

WINTER/LENT 2026

St. Paul Lutheran Church Newsletter

# ROOTED & GROWING



Grade  
seating

# Pastor's Post

## PRAYING WITH JESUS

"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Luke 5:16

I find it fascinating that Jesus spends time in prayer. I would think that somehow he didn't need prayer. But there he is, the son of God, taking time out of his busy schedule to go off to a mountain or a wilderness location and pray by himself.

This suggests to me

- Prayer is not optional, even for the supremely capable and spiritually grounded.
- Prayer may require a removal of other distractions to focus.
- Prayer is something other Christians have all done before us.

But it also makes me wonder quite a bit

- What did Jesus say when he prayed?
- What did Jesus hear when he prayed?
- What did Jesus feel when he prayed?

Typically during Lent, the church focuses on the three spiritual disciplines of praying, giving and fasting. This year, we will focus on praying, specifically, praying with Jesus. We will learn from Jesus about prayer, but also follow his invitation to pray with him.

Each Sunday, we will look at a time in Scripture where Jesus is praying or talks to his disciples about what prayer entails. It turns out there are many situations and ways in which Jesus prays. We will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 18 (services at 7 AM, 11 AM and 7 PM) with some of Jesus' first instructions about prayer, taken from the Sermon on the Mount.

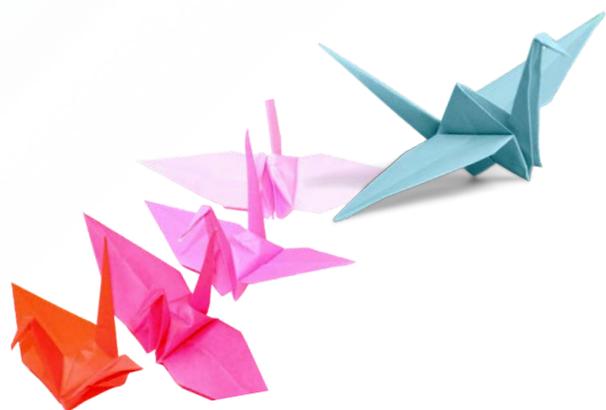


On Sunday mornings, we will also have a hands-on way for you to pray. At a table outside the sanctuary, we will have origami paper for you to write prayers on and then make cranes. We will use the cranes to decorate the sanctuary, creating a flock of ascending prayers to our Lord.

If you would like to go deeper, we also invite you to our Common Ground groups on Sunday mornings (9:30), where we will reflect on prayer together. If you need help finding a group, we encourage you to talk to Scott Frase, our adult education coordinator. On Thursday nights, we will have a soup supper followed by a meditative and contemplative service, an opportunity not simply to talk about prayer, but to spend time with others and Jesus in prayer.

As we observe and reflect on Jesus praying, I have a few hopes and prayers of my own. First, that you can learn from Jesus why, when and how we pray. Second, that you ultimately discover (or learn anew) what it means to pray with Jesus.

*Pastor Rob*



# Season of LENT

## Ash Wednesday

### Services on February 18

Ash Wednesday is a significant day in the Christian liturgical calendar, marking the beginning of Lent, a 40-day period of fasting, reflection, and penance leading up to Easter Sunday.

We are offering three services at St. Paul,

- 7 am
- 11 am
- 7 pm

Each service provides an opportunity for reflection and spiritual renewal as we begin our Lenten journey. The imposition of ashes will be a central part of each service, symbolizing our mortality and the need for repentance.

## Devotionals

The St. Paul Prayer Team created a devotional for use during the season of Lent as a spiritual companion. Engage in a journey of self-reflection, repentance, and renewal with this inspirational guide. The devotionals are available in the Narthex.

Devotionals for children and youth will also be available.

You can also find the St. Paul Devotional on our website, [stpaultitiz.net](http://stpaultitiz.net)



## Thursday Meal and Worship

Dinner | 6:00:pm in the Social Hall

Worship | 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary

### Beginning Thursday Feb. 26, 2026

Join Us for an Evening of Fellowship and Reflection  
The Lenten mid-week soup supper and worship will be held on Thursday evenings throughout Lent. Supper will begin at 6:00 PM, followed by worship at 7:00 PM. All are welcome to share in this time of community, nourishment, and spiritual growth.

Margaret Strausser is coordinating the suppers, with support from Tami Ruckel. Each week, they will request soup donations and organize volunteers to help with serving and hospitality. Your contributions and participation are appreciated as we come together to serve one another.

This year's worship centers on the theme, "Praying With Jesus." We will use a special evening liturgy designed for Lent and engage in guided meditation based on the gospel reading from the previous Sunday. After prayers for the people, there will be time set aside for personal prayer, during which worshippers may approach the altar and light a candle as an act of devotion and reflection.

The Lenten Mid-Week Supper and Worship takes place on the following Thursdays: February 26, March 5, March 12, March 19, and March 26.

We invite you to join us for these meaningful evenings as we journey together through Lent.

Kids ages preschool to 1st grade are invited to join Deacon Emily for some fun in the Social Hall after our Soup Supper and during Lenten Worship. Parents, please feel free to take this opportunity for your own quiet worship while the kids play and explore their own Lenten Journey in the Social Hall. Older kids are welcome to be helpers!

# Service and Learning

## Congregation Lenten Service Project



### Lutheran World Relief Care Kits

This Lent, St. Paul is joining in a meaningful Lenten Project to support Lutheran World Relief by collecting care kits for people facing hardship around the world. These kits provide essential items that bring comfort, dignity, and hope to individuals and families during times of crisis. Through prayerful giving and shared purpose, this project invites us to live out our Lenten journey by loving our neighbors near and far in practical and compassionate ways.

The care kits will be collected Sunday, March 1 and Sunday, March 8. This outreach project, previously held in the fall, has moved to the spring. Item lists and a sample kit will be available in the narthex, and donations may be placed on the narthex table.

### Ministry Support

Bridge of Hope Lancaster partners with local faith communities to train and equip volunteer groups to support families transitioning from homelessness into stable housing.

We currently have a family preparing to move to Rothsville and are hoping to form a team that can offer friendship, encouragement, and practical support during this transition. We shared a presentation about Bridge of Hope last week and are still looking to welcome a few more volunteers to join the group.

Contact Suzanne Black with interest. To learn more about the organization, visit their website: [lancaster.bridgeofhopeinc.org](http://lancaster.bridgeofhopeinc.org)

## Adult Faith Formation

As the community of St. Paul continues to grow, we seek to offer opportunities for people to feel connected as they grow in faith while becoming further integrated in the life of the church. To that end, we have added more Common Ground Groups to serve our community, The Sandwich Generation and The Faith and Lead Collective.

**The Sandwich Generation** is a group of peers navigating the realities of caring for children who are preparing to leave home or have already begun their next chapter, while simultaneously caring for aging parents.

**The Faith and Lead Collective** is a cohort of young adult professionals navigating cultivating community in the workplace while following Christ and exploring how their faith informs the good work they are doing in their careers.

Whatever season of life you find yourself in, or whatever your interests may be, there is a place for you at the table. From Bible studies to book clubs, in depth theological studies to connecting with peers about the joys and challenges of life, our hope is that you would feel connected and welcomed as we follow Christ together. For more information, please feel free to reach out to Scott Frase at [sfraseestpaullitiz.net](mailto:sfraseestpaullitiz.net).



# SACRED GROUNDS

## *Epiphany*

In celebration of Epiphany, members of St. Paul and the community gathered on our Sacred Grounds to share a cozy and meaningful time together, warming themselves by the fire with hot chocolate while wondering and wandering along the “Path of the Magi.” This reflective Epiphany journey invited us to follow the Magi’s path, slow down, and experience their story in a fresh way. Surrounded by firelight, nature, and fellowship, the evening offered a peaceful space to reflect on Christ’s light revealed to the world.

Caption for the photo below, it won’t let me add it under the photo for some reason... : Gathered around the fire on our Sacred Grounds, sharing warmth, wonder, and fellowship as we journeyed together along the Path of the Magi on Epiphany. 🕯️🌟

## *Holy Saturday*

Holy Saturday lives in the in-between—Christ is buried, the world holds its breath, and the promise of resurrection has not yet broken open. You are invited to a quiet, reflective Holy Saturday service in the Sacred Grounds, where we will walk the Stations slowly and prayerfully as a way of keeping watch with the buried Christ. This experience is not a celebration, but a sacred pause: a space for silence, waiting, and honest prayer. We will conclude in quiet hope, honoring the stillness of this day and trusting the light that is yet to come. (Details will be forthcoming)



A star glowing on our Sacred Grounds, guiding us once again on the Path of the Magi as we celebrated the light of Christ revealed at Epiphany.



## earth day

Join us in celebrating Earth Day in St. Paul’s Sacred Grounds with a special event focused on appreciating and caring for God’s creation. This time will offer opportunities to connect with nature, reflect on our role as stewards of the Earth, and enjoy this special outdoor space. Details about activities, times, and ways to participate will be shared soon—stay tuned for more information and plan to be part of this joyful time to reflect on creation care!

# KIDS MINISTRY

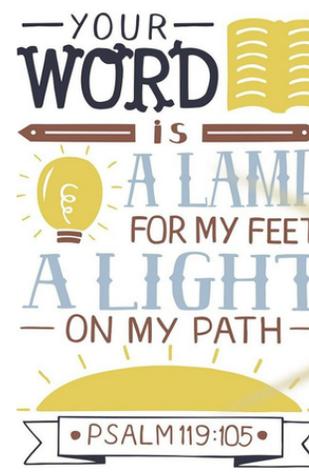
## Epiphany

### *Through Epiphany & Beyond*

The season of Epiphany is a time of LIGHT! We begin with the Light of the Star (January 6) and we end with the Light of Jesus as he's Transfigured (Feb 15, 2026). Throughout this winter season, our Bible readings in Worship and Sunday School shine Light on Jesus as the Savior. We are using the bible verse Psalm 119:105 as a guiding light for Children's Ministry this season: Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. The Bible is a Light that guides our way to Jesus!

### **Ways we're following the Light:**

- **In the Kids Sermons**, we are welcoming a St. Paul staff member to share a special Bible and verse that is a light to their path. We love getting to know our super staff better as they share a piece of their faith with us. You can see all the staff who've joined us so far on the St. Paul YouTube channel. Each week, kids are taking home an item that lights-up, as a reminder to read their Bible, find favorite verses and shine a light!
- **In the Sanctuary**, we have a large and varied display of Bibles. These are to be taken! If you don't have a Bible or know someone who doesn't, please choose one as a gift from St. Paul. All these Bibles were purchased thanks to a grant from the St. Paul Endowment Fund. If we run out, we'll find a means to get more! We want everyone to have the Word of God in their hands. The best bible for you, after all, is the one you open!
- **In our Faith StepStones**, we are preparing for Bibles and for Light! Our 3rd graders will receive a Bible as a gift from Sunday School. And our 4th graders will receive training on how to Acolyte. Our youngest kids will share the song "The B-I-B-L-E" in worship too!



Children's Ministry has been shining bright this Epiphany season! From a service event for the Medan Initiative to faith step-stones and sharing joyful moments in Sunday school, enjoying Sunday school fun, there's always something special happening among us!



# Lent

The church season after Epiphany is Lent. Lent begins on February 18, 2026 with Ash Wednesday. Kids are invited to worship to receive ashes on their foreheads.

Kids from the Christian Early Learning Center (CELC) will worship on Ash Wednesday in the afternoon.

The color of Lent is purple. Purple can help us think about royalty and repentance. Jesus is our King, and his power reigns in us to make us free from sin!

In this purple time of preparing for Easter, we focus on prayer and care!



## Prayer in Worship

Each Sunday in Lent, our kids' sermons will share an easy-to-remember prayer, such as a Camp Prayer. Some will be silly; some will be rhyming and all will be ways to talk to Jesus. Our Youth will help us learn these prayers and you can watch the youtube link to re-learn them later. That way, if you forget the prayer, you'll have a menu from which to remind yourself. We pray you'll use these prayers at home, at school, everywhere!

## Care for Others

Our Sunday School classes will help build Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. Each Sunday, kids will be invited to put an item in the Offering Ark such as soap, toothbrush, comb, nail clipper, or towel. Stay tuned to learn which item your class is collecting.

# YOUTH

# MINISTRY



ST. PAUL | Youth

## Reflection

by Scott Frase, Youth Ministry Director

I think we are all longing for spring! Having grown up in upstate New York and lived in Montana and Massachusetts, I'm not a stranger to the cold and snow. I actually look forward to it every year. But there comes a point when we've had enough and find ourselves dreaming of the warmth of the sun, plants emerging from their slumber, flowers blooming, leaves budding and the return of robins. We yearn to experience new life once again.

Throughout the season of Advent, we spent time discussing and thinking about the first coming of Christ, how he presently comes to us, and the anticipation of his return when all things will be made new. It's a season of waiting. Waiting for the light of the world that shines in the darkness that cannot be overcome. And because light has come in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, we can have strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow!

This theme of light has led us into the season of Epiphany, in which we reflect upon how the glory of God is manifested in and through Christ. We have journeyed with the wise men, witnessed Jesus' baptism, attended the wedding at Cana, sat in the synagogue as Jesus read from Isaiah, witnessed his mighty works, and caught a glimpse of his glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. And now we look to the cross where God's glory is revealed in Christ who came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. And we eagerly look to his resurrection, the dawn of new creation, and therefore hold fast to the living hope we have in him.



Pictured: Youth group visiting Luther Acres and singing Christmas Carols. It was a beautiful time of connecting with people!

## Mentor Mornings

Once a month we have Mentor Morning, where the youth join with 4-6 graders and lead a Bible Study! It's a time of activities, learning and having conversation of faith and what it means to follow Christ. In January, we were given a tour of the Lititz Warwick Community Chest to see what loving others in our community looks like. Then we wrote to Governor Shapiro and Senator Malone to ask them to remember the hungry in their upcoming budget.



# Winterfest

We rang in the New Year by attending Winterfest in Lancaster. Winterfest is the Lower Susquehanna Synod's retreat for high schoolers. This year's theme was Better Together. Throughout the weekend, we reflected upon Christ centered-community, which is so needed in our lives and in this world. We dreamed and discussed what that could and should look like as we bear witness to God's redemptive work in the world. There were large group sessions, worship, small group discussions, great conversations around meals, games, even karaoke. One of the major highlights was the service project. In partnership with Rise Against Hunger we participated in packing meals for 30,000 people which was completed in under 1 hour! Thank you for your generosity and partnership with the youth of St. Paul which makes these opportunities possible!



## Lenten Happenings

### Weeknight Gatherings in the Youth Room

- High School Youth, Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30pm
- Middle School Youth, Thursday nights from (the time that the Thursday service is being held)

Join us for a time of fun, fellowship, and a Bible study.

**Maundy Thursday Service**, Thursday, April 2 at 7:00pm. The youth will be leading the worship service in the sanctuary.

## Opportunities to Serve

Have you been looking for a new opportunity to walk alongside the youth at St. Paul and in the broader community? As St. Paul grows, so does our youth ministry and opportunities to continue to become rooted in grace and grow in our relationships with each other and our neighbors as we follow Christ together. To that end, there are and will be opportunities to partner together to serve and support the youth in our midst, from service projects and trips, retreats, and events, to faith formation, mentorship, even providing snacks and baked goods! If this is an opportunity that you would like to learn more about, I would be happy to connect with you! Thank you for considering this. Please reach out to Scott Frase at [sfrase@stpaultitz.net](mailto:sfrase@stpaultitz.net) or (717) 925-0366.

# Music Ministry

## Celebrating the Music of Advent & Christmas

The gifts and talents of our children, youth, and adults brought beautiful music for Advent and Christmas to life! The melodies played by our musicians, along with the glorious singing of the congregation filled our sanctuary with warmth and praise. Each service was truly meaningful and filled with joy! We are grateful to everyone who took part.



## Explore music opportunities for all during the winter and spring seasons.

Whether you are a seasoned musician or someone looking to explore your musical talents for the first time, St. Paul's Music Ministry offers a welcoming community where your contributions are valued. Engaging in music can be a fulfilling way to connect with others, deepen your spiritual experience, and enjoy the beauty of shared creativity. Join us to make a joyful noise and enrich our worship services with the gift of music. We look forward to sharing in this harmonious journey together!

## Winter and Spring Music Ministry for All Ages

### Choir

- When: Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- Details: The choir is preparing music for Lent, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. New voices are warmly welcomed!

### Cantors

- Interested in leading worship? We would love to include your voice in the cantor rotation.

### Jubilate Bells

- When: Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:25 p.m.

### Praise Band

- When: Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

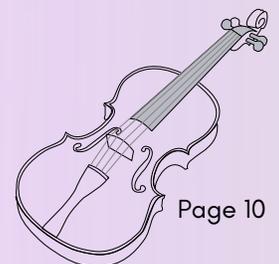
### Male Vocal Ensemble

- When: To be determined.

### Chime Time

- When: Mondays from 4:30 to 5:15 p.m.
- Details: Open to grades 2 to 6, this group will learn how to play handchimes and begins meeting on February 23.

For inquiries about St. Paul's Music Ministry, please reach out to Becky Rairigh at [beckyr@stpaulsititz.net](mailto:beckyr@stpaulsititz.net) or call 717-824-5913.



# Prayer

During this Lenten season, our emphasis is on prayer. One approach to prayer that we encourage is known as Listening Prayer. Listening prayers follow these steps:

## 1. Prepare Yourself

- Get into a comfortable position.
- Take a few deep breaths.
- Mark yourself with a cross, either on your forehead or 4 points on your body: head, shoulders, & heart.
- Pray a basic prayer such as: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." (This may be repeated; you may say this while breathing or making a cross.)

## 2. Listening to God in the Word

### Read a passage of Scripture

You can use any Scripture: the previous Sunday's readings; the Lord's Prayer; a portion of a particular book you are working through. One option is a Psalm:

**Mon: Psalm 23**

**Tues: Psalm 32**

**Wed: Psalm 51**

**Thur: Psalm 46**

**Fri: Psalm 121**

**Sat: Psalm 130**

**Sun: Psalm 96**

## 3. Listening to God through the Word

**Choose one word or phrase. Point to it, say it out loud or underline it. Allow your mind to dwell on this word or phrase.**

*If you wander too far in your thoughts, come back to that word. Trust that the Holy Spirit is in the midst of your wanderings. Your reflection will likely reveal not just your own but also even God's hopes & concerns for you.*

## 4. Listening to God through the Day

**Ask yourself a question to move your contemplation into action.**

While you can ask a different question each day, it might be helpful to stick with one or two questions for a few weeks at a time.

- *What do I need from God to be a disciple of Jesus today?*
- *Who is my neighbor who needs my love today?*
- *Over what must I surrender control today?*
- *What must I give up?*



**CANCELLED**

### Pipe Organ Event

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Pipe Organ Workshop scheduled for this Sunday, Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> has been canceled. We hope to reschedule in the future.



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ROOTED AND GROWING

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