



The Spirit of St. Paul's

DECEMBER 2023

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN
www.stpaulslutheran.ca

A NEW CHURCH YEAR BEGINS WITH ADVENT

The season of Advent is the beginning of a new Church Year. Following a liturgical calendar ties the rhythm of earthly life with the rhythm of heavenly life, helping us to remember God's love and promises given in Christ Jesus.

The word "advent" is from the Latin "adventus," which means "coming" or "arrival." In the Roman Empire, adventus referred to the arrival of a person of dignity or great power, like a king or emperor. Advent is the time when the Church patiently prepares for the coming of the Great King, Jesus the Christ.

Our focus during this season goes beyond just waiting for the birth of Jesus. Advent is more than just a prelude to Christmas. In fact, there are four "advents" that we consider:

- The advent of God's promise of a Saviour.
- The advent of the Christ born in Bethlehem.
- The advent of Jesus today through his Word, in the waters of Baptism, and in Holy Communion.
- The advent of Jesus on the Last Day when he will usher in the new heaven and new earth.

I wish you a blessed season of Advent and I pray that you are



filled with God's love and peace as we again hear the great and mighty wonder that the infant born in

Bethlehem is our Saviour and Lord. God is with us. Rest in the wonders of His love!

God's blessings, Pastor Keith



HELP DECORATE THE MITTEN TREE!

Mittens, gloves, toques and scarves in sizes for children and adults are needed. Donations will be accepted until Sunday, December 17 and then given to community organizations for distribution.

Sponsored by St. Paul's Lutheran Women's Missionary League

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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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 Saviour 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 through several bible studies. 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 are watching and discussing the movie series "The Chosen." We encourage members of St. Paul's to take part in any of these Bible study opportunities.

We are also pleased that as part of the discussions of the Board of Lay Ministry we continue to

transfer a number of new members into the congregation. We hope you will take the opportunity to introduce yourself and welcome these new members 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 in sharing their musical talents. Over the coming weeks we are pleased that a choir has been formed and will be part of our worship services. To assist with this music ministry a Music Committee has been meeting and is looking forward to the blessings this ministry will provide.

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.

Regards,
Barry Walter
Board of Lay Ministry



EVANGELISM and PUBLIC RELATIONS

REMEMBER . . .

“All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For kingship belongs to the LORD, and He rules over the nations.” (Psalm 22:27-28 ESV)

As we gather for weekly Divine Service throughout the Church Year, we hear our pastor begin “in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The Triune God meets us here and nourishes us through the hearing of His Word and the receiving of His Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. The season of Advent prepares our hearts and minds to remember Christ’s first coming and to celebrate His birth to the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. It also reminds us that He is coming again in power and great glory as King of kings and Lord of lords.

In Psalm 103 ESV, David helps us to remember God’s rich blessings that come to us through His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and for which He deserves all glory, honour and praise.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger

and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep His covenant and remember to do His commandments. The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, obeying

the voice of His word! Bless the LORD, all His hosts, His ministers, who do His will! Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul.”

As we leave the Divine Service, each of us returns to our own little “mission field” of family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and contacts within the community and beyond. As we interact with them, our Heavenly Father knows exactly who has yet to know or be reminded of His love and Christ’s sacrifice for them. I pray that each of us is open to sharing the Good News as the Holy Spirit leads, remembering that these words Jesus spoke to His disciples apply to us also.

“...the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (John 14:26 ESV)

Verla Schmirler,
Board of Evangelism
and Public Relations

Coming Up

The Board of Parish Fellowship are busy preparing for several gatherings. Watch for sign-up sheets.

DECEMBER 7, 7:00 P.M.: Advent service.

Come away from the busyness of the season and rest in the Lord. Join in fellowship afterward.

DECEMBER 17, after worship: Christmas social with a potluck meal and carolling too!



Why Liturgy?

from The Canadian Lutheran September/October 2023

by Rev. David Haberstock, Regional Pastor, Central Region, Lutheran Church–Canada

Why do Lutherans do liturgy? To answer the question, we first have to define what we mean by the word “liturgy.” It’s usually used by Lutherans in two ways: first, to mean the way in which Lutherans worship (with an orderly set of words for both pastor and parishioners rooted in Scripture). Secondly, it’s used to refer to the specific services in our hymnals.

Many pastors refer to the Divine Services in our hymnals as the “Historic Liturgy” of the Church. This distinguishes them from the tendency in recent decades to vary the text of the service from week to week (for example, in what Concordia Publishing House calls “Creative Worship”). Creative Worship is certainly liturgical in the first sense above because it is an orderly outline with responses. But when I ask why Lutherans “do liturgy,” I mean the second sense: the Historic Liturgy—that is, the liturgies in our hymnals which Lutheran Church–Canada congregations in convention have accepted, recommended, and agreed to use.

Why do we do these historic liturgies? There are many reasons but here are just a few:

1. Because they are solid and unchanging in a world which is constantly changing. Scholars, of course, would point out that the liturgy has changed over time. But generally, this change has been gradual, with changes and additions made bit by bit over the centuries. Divine Service Settings 1 and 2

in the Lutheran Service Book represented a departure from this slow and gradual process when they were introduced nearly fifty years ago, because they introduced a lot of change all at once. But even they follow the general outline of the older Setting 3. Once learned, Settings 1 and 2 also become a solid and stable thing you can hold onto in an ever-changing world.

2. It is Scriptural. Almost all of the words in the liturgy are straight out of the Bible or are a summary of things in the Bible. I remember being shocked in my teen years reading 1 John and realizing that those words we say in Setting 1—“If we say we have no sin...”—were straight out the Bible.
3. Repetition is the key to learning. You learn, grow to understand, and remember the things you repeat regularly. Repeating things together until they are learned by heart is the best

way to serve the aged, the very young, and the parent with a crying child in service. It keeps us all together supporting each other as no other technology can.

4. It is orderly. St. Paul says of worship that things need to be done in good order, “for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Order is something that young people raised in our present world of endless variety are drawn to and are actively seeking. Order gives them an anchor, a stable thing to connect to and root their lives in (Hebrews 6:19).
5. It teaches the most important things you need to know. The core teachings and practices of the Christian faith are included in the liturgy. From the very first Easter Sunday, Christians have always gathered for God’s Word, prayer, and the Lord’s Supper (e.g., John 20; Acts 2:42;



20:7). From there, the liturgy developed by adding the most important things we need to know. For example, when the creeds were written to clarify who our Triune God is and what He does, they were then added to the weekly liturgy so that we would learn them by heart.

6. It connects us to the whole church throughout the ages. When we use the liturgy handed down to us, we are being truly democratic and inclusive in that we are allowing the whole Church throughout the ages to

have a say in how we do things! Not that it's about voting; it's about the teaching of Scripture and how all the saints of all the ages have handed this blessed faith on to us. We worship in the same patterns and traditions they used and passed on. We sing the very songs of the saints who have gone before and of heaven itself. Most canticles we sing in the liturgy are songs of the angels (the Gloria and Sanctus) or of the saints in Scripture (Kyrie, Agnus Dei, Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis, Benedictus, and so on.)

7. It is evangelistic. "Evangelistic" simply means Gospel, and the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16)! When a pastor fails to preach the Gospel with clarity, the liturgy does. I have heard sermons that were all Law and no Gospel, and left us in dread of our sins. But then the Offertory ("Create in Me" – Psalm 51) immediately followed, applying the balm of God's forgiveness to our hurting hearts, pointing us to Jesus. Pointing sinners to Jesus is true evangelism!

St. Paul's FAMILY NEWS

WELCOME to new members Sarah Haugen and Martin, Julie, Magdalena and Ezra Nord.

On Sunday, November 19, 2023, Emmett Paul Roy Loos was welcomed into the Lord's family.

While the day had special significance for baby Emmett and his family, it also had historical significance for the congregation.

Emmett's great grandmother, Merle



Pictured top right: Rev. Alex Timm, Evan Loos, Megan Loos and baby Emmett.

Below: Great grandmother, Merle Timm; mother, Megan Loos, baby Emmett and grandmother, Lisa Bracewell.

Corianne Bracewell and Jordan Beatty served as sponsors.



Timm, a life-long member, was present. Emmett's great, great, great grandparents were founding members of the congregation.

Rev. Alex Timm, a son of the congregation and cousin of Emmett's mother preached the sermon.

STEWARDSHIP

The Measure of Our Generosity

If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the *LORD* your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the *LORD* made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the *LORD* blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Colossians 2:16). Or as

St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing

to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere.

The work of the ministry is ever growing and ongoing. We need to share in that ministry here and abroad. We pray that you will join with others as we take on that important work.

Here at St. Paul's we have just looked at the programs and ministry plans for 2024 and adopted a budget for next year's plans. We pray for your support in the last month of the year to end 2023 with good financial results so we can move into 2024 with confidence, joy and success.

Board of Stewardship

Want the latest info?

Each Thursday Lutheran Church-Canada sends out an edition of the InfoDigest to the email inbox of anyone who subscribes. To subscribe, visit the webpage address on the left.

Here what is included:

- mission stories, updates and prayers
- Latest news and viewa
- Calls and transitions across Canada
- Written sermons and devotional videos
- prayers for the week and a lectionary summary for the coming Sunday
- announcements and coming events



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