

THE QUARTERLY BLESSINGS

The Official Quarterly Newsletter of St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School

WHAT'S INSIDE

Dates to Know - 1

**Looking Forward to the New
Hymnal - 2**

**Teaching - A Meaningful
Career to Consider - 3**

**My Christian Life: Once a
detective, Now a Pastor- 4**

**Worshipping Through
Bible Stories- 8**

Space Utilization - 9

**Did you know? St. Paul's
Facts, Highlights and Points
to Ponder -10**

Membership Snapshot - 11

Gifts & Memorials - 12

DATES TO KNOW

- July 6 - Ministry Board Meeting
- July 14 - Summer Stories
- July 15 - Facilities Planning Committee Meeting
- July 20 - School Board Meeting
- July 22 - Facilities Planning Committee Meeting
- July 28 - Summer Stories

- August 3 - Ministry Board Meeting
- August 4 - Women of St. Paul's
- August 5 - Facilities Planning Committee Meeting
- August 9 - PTF Meeting
- August 9 - Back to School Bash
- August 11 - Early Childhood Orientation
- August 16 - K-8 Registration
- August 17 - School Board Meeting
- August 19 - Facilities Planning Committee Meeting
- August 25 - First Day of School
- August 26 - Facilities Planning Committee Meeting
- August 29 - Installation Sunday (10:30 AM)

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEW HYMNAL

christianworship.com/worshippers

When you gather for worship every Sunday you'll enjoy familiar continuity paired with the best new materials to foster joyful unity in worship, prayer, and praise.

WORSHIP THAT BELONGS TO EVERYONE

Lutheran worship is unique in how it involves the praise and proclamation of all God's people. Worship is not primarily all about the leader at the altar or the musician on the bench. Worship belongs to everyone. We carry out the encouragement of Christ's apostles when we speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.

GOOD NEWS TO SAY AND SING

Lutheran worship relies on the saving means of grace — the gospel in word and sacrament. Christian Worship: Hymnal gives God's people good news to say and sing to one another. Christian Worship delivers rites that center on the means of grace. All the texts and hymns of Christian Worship point to the good news revealed in Jesus Christ.



TRUSTWORTHY RESOURCES FOR UNITY OF PRAISE

Lutheran worship values doctrinal clarity paired with aesthetic beauty. Christian Worship is the result of a careful, years-long curation process conducted by dozens of spiritually discerning pastors, teachers, and laypeople with field test results from across the synod. You will delight to proclaim the rich teaching of God's Word in forms of praise that touch the heart.

*"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord."—
Ephesians 5:19*

For more videos, articles, and info on the new hymnal, visit
<https://www.christianworship.com/worshippers>



CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

TEACHING - A MEANINGFUL CAREER TO CONSIDER

by Ruthie Gehring

I am not someone who has known that they've wanted to be a teacher since they were little. In high school, the idea of picking a college and a career made me shiver because I had no idea what I wanted to do or where I wanted to go. I knew God would be with me wherever I ended up, but that still left me with a decision to make. As helpful as this would have been, I never received a divine revelation or even a feeling of sudden inspiration that teaching was a perfect choice. I'm not sure when exactly I decided to go to Martin Luther College, but I do know that now, I get more and more excited about teaching all the time!

Martin Luther College is a great fit for me. So many of my professors make me excited to teach. Covid made for an interesting college experience, and online learning was not my favorite, but many blessings came out of the difficulties. This fall, I'm looking forward to my clinical experience. I get to go into a classroom one day a week to observe a teacher and teach a few lessons. I can't wait to meet the teacher and the kids.

I want to teach because I want other people to know what Jesus has done for them and how much God loves them. Another reason is that I love to learn. School is a blast! No, seriously! Finally, teaching is exciting to me because kids are fascinating! I work in the summer as a nanny, and although I'm exhausted some days, I sincerely enjoy playing with them, reading with them, problem-solving, laughing, and growing with them!

God uses every Christian to show Jesus' love in a special way. It seems like God might use me as a teacher. Does teaching interest you at all? Do you enjoy being around kids? God could use your gifts and unique experiences to meaningfully reach a child or a family as a teacher!



MY CHRISTIAN LIFE: ONCE A DETECTIVE, NOW A PASTOR (REPRINTED FROM FEBRUARY 2021 FORWARD IN CHRIST

<https://forwardinchrist.net/a-former-detective-turned-pastor/>

A former detective-turned-pastor shows the importance of reaching individuals with the gospel—one by one.

In my former life, there were times if someone did not step up to lead, people could get hurt or die.

The same is true for you—and for all of us—as Christians. Someone you have not met yet is counting on you to step up and lead—to lead them to Christ so they will live. Your church doesn't have to grow by a thousand. It can grow one by one.

Living undercover

As a pastor, I wouldn't work the way I work today without the experiences and lessons God taught in the five years that I worked at a funeral home. I learned firsthand how important it was to remember someone's name, how important genuine kindness and care were for people who were at a difficult time in their lives, and how important integrity and a good reputation were if you wanted families to come back.

Those lessons only began to prepare me for what the Lord had in store during my career at a sheriff's department. I started as a deputy in the jail and was later transferred to work as a detective in the narcotics unit. From the beginning I was immersed in undercover work. I worked 24/7. One New Year's Eve that I had promised to take my wife out for dinner, my beeper went off. I told my wife I needed to take care of something and would be right back.

While I was on my way to meet the bad guy, a 19-year-old lost his brakes coming off the freeway and hit my car head on. He hit me so hard that it lifted my Monte Carlo into the air and spun it 180 degrees. When I landed, I got hit head-on by a pickup truck.

I was in bad shape. My partners came to the car and said, "Hang on, Bud, we're going to get your wife." I tried to whisper, "Tell her I love her, and I'm sorry."

And then I prayed, with the clearest mind I have ever had in my life. "Dear Lord, I am so sorry, for everything." I didn't see any bright lights. I didn't hear any voices. But I had a peace that no words can describe.

After I recovered I went back to the hard and fast of the unit. A couple of years later I got hurt again, had surgeries, got some new parts, and went back to the unit. A few years after that, I was in the hospital for over three weeks; that one almost did me in. I started to wonder, Lord, what do you have in mind? Should I be doing something different?

Starting the second half

After seven years in the unit I was promoted to Det. Sgt. in the detective bureau. At the same time, our church needed help with leading the Sunday school program. I led a little service with a devotion, and the Lord blessed our attendance. Some parents suggested that I go be a pastor. I said, "No, not for me. Maybe when I retire." My pastors asked if I'd consider the ministry. I said, "No, not me. Maybe after I retire." That went on for about three or four years. I prayed every day, "Lord, what is your will?"

My wife and I decided to visit Martin Luther College. After our visit I was convinced it was not for me, but I couldn't get the idea out of my head. I got a copy of the Augsburg Confession and looked for reasons that I had the wrong church all along so that my struggle would be over. But as I read, it had the opposite effect. God had brought me through so much. Would I make it through whatever happened next?

I began to wonder: What happens if I call this the first half of my life and call it good? What do I have to lose—if you'll have me, Lord—if I spend the rest of my life serving you? Because I knew that the peace I had known that night so many years ago was not just to be at peace with dying. It was peace to know that I was forgiven. I've been in church my whole life. But if I didn't realize what that peace truly was, then there must be others who don't either. And maybe I could tell them.

Sharing Jesus

I resigned and moved my family to Minnesota to study to be a pastor. One night, my former Chief Deputy called me. He told me he was waiting for a helicopter to take him to Chicago for a heart transplant. "But I don't think I'm going to make it," he said. "I wanted to call you and say thank you for the morning in the duck blind. I love you." I told him I loved him too.

The Chief was referring to a day many years ago when I had taken him duck hunting with me. As we talked about work, I told him that the only thing I had that was different was church; the Lord was important to me. "What about you, Chief?" I asked. He said, "Nah, it's not for me." It felt so incredibly hard to say more, but I said, "What's important for guys like us is to know that Jesus is our Savior."

When I hung up the phone, I told my wife I might do something stupid. I bought a plane ticket and caught an early morning flight to Chicago. I didn't even know if Chief was still alive. When I walked into his room in the ICU, he looked at me and said, "I just talked to you. You were in Minnesota. Is this real? Why would you do this for me?"

I said, "Last night, you said I love you. And I said I love you too. I got to thinking if I really did, I would do whatever it takes to tell you how far Jesus traveled to say I love you. You can tell me to leave and I'll get right back on the plane, but can I please tell you about Jesus?"

He said, "I think it's probably a good time for that." I showed him Jesus on the cross for him. And the Lord grabbed one more.

Watching the Word work

I was assigned to a vacancy in a mission church for my vicar year. It had struggled for seven years. I don't think there were 20 people in the first service. I told them I could work a homicide that day, but I had no idea how to do evangelism. "But I have courage," I said, "and God said he works through his Word. Let's use the Word of God for the next 364 days and see what happens."

My simple plan started with closing my eyes, pointing to a map, and then parking at the end of that street to knock on doors. I was terrified. Are you kidding me, I thought to myself. You did things that would give people nightmares and you went back for more. Get out there and knock on a door!

Sharing Jesus has to be all in. We don't have a long time to do this.

I watched a new kind of joy among the members when the Lord brought visitors I had invited—and brought them back! I took the box with hundreds of prospect cards and pretended I was working a homicide. I didn't stop until I called every one of them or knocked on their door.

We also tried advertising. We did Christmas for kids and offered free babysitting, but no one came to church because of it. They came when someone personally invited them. And we watched God work, one by one.

We all learned that year that building a church was not about the building. Building a church was first and foremost what God does in human hearts, one by one.



Growing his church one by one

When I graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 2009, I was assigned to serve St. Mark, Leesburg, Fla. The average age of my congregation was 72. The council had set aside money for whatever stewardship or evangelism program I wanted to buy. But the budget was in the red, and I knew I couldn't afford to have anyone think that the right program or the right pastor fixed anything. It had to be the Word of God that would grow his church—one by one, in every heart, starting with those who were already there.

A couple months later the council asked if I had picked out an evangelism program. I told them I had decided to use the Word of God. But I told them I did want to spend money and I didn't want to go cheap. I wanted to buy an umbrella.

"What in the world does that have to do with evangelism?" they asked.

I said, "The first time it rains, and I walk someone in, I'll show you. And if you want to buy two, you can help me."

When I meet people during the week, I tell them I'll wait outside for them and remember their name. So much good happens because of it. I get to set the tone for how people will enter the house of God, and they know they will have an opportunity to talk with me personally every Sunday. When my members ask their friends and neighbors to come to church, they tell them that Pastor will greet them outside and remember their names.

And they really do ask their friends and neighbors to come. Once a cashier asked a member how he was as he went through her line after church. He said, "Better now after hearing a reminder of how much God loves us." The cashier asked him to pray for her husband who has cancer. He got his name and the hospital he was in and stopped in and asked, "Would you like my pastor to visit you?" The next day I was sitting with that man in his room, having an amazing conversation while they were hooking him up for his first chemo treatment.

Sharing Jesus has to be all in. We don't have a long time to do this. God has placed each of you where he wants you for this day. He has given you unique gifts and abilities. He has given you a unique life and experiences to shape and guide you for who you are and how you are going to work.

There are so many miracles. I call them Monday . . . Tuesday . . . Wednesday . . . because I'm convinced it's going to happen each day. God's like that. One by one.

Whom can you tell how much Jesus loves them and invite them to come learn more about him today?

This article was adapted from a presentation by Rosenau at the 2020 Lutheran Leadership conference. Watch the full presentation at lutheranleadership.com/resources.

Congregational Services has produced a four-part Bible study on personal evangelism based on this presentation. The study, complete with videos and study guides, will be available in February.

Author: David Rosenau

Volume 108, Number 2

Issue: February 2021



FORWARD IN CHRIST
— A LUTHERAN VOICE —

WORSHIPPING THROUGH BIBLE STORIES

By Pastor Aaron Schulz



I've heard it said that we live in a story culture. People relate to stories. Stories give meaning and hope to life.

I've never been that great at telling a story that leads up to a joke. I fumble through my own stories that I share with other people. But I can retell the greatest story of all time and point out what God wants us to notice.

Our current summer sermon series is called "Bible Stories". We are reviewing familiar and not so familiar Bible stories. Some of us heard these as kids, but maybe haven't explored their full meaning yet. Some of us newer to the faith have not heard these stories and they grip us with their unexpected twists and turns.

So far this summer, we have gone through the story of Adam and Eve, which is like the pilot episode for the whole Bible. It sets the stage for why we need Jesus anyways. We and the human race have fallen so hard and so far, but God didn't give up on us. He gave up everything and spared no expense, including his Son, to rescue us.

In looking at the story of Jonah, we asked ourselves who needs God's mercy more, Ninevah or Jonah? Jonah or us? We learned more about how wonderful God's undeserved mercy towards us really is.

In the story of Job, we hear God speaking to us in the storms of life. The suffering may not all make sense, but God is not silent and God is not hidden. He will show up in our suffering, just as he showed up in Job's and in the worst suffering of all, Jesus' sufferings on the cross.

So sit back and take the stories in. Get caught up in them. The story of Adam, Eve, Jonah and Job is your story and my story. Learn them so well you can retell them too :)

Our story together as Church and Pastor is 5 years old. I am reviewing our nearly 150 years of history as part of my 5 year reflections. I am doing a lot of reflecting on these 5 years and find myself giving thanks for all of you, giving thanks that our stories have been intertwined.

Bible Stories

SPACE UTILIZATION

By Cristy Linse

As our ministries continue to grow and change we are looking forward to the many opportunities we have to serve our congregation and community. As we plan "next steps," we are being mindful of our shared values. They include: transparency in communication, equity (when possible), creating a thoughtful, well-designed plan with discernable action steps that are on deadline, and utilizing data-driven decision making. We also respect the role that tradition and history play in how we operate, and how those ideas impact the choices that we make moving forward. We believe we can honor tradition while embracing change.

It is with our shared values in mind, that we are moving a space utilization plan forward. The first phase of this plan, the gathering of input, is complete, and has resulted in an abundance of ideas. These ideas are currently being formulated into a comprehensive campus space utilization plan that was derived from action steps approved by the St. Paul voters in 2018. This comprehensive space utilization plan and action steps will be put in front of the Ministry Board at an upcoming meeting for their review and consideration.

The second phase is action. We are glad to announce that the time for action is now. This means the various spaces on campus are being cleaned out and reconfigured. Objects that have not been identified as currently being used are scheduled to be removed from campus. Please know that the staff will make the best informed decisions possible, with the information available at that time.

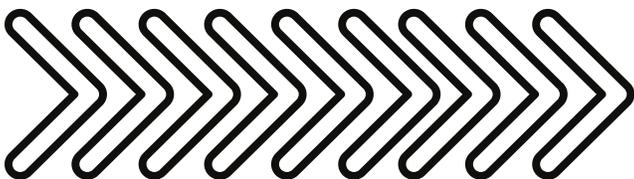
Based on multiple conversations with the various ministry leaders and the congregation at large, we have constructed two tentative room configurations. One is for the under-office area and one for the north end of the basement. Both of these plans are in alignment with the committee which was formed in February by the voters.

We are seeking final congregational input regarding the configuration of these two spaces as they are currently set up. If you have a moment, please take a peek at these multi-purpose spaces and reflect on whether or not they will meet your ministry needs. Please remember that we are striving for continual forward movement and want to avoid "analysis paralysis." We recognize that the configuration of these spaces may not meet all of your needs perfectly, but will be of use to all. To the greatest extent possible, we are hoping that we can meet the overarching needs of every group.

The next step is to get bids to finish spaces. Once bids have been gathered, we can make a plan to hire contractors so that we have a finished product that we can all use to help build our faith, and to share the good news of Jesus with others. The funding approved in February for conversion is still in the plan. Groups that have provided input have greatly improved upon the space upgrades. We feel these are even better than originally planned and will serve more souls with gospel ministry.

Together, we look forward to creating multi-purpose, beautiful, and functional spaces for all of us to use. Thank you for your input and patience as we work towards a comprehensive space utilization plan.

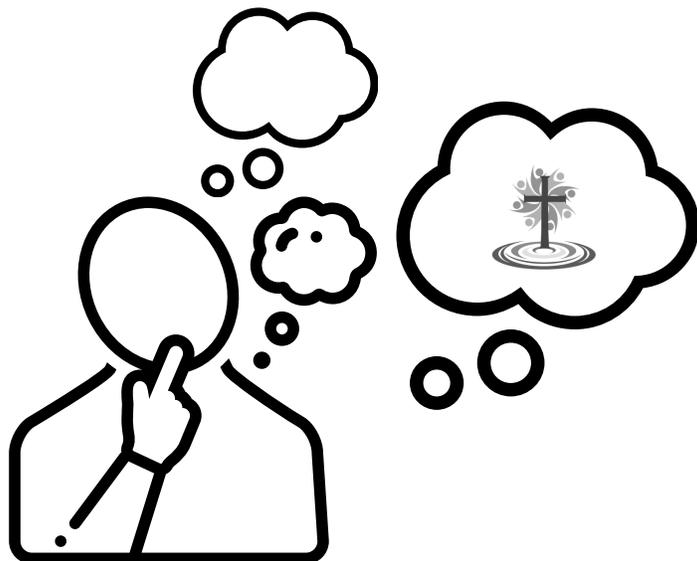
Serving with you in Christ,
Cristy Linse



DID YOU KNOW? ST. PAUL'S FACTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND POINTS TO PONDER

By Pastor Aaron Schulz

- **17 Growth Groups** have been meeting in 2021. (different Bible studies and support groups)
- **28 shut-ins** are being visited by 5 shut-in visitors (including one Pastor) in their homes and assisted living centers.
- Hannah Kressin will be helping **coordinate musicians and musical groups for worship** services. Becky Gehring, Eric Weihing, Dan Kuske and Diane Rust are on the Worship Team with Pastor Schulz to plan and coordinate weekly worship.
- 50 total people have gone through **Gifts Discovery Classes with St. Paul's**. As a result, people have changed careers, changed roles within the church, gotten involved with new roles, or have found informal ways to use their gifts and serve people in their everyday lives.
- **Mornings with Mommy** had two events this Spring that drew 49 people total around Easter time and 31 people. We are praying for a new joyful leader, as Alissa Schulz is stepping into full time teaching.
- **Our loan for the 2016 remodel is at \$228,237.10**. By eliminating this debt, we could be freed up to do more ministry, such as continuing to expand the Early Childhood Ministry and K-8 School.
- St. Paul's is gearing up to **call another Pastor in July, 2021**, so God's people can be better cared for and equipped for lives of joyful service in Jesus' name.
- St. Paul's **3K-8th Grade Enrollment is 116** as of 6/23/21.
- **Offering Trends**
 - 2018-517,000
 - 2019-520,000
 - 2020-551,000
 - 2021-541,945.00 as of 6/23/21
- **Christian Family Solutions** counseling sessions
 - 2019-45
 - 2020-70
 - 2021-80 (only halfway through the year)



JANUARY-JUNE 2021 MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT

Home with the Lord - 2

- Sue Burgeson
- Alma Maves

Received by Baptism - 2

- Willow Dikeman
- Eliza Kolle

Adult Confirmations - 2

- Nick Voss
- Leia Blazek

Profession of Faith - 9

- Becky, Dave, Jaden, Trystan Czysz
- Ona Voss
- Bob, Amy, Trent and Rochel Unser

Received by Transfer from another WELS - 3

- Matthew and Miranda Johnson
- Justin Michalewicz

Transfers out to other WELS - 5

- Maegan and Kase Bryant (Dan and Kim Gerth's daughter and child, facilitated a transfer to WELS church in Twin Cities, husband will be joining there too!)
- Eric and Marian Jacobsen to WELS church in Georgia
- Kathy Liebergen to WELS church in Florida

Weddings with St. Paul's members - 3

- Alex and Anna Wittmershaus
- Scott and Amy Ihrke
- Nick and Anna Dalka

Weddings officiated by Pastor outside of St. Paul's membership - 1

Renewal of Vows

- Chris and Sally Hunter (after 13 years of marriage)



MARCH - MAY 2021 MEMORIALS & GIFTS

AMOUNT	IN MEMORY/HONOR OF	FOR
\$245	Sue Burgeson	General Fund
\$2,779	Sue Burgeson	St. Paul's School
\$50	Sue Burgeson	Building Fund
\$40	James Bloss	General Fund
\$100	Roy Lierman	Building Fund
\$105	Mike Steinmeier	Radio Broadcast
\$100	Alma Maves	General Fund

GIFTS

AMOUNT	FOR
\$4,000.25	Building Fund
\$300	Missions
\$100	School Endowment
\$20	Sunday School
\$1,000	Christian Family Solutions
\$387	General Fund
\$300	Phone System
\$150	School Hot Lunch Program
\$100	Kitchen Fund
\$100	Mornings with Mommy
\$200	St. Paul's School
\$500	Fuhrman Tuition Fund

