

God's Family



- 10:00 a.m.—Sunday
Worship Service

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January 2024

Following Jesus into a New Year

Much of the content that the Apostle Matthew shares with us in his Gospel gives us an insight into how the Kingdom of God works. Namely, it subverts expectations. For example, the King does not come from a royal and mighty family, but from humble Nazarenes, a carpenter's son and a young maiden. He does not come in righteousness according to the world, but rather in scandal, as the virgin was with child and Joseph almost divorced her quietly. He does not come set in the clouds and enthroned over a sinful people, but comes down, and even descends into the banks of the Jordan river to be baptized into their lot with them. And as we will read, the pattern of paradox in the Gospel according to Matthew will continue this trend.

The Messiah, the King will ride on a humble donkey in his victory parade, not on a gallant steed.

He will come down from the mountain of transfiguration to climb up to the peak of Calvary to his crucifixion.

He will receive mocking and jeering instead of honor and respect from his people.

He will choose obedience unto suffering and death, even on a cross, even for his betrayers.

He will be as the sign is inscribed above his head on the cross, “This is the King of the Jews”... while he receives the condemnation of God, for the sins of the world.

It is clear that Jesus has come to bring something new to the world. A new Word from God concerning His promises and plans of old. A new revelation. A new rela-

tionship. A new Covenant. A new life. A new King.

But it is also very clear that when something new is afoot, it likely will be difficult for people to receive it, perceive it, and accept it. Why? Well because it's new! Novel, by definition, is something that we haven't experienced before, and so often in challenges are preconceived notions and expectations.

For instance, my wife Janie has brought me into the running world. After my first two races, I am learning that I don't know a lot about this running community. There are new rules, new vocabularies. I thought it would be as simple as, well, running! Just go until you can't! But there is pacing, stretching, types of running, and a variety of lengths of runs that affect your approach. Not to mention all the race etiquette! Thank goodness for Janie or I wouldn't even know how to sign up!

We all have had moments where the new thing took us off guard or didn't live up to our expectation (anyone who has had the pleasure of switching from a flip phone to an iPhone can relate, I am sure). But now think of the disciples. Jesus sees them in their elements, in their context, their livelihood as fishermen. He says, “Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men!”

Jesus, the Messiah, wants us to follow him? The King from the line of David? The one to restore Israel? The one to free us from oppression? The one to bring about a

(continued on page 3)



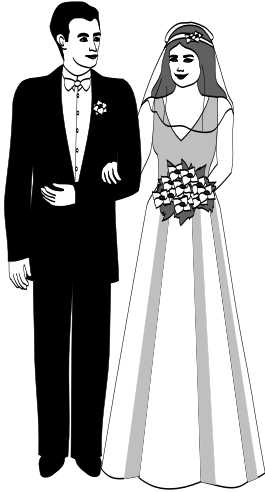
January Birthdays

1/18– Darby Ahern
1/20 – David Chappell
1/27– Delaney Schmidt



January Services

1/7—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.
1/14—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.
1/21—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.
1/28—Sunday w/Communion—10:00 a.m.



Special Sunday Events

Sunday, January 14 —Installation of New Officers—during the worship service

Sunday, January 21— Immediately after the service—Installation and Blessing of the newly renovated office space, followed by a reception and light refreshments

CONTACT INFORMATION

FOR

Pastor Maxx Fisher

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or

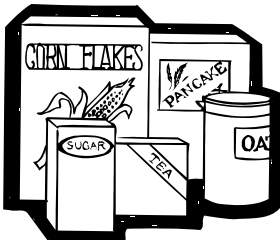
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December Food Pantry Donations

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

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 January

The **MEAL-A-MONTH ITEMS** for **January**: Fruit juice, coffee, multipurpose cleaner, razors, hair conditioner, applesauce, breakfast bars for kids. (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)*

revival of right worship and practice? Maybe even more! Of course, we will follow!

They were right about a lot of this in a way. You see, they had the Old Testament, the scriptures that promised and pointed to Jesus. But they didn't understand fully; they didn't have the whole story; they didn't know what we know only by virtue of their experiencing it and sharing it with us.

As you can imagine, as the new thing came, they struggled with the dissonance between their expectations and realities. Things weren't as they hoped. They struggled to understand.

When Jesus is betrayed into the hands of evil men, without even so much as a fight? When the Messiah is put on trial by the corrupt religious authorities, mocked before "King" Herod and the Governor Pontius Pilate... when he hung from the cross... this isn't what we expected. This isn't what we thought. This isn't what we interpreted.

Thanks be to God, he doesn't live up to our expectations, but rather Christ now lives to subvert our expectations, to burst the old wine skins (Matthew 9:14-17), so that we can receive the new thing He has done in Jesus, and the new things He is working on in our lives.

Truly this is good news, because our expectations, simply stink in comparison to the realities that God has placed before us and in us in Jesus Christ.

So, what's my point? It's a New Year. Perhaps I am being a little cliché. St. Paul's has a lot more new things to bring into our walk together for the sake of the mission. Perhaps I am being redundant (you have heard all this before). Maybe there will be some big changes and new accomplishments to celebrate soon! There are, thanks be to God and his servants for their efforts!

These things are all true. And to put my cards on the table, I am hoping we can manage change better and better each year, because it is not easy; it's hard, especially when new is NEW and we don't know what to expect; we aren't in familiar territory...

But remember, Jesus doesn't call his disciples to know everything before it happens; he doesn't call them to anticipate what the next turn will be; he doesn't even invite them to like what is happening to them along the way...

He simply says, "Follow me."

New things are happening St. Paul's. Which means unexpected challenges, difficulties, pains, failures... joys, celebrations, successes.

I wish I could give you a rousing, rosy, "rah-rah!" kinda

newsletter article, but I want to be honest with you and help prepare us for the reality of the "New". It will be awesome! It will be hard.

My recommendations would be to take a page out of Matthew and the other disciples' gospels. Seek to cope with the NEW Jesus is working in your life by following him. Deeper and deeper. Follow him into prayer. Follow him into his Word. Follow him into spiritual practices, like giving away your possessions. Follow him into the lives of others to serve and love them. Follow him into the gathering, as we worship him together.

Because the new thing Christ is doing is not always easy. But if we have to go through it, I would want to do it with him, following his lead.

Pastor Maxx

The "Follow Me" Series Continues

We will to cover a chapter of Matthew each week until we finish the entire book (around Easter).

January 7—Chapter 5

January 14—Chapter 6

January 21—Chapter 7

January 28—Chapter 8

Your worship folders will have many interactive elements you can use at church or at home with your families. There will be devotional materials including suggestions for ways to "live your faith" throughout the week and beyond, fun facts to broaden your knowledge as you study each chapter, and questions to consider about how these readings can touch our own life.

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 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!

Member Biography Corner

Terry Bethel



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

My wife Mary and I have been at St. Paul's for three years.

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

I enjoy helping with ushering and lending a hand with church maintenance.

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

The spirit of family and fellowship has drawn me to St. Paul's. I especially appreciate Pastor Maxx's approach to everyday life and how he relates the bible to our daily trials.

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

Prior to retirement I worked over 40 years as an ophthalmic surgical technician, contact lens tech, and clinical manager of an ophthalmic practice at St. Luke's Hospital in Chesterfield.

I served in the U.S. Navy for six years, two years active and four years active reserve during the Viet Nam War. I served in the Navy as a Hospital Corpsman.

I enjoy fishing, as often as possible, biking, and buying tools.

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!

Services of Silence and Prayer

Monday Mornings

10:00-10:30 a.m.

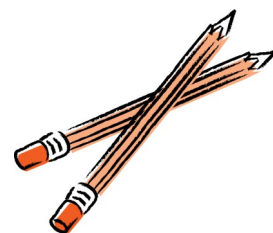
DATES

January 8, 15, 22, 29

Future Dates Available

Soon

Sip & Sketch



On Thursday, January 25th, St. Paul's will be hosting its first "Sip and Sketch". The event will take place at 7:00 p.m. in the church hall.

Come join Nick Bennett, our Artist in Residence, and others for a fun-filled evening of creativity and relaxation at our Sip & Sketch event. Grab a drink, grab a pencil, and let your artistic side shine.

Whether you're an experienced artist or have never picked up a drawing pencil before, this event is for everyone. Nick will guide you through the process, so all you need to bring is your enthusiasm. Unleash your imagination, as you sip on your favorite beverage and sketch away!

If you are still uncertain, you can talk to Nick at church or contact him through the church office.

Town Hall Meeting Attendees

Thank you to everyone who participated in the recent “Town Hall Meetings” to discuss the future and direction of St. Paul’s. These conversations are critical for our development of a plan to guide our next steps as a congregation to faithfully uphold the mission God has for us and realizing our vision.

Remember our Vision Statement is to be “A JOYFUL congregation, FAITHFULLY serving Christ, WELCOMING our neighbors into the family.” We strive to do so based on our values of CARE, BELONG, GENEROUS, MENTOR, HONOR.

If you were unable to make the first round of conversations, that’s okay! We will have more opportunities to work together on our future as a congregation. Be on the look out for those opportunities in the months to come.

ST. PAUL’S LUTHERAN CHURCH VOTERS MINUTES November 12, 2023

CALL TO ORDER – President Rick Pohlmann called the meeting to order. 12 members and one guest were present.

OPENING DEVOTION – led by Pastor Fisher.

MINUTES – Accepted as presented.

WELCOME OF GUEST – Shirley Reth

TRANSFER – Shirley Reth officially transferred from Living Lord Lutheran Church in Lake St. Louis.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – The following officers and board members were elected for 2023. President: Jeff Schneider; No Vice President at this time; Secretary: Carol Oberaitis; Treasurer: Barb Auping; Financial Secretary/Bookeeper: Pam Alexander; Property Maintenance: Scott Alexander with Mike Schmidt as consultant; Elder: Rick Pohlmann.

REPORT OF PASTOR – Pastor Maxx explained the purpose and format for the upcoming listening sessions with the consultant, Dale Kleinkamp from District office. He has experience leading these in the corporate world.

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone from the congregation who shared a gift, card, or even just a Merry Christmas with Janie and me!

We deeply appreciate the thoughts and support as we strive to work along side you to share the gifts of Jesus with our community and beyond!

—Pastor Maxx



Purpose: To discuss our current teamwork with Immanuel and Messiah to determine the process of our future path to independence.

REPORT OF TREASURER – Accepted as presented. The memorial fund was explained by Barb Auping.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT REPORT – The schedule and details of work being done to church offices discussed. Scott Alexander and Terry Bethel working diligently to finish by end of January.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: The new power pole is to be replaced and we are waiting for estimates.

NEW BUSINESS – 2024 Budget – Waiting for maintenance amount and insurance information. A motion was made, seconded and voice passed to approve the expenditure of up to \$20,000 from the Memorial Fund for the office remodeling project. The amount listed for pastor’s salary may need adjusting due to insurance premiums. The new “Push Pay” system for offerings will be discussed in a later meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Finke

Generations Sunday, Wassail & Cookies



Sunday, January 17 was an eventful time at St. Paul's. The morning began with a Generations Sunday service designed to be more inclusive for the young children present. They sat at the front of the church and listened while Pastor Maxx talked to them and Nick Bennett, Eryn Humphrey, and Janie Fisher read them the story *Little Jesus, Born for Me*. Each child received their own copy to take home, too. Then the young people placed ornaments on a small tree. These ornaments were created by members of St. Paul's, who decorated wood slices taken from a tree recently cut down that had been located between the church and the parsonage. Following the service everyone was invited to the hall to experience drinking wassail. Led by Sherry Brandes, who made the wassail, those present sang the "Wassail Song", received their own copy of the wassail recipe and song, and ate cookies and provided by members of the congregation, and set up by Annie Schneider, Amber Vossen, and Barb Auping.

Christmas Joy

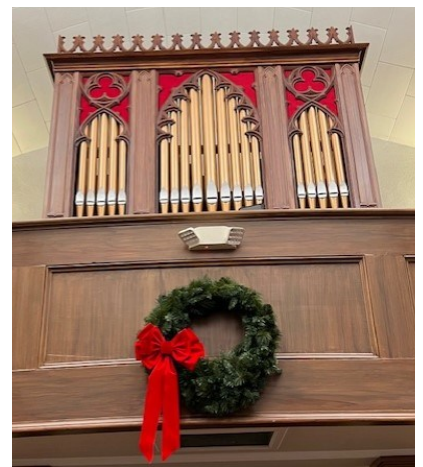
The poinsettias decorating our church for Christmas are to the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ and were given by the following:

- Roger & Dianne Sudbrock in memory of Harold and Marjorie Sudbrock and Harry, Myrtle & Jack Sudbrock
- Susan Gould for the birthdays of Natalie Kuliczkowski and Jacob Gould
- Ted & Jane Nadler to beautify our church
- Randy Pohlmann in memory of Linda Pohlmann
- Shirley Reth in memory of her son Sean Reth and her husband Mike Reth
- Terry & Mary Bethel in memory of her parents and his father
- Carol Oberaitis in celebration of the birthday of Jesus
- Harold Demien in memory of his wife Sharon, and their parents Art & Frances Benne and Bill & Emilie Demien
- The Schmidt family in memory of family members no longer with us
- Mark & Charlene Wehmeier in memory of their parents Elmer & Arlene Wehmeier, Glen & JoAnn Griessaber, and in honor of Christ's birth.
- Diana Eschenbrenner in loving memory of so many loved ones
- Georgia Lee Diederich to the Glory of God for the birth of Jesus
- Sally Goth in memory of her husband Richard Goth
- Rick & Debbie Pohlmann in memory of Joanne Wedemeier, Linda Pohlmann, and Charlotte Herbert
- Sherry Brandes in celebration of God's greatest gift, His son Jesus Christ
- Jeff & Annie Schneider in celebration of the birth of Christ
- Janie and Pastor Maxx Fisher in memory of Doug Fisher
- Carolyn Schwede in memory of her husband Roger Schwede, their parents Gus & Selma Webbink and Ray & Esther Schwede, and her brother Kenneth Webbink
- Bob & Wanda Greiwe to the glory of God for the birth of Jesus Christ

On both Christmas Eve and Christmas morning the sanctuary was filled with worshipers who sang with heartfelt love for the Lord and all of the blessings He showered on us by sending His son Jesus to redeem us from our sins and take us to be His own—not just on Christmas, but forever.

Those present could feel His love. Christmas is more than decorations, though gorgeous. The praises sung, the prayers offered, the warmth of the gathering of fellow believers remind us of the true meaning of Christmas.

May our faith and love grow throughout 2024 and beyond.



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

Ladies Aid Christmas Party

On Saturday, December 9, there were 21 St. Paul's Ladies Aid members and three guests gathered and ready to have a good time. They were NOT disappointed. In fact, they were so busy having fun together that absolutely no one took even one picture of people at the event! In our modern world, that is truly amazing.

The committee, Missy Motz, Carol Oberaitis, Diana Eschenbrenner, and Shirley Reth, prepared everything for a wonderful party—table decorations, place mat agendas, drinks. Missy Motz gave the opening prayer and devotion. Carol Oberaitis led the games. Jane Nadler coordinated the secret pal name selections for 2024.

Members brought salads, sides and cookies. The meats were provided by the Ladies Aid. Becky Murphy assisted by ordering and getting the meat to the party.

Lunch was served, parties talked. Games were played, parties talked. Secret Pal presents were distributed, participants showed what they received and thanked their Secret Pals...and they talked. New Secret Pal names were drawn for 2024 and parties talked. Who had time for pictures?! No one!

The Ladies Aid cordially invites ALL women of St. Paul's to become members and have some fun with them in 2024.



JOY
Love
HOPE · PEACE
Believe
Christmas