

January, 2023

**MARK: MY WORDS**

 “Farewells and Welcome.” That was how the heading appeared in the worship bulletin for Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, no one saw it because of the cancelation of worship that night and Christmas Day due to the blizzard conditions that affected our area.

That night was to have marked a significant change in the music ministry of our congregation. We had planned to honor and give thanks for the work of Organist, John Remmel, and Choir Director, Lori Zylstra, as they left their positions and introduce our new Organist and Choir Director, Dr. Vernon Carey, to the assembly.

 John and Lori have graciously agreed to return this Sunday, January 1, so that we might publicly say “Farewell” to them. We have been so blessed by both of them as they have led us in praise and thanks to God for so many years. For three decades, John so faithfully played for the many services we asked of him: weekly worship; weddings; funerals; choir rehearsal; mid-week Advent and Lenten services; and Holy Week liturgies.

 First as an assistant to Elvira Precious and then as Senior Organist, John led worship; choir and handbell pieces; arranged for special guest musicians; and helped organize our recital series and numerous hymn festivals, all with great good humor, meticulous planning, attention to every detail, and excellence in performance. He helped to shape and advance the rich musical and liturgical legacy of St. Paul. Thank you, John. We are deeply in your debt.

 Lori’s contributions are no less impressive and important. Her musical heritage with the congregation goes back even further than John’s. Her father, Conrad Lubs, was a huge influence in the choral tradition of St. Paul in the 1960s and 1970s. Lori grew up singing in every possible choir, small group, and ensemble.

 After receiving her degree in vocal performance, Lori returned to St. Paul, where she led the children’s choir and sang in the Senior Choir, Praise Band, and many solos. When Dennis Kienitz retired as Senior Choir Director, she took over; and for the past three years has led all the rehearsals and performances of the choir for our many liturgies.

 For the past several years, she has also served as Choir Director at Christ Lutheran in Hammond where her husband, Dale, is the pastor. She naturally wanted to be with him each week to support his ministry, and it was especially difficult for her to be away on festival days like Christmas Eve and Easter because she was directing our choir.

 So, when Dr. Carey became a candidate for our organ position and expressed an interest in also directing the choir, it provided a perfect opportunity for her to wind down her work here and move her music ministry to Christ. As does John, Lori leaves us with a rich history and wonderful memories of music that uplifted us and gave glory and praise to God. We could not ask anything more of her or John.

 As this chapter of St. Paul’s music ministry draws to its close, we look back with thanksgiving and forward with excitement and hope. Thank you, John and Lori, for your service to us, to the Church as a whole, and to the Lord.



**OUR NEW ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR**

 We are thrilled and blessed to welcome Dr. Vernon Carey as our new Organist/Choir Director. Vernon and his husband, Avril, come to us from Abilene, Texas, where he served as Organist/Choirmaster for Holy Family Catholic Church. There he conducted the choir and played the organ for Saturday evening mass and three masses on Sunday.

 Vernon contacted us after seeing our job description and expressed an interest in interviewing for our position. He is extraordinarily qualified. He has a Bachelor of Musical Education in vocal education, piano and organ performance from the University of Central Oklahoma; a Master of Music degree from the University of Oklahoma in Choral Conducting and piano/organ performance; and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the same school in piano/organ pedagogy and performance.

 He also has a Piano Performance Certificate from the Royal Academy of Music in London, and a Master Piano Performance Certificate from the American Institute of Music in Vienna, Austria. He has played in a wide variety of traditions and denominations, including Roman Catholic and Episcopal parishes, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and ELCA Lutheran congregations. He brings a rich background of choral, organ, children’s choir, and hand bell experience. He has begun teaching music education in the South Bend School Corporation.

 He is excited to join our staff, and we look forward to him continuing the faithful tradition of music left to him by John Remmel and Lori Zylstra. When you have the opportunity, please welcome him and make him feel at home in our midst.



**THE NAME OF JESUS**

 We will begin the New Year by observing the festival of the Name of Jesus, which falls on January 1. I wrote about this Day last year, and I think that it bears repeating.

This feast Day marks the tradition in Judaism that on the eighth day after birth all males are circumcised and formally named. “Jesus” is the English translation of the Hebrew name, *Yeshua,* or ‘Joshua.’ His name means, ‘God saves.’

In the Scriptures, “salvation” isn’t limited to ‘forgiving our sins so that when we die we can go to heaven.’ The root of the word gets at the idea of ‘health of mind, body, and spirit; wholeness and well-being in our lives and relationships with one another and the world around us.’ It is the basis of the familiar toast, “*Salu” ‘*To your good health!’

As we hear each week in our Gospel readings, Jesus *does* what His name means. He “saves” the sick and hungry and poor and outcast and grieving and dying by restoring them to health and wholeness and to their families, friends, and community. The Good News that we proclaim is that work did not end with His death on the cross.

God raised Him back to life so that such restoring and healing and renewing might continue now through those of us who are Jesus’ presence, hands, feet, arms, voice, and Body in and for the world. Therefore we face whatever is new: the day, the month, the year with the confidence that even if things are not better than before Jesus is in every moment working for those of us who bear His Name through Baptism for our good and through us the good of others.

There could be no more promising way to begin a New Year.”

 ** THE EPIPHANY AND BAPTISM OF OUR LORD **

 Fortunately, this year the calendar allows us to celebrate these two vital minor festival days separately instead of together as last year and on occasion in previous years. The Epiphany is on January 6, which this year falls on the first Friday of the New Year. We will observe that Day on Saturday, the 7th, and Sunday, the 8th.

 The Baptism of Our Lord is always the weekend after the Epiphany, which we will observe on Saturday, the 14th, and Sunday, the 15th. These are two crucial events in the life of Jesus which allow us to remember and give thanks for the revealing of Jesus yet in our time and world and for the gift of Baptism from which we are joined to His very life, death, and resurrection.



**PREPARING FOR THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY**

Epiphany is an often-overlooked season of the church year. Squeezed between the joy and celebration of Christmas and the solemnity of Lent leading into Holy Week, it can easily become a bland, “filler” time of the year. But this year it is a full eight weeks, so there will be ample time to hear and interact with its promise that Jesus the Light has come into the world to shatter its darkness and bathe all creation in His glorious illumination.

Our ELCA worship resource, *Sundays and Seasons,* offers some helpful suggestions on how to observe this important time. They are introduced by a wonderful essay providing background on the season and its themes and goals. Here is an extended quote from the essay:

“Epiphany commemorates the arrival of the magi who came from afar to pay homage to the Christ child. Yet, the Christ child is born to us every day and our Epiphany is continuous. The time after Epiphany is a perfect opportunity to receive new insights about ourselves and the God we serve…”

“…The Sundays after Epiphany give us time to unpack the full meaning of the gift we have received at Christmas. What begins in mystery starts to be revealed in signs and wonders until the light reaches every human being. The light does not overwhelm or crush the darkness; it helps us perceive what we could not see before. It pulls back the veil of our fear and the limits of our understanding such that we perceive the living God in our midst, and ourselves as God’s children. We are “born again,” baptized into Jesus Christ, and called like those first disciples to follow in the way of the cross.

It may be tempting to take a deep sigh of relief after a marathon of services during Advent and Christmas, but the time after Epiphany need not signify a “return to normal,” even if these are days of “ordinary time.” While most people will have put away their decorations by this point, these Sundays actually build on the momentum of Christmas: the living God is in our midst!

What does this new reality mean for our lives, the world, and those in need—all the things we pray for each Sunday? The stories we hear during this time are anything but normal. Jesus inaugurates his public ministry using the revolutionary language of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19)…”

 These weeks and this season come at the time of year when the darkness around us is the deepest and we yearn the greatest for an end to its shadows. Yet our final hope is in the magnificent poetry of the first chapter of John heard on Christmas morning that propels us into the days of Epiphany: “the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” Amen. Shine on *us,* Lord Jesus!



**SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

 At the November congregational meeting, it was decided that we would hold a special congregational meeting on Sunday, January 15, following the worship service. The meeting would have one agenda item. We will hear a report on the financial status of the school as reported by their treasurer, Judy Hunt. The Church Council will inform the congregation about a motion it passed at the December meeting regarding the finances for the remainder of the school year and the status of the school in the future. Please make every effort to be present for this important updated report.

**CHURCH COUNCIL/SCHOOL BOARD**

It has been our custom to install our Church Council and School Board on the first Sunday in January, highlighting our newly elected members on both. However, since the first Sunday falls on New Year’s Day and members may have previous commitments, we will move their installation to the second Sunday, January 8th, as part of our celebration of The Epiphany of Our Lord. They were chosen at the November congregational meeting and approved by consensus. Here are the Council members for 2023:

(\* indicates a newly elected member):

President Judy Mutchler

Vice-President Janet Bakken

Treasurer Karen Fleming

Secretary Carey Howard

Fred Hart

 Diane Waltz

 Wayne Dolson

 Susan Bagby

 Bob Kiser

 \*Donna Knoll

 \*Judy Hunt

 Susan Koziel

School Board: Melinda Nagle

 Janet Bakken

 Pastor Pamela Thiede

 Principal Tracey McCay

 Sarah McNabb

 \*Beverly Johnson

 We want to offer our deep gratitude to those who have completed their service on Church Council: Shirley McCarty and Jim Schraidt.

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**SNOW EMERGENCY LIST**

This is a reminder of where to turn to learn if worship has been canceled because of inclement weather conditions. There are three ways to learn about the status of the service.

* Tune in to WEFM-95.9 FM to listen for a list of churches who have called off worship.
* Turn to our church and school Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stpaulmichigancity/> for updated announcements.
* Call the church office number (219-874-7293) and press the “#” key; you will hear a recording about our “open/closed” status.

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**A PERSONAL NOTE**

 Please accept our great gratitude to all who sent our family Christmas cards and notes. Your prayerful support and wishes of joy and peace in these days greatly increased our celebration of Christmas. We are ever thankful for our continued partnership in this Gospel ministry.

 We received one gift of a Swiss Colony box of cheese and sausages on which there was a Christmas greeting but no name as to who sent it. Thank you to that very generous person.

Pastor Reshan

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**ARCHIVE NEWS**

Currently in the Archive Room, we are finding confirmation photos and putting them in date order. So far, there is a pile from 1901 to 1969 that are in date order. Hopefully, they all will be in order soon. A nice box storage system will be created, and you will be able to come in and browse. This is a work in progress, as many of them are numbered to correspond to a photo book but are not dated. Soon they all will be. There are just a couple hiccups so far; confirmation pictures from 1916 to 1920 are misidentified. Hopefully, that will be remedied as well.

Once again, a reminder that the Archive Room has a lot of old media. It is in the top drawer in the center stack of file cabinets. We have decades worth of now retired media of sermons and special services; some are special events or visiting pastors. (There are also about 200 cassette and VHS tapes in a different room that are recordings of church services of the 1970’s.) The problem? They are not in a computer format and perhaps should be. While you can go on Amazon or your favorite electronics store and purchase cassette players, VHS players, and even turntables, some of the media will be hard for you to view. It’s also very possible that the tapes will break or be brittle from age.

Does ANYONE want to volunteer for the job of converting this obsolete media into a digital format that can be enjoyed? While the technology is out there to do this, is it something we should even be doing? There are professionals that will do this, but is it worth the money? It may be quite expensive. Many of the tapes might very well shred from old age when handled to record them to digital format that can be enjoyed on a computer or tv.

 A sample of what we have in this drawer include about five metal boxes of slides, subject unknown. There are scanners that can handle scanning them, so they could be viewed if a person has the time to dedicate. Also found:

* Two 7-inch reels of radio shows and sermons.
* Two 5-inch reels of Pastor Knappe’s sermons from 1971
* Three-inch reel of Luther Meyer marked “very good”
* Three-inch reel from Jan 1968; contents are a mystery
* …and more cassettes and film negatives from years gone by

Take a step back in time this month; take a peek at the media we have and perhaps offer a solution for what our congregation should do with it. There are pencils and papers on the table for you to write your suggestions, and suggestions are ALWAYS welcome. And while you are there, please sign the guest book!

![C:\Users\volunteer\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\IE\JUAK50WD\thank-you[1].jpg]()

**IN MEMORY OF DIANE GIELOW**

**General Fund** from Anne Powell, John & Rosemary Bunton, Dr. & Mrs. Rosevear,

Jim & Bernadette Krueger, Glenn & Kathleen Lubeznik

**IN MEMORY OF ALLEN KRING**

**General Fund** from JoAnn Kring, Steve, Stephanie & Cindy; Terry & Kristi Milzarek

**IN MEMORY OF LEE TIMM**

**General Fund** from Sally Timm, Jim & Sandy Galinowski, Dawn Fitzhugh, Carol Radke,

Shawn Timm, Brian Timm, Angeline Zdyb, Camille McGrew, Betty Yourist,

James & Judy Gleason

**IN MEMORY OF ROGER MILZAREK**

**General Fund** from Norma Milzarek, Terry & Kristi Milzarek

**IN MEMORY OF CHAD’S BIRTHDAY on December 18**

**General Fund** from Virgil & Pat Miller

**IN MEMORY OF ROLAND BIGGS**

**General Fund** from Jim & Bernadette Krueger

**IN MEMORY OF GRANDPARENTS, NORMAN & DOROTHY KRIESEL**

**General Fund** from Terry & Kristi Milzarek



 **January Birthdays January Anniversaries**

 2 Christopher Michaels 1 Kenneth & Carol Hanft, Sr.

 5 Laura Mellen 7 Terry & Linda Wolter

 6 Fred LaBorn 12 Bradford & Kelly Neulieb

 JoAnn Kring 14 Richard & Donna Collins

 Louis Muckway 15 Jeffrey & Marla Furness

 Mary Peters

 David Schacht

 Christian Siebert

 7 Mackenzie O’Donnell

 9 Susan Bagby

 10 Debbie Martin

 Jackson Schafer

 Donald Thompson

 Brian Wiseman

 Stacie Summers

 12 James Burdett

 13 Kimberly Sydow

 14 Jessica Avila

 15 Vicki Bergquist

 18 Micha Howard

 Mark Tannehill

 19 Amy Haring

 Vicky Shelton

 23 Jackson Frever

 25 Wayne Simerlein

 26 Stacie Crozier

 27 Anthony Hendricks

 28 Elaine Bogart

 Eloise Ponder



**Long-Term Prayer List**

Audrey Beyer Irene Bohnstadt Donna Bostater

Laura Dovey Marla Furness Ed Gustum

Dolores Hackett Jess Kalvaitis Christine Kiser

Ryan Krueger Pastor Al Lorentzen Bethany Manning

Christian Martinez Shane Nevels George Ottersen

Jan Paholski Kay Peglow Kathy Thielman

Jean Thomas Margie Torres Valerie Waltz

Venia Wendt



 Monday 8:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.

 Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

 Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.

 Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon

 Friday 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

**St. Paul Lutheran Church & School Staff**

 Pastor Mark Reshan

 Organist/Choir Director Dr. Vernon Carey

 Accompanists Jary Tannehill, Mark Tannehill, Jacob Tannehill

 Custodian Mark Kloess

 School Principal Tracey McCay

 School Office Coordinator Christina Woodard

 School Custodian Tara Soto-Garcia



**CONSTITUTION**

The final copy of our new Constitution is now available for anyone interested in receiving one.  E-mail copies have been forwarded to those on the weekly bulletin list.  There will be a few placed in the Narthex as well.  Please contact Libby in the church office if you wish to obtain a copy.



**Do You Shop on Amazon?**

**St. Paul Lutheran Church is on Amazon Smile.** 0.5% of all eligible purchases will be returned to St. Paul. Help us spread the word! Link your Amazon account through the following link—https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1239301. When prompted, sign into your account to make sure you are choosing St. Paul for Amazon Smile. There’s no extra charge to your purchases.

Thank$ for $haring

Thanks to all who attended the giveback at Galveston in October. The church received $280.00 from that evening. Thanks, also, to all who attended the giveback at Holly’s in November, for which we received $185.00.

This month,we will see you again at Holly’s on January 17! Watch for the give-back coupon in your bulletin.