

# THE QUARTERLY BLESSINGS

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

Available online at [stpaulmenomonie.com](http://stpaulmenomonie.com)

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## **DATES TO KNOW**

- July 6th - Women of St. Paul's
- July 30th - Ordination & Installation of Pastor Stephen Oelhafen
  
- August 2nd - Women of St. Paul's
- August 7th - Back-to-School Bash
- August 9th - Early Childhood Night
  
- September 4th - Office Closed - Labor Day
- September 6th - Women of St. Paul's
- September 23rd - Walk to End Alzheimer's

### **BIBLE TRIVIA QUESTIONS**

A) How did God make people spread out across the earth?

B) How many people were saved on the ark?

Answers on page 8

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# WELS WORDS: FELLOWSHIP

by Pastor Geoffrey Kieta

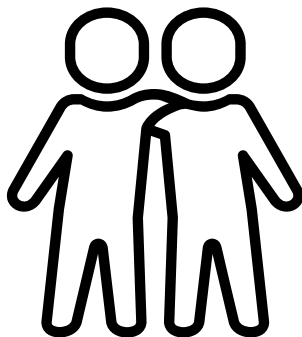
Fellowship is one of those WELS words that we can tire of very easily. You can't be an active member of the Wisconsin Synod without running into this word. A sad reality of our church's approach to fellowship is that we have come to think of it only in negative terms. If I took a poll of what fellowship means in any congregation in our synod, I bet I would get a list of "we-don'ts."

Fellowship means that we don't pray with other Christians, we don't commune members of other churches, we don't let our kids participate in scouting and more. While there is good scriptural reason for every one of the "we-don'ts," I don't believe that where our discussion of fellowship should begin.

The word that the Bible uses for fellowship literally means "sharing." Fellowship is sharing our joys and our sorrows, sharing our burdens, sharing our opportunities and the "Hallmark moments" of our lives with other Christians. Our fellow Christians are treasures that God has given us. They mean more to us than we mean to ourselves.

St. Paul proclaims that we have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:5). The Bible celebrates that unity. It calls fellow Christians "brothers." It calls the Church the body of Christ, and then goes on to point out how each member of the church, like each organ of the body, is different.

Eyes don't do what noses do.



Ears don't do what feet do. But the body needs all the different parts. If one part hurts, the whole body hurts. If one part is honored, the whole body is honored. Our Christian fellowship is a gift from God, a gift that an unbeliever cannot begin to understand.

Christian fellowship is unity in the faith. Before God, all Christians are perfectly united through the Gospel. When God looks at us, he sees all true Christians as one Church. But does that mean that our synod's practice and belief regarding fellowship are wrong? Not at all. We don't live in heaven. We live here. Spiritual realities are true even in this world, but they are not always visible in this world. The true fellowship of the Christian Church is an invisible reality. We can't see faith in the heart. We can only see what's on the outside. In truth, none of you knows if I am really a Christian or not. I hope that you believe that I am because you have heard my sermons. But you cannot look into my heart. My words and actions are all that you have to go on.

That reality makes "church fellowship" necessary. By "church fellowship" we mean the practice of churches of joining together with one another in the things that we do and the statements that we make. The Bible commands us to observe "church fellowship." Again and again we are exhorted to be one in faith, to agree together, to work together for the truth. At the same time, the Bible itself commands us to mark and avoid those who don't teach what we received in the Scriptures (see Rom. 16:17,18 for one example).

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We don't join with others who don't believe what we believe. In doing so, we confess what God's Word tells us. But we do it to protect our fellowship, not to destroy it. True Christian fellowship is unity on the basis of the Gospel. It is agreeing to confess what God's Word says. Disunity and divisions, in the sense that the Bible talks about them, is refusing to accept and believe what God has said. We don't create divisions and disunity when we refuse to join with someone who doesn't teach what God's Word teaches — they create the division and the disunity. We simply recognize that it is there.

The Bible says that false teachings are like yeast. Once it gets into a lump of dough, there is no way to get it out again. It will just keep growing and multiplying until it works its way through the whole mass. In the end, a kind of unity does result — a unity in denying what God says, a unity of disbelief. We see that in the way that the majority of churches today deny what God says about the role of men and women in the church and about homosexuality and gender. They may not agree on everything that they believe, but they all agree that what God has said is not true.

So we do mark and avoid those who don't teach what God has commanded us to teach. But there are twin dangers associated with that confession. On the one hand, we all feel a tremendous pressure to conform to the thinking of the world on this subject. It is difficult to refuse to pray with other groups. Our children often don't understand why they can't join the scouts when all of their friends do.

On the other hand, it's very easy for us to answer that difficulty by making a list of "we-don'ts" that very easily becomes legalism. We aren't thinking about preserving the unity of the faith. We just want a set of rules. That can lead to appearing and even feeling smug about ourselves.

It is a sin to let the world tell us what to believe about unity and disunity. It is a sin to ignore the differences that exist between us and other churches. But it is also a sin to do it without thinking and explaining why. God commands us to "speak the truth in love." I think all too often, we members of the WELS have spoken the truth, but without much love. We have all too often given the impression that we think that we will be the only people in heaven. That is simply wrong.

I think if we're honest, we all have to admit that we have failed to live up to speaking the truth in love with our lives and our lips. We either have not spoken the truth by caving in and going along with those who disagree with us, or we have not spoken the truth in love. Either way, it is a sin. But either way, Jesus died for our sins. He paid for every time we caved in to the pressure of the world. He paid for every time we failed to take the time to love the person that we were separating from. We are forgiven. God has erased those sins. God does still call us to speak the truth in love. But we can never do it on our own. We can only sincerely speak the truth with hearts full of love for our fellow Christians because God the Holy Spirit is working in our hearts. Trust his work! Trust it, and commit yourselves to speaking the truth in love.

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*"Trust God's work, and commit yourselves to speaking the truth in love."*

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# FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

by **Bob Buss**

It is hard to believe that another school year is complete at St. Paul's. I could be wrong, but I believe that this year's graduating class was the 150th graduating class of St. Paul's Lutheran School. The church historical documents seem to indicate that the school began rather quickly after the church began 152 years ago. There was one year in between the start of the church and school from historical records. Then, there was the one year that St. Paul's did not operate a school because there were no teachers available from our synod due to war-1945. Congratulations to our graduates this year. It is a milestone for our school!

So much has changed in the way we carry out our ministry and the gospel has not changed a bit. Looking into our coming year, we expect to see the largest K-8 enrollment on record and a total somewhere around 152. As always, there will certainly be a few families who come and go before the first day of school. The fields are ripe for Christian education at St. Paul's in the coming year. We are very excited to see Pastor Oelhafen take up the reigns of his spiritual development for the growing list of families who are interested in Bible information classes. We should see a lot of blessings in church interest and engagement thanks to having two pastors again after a very long time



I did share in the last newsletter and at the voter's meeting just how much we have improved our performance as a school in the past seven years and how we have maintained our high scores through the drop that much of the world experienced from 2020 until now. Our school district in Menomonie has also been doing very well along with the rest of the state. We are right in line with their scores. Menomonie's scores are the tiniest bit ahead of us in math and we are the same bit ahead of them in reading scores. It is our intention this year as a faculty to do an extensive curriculum study of our Math curriculum. This is also the year we need to form teams to do a self-study for our WELSSA accreditation visit in the 2024-2025 school year.

Our school choice enrollment is continuing to grow each year as the first year's students who were able to join the program due to being in first grade or younger in 2019 (due to legal restrictions on the program) are now entering 4th grade in our fourth year in the program. We project that the group in fourth grade will continue to be the wave that we can follow as the program's participants march through to eighth grade. We were just 9 students in the program in 2019-2020, and have 52 students expected to be with us in that program next year. If that bubble of students continues and we see similar number of students in younger grades following them, we could see a total choice enrollment in the neighborhood of around 100 students five years from now. I would project that to be the top of what we would see in the program unless we were to greatly expand our school. I am not advocating that at this point.

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In a landmark turn of events last week in Madison, the governor signed an increase to the voucher amount that we did not think would pass. WPCP vouchers have just been raised to over \$10,000 per student for next year and could still be raised another \$412 per student by the end of the budget conversation for our state. We thank God for the sudden, unexpected increase in our expected revenue for the year, and will report to the church just how much more the program will bring in this year once those conversations have concluded. This is all due to the governor demanding that an additional 1 billion dollars be added to education for next year in Wisconsin and conceding to school choice advocates in order to reach an agreement. We are not likely to see such a large jump in voucher amounts (potentially an increase of nearly 20% per student) for a few more years, but there are those who are lobbying for the program's vouchers to match the dollar amounts that public schools get per pupil.

We always encourage and welcome church members at school events. It is, after all, your school. Please consider joining us this fall along with a number of church members who have a good time at school events, even though they do not have children or grandchildren in the school. They find our events fun and informative. The **Back to School Bash will be on August 7** from 5-8 pm. Come out and have some food from the collection of food trucks that we invite each year and meet the school families and staff in a social picnic/carnival atmosphere.

The annual **Culver's Cares Night** is always a great way to support our PTF as well. A portion of the proceeds from Culvers that evening will go to our Parent Teacher Fellowship. This is generally within the first few weeks of the school year. (date tbd) The **Veterans' Day** event will be a solemn event on Friday, November 10. We have a wall of heroes in the gym for that event which includes church pictures and a bit of info on each church or school family member who has served. Please feel free to contribute and attend.



Thank you to all who contributed to the Angel Fund for this coming year. With the end of the general endowment which covered all non-choice tuition for a number of years, we now have the Angel Fund as our primary source of tuition assistance for those who need it. Not all students are able to be in the choice program, as it is not available to all students, and is not for economically disadvantaged students alone. The banquet raised just over \$12,000 for student assistance for this year. The banquet was a true blessing and unified effort to provide ways for students to sit at the feet of Jesus each day in our school this coming year. Look forward to another one in early 2024.

As always, pray the we can continue to be the center of Christian education in Dunn County. The other two schools in that category have a total enrollment of roughly 60 students. May God bless our efforts to serve families and students with the Gospel's light and peace in such troubling times in so many schools in our nation.

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# OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. PAUL'S

## **Spiritual Growth Opportunities**

- Church Service (Sundays - 9:00am)
- Adult Bible Study (Sundays - 10:20am)
- 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**

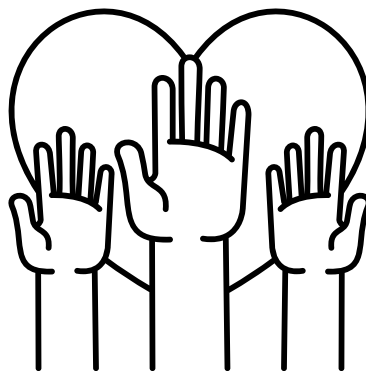
- Altar Guild
- Council Duty
- Ushers
- Sunday Morning Greeter
- Adult Choir
- Musician (all instruments welcome!)

## **Opportunities to Support Our School**

- Assist at School Events
- Tuition Assistance for Students in Need
- Teacher Relief/Classroom Assistance
- Art Program (donations, event volunteers)
- Hot Lunch Program (food donations, cooking, serving)
- Field Trip Chaperone
- Student Reading Buddy

## **Other Volunteer/Involvement Opportunities**

- Encourage St. Paul's Workers
- Church Cleaning / Maintaining Our Campus
- Provide Rides to Church on Sundays
- Join Committees or Boards
- Visit Shut-Ins
- Dorcas Quilting Group



SPEAK WITH US TO LEARN  
HOW YOU CAN USE YOUR  
GIFTS AT ST. PAUL'S!

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## APRIL-JUNE 2023 MEMORIALS

AMOUNT	IN MEMORY/HONOR OF	FOR
\$100	Creaser 40th Wedding Anniversary	School Furnace
\$20	Mary Buckley	Building Fund
\$300	Roy Lierman	Steeple Fund
\$50	Roy Lierman's Birthday	School Furnace
\$40	Garland Fregine	Building Fund
\$400	Bill Hayden	General Fund

## APRIL-JUNE 2023 GIFTS

AMOUNT	FOR
\$547.19	Kitchen Dishwasher
\$3,600	Building Fund
\$475	Missions
\$227	Christian Life Ministries
\$41,850	School Furnace
\$13,656.11	Angel Fund
\$4,400	Payroll
\$400	Radio Broadcast
\$30	St. Paul's School
\$50	Art Program
\$120	Arbor Day Expenses
\$2,000	Budget Deficit
\$50	VBS
\$235	Called Working Moving Fund
\$100	Steeple Fund

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# APRIL-JUNE 2023 MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT

## **Received by Baptism - 2**

- Julian Brandner
- Levi Ferg

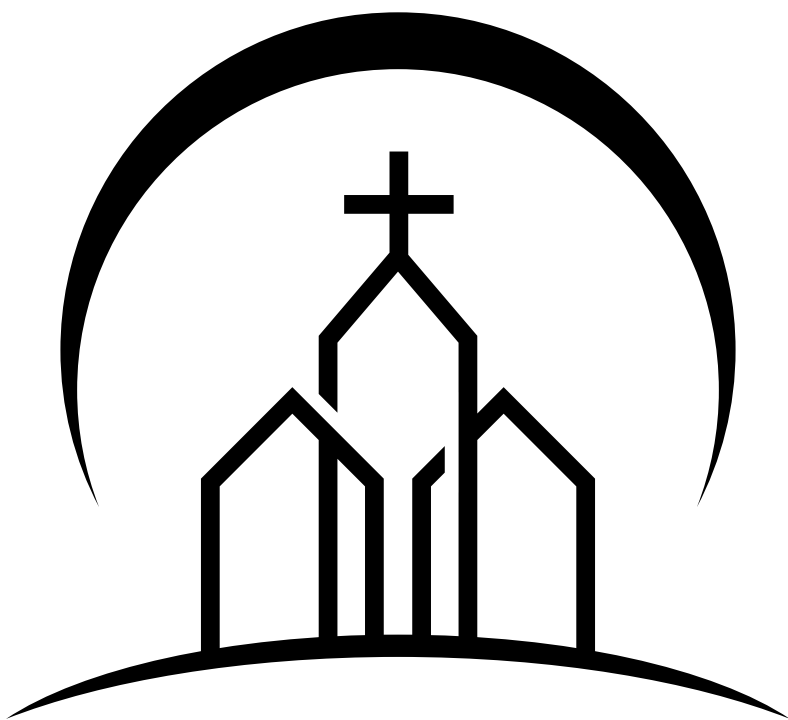
## **Home with the Lord - 1**

- Phyllis Howell

## **Transferred in from Sister**

### **Congregation - 4**

- David, Maloree, Easton, & Jayda Zassenhaus from St. Mark's Eau Claire



### **BIBLE TRIVIA ANSWERS**

A) Confused their languages

B) Eight

Questions on page 1



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# THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

## YEAR ONE - JULY

- 1.1 Samuel 4:1b-22
- 2.1 Samuel 5:1-7:2
- 3.1 Samuel 7:3-8:22
- 4.1 Samuel 9:1-10:16
- 5.1 Samuel 10:17-11:15
- 6.1 Samuel 12
- 7.1 Samuel 13
- 8.1 Samuel 14
- 9.1 Samuel 15
- 10.1 Samuel 16
- 11.1 Samuel 17:1-54
- 12.1 Samuel 17:55-19:24
- 13.1 Samuel 20:1-21:9
- 14.1 Samuel 21:10-22:23
- 15.1 Samuel 23,24
- 16.1 Samuel 25,26
- 17.1 Samuel 27,28
- 18.1 Samuel 29,30
- 19.1 Samuel 31
20. Ephesians 1:1-14
21. Ephesians 1:15-23
22. Ephesians 2
23. Ephesians 3
24. Ephesians 4:1-5:2
25. Ephesians 5:3-6:9
26. Ephesians 6:10-24
27. Job 1-3
28. Job 4,5
29. Job 6,7
30. Job 8:1-9:24
31. Job 9:25-10:22

## YEAR ONE - AUGUST

1. Job 11,12
2. Job 13,14
3. Job 15-17
4. Job 18,19
5. Job 20,21
6. Job 22-24
7. Job 25-27
8. Job 28-29
9. Job 30,31
10. Job 32,33
11. Job 34,35
12. Job 36,37
13. Job 38:1-40:5
14. Job 40:6-42:6
15. Job 42:7-17
16. Psalms 42,43
17. Psalm 44
18. Psalm 45
19. Psalms 46-48
20. Psalm 49
21. Psalm 50
22. Psalm 51
- 23.2 Samuel 1
- 24.2 Samuel 2,3
- 25.2 Samuel 4:1-5:16
- 26.2 Samuel 5:17-6:23
- 27.2 Samuel 7
- 28.2 Samuel 8,9
- 29.2 Samuel 10,11
- 30.2 Samuel 12:1-13:37
- 31.2 Samuel 13:38-14:33

## YEAR ONE - SEPTEMBER

- 1.2 Samuel 15:1-16:14
- 2.2 Samuel 16:15-17:29
- 3.2 Samuel 18:1-19:8
- 4.2 Samuel 19:9-39
- 5.2 Samuel 19:40-20:26
- 6.2 Samuel 21
- 7.2 Samuel 22
- 8.2 Samuel 23
- 9.2 Samuel 24
10. Psalms 52-54
11. Psalm 55
12. Psalms 56,57
13. Psalms 58,59
14. Psalm 60
15. Psalms 61,62
16. Psalm 63
17. Psalms 64,65
18. Psalms 66,67
19. Psalm 68:1-18
20. Psalm 68:19-35
21. Psalm 69
22. Psalms 70,71
23. Psalm 72
- 24.1 Kings 1
- 25.1 Kings 2
- 26.1 Kings 3,4
- 27.1 Kings 5
- 28.1 Kings 6:1-7:12
- 29.1 Kings 7:13-8:11
- 30.1 Kings 8:12-66

