that the **pantry's hours have been changed to begin at 8:30 a.m.** Come and join the food pantry on a Saturday morning and see what you are missing!

Grandparents

Here are the 3 Cs for Christian Grandparents: You are **called** to pass down your faith to your children and grandchildren. You must be **committed** to love and serve your families – this often involves sacrifice. You need to be **consistent** – intentionality requires a plan and perseverance. Being intentional is not easy and is so much more than just fun times. It's about using every interaction you have with them to pass down your faith in the only true God. See the May pages in your 2024 Grandparenting Planner for ideas on how to bring spiritual teaching and discipleship to your children and grandchildren.



The next fundraiser for the 2024 Alaska Mission Trip is **Wednesday, May 1st 4:00-10:00pm** at Lou Malnati's Pizzeria at all 3 locations in our neighborhood: Tinley Park, Flossmoor, and New Lenox. Dine-in, carryout, phone-in, order online, or delivery. Please use code

GPFUND24 or mention St. Paul when you order dinner and 20% of you order will come back to us for the mission trip. Tell your family. Tell your friends. Tell your neighbors. Please see the fliers in the narthex or call the church office for more information.



The St. Paul Focus Mission for April, May, and June is the 2024 Alaska Mission Trip. This year will be St. Paul's 10th mission trip to Alaska. St. Paul is sending 15 missionaries to Alaska in July. The VBS team will

conduct Vacation Bible School for the children and Community Meals for all residents of Mentasta Lake. The work team will perform construction, maintenance, and cleanup projects for families and residents and small businesses in Copper Center, Glenallen, Kenny Lake, and surrounding communities. Please support the mission trip with your prayers and contributions.

Help Wanted

Drivers are needed to shuttle Alaska Missionaries to O'Hare on Wednesday, July 24th and Friday, July 26th. Drivers are also needed to pick up the missionaries at O'Hare and bring them back to St. Paul on Sunday morning, August 4th. Please contact Scott Schulz if you can assist.

Ladies Aid

Bring your own sandwich as you join us Tuesday, May 14th at noon in the Narthex. We will be having a "tea themed" celebration of womanhood!

Support our Troops

Shop until you drop! Please fill the troop bin with snacks and toiletries as we have addresses for four chaplains. Suggestions for snacks include individually wrapped cookies, crackers, beef jerky, tuna pouches, hard candy, and powdered drink mixes. Suggestions for hygiene items include lip balm, sunscreen, petroleum jelly, tube lotion, antibiotic cream, floss, toothpaste, and toothbrushes. (No liquids, aerosols, hotel-sized, chocolate, or gummies will be mailed.) You are encouraged to write a note or color a picture (check the military table for blank cards and coloring sheets).

Monetary donations may be given by writing "troops" on the other line on the offering envelope.

Ladies Summer Bible Study – Karen Gustafson

The first hymnal was is the Book of Psalms in the Bible. Our Summer Ladies Bible Study will do a study on the Psalms. Our group will use a book by Max Lucado called, "Life Lessons from Psalms." Mr. Lucado sums it up this way: *"This collection of hymns and petitions was written over a span of centuries, in many different settings, by kings such as David and Solomon and commoners like Asaph, Heman, and the sons of Korah. Some of the psalms are defiant; others are reverent. Some are intensely personal: others are written as if the whole world is to use them. But all have one purpose - to help us express our hearts to God."* **Our Summer Bible Study starts on Thursday, June 6th at 6:30pm.** Please let Karen Gustafson know if you will be attending so that we can have study books for everyone. You can leave a message in my mailbox or call me at 312-502-2490

Mission Quilt News – Karen Gustafson

Very soon we will fill the church pews with all of the quilts that have been put together over the last months. It is exciting to see the fruit of our combined efforts and also to be able to pray for the people who will be receiving these quilts. Thank you to all who help with the mission quilts. Recently, 5 of our blankets were taken to the Morning Star Mission in Joliet to be given there by a volunteer who visits the mission. Most of our quilts are sent to Lutheran World Relief (LWR) but if you know of another local place that could use our blankets, please let us know. Thank you for your support and remember that we are still taking donations of fabric and gently used sheets.

Voice of Care - Dennis Pieper

We are asking you to sign up to serve as St. Paul is hosting a Spiritual Respite Companion Care Workshop on Saturday, May 18 from 12:00pm - 4:30pm, with a lunch provided. Spiritual Respite Companion Care is distinctively Christian Care for loved ones. This workshop is hands-on, giving support and materials so volunteers can relieve caregivers, and interact with the person in need for spiritual support. We would like to create a team of people to enhance the spiritual care offered through St. Paul, helping people to be part of a culture of belonging. We will especially be focusing on caring for those who are dealing with age-onset conditions and disability support for families. Sign up for the Workshop by going to voiceofcare.org or contacting Dennis Pieper at 708-759-4954

In Closing...

On Sunday several of our young ones will say "yes" to the gifts and the faith of Baptism. We call it confirmation. We spoke for them when they were baptized as infants, and now they speak for themselves. The most important news of all is that Jesus is risen from the dead and that what He won is given to us in Baptism and through the Word and in Communion. Nothing else lasts forever, but forgiveness has eternal benefits for us. All the things that we worry about will last forever. Having faith in Jesus Christ is the gift that gives and gives and gives. That message is the unique gift of the church. There is no other organization that has it. God will continue to guide us giving away that gift.

Peace,

Pastor T.