

EPIS⁺LE



*St. Paul's Lutheran
The Church On The Hill*

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January - 2025

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Pastor's Message

A new year filled with great expectations.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17

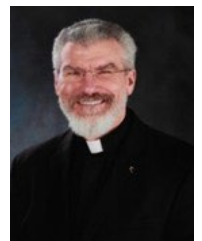
What a powerful reminder this verse of 2 Corinthians 5:17 is as we embrace this season of fresh beginnings! The turning of the calendar gives us a chance to step forward with hope, leaving behind the burdens, mistakes, and challenges of the past year. It's a time to renew our faith, reset our hearts, and walk boldly into the newness of life that Christ has given us.

Scripture tells us that when we are in Christ, we are not simply improved versions of our old selves—we are new creations. The old has truly passed away. Whatever regrets, fears, or pain we carry, Jesus invites us to lay them at his feet. Through his grace, we are made new, washed clean, and given a fresh start. Isn't that amazing? In Christ, a new year isn't just about resolutions or goals—it's about transformation. It's about turning loose of fear, and accepting what God has in store for us in Christ. As members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, we are part of something greater than ourselves. We are God's family, called to live out this newness together. This year, we move forward with great expectations, knowing that God is already at work in our lives and in our community. What new things might he have in store for you? For your family? For our church? I know as Lutherans, new things can be fearful, we may have never done things that way. The unknown of doing something new can slow us down or bring us to a full stop, but only if we look to ourselves and not to God. With God all things are possible, all things are in his promises. There is no fear in Christ for he is with us in all we do. Isaiah 43:19 reminds us of God's promise: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"

God is always at work, creating new opportunities for us to grow in faith, to serve others, and to share his love with the world. Whatever challenges or uncertainties may come, we can step into the new year with confidence, knowing that God's plans for us are good.

So, my beloved church family, as we look ahead with hope, let us cling to this truth: In Christ, we are made new. The old is gone. The new has come. May this year be one of renewal, joy, and abundant blessings for you and for our church family.

Your servant in Christ Jesus,
Pastor David Viles



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 6 Misty Schroeder
- 7 Ellie Kay Morgans
- 8 Brooke Steele
- 9 Marshall Griffin
- 10 Jenetia Gibler
- 10 Colin Walters
- 11 Lucas Carrel
- 16 Sherrie Hanks
- 20 David Russell
- 21 Kathy Meller
- 27 Briar Deaver
- 30 Kaitlyn Finch
- 30 Waylon Pistel

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Month/Day	Attendance Phys./Virtual	Offering
<i>DECEMBER 01</i>	<i>86 / 262</i>	<i>\$ 4,872.00</i>
<i>DECEMBER 08</i>	<i>86 / 254</i>	<i>\$ 4,816.00</i>
<i>DECEMBER 15</i>	<i>100 / 204</i>	<i>\$ 4,494.62</i>
<i>DECEMBER 22</i>	<i>86 / 342</i>	<i>\$ 4,427.00</i>
<i>DECEMBER 22 PLAY</i>	<i>150 / 503</i>	<i>-----</i>
<i>DECEMBER 24 EVE</i>	<i>122 / 256</i>	<i>-----</i>
<i>DECEMBER 29</i>	<i>85 / 180</i>	<i>\$ 4,091.00</i>

Additional Income:

Thanksgiving Envelope: \$632.00
Christmas Offering: \$1,691.00 To Date
Christmas Treats: \$155.00

Special Thanks To:
Dan & Wendy Weber: \$250.00
Mark Kross: \$250.00
Carol Beck: \$1,000.00
Special Gift: \$2,000.00



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 14 Kendall & Hope Stubinger 2016

**Congregational Meeting
 January 19, 2025**

Please remain after Worship service to vote on the new budget and other matters of the church.

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE - Erika & Bill Gerth

It is time to update the Church Directory! Please look at your listing in the current Directory to make sure all the information is correct. If you would like to have your cell phone number listed in addition to your land line, please let us know. Also, make sure that your email is listed correctly. Please get changes/addition to us by January 26, 2025. We want the Directory to be as accurate and complete as possible and we appreciate your help! Contact us by email:

erikagerth329@gmail.com, w4rk.bill@gmail.com.

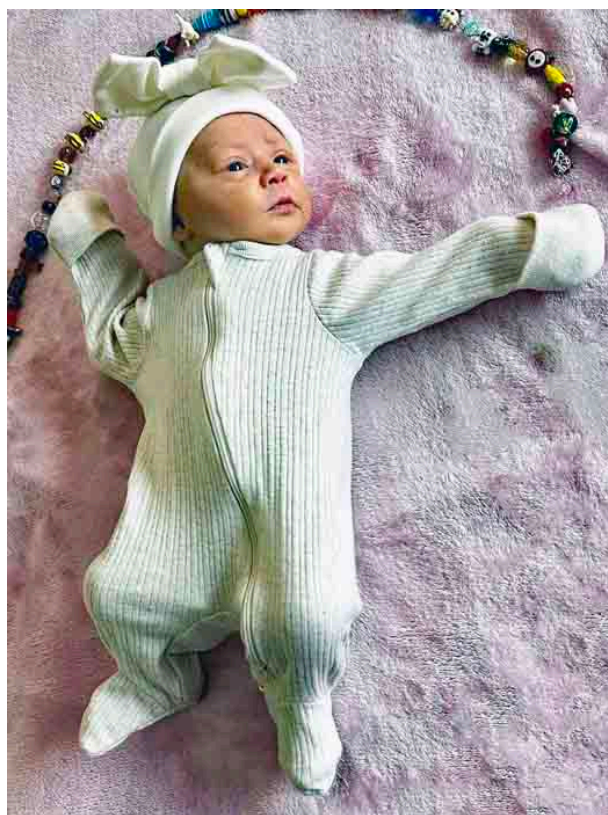
or phone: 573-635-6681.

Continued prayers for:

Jana Thompson, John Smith, Stacy McNamer, Patty Ott, Cynthia Forck, Jerry Koestner, Don Buchta, Julie Carel, and all those we hold dear in our hearts.

Stella Rose Soell

Was born to parents: Kaitlyn and Tyler Soell, on December 3, 2024 at 8:01 pm at only 34 weeks and 0 days gestation. Weighing in at 4lbs and 14 oz, 18 inches long! Praise God.



Congregational Council Meeting, December 9, 2024

† A regular Congregational Council Meeting was held at the home of Council President Zola Finch, who also hosted a delightful evening meal. Present for the meal and meeting were Council members Stacy Bubach, Kent Nelson, Misty Schroeder, Ashleigh Hillen, A.J. Ferrell, and Frank Pascoe. Also present were Pastor David Viles and Church Treasurer Michelle Collins.

† At 6 pm the meeting was called into session by President Finch. The meeting opened with a prayer led by Pastor Viles. Approval of the November Council minutes was given upon a motion offered by Misty Schroeder, seconded by A.J. Ferrell, and approved by all. The President requested that Church Treasurer Michelle Collins give the Council members a report on the Church's current financial status. The Treasurer distributed a four-page detailed summary of current, assets, accounts, and activities. The Year-to-date assets balance showed a total of \$314,032.02. Dedicated accounts totaled \$35,578.02. Income for the current month was \$11,085.09. Expenses for the current month totaled \$8,001.41. Discussion followed on the monthly question of renewal of currently held CD's, which were approved for ongoing renewal upon a motion offered by Stacy Bubach, seconded by Kent Nelson, and approved by all. The Treasurer's report and statement of hours worked were approved upon a general verbal consensus.

† Following the Treasurer's report, Stewardship/Finance Council Committee Chairperson Stacy Bubach distributed a two-page detailed outline for the 2025 Proposed budget. Discussion and questions followed. Pay rates for Church employees were discussed. Changes in the Church's insurance coverage were discussed. Stacy Bubach called for preliminary approval of the proposed 2025 budget. This approval was given upon a motion offered by Kent Nelson, seconded by A.J. Ferrell and approved via voice.

† At this point President Finch requested that Pastor Viles present his summary of his November activities. Pastor Viles report listed over ten meetings with various groups and organizations, including Thrivent, Church Insurance, Lohman Lions Club, and Lohman City Council. Meetings within our Church activity groups included Worship & Music, S.T.A.R.S., Fruendschaft, and Mutual Ministry. Numerous visits with individual parishioners took place. Pastor opened and closed the Friendship Hall for voting for the General Election on Nov. 5th. He held wedding rehearsals and a ceremony for non-members. Pastor sent off and welcomed back the members of the Branson trip travel event. He ordered two 85" TV's and their holding brackets. Pastor presided at two Communion Sunday services, and two non-Communion Sunday services. He also presided at a non-Communion Thanksgiving Eve service.

President Finch requested the various Council Committee chairpersons to present their summary of recent activities:

Evangelism: Chair Misty Schroeder's group held no regular meeting in November. Misty gave a report on the possibility of holding in the future occasional joint services with Trinity Lutheran Church of Russellville. This would, of course, need to be coordinated with Pastor Ed Merckel's Trinity Church council. Members who commented seemed to favor pursuing this suggestion. Misty also discussed with the Council needed planning for our annual Pancake Breakfast, possibly on the second Sunday in March [March 9th, 2025].

Technology: President Finch and Pastor Viles reported that the Sanctuary screens have been ordered. They should arrive any day now. The need for their installation was discussed. It is hoped they will be up and operative before Dec. 22nd. Kent Nelson discussed options for getting them installed in a safe and correct fashion. Pastor told the members about the battery-operated candles which are coming for use at the Christmas Eve service. They will replace the very messy wax candles used in years past.

Worship & Music: Chairperson Ashleigh Hillen reported that the piano in the Friendship Hall has been tuned. She greatly praised the planning and success of the Advent Dinner held on Dec. 8. Kathy Meller and other members of the committee did an outstanding job. The idea of singing or playing of various Vacation Bible School songs learned by the children was discussed. It might be pleasurable to do this as children came up for the Children's Sunday sermon, before and after they go on to Sunday School. It is also hoped to have more bell choir events as new and additional music is purchased.

Parish Education: A.J. Ferrell reported on the ongoing planning and preparation for the Christmas Eve program. She hopes that as many as twenty children will participate in the program. Various parishioners are working on the planned set for the event. New white robes have been purchased for the participating children. The new battery-use candles will be used.

Church Improvement: Kent Nelson brought before the Council the decisions needed on the repair of the illuminated cross on the outside of the front of the church. The family of the original builder has requested that the cross be repaired and will fund the repair up to an undisclosed amount. The Council voted to fund the remaining amount. Midstate Signs of Eldon is coming the morning of December 13 to remove the sign to their facility and to repair the sign. Kent Nelson reported that a new electrical ballast has been installed in the church secretary's office.

Stewardship & Finance: Having already led the Council's discussion of the 2025 budget, Chairperson Stacy Bubach heard various Council members' concerns about the purchasing offering envelopes for all enrolled parishioners. Various options were suggested for ideas to eliminate the purchase of envelopes for every member. When Time and Talent survey is distributed this year, Parishioners could be queried about their need for envelopes, as so many now use online contribution giving.

Mutual Ministry: Jana Thompson submitted a written report of the November 20 meeting of this committee. Six members were present. A chairperson for the Technology person on the Council is needed. There was much praise for Debbie Boyce's work for the 100th anniversary celebration. Diane Kalaf reported that her father had made the cross on the front of the church and her family is interested in contributing toward its repair. The book box out front was discussed briefly. To increase book reading, a bookshelf might be utilized in the children's area of the church. A Time and Talent Survey for 2025 will be distributed with online and paper copies available. A new 2025 pictorial directory of the congregation was discussed. Debbie Boyce volunteered to learn more about the process. No Mutual Ministry meeting is scheduled for December.

Old Business: The Council was reminded that reports are due to the church's secretary by December 16.

New Business: President Finch distributed a spreadsheet showing Council membership terms and each current Council member's years of service. She pointed out those members who may choose to retire after six years of service. New elections for vacant Church Council positions will be held at the annual congregational meeting to be held on Sunday, January 19, 2025. It is highly imperative that the church's nominating committee members get into action to replace any retiring members and complete the current expected need for three replacements on the Council for 2025.

The Council also discussed the need for a person or persons to collect and tabulate the weekly Sunday contributions to the church, a task handled for many years by the Financial Recording Secretary, our beloved Marie Schepeler, who has expressed a desire to soon retire from this duty.

The members of the Council gave approval for the distribution and consumption of mimosa drinks held within the church for a member's basement rental event.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was offered by A.J. Ferrell, seconded by Kent Nelson, and passed via voice. The meeting was closed with a recitation of the Our Father by all present.

Respectfully submitted by Frank Pascoe, Council Secretary.

STARS: Jeannette Fischer

We will not meet during January. However, beginning in February we will resume our schedule with wonderful food, fellowship and interesting programs.

Mobile Food Pantry: Audrey Bunch

The Mobile Food Truck held December 10th at Russellville in the Trinity Lutheran parking lot was COLD and very windy. We had 149 families with 411 people we served. Items given out were broccoli spears, 18 count eggs, marshmallows, whole hams, ice tea, canned corn, canned beans, jars of peanut butter, cereal in boxes, pop tarts, sliced banana pepper rings, frozen assorted breads, Reese's peanut butter puffs in bags, and Italian sausage. We had 21 volunteers that were able to help at the mobile. Volunteers from Lohman Lions Club were Gary and Alberta Zumwalt, from St. Paul's Lutheran Church were Rosemary Heidbreder, Dan Tschirgi, Gary and Audrey Bunch. NO Mobile Food Truck in JANUARY 2025.

Margaret Circle: Erika Gerth



Our final meeting of 2024 was held on Tuesday, December 4, 2024 at the home of Debbie Boyce. It was not hard to find her house - the outdoor decorations were spectacular, as were those inside. We thank Debbie for her hospitality and for providing the main course for our dinner. The rest of us were more than happy to provide sides and a dessert. Kathryn had Christmas cards ready to be signed by each of us for homebound members and friends of St. Paul's. We learned there are currently 25 children attending Russellville Elementary School who benefit from taking home Buddy Packs each week-end. They contain nutritious, kid-friendly meals to tide them over through the week-end. Margaret Circle provides something extra in each pack - toothbrush and toothpaste, lotion, mittens, etc. Thank you, Donita, for coordinating this program on our behalf. The evening's offering was divided between two organizations whose work makes this world a better

place: Oaks Indian Mission and Heifer International. We thank God for the work of all the organizations which we are privileged to support with our offerings.

A new year is beginning! Margaret Circle members look forward to growing in faith through sharing and participating in the study of God's Holy Word. We look for opportunities to share our offerings with local, national, and international organizations engaged in the work of helping people live their best lives. All women of St. Paul's, and their friends, are invited to share in this important ministry!

Fruendschaft Gruppe: Jeannette Fischer

Our gruppe met on December 2 with 16 in attendance. After a delicious dinner served by Glen and Donita, we celebrated the Hanging of the Greens. Our workload was made much lighter thanks to Kathryn who had already placed all the decorations on the outside railing. On Saturday, December 7, we gathered to set up the tree and finish the decorations. Tree trimming did not take long because Pastor had already assembled the tree and decorated the top section. On Saturday, January 4, we will remove all decorations, disassemble the tree and store everything safely away. After all this work, we will treat ourselves to a wine, cheese and soup supper. Hopefully there will also be cookies.

Advent Dinner: Kathy Meller

The Advent Dinner was held on the evening of Sunday, December 8 th. The approximately 50 people in attendance were greeted by candle lit tables adorned with cedar branches. Sparkling juice was served at 5:30 p.m.as everyone visited and enjoyed the social time. At 6:00 p.m. a delicious meal was served by Misty Schroeder and Glen and Donita Stubinger. The meal concluded with mouthwatering desserts which were impossible to resist. After the meal Pastor David led the program titled "Waiting on the Promises of God", which included a litany of God's promises and as well as several songs. A huge thank you goes to Zola Finch for playing the piano to accompany the singing. Everyone enjoyed her jazzy arrangements! The evening concluded with a closing prayer by Pastor David (his prayer included the Kansas City Chiefs-which is why they won). Everyone went home with an ornament stating God's Promises as well as a prayer journal of promises. We are so thankful to have Misty, Glen, and Donita to help make events like this so special. We truly appreciate all their hard work. The Worship and Music Committee would like to thank everyone for coming. We hope this experience enhanced your Advent season as we wait with anticipation for the coming of Christ.

Children's Christmas Play

This year's Children's Christmas Play, organized by our dedicated Sunday School teachers, was a resounding success, bringing joy and excitement to all involved. The event showcased the talents of our young performers, who excelled in their narration and speaking roles, demonstrating remarkable confidence and enthusiasm. Every child, including the youngest participants, contributed significantly to the play, making it a memorable night for families and friends. Their ability to portray the story of Jesus' birth with such spirit is commendable.





A heartfelt thank you to AJ Ferrell and Wendy Barker for their tireless efforts in bringing this play to life. We also extend our thanks to Jason, Landon, and Lindsey Plochberger for their hard work in setting up and dismantling the stage. We look forward to many more years of these wonderful plays that will continue to tell the beautiful story of Jesus' birth. The enthusiasm displayed by everyone involved truly exemplifies the spirit of Christmas and our St. Paul's congregation. We are grateful for the support of all parents and volunteers who made this event possible.



Christmas Eve Candlelight



Welcome New Members

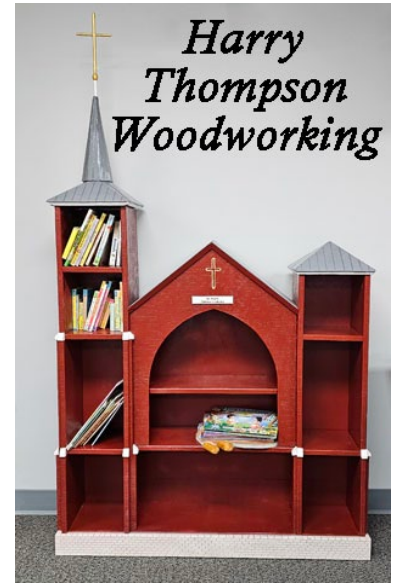
On December 29, 2024, we joyfully welcomed John and Debi Berry as new members of our church community! Having attended services with us for several months, they have already made a wonderful impact with their warmth and kindness. John and Debi are truly a blessed addition to our congregation, and we are immensely grateful for the energy and spirit they bring. We look forward to growing together in faith and fellowship!

The Church Children's Book Shelf

St. Paul's Church is proud of the addition of a beautifully crafted bookshelf designed to resemble our church. This remarkable piece was created by Harry Thompson in his woodworking shop and has been installed in the Fellowship Hall, adjacent to the children's play area.

During Sunday gatherings, members are encouraged to admire this unique craftsmanship, which not only serves a functional purpose but also enhances the aesthetic of the space.

The bookshelf stands as a testament to Harry Thompson's skill and dedication to the church community, and it is a wonderful addition for both children and adults to appreciate while enjoying fellowship together.



The Light Shines Again:



The Neon Cross that shines above the front Stained Glass windows has been broken for several months. The glass tube on the bottom right was completely severed and hanging by a wire.

This neon cross was made and installed by Rupert 'Barb' Linsenbardt who was the father of Diane (Linsenbardt) Kalaf. At that time Mr. Linsenbardt was in the business of making neon lights and this one was created in the late 1950's or early 1960's. As we began to consider replacing the cross, possibly with an LED tube design, Diane asked that we consider

having this one repaired and offered to donate the cost. MidState Signs in Eldon quoted the job for \$720.00 and completed the work to repair the broken cross in mid December. Thank you to Diane and Mike Kalaf for having Rupert Linsenbardt's Cross repaired and shining bright at night on the Hill.

Julie Carel Birthday:

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for joining us at the 70th birthday brunch at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Your presence truly made the day special, and it meant a great deal to celebrate this milestone surrounded by such cherished friends and family. The cards and thoughtful messages you shared were incredibly touching and added to the joy of the occasion. I feel so blessed to have you in my life, and I appreciate your kindness and support. Thank you once again for being a part of this memorable celebration.



Julie Carel

Calendar of Events and Schedules

January 5th, Sunday: Children’s Sunday School (weather permitting.)

January 5th, Sunday: Fellowship hour after worship.

January 7 th, Tuesday: Worship and Music will determine hymns online, no meeting at Church.

January 13th, Monday: Church Council will meet in the Sunday School room upstairs.

January 14th, Tuesday: Food Pantry Volunteers at Trinity Lutheran in Russellville at 1:00 p.m.

January 15th, Wednesday: Mutual Ministry Meeting at 5:30 p.m.

January 19th, Sunday: Children’s Sunday School

January 19th, Sunday: Annual Congregational Meeting in Sanctuary after worship.

January 21st, Tuesday: Basement reserved for Lohman City Council 5:30 p.m.

Bulletins are normally printed on Wednesdays. Pastor David normally plans Fridays as his day off.

Council Schedule

Jan. – 05	AJ Ferrell
Jan. – 12	Kent Nelson
Jan. – 19	Frank Pascoe
Jan. – 26	Jana Thompson

Acolyte Schedule

Jan. – 05	Lucas Plochberger
Jan. – 12	Oliver Stoermer
Jan. – 19	Madeline Stubinger
Jan. – 26	Morgan Schroeder

Greeters Schedule

Jan. – 05	Donald Weber	Marie Scheperle
Jan. – 12	Jason Wood	Jacklyn Wood
Jan. – 19	Rosemary Heidbreder	Richard Heidbreder
Jan. – 26	Harry Thompson	Jana Thompson

Readers Schedule

Jan. – 05	Audrey Bunch
Jan. – 12	Carol Elliott
Jan. – 19	Lori Meyer
Jan. – 26	Harry Thompson

Song Leader

Jan. – 05	Kathy Meller
Jan. – 12	Dan Tschirgi
Jan. – 19	Kathy Meller
Jan. – 26	Dan Tschirgi

Audio / Video Technician

Jan. – 05	Dan Tschirgi
Jan. – 12	Roger Pennell
Jan. – 19	Dan Tschirgi
Jan. – 26	Roger Pennell

Organist / Keyboard

Jan. – 05	Zola Finch
Jan. – 12	Zola Finch
Jan. – 19	Zola Finch
Jan. – 26	Zola Finch

Communionware for the Month

Laurie and Jerry Koestner

Communion Assistants

Jan. – 12	Devin Koestner
Jan. – 26	Jahanna Koestner

Altar Flowers for the Month

Kathryn Linsenbardt

* Communion Days noted in Yellow

Happy and Blessed New Year 2025