

God's Family



- 10:00 a.m.—Sunday
Worship Service

Inside this Issue:



Follow Me— A Message from Pastor	1 & 3
Birthdays; Anniversaries; Services; Food Pantry	2
How the "Follow Me" Series Will Work on Sundays; Town Hall Meetings	3
Member Biography Corner w/photo; Recycling; Oktober- fest Sausage	4
St. Paul's Partici- pates in New Melle Country Christmas w/photos	5
St. Paul's Coffee Cart w/photo; Ad- vent Services Letter from Pastor Maxx	6
Jingle Jam at Messiah w/photos	7
Altar Flower Order Form & Price In- crease for 2024	8

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
150 W. Highway D
New Melle, MO 63365
(636)828-5616

Volume XXIV Issue 12
December 2023

Follow Me

"Follow me."

Quotes don't have to be long to be profound, do they? Think back on your life. Are there times when someone said something to you in only a few words? Simple. Yet profound. Life changing moments, with only a few brief words to bridge the transition.

You've been accepted!
I'm pregnant! I love you.

Your father died. It's
cancer. Goodbye.

Be it good or bad, cele-
bratory or sorrowful, a
few words are all it takes
to strike into our souls.

No long study, no moun-
tain of books, lectures, or
seminars.

I think it has to do with
our great human ability
for applying context, even
if it is subconscious. Our
hearts, our guts, can pro-
cess on a different plain
than our minds at times.
Or at least so it seems.
We often have an ability
to assess the gravity, the
power, the profoundness,
the death, or the emotional weight of a situa-
tion, even if we can't fully comprehend it, cope
with it, even know how to live out its next steps.

I would have to think Matthew is no excep-
tion. One of the wordier gospel writers, keen
on extracurricular details to his companion
Mark, Matthew writes the account of when he
first encountered Jesus of Nazareth, the healer,
the great teacher, and somewhere even saying
the Messiah come from God (**Matthew 9**).

He holds no punches and gives us the key de-
tails of his life. A tax collector, on the outside

looking in at the normal Jewish society in which
he grew up. Now he was deemed a traitor, an
extortionist, a Roman! Not that the Romans
claimed him; he just got the money... if he
skimmed off the top or betrayed his own peo-
ple... what was it to them?

It was just a job though, right? Someone had

to do it. I think it is inter-
esting that in the rest of
the section Matthew talks
about Jesus and how he
seemed to frequent fel-
lowship with tax collectors
and sinners. The two for
Matthew seemed to go
hand in hand. The outsid-
er, the marginalized, the
broken, the misled, the
misbehaved, the sick...

I can only imagine the
jolt of butterflies flowing
out of his coronaries when
Jesus, this well-known
holy figure, a Rabi and
perhaps a prophet, walk-
ing Matthew's midst...
stops... looks Matthew in
the eye, and in Matthew's
keen and detailed record-

ing... simply says... "follow me."

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, starting December
3rd we are going to begin a churchwide walk
through the gospel according to St. Matthew.
We will read a chapter a week together. From
Advent to Easter.

There are many reasons for our doing so. For
starters it is good to be in God's word as a peo-
ple of God. His words, His story, is the vocabu-
lary and narrative of our lives. My hope is

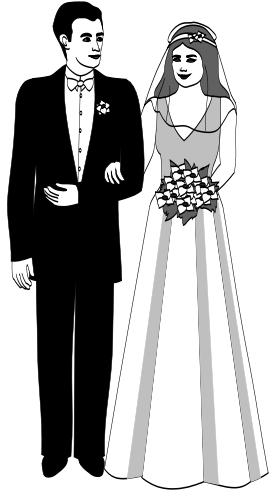


(continued on page 3)



December Birthdays

- 12/24 – Pamala Alexander
- 12/24 – Barbara Auping
- 12/30 – Bill Eslinger
- 12/26 – Jams Holladay
- 12/5 – Allen Schwede



December Services

- 12/3—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.
- 12/10—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.
- 12/17—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.
- 12/24—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.
- 12/24—Christmas Eve Service — 6:00 p.m.
- 12/25—Christmas Day Service
w/Communion—10:00 a.m.
- 12/31—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.

CONTACT INFORMATION

FOR

Pastor Maxx Fisher

Office: 636-828-5616

or

Cell Phone: 812-216-5891



November Food Pantry Donations

Members of the congregation reported donating 36 food items and \$65.00 in cash to the New Melle Food Pantry during the month of November.

In the future, if you donate, please report this to Sherry in the office, so your donations can be included in our tally.



Meal-a-Month Needs for December

The **MEAL-A-MONTH ITEMS** for **December**: Laundry soap, detergent, razors, catsup, mayonnaise, potatoes, sugar, saltine crackers, fruit juices, coffee, tea, canned pears, pineapple, fruit cocktail, and apple sauce, (No glass containers, please.)

Please bring items directly to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. If you donating money, please make checks payable to: St. Vincent De Paul Society. You may hand deliver your monetary (cash or check) donation or mail a check to Immaculate Heart of Mary, PO Box 100, New Melle, MO 63365. Please report your donation to Sherry Brandes in the office for Voters Assembly and Ladies Aid records. You only need to report number of items (or boxes or bags) and dollar amount. No names will be attached to the donations; just a monthly tally of the number of food items and dollars donated will be recorded.

Follow Me *(continued from pg. 1)*

throughout the series you see how the story of Jesus continues to play out in his church to the day when we will meet Jesus face to face ourselves.

You see, Jesus has also spoken to you. He has called you by name. He has looked you in the eyes, he has seen the depths of your soul. He knows you. Every detail. Every word spoken.

And yet he simply speaks... "follow me."

Some marvel at Matthew's immediate response. I don't. When someone has hit bottom, when someone is ready to climb out of their hole, when someone can't stand the muck and mire of the life they live, they know full well there is nowhere else to go.

Jesus is not calling for "knowers of Christianity", "scholars of scripture", or "moral heroes", though those things are all good and God pleasing things.

Jesus is calling for you... for sinners... for the sick... to simply "follow him".

But what does that mean? Where will we go? What will it cost? What must I lose? What will I gain? Will it hurt? Will I die? What will my friends think? What about my family? "Follow me."

But... what if? When? Where?

"Follow me."

With Matthew, we will stand up... and follow Jesus on his journey to the cross, to the tomb, beyond the grave, and into the world.

What the Holy Spirit will do with your heart and mind, I don't know. But I know this, Jesus has called us to follow him.

The only way to find out what that means is to get up and start walking.

What else do you have to lose? Where else do you have to go? What will it look like? When Jesus calls out to us...

"Follow me."

Pastor Maxx

St. Paul's Town Hall Meetings

A little over three years ago, through the efforts of the Missouri District and support from another congregation, Rev. Maxx Fisher was called to serve as the Pastor at our congregation. Over the past three years our congregation has made significant progress, which is a reason to celebrate.

A key question facing our congregation today is, "*What is next for St. Paul's?*" To help us begin to answer this question, the Missouri District has retained a consultant (Dale Kreienkamp) on our behalf, who will host several listening sessions to gather our input about the future through a guided conversation. Each listening session group will have approximately 12-15 members and will last between 60-75 minutes.

We need your help by attending one of these sessions and sharing what's on your mind. You can sign up in several ways: 1) You can sign up on one of the three sign-up sheets in the narthex: *Sunday, December 10, 11:30 a.m.; Monday, December 11, 3:00 p.m.; and Monday, December 11, 6:00 p.m.* 2) You can email the office, and we will put you on the list or 3) You can call the office to sign up. ***Please sign up for one of these meetings.***

How the "Follow Me" Series Will Work on Sundays

We will do a chapter of Matthew each week starting December 3rd and ending in Easter.

Your worship folders will have many interactive elements you can do at church or at home with your families

Make the weekly prayer a part of your day-to-day life, as part of our devotional walk together

Linger after service for discussions with Q & A with Pastor Maxx, as we enjoy our newly commissioned coffee cart!

Try something new, by taking sermon notes, or journaling through your scriptures, with resources for you and your family, which can be found in the narthex.

Do you have kids, grandkids or great grandkids? Begin talking with them through the Story Bible, so they can hear God's story too!

And don't forget to bring them along for our Generations Sunday Worship December 17th with Christmas carols, interactive worship, a kids message, and afterwards Christmas cookies and wassail!

Member Biography Corner



Carolyn Schwede

How long have you been at St. Paul's?

I am a life long member of St. Paul's.

What do you do and enjoy doing at St. Paul's?

I have been blessed to be able to serve as a church organist, choir member, Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teacher over the years. Currently I am Co-President of our Ladies Aid Society.

What do you enjoy about being a member of St. Paul's?

I enjoy the people, and the closeness of our church family.

What is something interesting about yourself? A hobby? Etc.

I first learned to play the organ on my mom's pump organ. That meant my legs got some exercise while I played the keyboard; as the pedals serve to pump air across the reeds to produce the sound.

I retired from the Wentzville School District this year, after working as a principal's secretary the past 22 years. I'm looking forward to having more time to travel and spend time with family.

Note about future member biographies: We plan to highlight one member each month, starting with our leadership and staff. Eventually every member of St. Paul's will be highlighted, so you can start writing your biography now, using the questions from Jackie's biography above!

Recycling at St. Paul's in 2024

Currently, you can recycle four types of items by turning them in at the office: 1) Devotional booklets such as *Portals of Prayer* and *Hope-Full Living*, 2) Printer ink cartridges—from home or office (we get a discount on supplies for the office for these), 3) Prescription pill bottles (labels MUST be removed), and 4) Household batteries of any size and type (not CAR batteries, etc.). Please check with Sherry in the office, if you have any questions.

Oktoberfest Sausage for Sale

Frozen raw sausage, packaged in two-pound bags is available for sale at \$10 per 2-pound bag. It is stored in the church freezer. If you wish to purchase one or more bags, please see Sherry at church, either on Sundays or throughout the week. Make checks payable to "St. Paul's Lutheran Church".

St. Paul's Participates in the Annual New Melle Country Christmas



On Saturday, November 25th, St. Paul's joined in on the fun at the annual New Melle Country Christmas. Nick Bennett and Amoret Chappell spent the evening making mason jar snow globes with the kids.

Everyone had a blast putting faces on the jars and filling them with their favorite colored glitter.

Nick and Amoret had their complete utmost attention until Santa arrived, of course.

What a cool way to show up for the community and remind the kids about their friends over at St. Paul's.

Thank you, Nick and Amoret, for helping the kids use their creativity to have a little fun and take home an artistic memory of their friends at St. Paul's.



YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS SUNDAY—December 17

Generations Sunday, Hymn Sing, New Member Reception, Wassail & Cookies

This service will include special activities for the children and a "hymn sing" during which, congregation members can pick a favorite hymn and everyone will sing a couple of verses of that song. New members will also be accepted into our congregation during the service.

Following the service there will be a reception for these new members. This will include refreshments of a hot beverage called "wassail", as well as cookies, followed by the singing of the "Wassail Song" and time to meet and greet our new members.

If you don't even know what wassail is and/or haven't had the opportunity to meet our new members, please join us for a little lighthearted fun and fellowship.

St. Paul's Coffee Cart—So Much More Than Just a Beverage Cart

On Sunday, November 26, St. Paul's Coffee Cart was commissioned during the church service by Pastor Maxx.

The cart has not only coffee, but also hot water for tea, bottles of water, and juice drinks. However, the purpose of this cart is much more than just to serve beverages to thirsty people. The cart and its offerings are available after each church service to encourage members and visitors alike to “stick around” after the service and talk to each other, just like families do.

Hopefully, this cart and its contents will allow everyone to know that St. Paul's is a friendly place to be, a place to bring their children, and a place that encourages people to go beyond the church service, spend time here, get to know one another, grow friendships, and become an interactive part of God's family.

So, enjoy the beverages, but enjoy each other more... strengthen our family in Christ.



Advent Wednesday Services

Dear St. Paul's,

Due to the lack of attendance, and lack of ability for some of our members to access these evening services, it has been determined that we will not have Wednesday Advent services this year.

I want to take a moment to remind everyone that while this might be difficult for some to hear, Wednesday Advent services are not biblically mandated services for our church to have.

Worship Services have many functions, one of which being discipleship. It is clear that the Wednesday services are not providing the best opportunity for discipleship to our congregation and divert resources and opportunities away from things that can and do.

If you would like to attend a Wednesday worship opportunity our brothers and sisters at Messiah and Emmanuel both offer these services.

In the meantime, St. Paul's is working diligently to provide for other opportunities for the congregation to be in the Word together. We have had a plethora of small groups, study's, events, prayer services, and Firestarter's, as well as Sunday worship. We will continue to seek opportunities for discipleship that fit our ever-changing context. However, please consider, your commitments to the deepening of your faith in God's word when there are opportunities presented. Also, remember that you can always gather with your friends at church and be in God's word, prayer and fellowship. Pastor Maxx is always willing to help find resources and make recommendations for any small group efforts.

Pastor Maxx

“Jingle Jam” at Messiah

Our Artist-in-Residence, Nick Bennett, once again had the chance to share his remarkable talents by designing and painting backdrops for the “Jingle Jam” event held at Messiah Lutheran Church in Weldon Springs on Friday, December 1st. Well over 500 kids and their parents had the chance to enjoy the wonderful show led by “Pirate” (Pastor Chuck Schlie) and his co-host, Hannah Lang.

Congratulations, Nick, on another successful artistic endeavor used to share the Good News of the coming of the Christ Child.



Nick spent a week working on the 4-sided cardboard backdrops pictured here. The backdrops were rotated by Nick, his brother Charlie, and his dad Ken to fit the activities in the show (so they were behind the scenes throughout the event). Singing and dancing accompanied each scene. The games coincided with the backdrops and the story being told. While at “Reindeer Island” kids wore antlers and had to do a ring toss onto the antlers of another person. At “Snowball Pass” kids had to decorate their parents as snow people in a timed event. Next, onstage participants played “Candy Cane Limbo”, using candy canes as limbo sticks. The treasure hunt at the end was for a “Gold Star”, which was used to tell of the birth of Christ.



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 70
New Melle, MO 63365

"A new command I give
you: Love one another."
John 13:34



St. Paul's Lutheran Church-
Missouri Synod

Flower Price Increase

The price for our altar flowers will be going up from \$30 to \$40 for 2024. This is the first price increase Dunn's Florist has asked for since before 2007.

The breakdown will be \$15 per altar vase and \$10 for delivery.

These prices are for the more common colors and flower varieties. Examples: Daisies, Carnations, Astras, and Poms. The common colors are white, lavender, and yellow. If you want to purchase within these limitations, the cost will be \$40.

If you want more expensive flowers and colors, the cost will go up (instead of \$15 per vase, it could be \$20 or \$25 per vase). Some examples of these are rarer varieties, such as lilies, or rarer colors, such as carnations in red or other less common colors.

The simplest way to contribute altar flowers: Fill out the form on this page or find one located in the south room of the narthex, sign up for the date or dates you desire to have flowers in church, and give the order form to Sherry Brandes. She will contact the florist and verify the cost of your flowers. THEN, you can pay for them...this means, you want to try to avoid waiting until the last minute.

She will order flowers on Mondays and when she calls, she will learn the price for what you are ordering. Then she will contact you to explain the cost, so you can agree to the amount or change your order.

Altar Flowers for 2024

DATE (flowers in church) _____

Given by _____

Phone Number _____

Reason (in memory of, in honor of, in celebration of, etc.) (for particular occasion or person, etc.)

COLOR OF FLOWERS: _____

COLOR OF RIBBON: _____

LEAVING AT CHURCH FOR FUTURE USE? _____

TAKING HOME AFTER CHURCH? _____

PAYMENT (\$40 for "regular" order - cash or check made payable to: "St. Paul's Lutheran Church")

If you want flowers or colors that are considered "premium" colors or flower types, this will cost extra – check with Sherry Brandes (636-828-5616) before paying for your flowers.

NOTE: Order form should be submitted at least a week in advance to Sherry Brandes (or placed on office desk)