



# PERSPECTIVE

## Newsletter of

St. Paul Lutheran Church—ELCA

200 N. Commercial Street • Neenah, WI 54956

(920) 725-3961 • [stpaulneenah.org](http://stpaulneenah.org)



*Gathering Joyfully, Growing Spiritually, & Going Faithfully,  
Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ!*

DECEMBER 2022

## From Pastor Amy



What I like best about the Advent and Christmas seasons is how rich they are with traditions and rituals. Decorating my parents' Christmas tree with my nieces, baking Christmas cookies, planning the Christmas Day scavenger hunt, and making tearing for Christmas morning just the way my grandma did (and

her mother before her!) are so much fun and I look forward to these things all year. I come to the candle-light Christmas Eve worship service and think about all the Christmas Eves over the years – sitting with my family, singing the many beautiful carols, the years where, as confirmation students, we helped with the sermon, and of course lighting candles during the singing of Silent Night.

Each tradition we have holds within it memories and stories of days gone by. These traditions and stories connect us through the generations, with both generations past and generations to come. They are not only part of our history, but are also part of our legacy.

The Christmas story, from beginning to end, is a story that also connects us with saints throughout the ages. The generations that lived prior to Jesus' birth longed for the coming of the Messiah. They waited in anticipation for the coming of the one sent from God who would redeem them. The Christmas story begins with the stories of these saints and how God was faithful to them as they lived in their own advent waiting.

The birth of Jesus, the Messiah for whom God's people yearned, was the fulfilment of prophecy and promise – God's promise to save God's people. While Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was somewhat unassuming, salvation history took a drastic turn. God became flesh in the person Jesus to walk and live among us, to show us how to live a life under the reign of God, and to give his life that we might have eternal life.

We are many generations removed from Jesus physical life on earth, but we, like our ancestors of old, find ourselves in advent waiting for the coming of Jesus into the world in all his fullness of glory. We continue to live the Christmas story. Like our biblical ancestors, we too experience God's faithfulness in our waiting. Like Mary we offer ourselves to the service of God. Like Joseph we dare to choose a better way – God's way – rather than giving into the pressures of the world. Like the shepherds we are given the good news of Jesus to share. And like the wise men, we still seek Jesus in our world today.

The Christmas story is the story of God with us – yet, still, and always. This Advent and Christmas our theme is "From Generation to Generation." We will reflect on how Christmas story comes to us from generations past, continues in our own generation, and how we are to pass this embodied story to future generations.

From Generation to Generation reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. The work of God is always unfolding— in and through us. This Advent season, how will we carry it forth?

Peace to all,

*Pastor Amy*

# Worship Volunteer Schedule



## ASSISTING MINISTERS

**Hoks, Dave;** Dec. 4  
**Kalfahs, Darlene;** Dec. 18  
**Quella, Bev;** Jan. 1  
**Thompson, Eric;** Nov. 27; Dec. 11  
**Tipler, Linda;** Jan. 8

## GREETERS

**Eckrich, Sue;** Nov. 27; Jan. 8  
**Grondahl, Butch;** Jan. 1  
**Jones, Kathi;** Dec. 4  
**Procknow, Kathy;** Dec. 11  
**Wyman, Laura;** Dec. 18

## USHERS

**Bauer, Roger;** Dec. 11; Jan. 1  
**Boche, Don;** Nov. 27; Dec. 18; Jan. 8  
**Evenson, Gene;** Nov. 27; Dec. 18; Jan. 8  
**Grondahl, Butch;** Dec. 11; Jan. 1  
**Haufe, Linda;** Dec. 4; Dec. 25  
**Hemp, Lyle;** Dec. 11; Jan. 1  
**Macias, Alicia;** Dec. 4; Dec. 25  
**Parker, Linda;** Dec. 4; Dec. 25

## LECTORS / COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

### (c.a.)

**Borchers, Audrey;** Jan. 1 lector  
**Fink, Vicki;** Dec. 11 lector; Jan. 1 c.a.

**Gillis, Becky;** Dec. 4 c.a.  
**Ihde, Eric,** Nov. 27 lector  
**Jones, Kathi;** Dec. 4 c.a.  
**Kalfahs, Darlene;** Dec. 18 c.a.  
**Quella, Bev;** Dec. 4 lector; Jan. 1 c.a.  
**Strong, Cindy;** Dec. 18 c.a.  
**Thompson, Eric;** Dec. 18 lector  
**Tipler, Linda;** Dec. 4 c.a.; Jan. 1 c.a.  
**Tonn, Kathy;** Jan. 8 lector  
**Wyman, Laura;** Dec. 18 c.a.

## Overflowing – God’s grace to us and through us to others

Thank you to everyone who turned in their commitment card for 2023. If you have not yet turned in your card, please return your completed card to the church office as soon as possible.

**Rev. Amy Engebose**  
Senior Pastor  
pastor@stpaulneenah.org

**Tamie O’Dell**  
Parish Administrator  
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**Cheryl Hentz**  
Communications Specialist  
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**Kris Grutzner**  
Bookkeeper  
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**Eric Ihde**  
Handbell & Sanctuary Choir  
ihdeeric@gmail.com

**Todd Nerenhausen**  
Facilities Manager  
tnerenhausen@stpaulneenah.org

**Linda Parker**  
Custodian

**Jill Hagen**  
Organist and Custodian

**Council**  
Peg Hoks, President  
Jessica Hess, Vice President  
Audrey Borchers, Secretary  
Diane Turke, Treasurer  
Alicia Macias  
Dave Fink  
Don Boche

## Ministry Team Contacts:

### Worship Ministry:

Pastor Amy Engebose  
pastor@stpaulneenah.org

### Prayer Ministry:

Mike Dvorachek  
mdvorachek@centurylink.net

### Property Ministry:

Todd Nerenhausen  
tnerenhausen@stpaulneenah.org

### Meal Ministry:

Kathi Jones  
kathi@moderncashregister.com  
Lisa Schroeder  
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### Mission Team:

Jill Hannemann  
jilli1216@aol.com

### Stewardship:

Chuck Kurtti  
ckurtti@new.rr.com

### Quilting Angels:

Bev Quella  
baquilla@gmail.com

### Safety Team:

Don Boche  
dboche@gmail.com

### Men’s Fellowship:

Don Boche  
dboche@gmail.com

### Knit2gether:

Marcia Kavanaugh  
mkvisions22@gmail.com

**WORSHIP: In-Person & Online—Sundays at 9:30 a.m.**  
**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: Mon—Fri 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**



## What is God Calling Us to Do? St. Paul Congregation Member Discussions

You are invited and encouraged to participate in conversations with your St. Paul Church Council. This series of discussions are open to all members and will take place after worship on December 4, December 11, and January 8 in the narthex or library.

Our question is: What is God calling us to do as a St. Paul Congregation? The Council has been discussing this very question and has a vision of a deepening culture of discipleship – one that is characterized by a high level of engagement of our members for mission and ministry.

Building on responses to the question on the graffiti wall in the narthex, “Where do you see God’s overflowing grace at St. Paul?” participants will discuss:

- What are your passions for ministry; what excites you to do ministry?
- What are our gifts and strengths at St. Paul that we can utilize in our ministry efforts?
- What barriers or roadblocks do we need to acknowledge, address, or minimize to do effective ministry?
- What ministry teams need to be active to accomplish our mission and ministry purpose?

Please make plans to join us for any or all these three discussions. Your involvement, input, and ideas will be very helpful as we set goals and plans for 2023.

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### *Advent Theme – From Generation to Generation*

Our Advent theme this year is “From Generation to Generation”. Each Sunday morning and into the new year, we will hear another part of the Christmas story *in chronological order*. The Christmas story, of a love that came here, that walked among us, that was born in a humble manger to uncertain parents with shepherds nearby, is a story that we pass from generation to generation, because without fail, it continues to change us. It reframes the way we hope. It centers the way we love. It shapes the way we live.

The Christmas story is our story, too. The tapestry God is weaving did not stop in Bethlehem. Our own threads, from generation to generation, weave into the narrative of God’s incarnation in the world that proclaims the Advent promises of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Sunday, November 27	There’s Room for Every Story
Sunday, December 4	God Meets Us in our Fear
Sunday, December 11	We Can Choose a Better Way
Sunday, December 18	We See God in Each Other



**Advent Devotionals based on the “From Generation to Generation” theme are available at the church.**

### Midweek Advent Worship

In the middle of the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, join us as we take time to stop, breathe, and dwell in the presence of Christ. On Wednesday evenings, November 30, December 7, and 14 we will join together by candlelight for Holden Evening Prayer. This Advent midweek worship service will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the narthex. We will not be livestreaming the midweek services.



## Blessed Beyond Belief

By Rev. Clarence Harms

World Relief estimates that there are 80 million people around the globe who have been forced, or made the painful choice to leave their home. Threatened by extreme poverty, violence and oppression, they leave behind everything familiar to seek a life free from fear. If they are lucky enough to gain refugee status (a long, complicated, difficult process), some of them come to America.

In the case of the Isaac family, they landed at the Appleton Airport on June 26. Now, imagine, you step off the plane with only the clothing you have on your back and in a small suitcase. You have only the money you may or may not have in your pocket. You aren't sure exactly where you are or where you need to go.

But you have friends. The Isaacs were met by our Good Neighbor Team, a case worker from World Relief, and the people from Zion French African Church in Appleton. After celebratory prayers and singing, they were transported to their new residence.

This was the first blessing. In Africa they lived in a small two-room house, with no kitchen (cooking was done out of doors). When they saw their two-story house with an apartment on each floor (complete with kitchens, they were amazed and gratified, almost to the point of tears. When the three little girls saw their bedroom, they cried out, "We have beds!" and gleefully jumped on them. Within two weeks, the family requested an American flag to display on the front of the house to show their joy and gratitude.

In the first two months, they were dependent on the Good Neighbor Team and World Relief caseworkers to help them meet basic needs – grocery shopping, required health assessment appointments, Social Security, school enrollment, and other things.

But they are growing ever more independent. JR took the initiative to contact the landlord for permission to attach the flag to the front of the house. Mama Vivian, JR, William, and Dorcas now have full-time jobs, and have worked out the transportation needed to get them to and from work. Danielle is in high school (getting mostly "A"s) and has a weekend job on Saturdays and Sundays. The three little ones live too close to their school to be bussed, so the family has worked out getting them to and fro.

William recently returned from South Carolina, where he became engaged to Joyce, herself newly-arrived from Africa. JR has begun the process of bringing his wife, Rebecca, and their babies to Appleton. In short, the Isaacs are succeeding in making a life here – a life filled with gratitude, free from fear, and full of blessings.

But they aren't the only ones blessed. The Good Neighbor Team has been blessed with new friendships, the joy of seeing the children play in the park and on the soccer field, and hearing them sing in the car on the way somewhere. Most of all, we are acutely aware of the blessing of the Holy Spirit, whose power we have felt in this whole process to make this little part of the world more full of love, friendship, joy, and hope.

### Worship Assistants Needed

We are in need of a few additional people to provide hospitality and service to our worshipping community. There is a rotation of worship assistants, so you should only have to serve about once every month. We need **4 ushers, 1 person to set up holy communion, 1 person to clean up after holy communion, and several greeters.** If you are willing to serve in any of the roles, please contact Tamie in the church office.



### Deck the Halls!

Join us at church on Saturday, December 3 at 11 a.m. to decorate the church for the season! Many hands make for light work – and we have fun, too!

### Christmas and New Year's Helpers Needed

Worship Helpers needed for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. We need ushers, assisting ministers and communion assistants. If you are available to help, worship for Christmas Eve is December 24 at 4 p.m. only Christmas Day and New Year's Day are at 9:30 a.m. as usual. Thank you.

### Festival of Nativities – Sunday December 18, 10:30 a.m.-Noon in the Fellowship Hall

A Festival of Nativities is an event in which we will be displaying nativity sets, scenes, pictures, and other visual representations of the birth of Jesus. Our Festival of Nativities will not only feature art, but will also include a time of singing Christmas carols, a nativity craft project for children, Christmas cookies, and a hot chocolate bar! Invite your friends to come to our Festival of Nativities – better yet, invite them to join us for worship that morning too!

Do you have a nativity set or other artwork portraying Jesus' birth that we could borrow for our Festival of Nativities? Please bring your nativity sets and art to the church in a box or bag as appropriate with your name on it. If there is a story, background information, or tradition around your artwork, please include that information as well so we can include it in our display. Your pieces can be taken home after the Festival of Nativities or picked up in the church office the week of December 19. All pieces for the Festival must be at church no later than Sunday, December 11. Please contact Pastor Amy if you have any questions.

### Longest Night Service – Wednesday, December 21 at 6:30 p.m.

December 21<sup>st</sup> marks the Winter Solstice and has the longest night of the entire year. Darkness reminds us of the situations of loss, death, change, loneliness, or uncertainty we have experienced or are currently enduring. This year we will have a Longest Night Service at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 21.

For those who have experienced a loss—be it a loved one, a dream, health, or a joy-- this can be a difficult time of year when it seems everyone else is celebrating. On this night, the Longest Night Service is offered at St. Paul Church. It is a time to reflect, acknowledge those losses, and be comforted. This year we will also name what we have lost in the last two years because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Longest Night Service allows us to be honest about our grief and pain and to find comfort in one another. We remember that Jesus is the Light of the World and is born anew in our heart, helping us to live with hope in the midst of loss and difficulty. Please know that this service is also open to all who may be finding this time of year difficult, no matter when their loss occurred. Feel free to invite a friend to come with you.

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**Christmas cards** with our worship times during Advent and Christmas are available at the church for you to send to people who may be looking for a place to worship this season. Include a note of your own – perhaps invite them to come to worship with you or join you for brunch following worship!

### Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day Worship

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Worship – December 24 at 4 p.m.**

**Christmas Day Worship – December 25 at 9:30 a.m. - "Carols and Communion"**

**New Year's Day Worship – January 1 at 9:30 a.m.**



## BIRTHDAYS

### December 1

Kelly Krabbe  
Nancy Orlady  
Dillon Patel

### December 2

Donna Bauer  
Kalen Peterson

### December 3

Darlene Petersen

### December 4

Jamaica Festge  
Eric Ihde

### December 6

Shawna Dahlman  
Cameron Fiebig

### December 7

Martin Day

### December 8

Rhonda Clancey  
Katie Pirwitz

### December 10

Laurie Andersen  
Stephanie Hodek  
Allison Miller

### December 11

Jodi Micale  
Louise Schmidli

### December 12

Nathaniel Burnham  
Jim Henderson  
Debbie Houle  
Levi Miller

### December 14

Lori Sargent  
Lisa Schroeder  
Adam Shafer

### December 16

Jill Hannemann  
Kate Kingree  
Tabby Miller  
Ellyn Wickman

### December 17

Miya Gilman  
Liam Israel  
Karen Law

### December 18

Morgan Brahe  
William Rambert

### December 19

Nora Cvengros  
Cliff Zeinert

### December 20

Cedric Lewis  
Joy Schultz  
Tiffany Vogels

### December 21

Bryan Jones  
Ryan Lee

### December 22

Gabryella Jackson

### December 24

Marion Larson

### December 25

Jeff Sherwood

### December 26

Johnathan Plier

### December 29

Ryan Cerney

### December 31

Mitchell Bushman

## ANNIVERSARIES

### Ryan & Rachel Kaufman

December 1, 2012

### Gary & Linda Parker

December 4, 1981

### Ryan & Donell Cerney

December 31, 2002

## Condolences...

Our Sympathy to the family of Clary Reinhardt who died on Saturday, November 12, 2022. His funeral was held on November 26 at St. Paul Church.

*Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.—John 11:25-26*

## Baptism

Bella Marie Mae Erickson was baptized on Sunday, October 23. She is the daughter of Ricky and Kayla Erickson. Her baptismal sponsors are Lance and Erin Mosher; and Emma Murphy.

## Offerings for 2022

All offerings for 2022 must be received by the church no later than December 25, 2022 in order to be counted for this fiscal year. Thank you for your offerings throughout the year that make ministry and mission possible in and through St. Paul congregation.

## God's blessings upon the confirmands who affirmed their baptism on Sunday, October 30.

Pictured from left to right are:

**Ceci Pirwitz** (Parents: Tiffany Vogels and Patrick Pirwitz)

**Cody Tipler** (Parents: Eric and Linda Tipler)

**Alex Grandaw** (Parents: Katie Pirwitz and Tim Grandaw)






### St. Paul Lutheran Church Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held Sunday, January 29, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. Mark your calendars now so we're assured of Having a quorum. The *Agenda and Annual Report* will be available mid-January.

# This Month at St. Paul



DECEMBER 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>27</b> Advent I 9:30am In-Person & Online Worship 10:30am GIFT Time	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 9:00am Quilting Angels 11:30am Community Table	<b>30</b> 10:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Midweek Advent Worship	<b>1</b> 8:00am Luther Lines Deadline 9:00am Conversations on Scripture @ Shelter's 6:30pm Safety team	<b>2</b> 9:00am Knit2gether	<b>3</b> 9:00am Bloom Women's Ministry 11:00am Decorating the Sanctuary 11:30am Community Table
<b>4</b>  9:30am In-Person & Online Worship 10:30am GIFT Time 10:30am Conversations With Council	<b>5</b> 1:30pm Memory Care	<b>6</b> 9:00am Ladies Breakfast 9:00am Quilting Angels 11:30am Community Table	<b>7</b> 10:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Midweek Advent Worship	<b>8</b> 8:00am Luther Lines Deadline 9:00am Conversations on Scripture @ Shelter's 6:15pm Handbell practice 7:30pm Sanctuary Choir practice	<b>9</b> 9:00am Knit2gether	<b>10</b> 11:30am Community Christmas Dinner 11:30am Community Table
<b>11</b> 9:30am In-Person & Online Worship 10:30am GIFT Time 10:30am Conversations With Council	<b>12</b> 1:30pm Memory Care	<b>13</b> 9:00am Quilting Angels 11:30am Community Table 6:30pm Council Meeting	<b>14</b> 10:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Midweek Advent Worship	<b>15</b> 8:00am Luther Lines Deadline 9:00am Conversations on Scripture @ Shelter's 6:15pm Handbell practice 7:30pm Sanctuary Choir practice 11:59pm Perspective Deadline	<b>16</b> 9:00am Knit2gether	<b>17</b> 11:30am Community Table
<b>18</b>  9:30am In-Person & Online Worship 10:30am Festival of Nativities (fellowship hall)	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 9:00am Quilting Angels 11:30am Community Table	<b>21</b> 10:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Longest Night Service	<b>22</b> 8:00am Luther Lines Deadline 9:00am Conversations on Scripture @ Shelter's 6:15pm Handbell practice 7:30pm Sanctuary Choir practice	<b>23</b> 9:00am Knit2gether	<b>24</b> 11:30am Community Table 4:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Worship
<b>25</b>  9:30am In-Person & Online Worship - "Carols and Communion"	<b>26</b> Office Closed	<b>27</b> 9:00am Quilting Angels 11:30am Community Table	<b>28</b> 10:00am Staff Meeting	<b>29</b> 8:00am Luther Lines Deadline 9:00am Conversations on Scripture @ Shelter's 6:15pm Handbell practice 7:30pm Sanctuary Choir practice	<b>30</b> 9:00am Knit2gether	<b>31</b> 11:30am Community Table

St. Paul Lutheran Church – ELCA  
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## COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

The annual Community Christmas Dinner is coming up on Saturday, December 10. They need our help. They are in need of:

- 50 combs
- 25 women's / unisex shampoo (full size)
- 55 men's shampoo (full size)
- 10 dozen cookies (divided 6 per bag)
- 2-4 "wait staff" for serving the meal on the 10<sup>th</sup>
- 3 additional helpers to help wherever needed that morning
- 1 clean-up person on the 10<sup>th</sup>
- 3-4 drivers to deliver meals to shut-ins on the 10<sup>th</sup>

**The combs and shampoo can be brought to the church anytime before Wednesday, December 6 when the gift bags will be assembled (after worship that evening). People are needed to help with assembling those gift bags (December 6). The 2 pies need to be here by Friday, December 9, unless they are pumpkin, in which they ask that you bring it in early Saturday, December 10.** Please call the church office at 920-725-3961 to let us know what you can bring and/or help with.

Thank you so much for your prayerful consideration in this wonderful ministry here at St. Paul!