



# ST. PAUL NEWS

Monona, IA 52159

JANUARY 2026

Office 563-539-2230

Kitchen/School 563-539-2050

*Pastor:  
Erika Lenth*

*Parish Bookkeeper:  
Ashley Blietz-Camp*

*President:  
Crystal Thurn*

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## From Pastor Erika

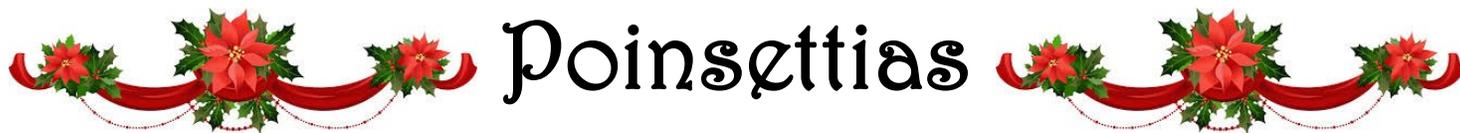
Another Christmas has come and gone... The excitement of giving and opening presents, the food, the sweet treats, time with family, and the beautiful Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service, done again for another year. What do we do now that Christmas is over? I don't think it is ever over- the whole point of Christmas is that God sent down Jesus-Emmanuel "God with us," to be with us, to understand the human condition, to teach us about the kingdom of God and how we should treat each other. So the secular celebration of Christmas is over, the Christmas trees are taken down, the stores are selling Christmas products for 70% off and people are ready for the next holiday, Valentine's Day. Yet for us, for all who are Christian, the joy of Christmas never goes away the prophecy of Isaiah has come true, "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace." We are no longer in the Christmas season as of January 4th, we will be in Epiphany and the Time after Epiphany which is the shorter of our green seasons and may seem as though it is filler between Christmas and Lent. Yet this season serves an important role in continuing what was introduced in the Christmas season, focusing on the means through which God is made manifest in the world in Jesus Christ. As we go through this Time after Epiphany pay attention in the readings how Jesus is made known to the world. In your own life where is Christ present? I think we see Christ present at Christmas because we are looking for him and people seem to be more generous at Christmas time but we still wait for Christ to come again, we are always looking for signs of him in the world. Where do you see him in this Time after Epiphany? How can you make Christ known? Generosity and volunteering aren't just at Christmas; there are plenty of opportunities all year long to help out your neighbor to be Christ to each other. Find the hope of Jesus Christ in the world and when you can't see it through the violence, bullying, confusion- be the hope. One of my favorite stories at Christmas is A Christmas Carol, at the end Ebenezer Scrooge realizes the importance of the Christmas spirit, "I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach!" Christmas is not over as long as we honor Christmas and try to keep it all year.

In Christ's peace,  
Pastor Erika

## Children's Christmas Program



*On Sunday, December 14th, the St. Paul Sunday School Students performed "The Incredible Christmas Search" for their annual Christmas Program. There were 80 Sunday School Students in attendance and they did a wonderful job of sharing the Christmas story.*



In Memory or in Honor

By

L'Dean Henkes, Dwain, Jody, Austin  
and Aren Henkes & Loved Ones

Arleta Henkes & Family

Loved Ones

Mary Ann Koehn, David & Lorna Jones

Jerry Brown

Celia Brown

Loved Ones

Andy, Heidi, Emma & Joseph Meyer

Lyle Johannsen & Loved Ones

Marion Johannsen & Family

Loved Ones

Tyler & Ashley Camp, Brodyn, Bryce &  
Layton

Robert Ball and Allen Ball

Betty Ball

Loved Ones

Don & Karen Martindale & Family

Loved Ones

Richard & Teresa Sass

Loved Ones

Craig & Mary Jo Sexton & Family

Jim Walter

Judy Walter, Lisa, Lori, Lary & Families

Loved Ones

Judy Walter & Family

Gene Baade

Marilyn Baade & Family

Loved Ones

Tim & Diane Fisk & Family

Loved Ones

Barbara Horns & Family





**JANUARY**

**Mission Action:**

Bath Soap 4-5 oz. in original wrap

**Bible Study:**

Now Let Us Pray

Session One: Praying With Our Bodies

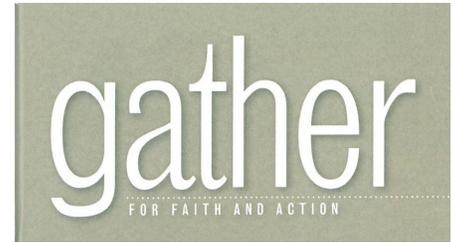
**JANUARY CALENDAR**

**Wed. Jan 14th**

10:30 am Soup Luncheon & Bible Study with Pr. Erika \*All are welcome

**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.



**A Special Thank You to "Secret Santa" for sending beautiful Christmas plants to our Garden View members, the church office and other members of the community. They are much appreciated!**

**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 collected 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 January is Bath Soap, 4-5 oz bar in original wrapper**

**2026 Noisy Can**

The Church Council has voted to give the 2026 Noisy Can donations to benefit the Caring Closet of the MFL MarMac Schools. This closet is for students who need a snack, toiletries, clothes, needs that they may not be getting elsewhere. Thank you for your continued support of Noisy Can so that we can continue to help our community .

## REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Council Meeting December 16, 2025

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

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

Meeting called to order by council President, Crystal Thurn, at 6:02 pm.  
Devotions were led by Barbara Horns. Next month is Rein Kregel.

**Minutes of Council Meeting:** Minutes from the November 12th council meeting were reviewed. Kevin Brainard motioned to approve the minutes as printed. Barbara Horns seconded. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report & Bills:** Ashley shared that in November we brought in \$1,235.21 more than we spent, and the Memorial Fund brought in \$15,290.15. In Loving Memory memorials totaled \$135.00, the parking lot brought in \$14,373.00, with no expenses. Church Mutual made an update to their online payment system and we were instructed to make a one-time payment, however our autopay payment also processed. As of December 15th, our next bill had not been generated to see if the credit will be applied to December's payment. Steve Johnson motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Craig Watson seconded. Motion carried.

**Correspondence:** None

**Pastor's Report:** Her monthly visit to Garden View continues to go well, the Luther League held a lock-in on the 15th which was fun and well attended, and confirmation classes are still going well. Thanksgiving Eve service saw a nice level of attendance and provided great music! Her additional time/duties in the office is going well and she's enjoying the change.

**Education & Youth:** No report. The Sunday School Christmas program was very well attended and we had 80 youth take part! Next meeting is January 15th, at 6:00 p.m.

**Fellowship & Evangelism:** No report.

**Mission & Social Ministry:** Met November 16th and discussed next year's fall dinner and the Giving Tree was set out to begin collecting donations. Next meeting is February 8th at 10:15 a.m.

**Property & Grounds:** No report.

**Stewardship & Finance:** Budget was finalized.

**Worship & Music:** No report. Next meeting is January 13th at 6:00 p.m.

**Interchurch Council:** No report. Next meeting is in January to elect officers.

**Old Business:** Signage on the display entering Monona: Have not been installed yet.  
Auction Update: Date is March 21st and information has been added to the bulletin.

**New Business:** Hay Days: Hay Days is moving to the park in 2026 due to the Center Street project. Grant Langhus spoke with the council about opportunities for fundraising. At this time it was decided to allow the Hay Days committee use of our parking lot, see what the Hay Days committee does not already have planned then talk to our committees/youth groups.

## Council Minutes Continued . .

Scouts: Jim Langhus shared that our troop has been given the approval to join the boys and girls troops to become a Family Troop, the first in our district. Kevin Brainard motioned to approve the conversion to a Family Troop, with St. Paul Lutheran being the chartered organization. Craig Watson seconded. Motion carried.

Budget: 2026 proposed budget was presented. Steve Johnson motioned to accept the budget. Craig Watson seconded. Motion carried.

2026 Noisy Can: Discussion was held and the decision was tabled until more information could be gathered. On December 22nd, a vote was held by email and MFL MarMac's Caring Closet was approved as our 2026 Noisy Can recipient.

New Members: Lois Garms motioned to approve Josie Doepke, Brenda, and Lan Kleinow as new members. Ashley Blietz-Camp seconded. Motion carried.

Other: Endowment CD funds will soon be distributed and it was approved for 40% be given to the Clayton County Food Shelf, 40% to ECLA World Hunger, and 20% to the parking lot fund.

Next Meeting will be the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 18th at 10:00 a.m.

Barbara Horns motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm. Kevin Brainard seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Blietz-Camp

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## **ANNUAL MEETING**

The St. Paul 2026 Annual meeting will be Sunday, January 18th, following the 9:00 a.m. worship service. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall for our Congregational Meeting.

~A baked potato bar will be served by the Luther League. ~

Committee reports for the Congregational Annual Report were due on December 31st . All financial reports need to be turned in by Friday, January 3rd. Those reports include Luther League, WELCA, Committee Reports, Council President, Pastor, Music Department, Choirs, Altar Guild, and

Scouts BSA Troops #38/138.

Annual Reports will be ready Sunday January 11th. Please pick up your copy in the Fellowship Hall anytime after that date.

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# Shepherd of the Hills Ministries

## NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2026



WOW... We are truly blessed. Our Christmas for Kids event was amazing. We had 466 children registered which equates to 173 families. Thank you to all who donated toys, financial support, their time or just a prayer to get through this busy time. As we navigate from one event, we jump into another one. Our conference assembly is scheduled for February 15 at 2:00 pm. The hosting church is Zion Lutheran Church in Oelwein. As we prepare for our meeting, our churches are focusing on their own church assemblies. We ask that you consider a monthly donation to Shepherd of the Hills. Our mission to help those in need has expanded immensely. Our need in the surrounding areas is heartbreaking but we as a conference ARE making a difference. Your donations are so important and needed as we navigate through tough times. We are unique as we are the only conference that is offering the vents, crisis help and thrift store support in the state. That is something to be proud of. We can make a difference if we support one another. TOGETHER! Happy Holidays and stay safe and healthy.

### Clothing Center Updates:

*Our thrift store is FULL. Many nice things to select from. After the new year, we will have a half off sale. Please continue to follow our social media for the dates of our sales. Remember, most of our items are only \$1.00 and our sales in turn make our items \$.50 We will be closed from December 24 through January 4, 2026. This gives me some time to recover from Christmas for Kids and start the new year out re-energized.*

### Shepherd Conference News:

*Pastor Gary Hatcher (St. Paul Garnavillo, First Lutheran McGregor) will be retiring at the end of 2025. We will miss him and wish him well on the next chapter of his life. We would like to also recognize Pastor Mike Ashman (St. Paul and St. John Guttenberg) on the anniversary of his ordination on 01/03/1993. Please say a prayer for all of dedicated Pastors in our conference and for the churches that are in-between Pastors at this time. We are very blessed to have them and cherish the work that they do.*

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:

**Shepherd will be CLOSED**

**December 24-January 4**

**Conference Assembly:**

**February 15, 2026 @ 2:00 pm**

**Zion Lutheran, Oelwein**

**\*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](mailto:shephill@neitel.net)

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

## JANUARY BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

6: Emma Meyer  
 7: Ivy Burke  
 12: Skyler Engen  
 13: Nathan Friedlein  
 15: Ava Hendricks  
 Waverly Wagner

16: Macey Moose  
 23: Lucille Cheeseman  
 25: Jase Bouzek  
 27: Grace Palas  
 Brody Moose



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 15: Eldon Kurth  
 Jan. 19: Fran Passmore  
 Jan 22: Larry Geisler  
 Jan 29: Craig Sexton

## JANUARY GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

January 16th - Roger & Marcine Nelson

## OFFICIAL ACTS IN DECEMBER

**Baptism:** Kaelix Ian Kraus

Parents: Marcy & Darren Kraus

Sponsors: Keith & Marie Amundson, Clay Amundson, Kim Kraus

## THANK YOU'S !

**For the Sunday School Program:** Thank you to our Students, Superintendent Heidi Meyer, Teachers, Pastor Erika, Judy Walter, and Ryan Martindale, for a wonderful Christmas Program! You are all talented people and St. Paul is so blessed to have you!

**St Paul's Choir** had a wonderful time sharing musical selections at the Dec. 21st Songs of Advent Worship Service. Thank you to Director, Diane Fisk; pianist, Judy Walter; violinist, Pam Malanaphy; flautist, Lisa Lenth; the Choir, the Jr. Bell choir, Brodyn Blietz & Cora Keehner and all who attended.

**For the Decorations:** The Fellowship & Evangelism Committee wishes to thank everyone who helped with decorating the church for the Advent and Christmas season. Many hands make light work. The decorations bring added beauty to the Christmas Season. You are invited to help take down the decorations on January 4th after Fellowship. Thank you in advance!!

**The Christmas Giving Tree:** The Mission and Social Committee would like to thank everyone for their generous donations to the Christmas Giving Tree this season. Donations were split between: Shepherd of the Hills Christmas 4 Kids, and Garden View.

### ST PAUL EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH DATA

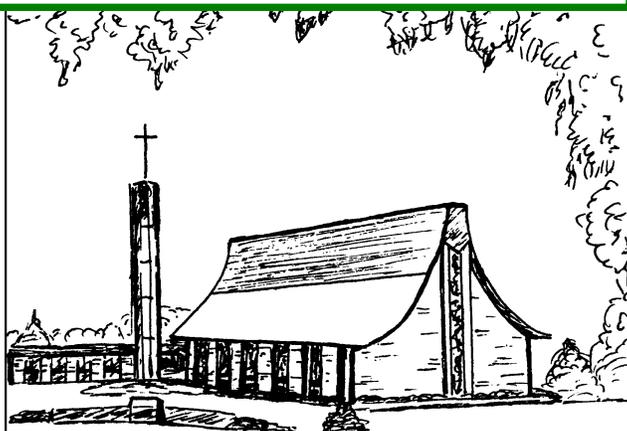
Total 536

Total Family Units 236

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

Average Sunday Attendance for 2024  
 107 (In Person) 40 (Virtual)

Average for 2025 through December 15th  
 104 (In Person) 50 (Virtual)



# November Financials



***Giving	Cash/Check
November 2nd	\$2,227.36
November 9th	\$7,293.52
November 16th	\$2,442.25
November 23rd	\$2,183.00
November 30th	\$16,837.98
<b>**Total Simply Giving for November 2025</b>	<b>\$3,714.00</b>
ILM Memorials	\$135.00

\*\*\* 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	November 2025 Actual	November 2025 Budget	November YTD Actual	November YTD Budget
<b>*Receipts</b>	\$15,735.54		\$180,281.78	
<b>Disbursements</b>	\$14,500.3	\$18,171.87	\$181,629.76	\$199,890.59

**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 February St. Paul News need to be turned into the office by January 20th.**

**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. [stpaulth@netel.net](mailto:stpaulth@netel.net)*

# JANUARY 2026

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
				1	2	3
					Financial Reports due 5:30pm Scouts	3-5pm Celebration of Life Betty Breitsprecher
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:00 am Worship/Eucharist 10:00 am Fellowship (EPIC) *Take Down Christmas Décor.		6:00 pm Audit 2025 Financials	6:30 pm Confirmation			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:00 am Worship/Eucharist 10:00 am Fellowship 5:00 pm Giard EH 4-H		6pm Worship & Music Mtg.	10:30 am WELCA Bible Study Soup Luncheon	6pm Ed & Youth mtg. @ Center Street		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:00 am Worship/Eucharist Council meet before 10:00 am ANNUAL MEETING Council meet after Lunch /Luther League 6:30 pm Scouts			6:30 pm Confirmation			
25 <i>Noisy Cat</i> *	26	27	28	29	30	31
8:00 am Bell Choir 9:00 am Worship/Eucharist 10:00 am Fellowship 10:15 am Sunday School	7pm Interchurch Council Mtg here		6:30pm Confirmation	Doing Days	Doing Days	

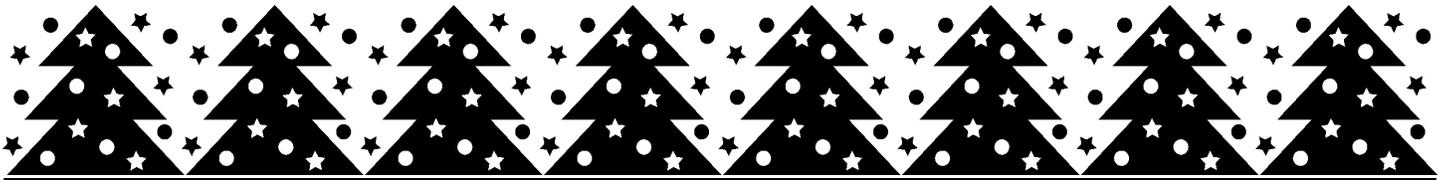
**St. Paul Evangelical  
Lutheran Church**

401 South Egbert Street  
P O Box 1968  
Monona, IA 52159-0561

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

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**JANUARY SCHEDULES**

**COUNCIL**

Jan. 4 9:00 a.m.	Steve Johnson Justin Birdnow
Jan. 11 9:00 a.m.	Crystal Thurn Beth Foels
Jan. 18 9:00 a.m.	Crystal Thurn Craig Watson
Jan. 25 9:00 a.m.	Kevin Brainard Rein Kregel Andy Meyer

**DATE      USHERS**

Jan. 4	Bob Tayek Wayne Garms
Jan. 11	Jim Langhus Linette Langhus
Jan. 18	Nathan Friedlein Aaron Friedlein
Jan. 25	Heidi Meyer Andy Meyer

**Come & Worship**

**LECTORS**

January 4:      Heidi Landt  
January 11:     Crystal Thurn  
January 18:     Barb Kalkwarf  
January 25:     Heidi Meyer

**ACOLYTES**

Jan. 4:            Kyler Nuehring  
                      Veda Torkelson  
                      Clayton Henkes

Jan. 11:           Brodyn Blietz  
                      Jaxon Lamborn  
                      Taylor Rasmussen

Jan. 18:           Briella Schutte  
                      Blake Schutte  
                      Kashton Decker

Jan. 25:           Evelyn Birdnow  
                      Gage Paulus  
                      Grace Palas

**ALTAR GUILD**

Jan. 4	Kris Christen
Jan. 11	Lorna Jones
Jan. 18	Barb Kalkwarf
Jan. 25	Mary Ann Koehn- check robes

**FELLOWSHIP**

Jan. 4	Jill Lamborn EPIC      Abby Burns
Jan. 11	Diane & Tim Fisk

Jan. 18	Annual Meeting Luther League
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Jan. 25	Heidi & Andy Meyer
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**FLOWER ASSISTANTS**

Jan. 4	Beth Henkes
Jan. 11	Teresa Sass
Jan. 18	Dyane Schutte
Jan. 25	Lois Garms