

St. Paul
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Missouri
Synod

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



6201 Vollmer Road
Matteson, IL 60443
CHURCH
708-720-0880
www.stpaulsonline.org

December 19, 2024

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

From the desk of Pastor Larry...

I have two pictures of our granddaughter Claire that reminded me of something that was missing for me about Christmas. The first was her opening her St. Nicholas Day presents (not that she's spoiled or anything), and she's looking up at her first Christmas ornament, reaching out to touch it, eyes focused on this new thing in front of her. The second is a screen capture from a video of her scooting along the floor toward the freshly cut Christmas tree, with lights aglow, that now resides in her home. She is craning her little head up as she lays on the floor, staring at the tree and lights with a sense of wonder. Wonder. The wonder of a child at Christmas. That's been missing for me in the midst of the difficulties and monotony of day-to-day living. More importantly, I'm starting to recapture the wonder of a baby, born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. Not only a human being, but God incarnate as well. Immanuel. The wonder of God's love wrapped up in a small little package of arms and legs, eyes and ears, giggles and cries. The wonder of a baby that grew to be a man that would die for us so we could wonder at His victory over death. The wonder of meeting Him in the Lord's Supper, where He forgives us and cleanses us from our sin. The wonder of what is yet to come when He returns. The wonder of His love.

I pray that this Christmas you would take time to look upon the Word of God, picture the baby Jesus, and look with a sense of wonder, like a child seeing it for the first time. Reach out to Him. Take in every angle you can. Be amazed. Learn again about the love of God wrapped in human flesh-- Jesus Christ. And I pray that wonder about Christ would radiate into the New Year, as you continue to seek Him, eyes open in wonder, experiencing all the He is for you, like it was the very first time. May your Christmas and New Year be full of peace, joy, and wonder in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Board of Elders – Dennis Pieper

On January 6th we celebrate Epiphany and remember the Magi following the star to Jesus. It's Christmas for some churches who celebrate the coming of the Christ child for non-Jewish people, Gentiles, all of us. Yet, Epiphany is a regular part of life experiences. Have you ever had an "epiphany" come to understand something you struggled to learn? Perhaps you even said "I saw the light" or "It dawned on me. . ." My favorite example is when the Prodigal Son realized he could return to his father's house. Scripture literally says he "came to his senses". In 2025, let us "see the light" and know St. Paul is a place we gather together to encourage each other and come into the light of Jesus our Savior.

Church Council – Dennis Pieper

Sunday, January 12th at the 9:00am service we will have **Installation of Officers for 2025** and "*Thank You*" to the Officers and Elders who completed their service in 2024. On the next Sunday is our **Voter's Meeting – Sunday, January 19th after the 9:00am** worship service. Every Member who has confirmed their faith following Confirmation Class, is a Voting Member of St. Paul. Please plan to attend—you need to be there.

Treasurer – Paul Szymanski

Thank you all for your generosity not only in treasure, but in time and talent as well. St Paul's only works because we have so many people involved in the day to day and many of you have taken on responsibilities with your passion for mission and outreach. What a blessing! I pray you all have a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Youth Director – Paul Szymanski

December is always a busy month and I didn't want to add to that. Looking forward to getting back to movie nights, game nights, and more come January. Watch the bulletin for updates and have a Merry Christmas.

Food Pantry – Donna Brunell

With a supply of turkey breasts, hams, potatoes, sweet potatoes, gravy, and stuffing mix from the Greater Chicago Food Depository we supplied 216 families this Christmas. Our Food Pantry Volunteers had a chance to enjoy a family meal on December 3rd as a thank you for all their hard work this past year. Without them we wouldn't be able to distribute food to over 200 families each week. We especially thank Rich and Ruth Treichel who have successfully been managing the Food Pantry since it's beginning in 2011. The Food Pantry has gone through many changes and transitions, and Rich & Ruth have led us all the way, serving tirelessly and with joy. I (Donna Brunell) will be stepping into the role of Coordinator starting in 2025. Finally, we thank Colin Powell Middle School in Matteson for their donation of 10 boxes of canned goods to our pantry which Scott Schulz picked up for us.

Prayer Shawl – Diane Wille

As we enter a new year on the calendar, we also reflect back to a year of busy hands making Prayer Shawls, baby blankets and hats, scarves, prayer squares, military prayer squares and Christmas stockings for the military. Last year we were blessed to have 12 Baptisms at St. Paul, and we shared a blanket for each baptism. It will be interesting to review just how much yarn we needed, how many prayer shawls were given and the number of blankets & baby hats, scarves and prayer squares we supplied this year. We meet every Monday in the Narthex (weather permitting) and work on projects bag and tag items and get them ready for a blessing. As the mission goes forward, please consider joining our group or working at home to donate items. We also appreciate monetary gifts so we can continue to purchase yarn for these items.

Mission Quilting Group!

We look forward to the New Year and all of the blessings that await us. We will be meeting to tie quilts on these dates, January 9th and 23rd, both Thursdays, from 9:00-11:00a.m.! You are welcome to come and give a helping hand.

Stephen Ministry Training

We would like to begin a new Stephen Ministry training class early in the New Year. If you think you would be interested in becoming a Stephen Minister, please let one of the Pastors know. You can learn more about the 50-hour course and also about Stephen Ministry in general by talking to one of the current Stephen Ministers.

A Purposeful Grandparent's Prayer for 2025



Sovereign God, Thank You for my salvation in Christ and for Your divine purpose in my life. My soul rests in Your power as I testify to my children and grandchildren of your great faithfulness and love. Show me how to lead with Your grace as I share Your truth. Prepare the hearts of my children and grandchildren and give me courage to fulfill the purpose You designed me for in my family. I pray that You shower my family with multi-generational blessings and spiritual fruit for Your glory. Amen. Please see your 2025 Grandparenting Planner for ideas on applying your purpose with your grandchildren in January.

Fellowship and Fire



St. Paul Men, you are "warmly" invited to come out and join other men **Thursday, January 16th, at 7:00 p.m.**, as we come together to relax, celebrate victories, tell stories, escape the chaos, and support and encourage each other around a fire. You only need to bring your favorite lawn chair and your favorite campfire consumables (beverage, snacks, etc.). You will find us behind the St. Paul Education wing – just look for the fire. Bring a friend.

First Quarter Focus Mission – St Matthew Lutheran Church

Since 1871, St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church has served the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. Once a center for German immigration, Pilsen is now mostly Hispanic immigrants and their children. Pastor Cesar Sifuentes and Deaconess Elle Sifuentes, originally from Guatemala, serve this small Spanish-speaking congregation, which operates a food pantry and soup kitchen, "El Comedor Popular", to help feed countless neighbors in their community every week. Please consider supporting the ministry of St. Matthew with your prayers and contributions. The Soup Kitchen is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and a group from St. Paul's is scheduled to go on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, leaving church at 10:30 and returning by 1:30 pm. Come and meet us at church and we will car-pool together.

Missionaries Needed



The 2025 St. Paul Alaska Mission Trip will be July 23rd thru August 3rd (10-day team) or July 25th thru August 3rd (7-day team). We will be performing work projects and conducting a VBS. More information will be coming out soon. Please contact Pastor Troester, Pastor Larry, or Scott Schulz if you have any questions.

St. Paul Blood Drive

Versiti Blood Center will to St. Paul on **Sunday, January 26th, from 9:00a.m. – 12:15p.m.** to receive donations. St. Paul has had great success at giving blood in the past. Please step up to help save lives again. It takes about 30 minutes including rest/snack time after giving. See or call Rosanne Tadsen at 708-209-5335 to make your appointment.

In Closing...

The prophet Isaiah wrote, 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, that God would send One whose titles would include: Immanuel ('God with us'), Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. These titles, and many more, such as Messiah/Christ ('anointed one'), LORD ('I am'), and Redeemer ('ransom') makes Christmas a BIG DEAL for those of us who believe! Make it a big deal on your Christmas list of things to do. Be in worship with your fellow believers (note the times of worship below)! Make each gift you give and receive, a reminder of God's Greatest Gift for everyone (without cost & eternal)! Listen to the counsel that Jesus is, as you wonder at His Great Gift of Himself for you. Recall at the birth of Jesus, that He is God, and see His mighty works. Listen, obey and follow the example of Jesus, who like a father has carried the burden of you, His Family, and is preparing a place for you in heaven. And finally, come and worship Jesus, the Prince of Peace, bringing real peace, eternal peace, having fought the battle for us which brings us that Peace, by grace through faith.

BLESSED CHRISTMAS,

Pastor T.



Christmas Eve Worship Service
Tuesday, December 24th
5:00pm & 11:00pm

Christmas Day Worship Service
Wednesday, December 25th
10:00am