



The Spirit of St. Paul's

DECEMBER 2024

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

www.stpaulslutheran.ca

EVANGELISM and PUBLIC RELATIONS

THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The first streetlight etched in my memory had a distinctive white glow that lit my path from the end of our lane until I had almost completed the two-block walk to the schoolyard. In time, the light was changed to one with a sensor that automatically turned it on and off as needed. Its bulb created only a small blue circle at the base of its lamppost and I struggled to see as I walked to school in the darkness. By the time I could rejoice in the radiant amber rays of the most recent streetlights, I had good reason to wonder what it would be like if they were to disappear altogether. What would it be like to walk in utter darkness?

The prophet Isaiah declares, *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone"* (Isaiah 9:2), and *"Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the Name of the LORD and rely on His God"* (Isaiah 50:10b). Only the light of God has the power to overcome the "deep darkness" of sin, death and Satan's

power that entered our world through the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve.

We rejoice in the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary just as the prophet Isaiah foretold: *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His Name Immanuel"* (Isaiah 7:14). In John 8:12 Jesus confirms, *"I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,"* and in John 14:6 He reminds, *"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* His saving work on the cross, His death, resurrection and ascension back to His Heavenly Father, both illuminates and secures our pathway to Him.

We also remember these words that Jesus included in His Sermon on the Mount: *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In*

the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

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ADVENT and CHRISTMAS CALENDAR

- Sunday, **December 8**, after service - Voters' Assembly, coffee and cookies served
- Thursday, **December 12**, 7:00 p.m. - Advent Worship Service
- Sunday, **December 15** - Christmas Potluck Social, immediately after worship. Singing, games and Christmas punch. Sign up to bring a main or dessert.
- **December 16 & 17**, 7:00 p.m. - Carolling to shut-ins. Contact office if you would like to sing.
- Tuesday, **December 24**, 7:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
- Wednesday, **December 25**, 10:00 a.m. - Christmas Day Worship

Reminders

- Please remember that, because we have a number of members with allergies to nuts, any foods brought to church events should be nut-free.
- Also, several have allergies to fragrances. Please consider them when choosing toiletries and whether or not to wear perfumes.
- LWMLC mites and society offerings may be put in the offering plate in an envelope separate from your church offering, mailed to the church or given to society treasurer, Marion Hollinger. Please make any cheques payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church but mark them clearly as being for LWMLC. Indicate the amount for mites and the amount for society funds.

Classifieds

Something to sell or give away? Need something? Services to offer to fellow members? Try The Spirit Classifieds first. No cost. Leave your ads at the church office or give them to the editor.

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Light in the darkness, continued
 We are blessed to sing/pray these words from LSB #523 (Text and music: public domain).
*O Word of God incarnate,
 O wisdom from on high,
 O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
 O Light of our dark sky;
 We praise You for the radiance
 That from the hallowed page,
 A lantern to our footsteps,
 shines on from age to age.*

*The Church from You, dear Master;
 Received the gift divine
 And still that light is lifted
 O'er all the earth to shine*

*It is the chart and compass
 That, all life's voyage through,
 Mid mists and rocks and quicksands
 Still guides, O Christ, to You.*

*O make Your Church, dear Saviour,
 a lamp of burnished gold
 To bear before the nations
 Your true light as of old!
 O teach Your wand'ring pilgrims
 By this their path to trace
 Till, clouds and darkness ended,
 they see You face to face!*

*Verla Schmirler
 Board of Evangelism
 and Public Relations
 Scripture quoted is from ESV.*

FORMER PASTOR CALLED HOME



Rev. Lowell L. Guebert, 1959-1985

One of our dear members, Reverend Lowell Guebert, was called home to glory October 24, 2024. Reverend Guebert served as St. Paul's ninth pastor from 1959 to 1985 and continued to support the congregation's ministry in his retirement.

We give thanks to God for his ministry and contributions to St. Paul's and the church at large.

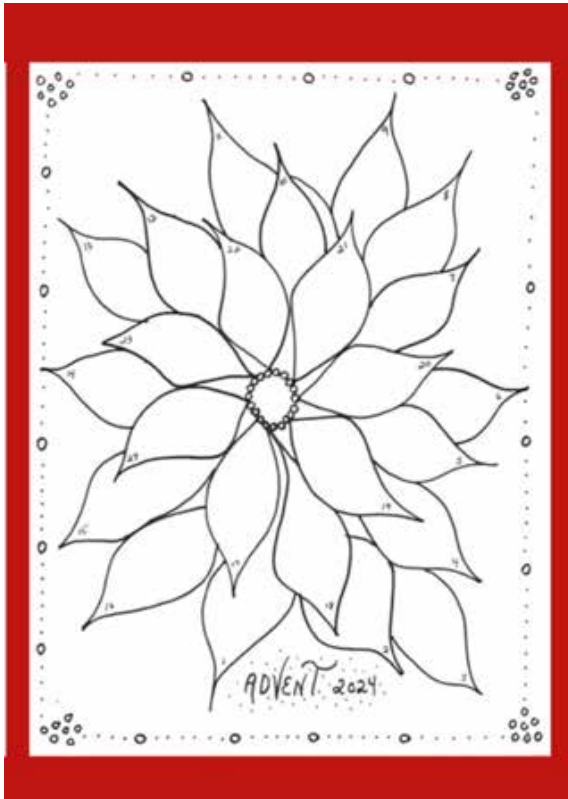
Rev. Guebert in front of the altar as it was in 1961.



Pictures from "The Stones Will Shout: Celebrating 100 Yersars of God's Grace"

We hear and are comforted by the promise of Christ, our Lord: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

ADVENT CALENDAR — AN IDEA TAKEN FROM PRAYING IN COLOUR



MITTEN TREE

Help keep many hands and ears warm this winter by decorating the Mitten Tree. Mittens, gloves, toques and scarves in sizes for children and adults are needed. Donations will be accepted until Sunday, December 15, and then given to community organizations for distribution.

St. Paul's LWML



ADVENT IS THE SEASON OF PREPARATION for God's coming into the world as a flesh and blood person. Lush and heady words pepper our Advent vocabulary and theology—incarnation, anticipation, preparation, hope, despair, annunciation... But Advent is also a season of down-to-earthiness and the physical senses. It is a time for awakening the head, heart and body.

Using an Advent calendar is one of my favourite ways to prepare and pray in the days leading up to Christmas. Unlike the store-bought versions, my calendars have no doors, just blank spaces for the days of Advent. Instead of tearing apart a calendar day by day, I build the calendar. Each day I choose a person to pray for or a word to ponder. I write the name or word in the space and ask God to be with me in this daily journey. Then I sit with the word and surround it with doodles and colour; I think of each mark or swath of colour as a non-verbal prayer. Each day's offering feels like a little wrapped package to bring to Jesus' birthday celebration. Creating this calendar helps me to savor each day of Advent. I no longer want Christmas to hurry up and get here! I am content in the preparation. When the calendar is finished, the accumulation of daily doodles forms a colorful tapestry and is a record of my Advent spiritual journey.

Drawing, writing, or doodling on an Advent calendar template is both a prayerful and playful practice. No artistic skill is necessary! Advent starts on December 1 this year, so there are 24 days until Christmas.

Ideas For Using the Calendar Templates

1) **Pray for a person each day.** Write their name in the space. Doodle around the name, add colour. If words come to you as you draw, pray them in your mind or write the word on the page. Squeeze words onto the calendar in the shape or along the margins. When you have finished with your daily entry, say "amen" or recite a short passage of Scripture appropriate to Advent like "The Lord is my light and my salvation" (Psalm 27:1). This tiny colourful mosaic creates a frame around the person's name. Return to the calendar each day and let it be a visual reminder to pray for each person again. Add a new person every day.

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Advent calendar, continued

2) **Choose a word from the daily Scripture readings for the season.** You can find a daily lectionary in Lutheran Service Book, page 299.

3) **Choose a word from a book of Advent meditations.** Combine your calendar with one of the many wonderful books of daily Advent meditations and reflections. Read the entry for the day and choose a word that jumps out at you. Write the word in the shape and doodle and colour around it. Marinate in the word. What is it saying to you? What does God have to say to you about the word? Keep a computer or notebook next to your calendar so you can write any insights or “ahas.”

4) **Write and ponder an Advent word** like prepare, wait, pregnant, hope, watch, darkness, wilderness, longing, light...as you doodle and colour. There are dozens of words associated with Advent. When you complete a calendar using these words, it is like having a mini, visual dictionary of the season.

5) **Use the words chosen by AdventWord.** Their suggested words for 2024: humility, abound, redemption, sprout, earnestly, faithfulness, safety, splendor, refine, joy, prepare, righteousness, salvation,

proclaim, rejoice, gentleness, trust, gather, home, love, mercy, lifted, shine, come, fruit

6) **Write something you hope for each day.** Advent is a season of hope. Choose a word of hope and write it in the space. Let the word fill you as you draw and add colour.

7) **Celebrate the women and men of the Bible.** Choose a different person for each day and learn what they did and why they are important to our story and God’s story. As you draw, be quiet and listen to what these people might reveal to you about Jesus and God.

8) **Write one of the many names for Jesus in the daily box.** Here are a few of the many ways we refer to Jesus: Saviour, Messiah, Friend, Prince of Peace, Emmanuel... Use the Bible, Handel’s Messiah, Christmas carols, and hymns to uncover those names. Pray and ponder how that name for Jesus stirs, affects, annoys, delights, or inspires you.

9) **Just colour and doodle in the space. For smaller children,** draw the calendar on 11"x17" paper to create larger spaces. Teach them about Advent as a “one day at a time” journey. Light a battery-powered votive candle and give them a quiet, secret place to work.

STEWARDSHIP

REPENTING OF “YOURS” AND “MINE”

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won’t be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn’t ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is



Repenting, continued

repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us Lord for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788) highlights both this gift and our response.

*Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,
that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost*

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

But there is no way that we deserve anything we get from our Lord. We need that ongoing lesson from God Himself. Thankfulness toward God is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. God’s Word works this thanksgiving in us. We need this weekly reminder that Jesus didn’t consider “equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” for us, to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:6). He didn’t bat an eye. He paid the price! Our life of stewardship is one of daily and weekly thanksgiving inspired by the Lord Himself.

*That knows no barrier of “yours” and “mine,”
assured that only what’s withheld is lost.*

Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is “mine!” But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” There isn’t anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the “yours” and “mine” and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord’s house.

HERE AT ST. PAUL’S, as we move into the Advent season and all the expectation that season brings, we

are mindful of the many ways God continues to bless us and our congregation. We are blessed with the gift of music and those who offer it to enhance our worship experience. We are reminded of the dedication of Pastor Keith and his disciplined sermon messages founded in the true inspired Word of God. We are thankful for the faithful servants who support our worship ministry and church office functions. We will soon be meeting to hold our voters’ meeting where we will approve an operating budget for 2025. We pray that you will continue to support our mission and ministry here and abroad with your gifts.

Moving into the last month of the year, we look at our financial situation and where we might end the year. Our last financial statement to the end of September showed a deficit of \$20,085 so we have a way to go to end the year in the black. This compares to a deficit at the end of September 2023 of \$27,554. Last year we ended the year with a small surplus so we know we can make up substantial ground with God’s blessings and our collective gifts. Our latest year-end projections based on previous years’ actual giving and expenses show a possible deficit of just over \$9,000. We know we can overcome this deficit, and we pray that we will see an improved year-end result.

*God’s blessings this Advent and Christmas season!
Board of Stewardship*

ABOUT OUR STAINED GLASS WINDOWS



St. Paul’s will be printing a book about the meaning behind our stained glass windows, including information about the designer, the stained glass artist and the process of creating the windows.

Three copies will be available in the narthex for use at the church and three copies will be available to borrow from the library for anyone who would like to spend more time reading it at home.

Personal copies will also be available to purchase at our cost of approximately \$17 plus tax. Please contact the office if you would like one ordered for you. **The deadline for orders is December 2.**

THE WALK AND THE WATER — A RETREAT

On October 19, 2024, thirty-one women from St. Paul's and other LCC congregations in Saskatoon and area gathered at Faith Lutheran, Saskatoon, to embark on a virtual camping trip with Jesus, "The Walk and the Water," created by Renate Bishopp of Faith.



Denise Timm, our Nor'Western Zone delegate, shared the experience of attending her first LWML–Canada convention, "Sing a New Song to the Lord," held in London, Ont., July 11-14, 2024.

Campers enjoyed a noon lunch of delicious beef stew, buns and a variety of cookie treats.

Upon arrival, ladies received "trail mix" and their choice of beverages to enjoy. Following an opening devotion, Campfire Bingo (an icebreaker led by Gail Mitchell) helped us get to know each other better.



Two Bible studies, "The Walk" and "The Water" were led by Gaylene Haugen and offered opportunity to study God's Word, share experiences, sing and pray.

Whether the day's trail took us down memory lane or to places we had never been before, it left us renewed and at peace. The day's registration fee included a donation to Saskatoon Crocus Co-op, a local organization that supports people with mental and intellectual challenges, whose catering team had prepared the lunch time stew.

St. Paul's FAMILY

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

When it comes to friendships within the church, Jacob Kitsch thinks broadly. In 2019 he set out on an adventure that just kept growing.

That year while Jacob was still in his teens, one of Rev. Nieminen's children, whose father previously served as vicar at St. Paul's, introduced him to a group chat of teens, many from eastern Canada. Today Jacob thinks he has met a significant number of the young adults in Lutheran Church–Canada.

In 2022 he attended the Lutheran Church–Canada convention in Edmonton, meeting many and learning the ins and outs of our church body.

Summer is the best time for travel because Jacob is at university the rest of the year. In 2023 he drove to Winkler, Man., to attend a retreat for Central Region young adults organized by Rev. Klages. He met Hunter and Sahara Monselor, former members of St. Paul's living at Christopher Lake in Winkler. He also helped with a VBS in a small congregation in Sudbury, Ontario, the same one Gracie Harper helped with this year as part of her summer internship. Jacob, Hunter, and Jacob's cousin Kyler also attended the Good Shepherd Institute at Fort Wayne, Indiana. Jacob received assistance from St. Paul's Scholarship fund for the Good Shepherd Institute.

Young adult retreat in 2023 at Winkler, Man. Sahara and Hunter Monselor and Jacob Kitsch are seated facing the speaker.



This past summer was another busy one for Jacob. In all he was away from home for four weeks. He attended what has become an annual retreat in Winkler in May. In July, he was off to a one-week summer conference at Concordia University in Nebraska. Jacob shared at length about the state of university education in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and discussed an organization named The Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education (CCLE) who provided the summer conference attended by 600 people, many of whom were young adults.

Following the conference, he drove to Florida and visited with members of a family he attended CCLE with. After this, he drove to Galveston Texas for a cruise for 21- to 41-year-old Lutherans organized by Rev. Bryan Wolfmüller of Austin, Texas. The cruise ship held 6,000, 150 of whom made up the young adult group. Jacob attended the cruise with Hunter Monseler, Jack Seemel, and Vicar Albert Ho.

Jacob agrees that driving is cheaper than flying and he has logged about 40,000 km so far.

Where to next? There's a retreat in Kitchener, Ont., and possibly one in Saskatchewan next summer. And, after he graduates from the University of Saskatchewan, he tentatively plans to attend a two-year program at Luther Classical College in Casper, Wyoming.

We began this by saying that Jacob thinks broadly when it comes to friendship...wanting to make connections with like-minded Lutherans. But it isn't just about friendship. It's learning about Lutherans in the current culture, and sharing and praying and more, with like-minded people, especially in the young adult age group. And I suspect he may be keeping his eye out for just the right someone to be part of his future.

Marion Hollinger, editor



EDUCATION

KIDS CORNER GROWING HEARTS OF FAITH

One Lord, One faith, One baptism (Ephesians 4:5)

Hey Kids!

So we've made it to December! I'm sure you are all familiar with what happens in this month. We celebrate Jesus being born! He was the best gift we could ever receive because He literally saves our lives! Talk about a superhero! As you are giving and receiving gifts this year, try to remember that the real reason we do so is to remind us about God's Gift to us. Christmas isn't only about the gifts, it's a reminder of the greatest Gift ever given! God gave us Jesus,

His Son to later die on the cross so we can be forgiven of all the bad things we do. And there's one more big gift we will receive later....to live in heaven where no one ever hurts anymore! Thank you, God!

Have a very blessed Christmas!!!

Mrs. Denise Timm

For the Board of Christian Education and Youth



LAY MINISTRY

“For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”. Luke 2:11

God's blessings to everyone as we celebrate the real meaning of Christmas which is the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We hope and pray that everyone is doing well.

The Board of Lay Ministry along with Pastor Keith, continue to meet to discuss the overall ministry at St. Paul's. This ministry over the Christmas season will include several opportunities for worship including an Advent Worship Service, the traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight service and worship service on Christmas Day. We hope you will join us.

Pastor Keith continues to provide numerous opportunities for members of the congregation to be in the Word. These include an online Bible study on Tuesday mornings, a men's Bible study on Thursday mornings and a Bible study on Thursday evenings where we have been watching and discussing the movie series “The Chosen.” We encourage members

of St. Paul's to take part in any of these opportunities. We are also pleased that as part of the board's discussions we continue to transfer a number of new members into the congregation. We hope you will take the opportunity to introduce yourself and welcome them to St. Paul's.

As always, we continue to be blessed with the dedication of the many volunteers who assist with worship services including serving on the altar guild and ushering. In addition, we are blessed by the presence and leadership of Laura Neufeld as well as many others who share their musical talents.

Pastor Keith continues to be a constant in providing leadership to St. Paul's in carrying out the ministry of word and sacrament to the congregation including through member visitation and private communion and we thank God for his ministry.

We wish all members and their families a very blessed Christmas and we look forward to seeing all of you in the new year.

Barry Walter, Board of Lay Ministry