

THE QUARTERLY BLESSINGS

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

Available online at stpaulmenomonie.com

WHAT'S INSIDE

Dates to Know.....1

WELS Words: Legalism.....2

Going, Growing, Knowing.....4

Private Communion.....6

Women of St. Paul's.....7

Stewardship.....8

Opportunities at St. Paul's.....8

Gifts & Memorials.....9

Membership Snapshot.....10

Through My Bible - 3 Years...11

Cross Maze Game.....12

DATES TO KNOW

- January 4th - Women of St. Paul's
- January 16th - Office Hours Reduced (8am-12pm)
- January 27th - 4K Movie Night

- February 1st - Women of St. Paul's
- February 17th - Office Closed
- February 22nd-23rd - Usborne Book Fair
- February 22nd - Ash Wednesday Service

- March 1st - Women of St. Paul's
- March 1st - Midweek Lent 2 Service
- March 8th - Midweek Lent 3 Service
- March 13th-17th - Different Office Hours? TBD
- March 15th - Midweek Lent 4 Service
- March 16th - Blood Drive
- March 22nd - Midweek Lent 5 Service
- March 24th - School Art Show
- March 29th - Midweek Lent 6 Service

BIBLE TRIVIA QUESTIONS

A) What did Jacob give Joseph that sparked jealousy from his siblings?

B) Name the city where Jesus was born.

Answers on page 5

WELS WORDS: LEGALISM

by Pastor Geoffrey Kieta

Have you ever stoned anybody? Probably not. But don't we all stone people verbally sometimes? There are lots of stones that should never be thrown. Belittling people because of their color or their race, saying that women are all scatterbrained or that men are all insensitive are examples of throwing stones best left on the ground. But, harsh as it may seem, there are some stones that we ought to throw. When we say that our culture's fascination with sex and violence is destroying our youth, we have a pretty big — and pretty necessary — stone at pop culture. One of the biggest and most frequently used stones in the Lutheran sling is "legalism." But what do we mean by the word? Is it ever legitimate to call someone a legalist?

Legalism means "law-ism." But it doesn't mean knowing God's law. Nor does it mean basing your comments on the law. Legalism is the abuse of God's law. Not the use, the abuse. It is not legalistic to say that God forbids abortion or homosexuality or women pastors, because God does forbid those things, just as he forbids stealing or murder or rape.

Condemning what God condemns is not legalism. Legalism is distorting what God says in his law.

The most obvious type of legalism is inventing laws that God has not commanded. "You have to go to confession at least once a year." "You have to be in church every Sunday."

God has not commanded those things. God did call us to listen to each other's sins and forgive each other to sooth troubled consciences. But we are not obligated to go to a priest or a pastor and confess each one of our sins orally to him. God didn't even tell us we have to be in church every Sunday. Instead he tells us not to stop meeting together and to love to hear and read his Word. When we ask how many Sundays add up to loving and hearing, we are already on the road to legalism.

Not every kind of legalism is so easy to point out. I once asked a man why he believed he would go to heaven. He told me, "When people are in need, I help them. If they're hungry and they come to my door, I buy them dinner. I've lived my whole life that way." I'm sure he did. But feeding hungry people and helping those in need, as important as those things are, does not get us into heaven. God does want us to do those things, but when we depend on them to save us, we are legalists.

A very subtle kind of legalism talks about Jesus only as a good example of what love really is. This kind of preaching puts the law in front of the gospel in a way that keeps the gospel from being preached clearly and effectively.

The gospel says God did it all for us. The gospel says we are holy in God's eyes because Jesus was perfect for us and because Jesus died to pay for our sins and rose to give us life. The gospel says that God reaches out to us every day through the message of Jesus and gives us faith in him and keeps that faith alive...

Legalism either ignores that altogether, or it spends so little time on that truth that all you think about is the law. That is why legalism is so destructive: it leads us away from the gospel.

Legalism also leads us away from the law. That might surprise you, but it's true. To be a legalist, you have to believe that you can obey God's law. A legalist trims off those parts of the law that are impossible for a sinful human being to keep, and replaces them with other laws that can be kept so we can feel good about ourselves.

The Pharisees were great legalists. They worried about how many steps they could take on the Sabbath and how long the prayer tassels on their robes were. But they didn't worry about justice and mercy and compassion. God's definition of those things is so extreme that no human being can obey them so they trimmed those things off.

The same thing happens today. Liberal "Lutheran" churches trim off God's condemnations of homosexuality or abortion and replace them with "caring relationships" and "respect." "Fundamentalist" churches trim off what God says about the attitude of our hearts and add prohibitions on drinking, or requirements like tithing. It's all legalism. It destroys salvation.

But there are legitimate uses of God's law. When we hold God's law up to ourselves and see that we are sinners, that is not legalism. When we use God's law to guide us in Christian living, that is not legalism...

Even when we use God's law to put a temporary check on the outbreak of sin so that we can study the gospel, that is not legalism. It is using God's law as he intended us to use it.

It seems pretty simple when you lay it out, so why is legalism so common today? Because it is the natural attitude of the human heart. That's why we parents so often find that our dealings with our children reduce themselves to "Do what I say, and do it now!" That's why we easily reduce our spiritual leadership to "You should be in church every Sunday!" or "As long as you live in this house, you are going to be confirmed" or "attend the Lutheran church." It's not that those things are wrong. It's that they rely on the law to get the gospel's job done, and the law simply can't.

Legalism is so ground into the human heart that it is impossible to avoid. Our natural legalism endangers us, our children, and our brothers and sisters in the faith. We need to recognize just how sinful those attitudes within us are. But for every moment of legalism, for every overemphasis on the law, for every self-invented rule, for every feeling of satisfaction at obeying what we can do while we ignore what God wants, Jesus died. He paid for it all. He also gave us his perfect life of obedience to God's law. And in God's eyes we are perfect now. We are forgiven. That is the truth that we never want to obscure. That is the promise that defeats and destroys the natural legalism of our hearts. That is the power of God to live in Christian love and freedom.

GOING, GROWING, KNOWING

by Daniel Kuske

Going! Growing! Knowing!

Those three words really summarize the Mission of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. If you were at the Voters' Meeting on September 18th, you would have heard us approve a new mission Statement for St. Paul's Church and School. It now has become **"St. Paul's is a community of believers who knows Jesus Christ, lives out the gospel in our church, our school, and our community; and leads the world to Jesus."** You may have wondered what was wrong with the last mission statement, or why change it again? Some of the reasons I will explain to you are the following:

"God's amazing grace empowers us to love and serve God and one another." This was the previous mission statement. The first thing that has been brought to our attention by the Pastors we have called and interacted with is that **God** is too basic of a word. The members of St. Paul's know what this means, but outside members do not. Is this Jehovah the god of the Jews? Is this Buddha? Is this the god of self? Clarifying God into Jesus Christ shows that without him we are lost. Jesus Christ dying on the cross for my sins and realizing that I cannot do anything to gain his favor is a basic part of our faith.

The second thing that we have been pointed to was that the mission statement is to direct us in the actions of the church to fulfil the direction of the mission statement. **"Love and Serve God and one another"** has no direction. It allows everyone to continue doing what they were doing without unifying the actions to complete goals of St. Paul's. The gospel is important not only for people outside of our church but the very members who are in it. We can continue to share the gospel and grow our church but if we don't continue to nurture and support our current members we will just be filling a bucket with a hole in it.

A third thing that we continue to look at is St. Paul's Lutheran School. We have been blessed for over 140 years of school education. That is incredible! Our School is currently the largest enrollment ever. We are looking for every nook and cranny we can use to continue educating our students. St. Paul's has complete control over the school. It is our responsibility to continue to fund it. Did you know we are approaching 75% non-member enrollment of all the students in the school? The school is our #1 outreach form at St. Paul's. When we get our new second Pastor, one of the things he will be doing is building relationships with those nonmember families and showing them the Grace, Faith, and Gospel of Jesus Christ. With our school we have a committee that is looking into the possibility of creating a new school...

We expect that they will have many answers and recommendations on space requirements, future technology needs, extra-curricular options, and the price tag to make these things happen. Please watch for news about this congregational meeting in the future.

The fourth thing that came out was that St. Paul's is in the community of Menomonie. We are here to serve the people in and around Menomonie. We have enthusiastic people working with shut-ins at the local Nursing homes; we have Men's and Women's Bible Studies that invite community members to come in and learn what we believe; we have support groups that meet in our building to provide listening ears and shoulders to support them with.

The final thing is that we support the mission of spreading the good news of Christ out into the world. We do this by supporting our WELS Synod. They combine all the support of many congregations to send missionaries out into the world, both in other countries, and right here in the United States. We support our Ministerial schools at Martin Lutheran Collage and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. There we encourage our called workers to gain a strong base of what we believe.



As Church Council has received many new members, a new pastor, and potentially a second one; we have taken a step back and refocused on the direction that the Church gave in 2017. Evaluating our mission statement and our structure has lead us to return to a bigger church structure. This allows spreading more responsibility out among council members and dividing duties to make sure all the ministries of St. Paul's receive adequate attention. If you have further questions please ask me.

Yours in Christ Daniel Kuske President of St. Paul's Church and School

BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS

A) A coat of many colors

B) Bethlehem

Questions on Page 1

PRIVATE COMMUNION

by **Pastor Geoffrey Kieta**

Our "shut in" members (those who are home bound or who live in nursing homes) are served every month with communion, God's word, prayer and fellowship. Pastor Kieta visits and communes them every other month (half each month), usually on Mondays and Tuesdays early in the month. Each person is visited, God willing, six times a year. (When we get a new pastor that will hopefully increase to every month.) Muriel Puhl schedules those visits for him.

Our Visiting Elders (lay members of the congregation) also make monthly visits. We have called them to bring communion and a devotion, as well as to share Christian fellowship and prayer.

Ideally every "shut in" member should get two visits per month. We do this because we treasure these members who are no longer physically able to join us on Sundays and because we recognize how important it is for every Christian to be in the Word, to receive communion and to be encouraged in their faith by their brothers and sisters in Christ. If any member of our church needs to be included in this ministry, please contact Pastor Kieta, Warren Puhl or the church office.

Pastor Kieta also visits members who are hospitalized or who are having surgery. If you or a family member is in the hospital, please call Pastor Kieta or the church office and let him know. Please include what hospital (with the room number if you know it). Pastor may need to know what is happening so that he can adjust his schedule if the situation is urgent. If you have a surgery scheduled and would like a prayer, a devotion and/or private communion before, please call Pastor Kieta or the church office.



WOMEN OF ST. PAUL'S 2022-2023

by Lyn Kraft

CALLING ALL WOMEN!!!

*We have a true message of grace from our Savior!

*As a woman created by God, you are prized and cherished! ❤️

love

*God tells us in Romans 8 that nothing can "separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

*We are made in God's own image!!

*God gave us specific talents, skills and abilities!!

*He does not make mistakes.

*We are each unique on purpose! (What a thought!!).

*We are actually designed to glorify God!

*Your voice matters and we need your strengths"



*Come and join us at Women of St. Paul's!!

*Learn from each other - Encourage each other - Comfort each other - Share sorrows and joys with other Christian women.

To the right is our schedule for the beginning of 2023. Come and be entertained, learn, share and most importantly, praise God!

WOMEN OF ST. PAUL'S 2023 Schedule

JANUARY 4 - Movie Day -- "I Can Only Imagine"

FEBRUARY 1 - Nutrition (Dietetics Program Director at UW-Stout is setting this up)

MARCH 1 - Emergencies/CPR/AED
(Presentation by Menomonie Fire Department)

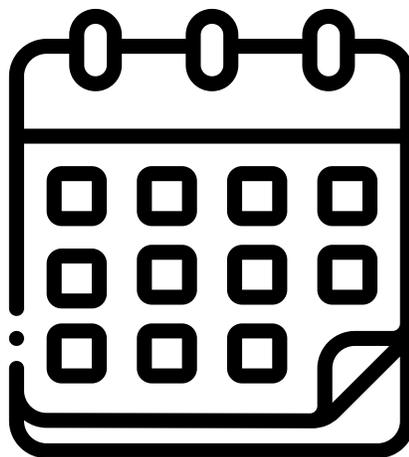
APRIL 5 - Teacher Intro (Mrs. Kelley Gowling) - Shut In Bags

MAY 3 - Nursing Home Visit (Comforts of Home tentative) w/ Students Singing

JUNE 7 - Nomic Brewery (History -- Menomonie Train Station)

JULY - No Meeting

August 2 - Season's Harvest Visit
(create a craft item)



DECEMBER STEWARDSHIP

Summary of the Stewardship Meeting - December 20th, 2022

Planning for next year. There was a lot of discussion on the five proposed items on the agenda. We could not decide what the focus or outcome should be for each of the items. The largest item that we could not agree on was the needs of the congregation. The final decision was to ask the congregation.

The decision was made to form a study group with three areas in question. The study session will be announced in the month of January and be held on Sunday the 12th of February. An explanation of the process will occur at the end of the service and the people will be invited to a coffee and cookie meeting in the basement. The group will be divided into three study areas with a leader and a note taker in each one. Questions will be asked; such as what is the first thought that come into you mind when you hear the word stewardship. There is no right or wrong answer. Notes will be taken but no name assigned to the expressed thoughts. The leaders will move from group to group so everyone has an opportunity to respond to all of the questions. The stewardship board will look at the list of thoughts from the three study groups and draw them into goals for the stewardship program for next year and report back to the congregation the next Sunday.

Each board member was asked to submit potential questions to the committee via email for the team to think about.

OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. PAUL'S

Spiritual Growth Opportunities

- Church Service (Sundays - 9:00am)
- Adult Bible Study (Sundays - 10:20am)
- Teen Youth Group (Sundays - 10:20am)
- Sunday School (Sundays - 10:20am)
- Campus Ministry (Wednesdays - 8:30pm)
- Women's Bible Study (Mondays - 12:00pm)
- Men's Bible Study (Fridays - 6:30am)
- Women of St. Paul's (1st Wednesday of every month)

Opportunities to Serve at Worship

- Altar Guild
- Council Duty/Usher
- Sunday Morning Greeter
- Adult Choir
- Musician (all instruments welcome!)

Opportunities to Support Our School

- Coach Sports
- Hot Lunch Program (food donations, cooking, serving)
- Field Trip Chaperone
- Student Reading Buddy
- Assist at School Events

Other Volunteer Opportunities

- Encourage St. Paul's Workers
- Plan Vacation Bible School (Summer 2023)
- Church Cleaning / Maintaining Our Campus
- Provide Rides to Church on Sundays
- Join Committees or Boards
- Assist in Growth Groups
- Visit Shut-Ins
- Dorcas Quilting Group

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022 MEMORIALS

AMOUNT	IN MEMORY/HONOR OF	FOR
\$440	Ginnie Gierke	Adult Choir
\$400	Ginnie Gierke	Steeple Repair
\$210	Ginnie Gierke	Building Fund
\$730	Ginnie Gierke	General Fund
\$50	Ginnie Gierke	Fellowship Hall Tables
\$40	Mike Bean	Steeple Repair
\$10	Mike Bean	Kitchen Fund
\$135	Gary Lierman	Building Fund
\$10	Emily Duesterbeck	General Fund
\$25	Emily Duesterbeck	Steeple Fund
\$20	Michael Casper	Building Fund
\$10	Michael Casper	Building Fund
\$100	Wayne Cook	Women of St. Paul's
\$10	Sharon Wildner	General Fund
\$25	Sharon Wildner	Steeple Fund
\$20	Sharon Wildner	Building Fund

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022 GIFTS

AMOUNT	FOR
\$2,680	Building Fund
\$225	Missions
\$150	Steeple Repair
\$5,760	St. Paul's School
\$1,200	Budget Deficit
\$100	Sanctuary Security
\$1,110	Fellowship Hall Tables
\$1,000	Counseling
\$2,000	School Lunch
\$260	Shut-In Photos
\$100	St. Croix High School
\$1,250	General Fund
\$50	Sunday School

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022 MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT

Transferred in from Sister

Congregation - 6

- Jim & Shirley Christenson from St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, WI
- Kyle, Kristin, Landon, & Ellyana Vande Hei from St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, WI

Received by Profession of Faith - 6

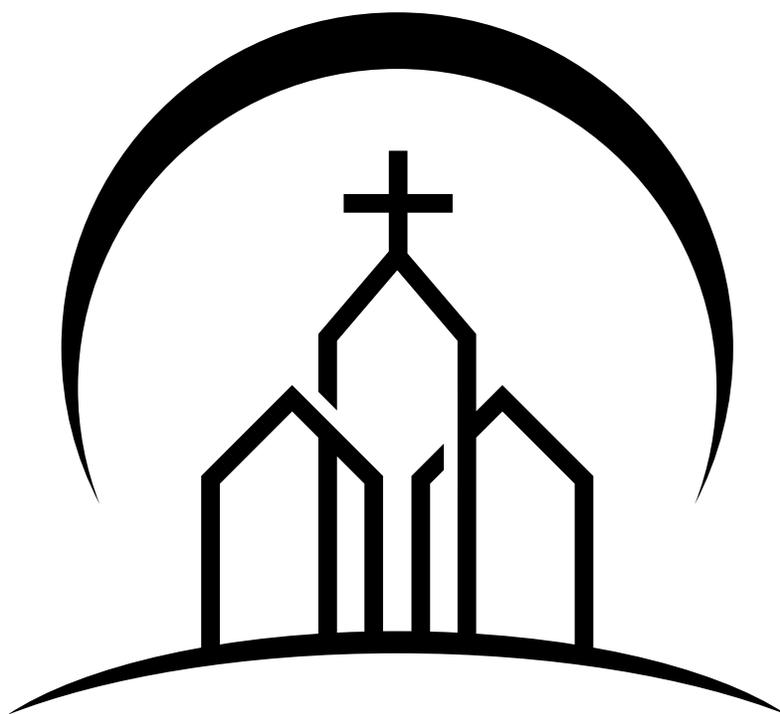
- Chad, Crystal, Whitley (Syverson) Brantley, & Charli Bahr
- Brian Gowling

Transferred to Sister Congregation - 2

- Tanner & Kenya Holderbecker to Faith Church in Excelsior, MN

Home with the Lord - 6

- Michael Casper
- Emily Duesterbeck
- Ginnie Gierke
- Bill Hayden
- Mary Kuhrt
- Sharon Wildner



THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

YEAR ONE - JANUARY

1. 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:16
2. 2 Corinthians 8:1-15
3. 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:15
4. 2 Corinthians 10
5. 2 Corinthians 11:1-21a
6. 2 Corinthians 11:21b-12:10
7. 2 Corinthians 12:11-21
8. 2 Corinthians 13
9. Micah 1 & 2
10. Micah 3:1-4:7
11. Micah 4:8-5:15
12. Micah 6:1-7:6
13. Micah 7:7-20
14. 1 Timothy 1
15. 1 Timothy 2
16. 1 Timothy 3:1-13
17. 1 Timothy 3:14-4:5
18. 1 Timothy 4:6-16
19. 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2
20. 1 Timothy 6:3-21
21. Titus 1
22. Titus 2
23. Titus 3
24. 2 Timothy 1
25. 2 Timothy 2
26. 2 Timothy 3
27. 2 Timothy 4
28. Leviticus 1
29. Leviticus 2 & 3
30. Leviticus 4:1-6:7
31. Leviticus 6:8-7:38

YEAR ONE - FEBRUARY

1. Leviticus 8
2. Leviticus 9, 10
3. Leviticus 11
4. Leviticus 12:1-13:46
5. Leviticus 13:47-14:32
6. Leviticus 14:33-15:33
7. Leviticus 16
8. Leviticus 17
9. Leviticus 18
10. Leviticus 19, 20
11. Leviticus 21, 22
12. Leviticus 23
13. Leviticus 24
14. Leviticus 25
15. Leviticus 26
16. Leviticus 27
17. Hebrews 1
18. Hebrews 2
19. Hebrews 3:1-6
20. Hebrews 3:7-4:13
21. Hebrews 4:14-5:10
22. Hebrews 5:11-6:8
23. Hebrews 6:9-20
24. Hebrews 7:1-14
25. Hebrews 7:15-28
26. Hebrews 8
27. Hebrews 9:1-15
28. Hebrews 9:16-28

YEAR ONE - MARCH

1. Hebrews 10:1-18
2. Hebrews 10:19-39
3. Hebrews 11:1-22
4. Hebrews 11:23-40
5. Hebrews 12:1-17
6. Hebrews 12:18-29
7. Hebrews 13:1-8
8. Hebrews 13:9-25
9. Numbers 1, 2
10. Numbers 3, 4
11. Numbers 5:1-6:21
12. Numbers 6:22-7:89
13. Numbers 8:1-9:14
14. Numbers 9:15-10:36
15. Numbers 11, 12
16. Numbers 13:1-14:10a
17. Numbers 14:10b-45
18. Numbers 15
19. Numbers 16:1-35
20. Numbers 16:36-18:7
21. Numbers 18:8-19:22
22. Numbers 20
23. Numbers 21
24. Numbers 22
25. Numbers 23, 24
26. Numbers 25, 26
27. Numbers 27, 36
28. Numbers 28, 29
29. Numbers 30
30. Numbers 31
31. Numbers 32

Cross Maze

