

ST. PAUL NEWS

Monona, IA 52159

DECEMBER 2025

Office 563-539-2230

Kitchen/School 563-539-2050

*Pastor:
Erika Lenth*

*Bookkeeper:
Ashley Blietz-Camp*

*President:
Crystal Thurn*

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From Pastor Erika

Advent is a season of waiting and hope. We wait for the already arrived Messiah, Jesus, who came to us as a baby. We wait too for his 2nd coming when he will reign and there will be peace and joy over all of God's creation. Our waiting is hopeful because we wait for the time when "Light dawns on a weary world, when eyes begin to see all people's dignity. Light dawns on a weary world: the promised day of justice comes. The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs; the hills and mountains shall break forth with singing! We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace, as all the world in wonder echoes shalom." (ELW 726) Our world is longing for peace and joy that we can only find in God through Jesus Christ. Waiting is difficult as anyone who has ever waited for test results, for a baby to be born, in line, for Christmas to come or for Christmas to be over, knows. Time passes slowly, yet waiting does not and should not be passive, God calls us to actively wait to witness to God's activity in the world, share God's love through word and deed and learn more about God in Jesus Christ. Advent is a time of year that can stir a lot of emotions there are those who are no longer with us, those who are alone, childless, who can't afford Christmas presents, those who feel sadness at Christmas. But Christmas also brings out joy, excitement, peace and hope- look at any child waiting to see Santa or looking at Christmas lights and it is pure joy. However you may be feeling this Advent, all feelings are acknowledged. The midweek Advent worship services using Holden Evening Prayer with the sermon series Fear Not! is a time of peace and contemplation. The themes each week center on emotions that we go through in our faith everyday and so did the people surrounding Jesus: Fear not, Zechariah, priest and righteous one, Fear not, Mary, favored one of God, and Fear not, Joseph, son of David. In our active waiting for the Messiah we can prepare ourselves for Christ's coming by attending the Wednesday services, opening an Advent calendar," helping at the Shepherd of the Hills Christmas Just 4 Kids give-away are just a few examples. How else can you wait and prepare for Christ's coming? The holiday season is always promoted as joyous and starts well before Thanksgiving in the world around us but Advent gives us space to have varying emotions, to wait and prepare for the only one who can give us hope, joy, peace and abundance of life- God in Jesus Christ. When the rest of the world is rushing Christmas, insisting you feel a certain way know that God is with you with no expectations.

In Christ's Peace,
Pastor Erika

Christmas at St. Paul

Advent services

We will be doing our Holden Evening prayer Advent services on the Wednesdays before Christmas, December 3rd, 10th and 17th. Advent Services will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Children's Christmas Program ~ December 14th at 10:00 a.m.

The Incredible Christmas Search Service begins at **10:00 a.m.** and includes communion. Please have your children in their classrooms by 9:30 a.m. Luther League is having a bake sale following worship. Free-will donation.

The "Songs of Advent" Worship & Eucharist Service ~ December 21st 9:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship & Eucharist ~ Wednesday, December 24th 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship & Eucharist ~ Thursday, December 25th 9:00 a.m.

Lessons & Carols Lay Service ~ Sunday, December 28th 9:00 a.m.



Sharing Poinsettias for Christmas

The Flower Committee would like to invite you to share a poinsettia or a Christmas plant in memory of your Loved One or to the Glory of God again this year! **Please notify the office by December 17th** so your name can be in the Christmas Eve bulletin. **Plants can be dropped off in the Church Library between Friday the 19th and 10:00 am on Christmas Eve - please don't drop them off earlier.** Also, make sure you mark your plant with your name so you can pick it up later. Thanks!

ST. PAUL ANNUAL FALL DINNER

The Fall Dinner was a success with good food and good fellowship. 234 Dinners were served and the total money raised from the dinner was \$2,888.50. Proceeds went to the Cedar Lodge renovation at Camp EWALU.

Thank You to the Mission and Social Ministry Committee: Rein Kregel, Randee Koenig, Ashley Blietz-Camp, Lois Garms and Beth Foels. Your hard work is much appreciated!

Thank You to all who worked, donated food, attended, and supported our event!



DECEMBER

Mission Action:
Comb (wide-tooth)

Bible Study:
Money, stewardship and generosity
Session 3 Generosity:
There's a wideness in God's Mercy

Focus Verse: *"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver:*
2 Corinthians 9:7

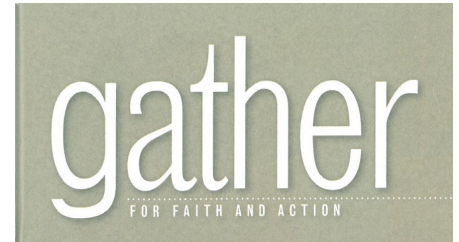
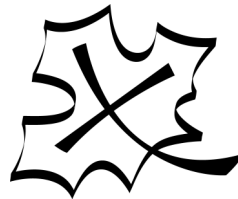
DECEMBER CALENDAR

Wed. December 3
9:15 am WELCA Bible Study
No Doing Days in December

Coming Events

Wed. Jan 14th
10:30am Soup Luncheon & Bible Study

Jan. 22nd & 23rd
Doing Days



*All are Welcome to come to
any Bible Study
Studies are held the 1st
Wednesday of the month
at 9:15 a.m.
in the church library.*

Note: copies of the
Bible study are
available in the library.

MONTHLY MISSION ACTION PROGRAM

The Monthly Mission Action Emphasis is a program St Paul WELCA has been active with. Each month a different item is specified and that is the item we collect that month. All items will be used in our Lutheran World Relief kits or given to Shepherd of the Hills. Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate!

*Place your gifts in the basket on the table in the entryway by the church office. Watch the St. Paul News each month for the item. Thank you!

**The item for
December is a Comb
(wide
tooth)**



THANK YOU!

Thank you to Jim and Linette Langhus for loading & delivering the boxes of LWR Quilts & kits to Decorah !

St. Paul's donated:

72 Quilts
11 Baby Kits
37 Personal Care Kits

THANKS to all who helped in this effort!

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Council Meeting November 12, 2025

(November Minutes are printed but pending approval at the December Council Meeting)

Present: Crystal Thurn, Pastor Erika Lenth, Lois Garms, Steve Johnson, Justin Birdnow, Ashley Blietz-Camp, Kevin Brainard, Andy Meyer, Beth Foels, Barbara Horns, and Craig Watson. Absent: Tiffany Torkelson and Rein Kregel

Meeting called to order by council President, Crystal Thurn, at 6:01 pm.
Devotions were led by Beth Foels. Next month is Barbara Horns.

Minutes of Council Meeting: Minutes from the October 8th council meeting were reviewed. Barbara Horns motioned to approve the minutes as printed. Kevin Brainard seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report & Bills: Ashley shared that in October we brought in \$2,445.30 more than we spent. The Memorial Fund brought in \$2,072.79 with \$40.00 being In Loving Memory memorials. Donations received for the parking lot fund were \$357.00 and \$1,100.00 to the solar fund. Expenses from the Memorial Fund were \$105.88 to Abby Burns for Sunday School curriculum and \$1,300.00 from the solar fund to pay down the principal balance of the loan, which stands at \$74,907.17 after November's loan payment. October bills were a little higher as Danielle purchased extra worship and custodial supplies to get us through the end of the year. Payroll was lower because Danielle was not paid in October as she was moved to hourly and she will be paid in November. Justin Birdnow motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Lois Garms seconded. Motion carried.

Correspondence: A letter was received from Schiller Law Office stating that our church is listed as a beneficiary in Betty Brownson's will.

Pastor's Report: Pastor reported mileage of 309 totaling \$216.30 from October through November 11th. Kevin Brainard motioned to approve Pastor's mileage. Steve Johnson seconded. Motion carried. Pastor shared that she had a busy October. She attended continuing education at Wartburg Seminary called A Fellowship of Pastors, which included 50 different pastors/speakers. She presided over the wedding of Brock and Kayden Lamborn and two baptisms, and confirmation class continues to go well. She was glad to be back at Garden-View and met in a new area upstairs.

Education & Youth: No report.

Fellowship & Evangelism: No report. Did serve fellowship for Confirmation.

Mission & Social Ministry: Next meeting is Sunday, November 16th after church. The Fall Dinner went very well, serving 234 people and proceeds going to EWALU for the Cedar Lodge project equaled \$2,908.50. The Giving Tree will be put out very shortly.

Property & Grounds: Budget was approved.

Stewardship & Finance: Met on November 10th for discussion, will be meeting again in December to work and finalize the budget. Kevin will give a temple talk on November 23rd.

Worship & Music: Met on November 11th. Approved the budget, and discussed the special services coming up. Barbara Horns will serve soup suppers for Advent and we have two upcoming baptisms on November 30th and December 7th. It was decided that we will be singing the Lord's Prayer on the first Sunday of every month. Austin and Heather Schoulte would like to become new members. Justin Birdnow motioned to

Council Minutes Continued . .

approve Austin and Heather as new members. Lois Garms seconded. Motion carried.

Interchurch Council: We will be hosting Thanksgiving Eve service at 7:00 pm with fellowship to follow, offering will be going to the Clayton County Food Shelf. Next meeting will be in January.

Old Business: Signage on the display entering Monona: They have been printed and will be put together soon.

Parish Bookkeeper: Council approved the hiring of Ashley Blietz-Camp as bookkeeper after the last council meeting by email on October 24th. She will be in the office on Monday and Wednesday mornings during the winter months. However, because of this position, a new council member will be required to fill the last year of her term.

Church Treasurer: To comply with our church constitution, we will be implementing a treasurer, who will work alongside Ashley and give the monthly report to the council. Lois Garms motioned to appoint Crystal Thurn as treasurer after her term on council is over in January. Ashley Blietz-Camp seconded. Motion carried.

New Business: Nominating Committee: Would like a list of past council/committee members.

Next Meeting will be Tuesday, December 16th at 6:00 pm

Steve Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 pm. Craig Watson seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Blietz-Camp

It's that time of year again! The Nominating Committee has formed and is looking to fill Council positions and committee positions for next year. Please prayerfully consider serving in one of these areas. Contact Pastor Erika or the Nominating Committee if you would be interested. Thank You!

Congregational Council ~ Education & Youth ~ Fellowship & Evangelism ~ Mission & Social Property & Grounds ~ Stewardship & Finance ~ Worship & Music ~ Mission Endowment ~
2026 Nominating Committee

DECEMBER OFFERING

Special Christmas offering
will go to the Current Fund

2025 CONTRIBUTIONS.

Please have your contributions
in by **Sunday, December 28th**
to be included in this years
statements! THANKS



the tree with some gift ideas. These can be taken home as a reminder. The clothes pins will also be on the tree to be used to pin up the mittens and hats that are donated.

SOTH Items will be taken Dec 11th *We need a volunteer to take items. Please tell Ashley Blietz-Camp if you can!

"The Christmas Giving Tree" is here!

The Mission & Social Committee has put out our Christmas Giving Tree to collect items for Garden View, and

Shepherd of the Hills. This way St. Paul can share our generosity with children & adults. There are paper ornaments on

Shepherd of the Hills Ministries

NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2025



Christmas is fast approaching. We are planning on serving over 500 children this year. We could use your help making Christmas a bit brighter for local families in need. There are two ways you can help...Bring a new unwrapped toy or item for kids to the auditorium in St. Olaf on December 11-12.

Or you could send a monetary donation so we can shop for items in need. The address is...

Shepherd of the Hills, PO Box 36, St. Olaf, Iowa 52072

Toys for Tots is supporting us again this year...However, they are unable to support the age groups of 14-17. If you are able to support this group, that is great.

Our Christmas for Kids event is underway. December 11-12 from 9am to 4pm, we will be sorting the toys and taking walk-in donations for the event. If that date/time does not work for you, we can schedule a date/time that does work.

December 17-18 we will be distributing the toys to families that have a referral.

Clothing Center Updates:

Wow...We had an awesome ½ off sale on Oct 31-Nov 1. This shows me that people are recognizing us as a thrift store, not just a place to help those in need. We are accepting winter/long sleeve donations at this time until March 2026. We will be closed from December 24 - January 5. This time allows us to spend the holidays with friends and family. It has been a wonderful year for us. Our volunteers are the best gift for Shepherd of the Hills. Thank you for supporting us in 2025.

Shepherd Conference News:

We would like to recognize Pastor Randy Baldwin on the anniversary of his ordination on December 8, 1985.

Mark your calendar for our Annual Conference Assembly on February 15, 2026 at 2:00 pm.

Location this year is Zion Lutheran Church in Oelwein.

Shepherd of the Hill's Needs:

The Operating Fund pays the utilities, insurance on the building, supplies, salaries and Lawn/Snow Care. The Crisis Fund is used to help families with emergency rent or utilities and our sponsored events throughout the year. Please utilize the MEMO LINE on your check to specify Crisis or Operating Fund!

Please indicate what church you are from as well to provide better bookkeeping.

IMPORTANT EVENTS/ DATES:

*Christmas for Kids
December 17-18*

Conference Assembly

February 15, 2026

**Any event may be subject to change*

Shepherd of the Hills:

Heather Hageman
100 W. Hill Street, PO Box 36,
St. Olaf, IA 52072

Telephone: 563-783-2409

Fax: 563-783-2428

E-mail: shephill@neitel.net

**Business Hours: Monday-Friday
9am-12pm and 1pm-4 pm**

DECEMBER 2025 BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

10: Addison Buchheit
 11: Mackenzie Birdnow
 Ansley Hundt

24: Peyton Martins
 31: Austin Trappe
 Amelia Shaffer



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Dec 3: Pat Zach
 Dec 12: Diane Geisler
 Dec 13: Hazel Schrandt
 Dec 18: Bonnie Smola
 Dec 23: Fred Heins
 Dec 23: Lloyd Johanningmeier

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

Dec 12: Doug & Janice Bachman

OFFICIAL ACTS IN NOVEMBER

Wedding: Oct. 25 Brock & Kayden Lamborn

Baptisms: Nov. 2 Blaire Ivy Doeppke

Parents: Chris & Kristen Doeppke

Sponsors: Riley & Josie Doeppke

Mabel Ivadean Doeppke

Parents: Riley & Josie Doeppke

Sponsors: Kristen Doeppke & Christian Kleinow

Nov. 30 Iyla Rose Schoulte

Parents: Austin & Heather Schoulte

Sponsors: Kylee & Colt Gilson

ST PAUL EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH DATA

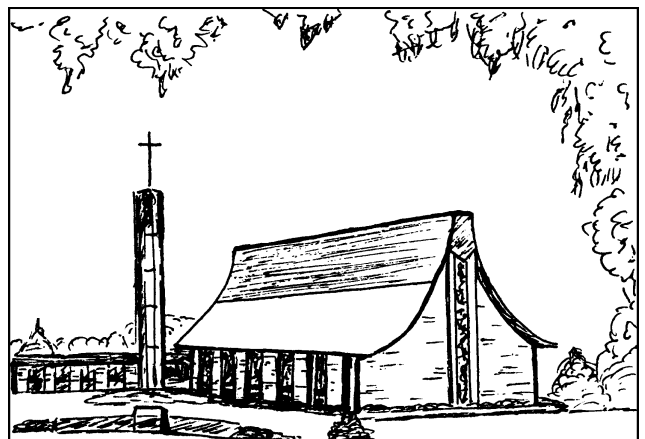
Total 536

Total Family Units 236

Average Sunday Attendance for 2023
 94(In Person) 45 (Virtual)

Average Sunday Attendance for 2024
 104 (In Person) 38 (Virtual)

Average for 2025 through November 23rd
 100 (In Person) 40 (Virtual)



October Financials



***Giving	Cash/Check
October 5	\$4,292.52
October 12	\$4,729.56
October 19	\$2,148.50
October 26	\$1,834.05
ILM Memorial Fund	\$40.00
**Total Simply Giving for October	\$3,679.00

*** The chart above shows weekly income from the offering plate, money that has been sent in, Simply Giving, as well as fundraisers (Coffee Hour, Fall Dinner, etc.) which include: Current Fund Offering and Designated Funds (Mission Offering and Memorial Funds, such as the Boiler and Solar Funds).

** Simply Giving Donations are reported once a month due to posting issues at the beginning/end of month.

* The receipts below reflect money that is available for the operating budget AFTER deducting designated giving.

General Fund	October Actual	October Budget	October YTD Actual	October YTD Budget
*Receipts	\$16,683.63		\$164,546.24	
Disbursements	\$14,238.33	\$18,171.87	\$167,129.43	\$181,718.72

Can't make it to church in person?

Find our services on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulmononaia>

Also, check out our Facebook Page to find out what's going on at St. Paul!

<https://www.facebook.com/stpaulmononaia/>

Items to be included in the January St. Paul News need to be turned into the office by December 15th.

St. Paul Parish Office Hours

Monday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. & 2-3:30 p.m.
Wednesday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Friday Closed

Outside of Office Hours, please feel free to leave a voicemail at the church phone number (539-2230) or leave a note in Pastor Erika or Ashley's mailbox located next to the library door.

Would you like to receive the St. Paul News via email?

Please let us know by emailing the church office.

DECEMBER 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 9:15am WELCA 5:45 pm Choir Practice 6:30 pm Advent Service 7:00 pm Bell Choir Confirmation	4	5	6
7 2nd Sunday of Advent 8:00 am Vocal Choir Practice 9:00 am Worship/Eucharist/ Baptism 10:00 am Fellowship 10:15 am Sunday School	8 6:00 pm Stew. & Fin. Mtg	9	10 5:45 pm Choir Practice 6:30 pm Advent Service 7:00 pm Bell Choir	11	12	13
14 3rd Sunday of Advent 9:30 am SS kids in classrooms 10:00 am SS Program 11:00 am LL Bake Sale	15 Newsletter info due to office	16 6:00 pm Council	17 5:45 pm Choir Practice 6:30 pm Advent Service 7:00 pm Confirmation Bell Choir Poinsettia info due to the office by Noon	18	19	20
21 4th Sunday of Advent 8:00 am Vocal Choir Practice 9:00 am Worship/Eucharist Choir Leads Service	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 7:00 pm Candle Light Worship/Eucharist	25 Christmas Day 9:00 am Worship/ Eucharist Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27
28 9:00 am Lessons & Carols Lay Service Last day to submit Contributions for 2025.	29	30	31 Committee Reports Due to the Office			

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

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P O Box 1968
Monona, IA 52159-0561

Phone: 563-539-2230
Email: stpaluth@neitel.net

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 6
MONONA, IOWA



COUNCIL

Sun. Dec. 7 9:00 am	Steve Johnson Andy Meyer
Wed. Dec. 3 6:30pm	Steve Johnson
Sun. Dec. 14th 10:00 am	Crystal Thurn Kevin Brainard
Wed. Dec. 10 6:30pm	Crystal Thurn
Sun. Dec. 21 9:00 am	Ashley Blietz-Camp Justin Birdnow
Wed. Dec. 17 6:30pm	Andy Meyer
Sun. Dec. 28 9:00 am	Andy Meyer Craig Watson
Wed. Dec. 24 7:00 pm Christ. Eve	Andy Meyer Rein Kregel
Thurs. Dec. 25 9:00 am Christmas	Rein Kregel

FELLOWSHIP (only 1)

Dec. 7	Brainard/Koenig
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DECEMBER SCHEDULES

LECTORS

December 7:	Melissa Haberichter
December 14:	SS Christmas Program
December 21:	Cantata
December 24:	Melissa Haberichter
December 25:	Heidi Meyer
December 28:	Crystal Thurn

ACOLYTES

Wed. Dec. 3:	Jaxon Lamborn
Sun. Dec. 7:	Nora Rasmussen Blake Schutte Jaxon Lamborn
Wed. Dec. 10:	Briella Schutte
Sun. Dec. 14:	Brodyn Blietz Clayton Henkes Kyler Nuehring
Wed. Dec. 17:	Brodyn Blietz
Sun. Dec. 21:	Kashon Decker Briella Schutte Veda Torkelson
Wed. Dec. 24:	Nora Rasmussen Taylor Rasmussen Clayton Henkes
Thurs. Dec. 25:	Kase Paulus Grace Palas Gage Paulus
Sun. Dec. 28:	Kashon Decker Grace Palas

ALTAR GUILD

Dec. 7	Mary Ann Koehn
Dec. 14	Teresa Sass
Dec. 21	Heidi Meyer
Dec. 24	Lorna Jones
Dec. 25	Crystal Thurn – <i>check robes</i>
Dec. 28	Lay Sunday

USHERS

Dec. 7	Tim & Diane Fisk
Dec. 14	Brad Kiesau/Wayne Garms
Dec. 21	Marsha Gerleman/Mary Jo Sexton
Dec. 24	Rich Sass & Lorna Jones
Dec. 25	Bob Tayek/Jim Langhus
Dec. 28	Rich & Teresa Sass

FLOWER ASSISTANTS

December	Poinsettias
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