



St. Paul News

The Newsletter of
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Ida Grove, Iowa

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December

2020

“A Light to Lighten the Gentiles”
Pastor Neil Wehmas

Why does the church exist? The importance of this question cannot be over-stated. When the 40-day infant, Jesus was brought to temple, Simeon spoke or sung the familiar words of the Nunc Dimittis. This canticle ended with the words, “A light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

Embodied in these words is the purpose of the church. Jesus Christ is the light of the world. He is a light to the nations, from the greatest to the smallest. In Him is salvation from sin, death, and the devil. However, our God didn't choose to just flip a switch and everyone had received this light and salvation. Instead, he sent forth his church.

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...”, St. Matthew records Jesus saying. In Luke's Gospel Jesus says, the repentance and forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name. The book of Acts he says tells his Apostles that they are to be witnesses of Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the very ends of the Earth.

The job of the church is above all else to spread the message of the Gospel to the nations. How do we do this? First, let's address the ends of the Earth. This is not so easily done by us. I live no where near Kenya for example. However, our congregation has for years supported the mission work of Shara and Michael Osiro in Kenya. Mission Central outside of Mapleton has a multitude of missionaries to support financially, and possibly even with our own volunteer time should old Missionary Gary need it.

Here in Ida Grove, we are home to an Orphan Grain Train location. They send trucks full of clothing, crutches, hospital beds, etc. to places such as the Republic of Georgia. They could use help loading those trucks, and financial support to be able to send those trucks. This is a way of reaching the ends of the Earth.

Jesus tells his disciples to be witnesses in Jerusalem, which is where they were most closely located. Judea which is the region in which Jerusalem rests. Samaria was the neighboring region. For us it might sound like “Witnesses in Ida County, Western Iowa, Nebraska, to the ends of the Earth.”

Western Iowa is supported through the work of Iowa District West, LCMS. We support Nebraska and other districts in our support of the Synod. But Ida and Western Sac County, that is our task. That is your mission field. That is the purpose for which St. Paul Lutheran Church exists. We are the mission outpost to our area.

Our congregation sits on top of the hill, with a cross standing tall, calling people to come and receive the gifts of its blessed savior. The ringing of the bell calls for its people to go forth and serve. To be the missionaries, the ambassadors of Christ's good news to Ida Grove, Battle Creek, Arthur, Holstein, Galva, Odebolt, etc.

We bring this light of Jesus to the gentiles by being good employees. We do this by being good students and team mates. We do this by being good neighbors. We do this by talking about our faith with our friends, family, and others. We do this by inviting people to church or church activities. We do this by sharing church worship services, sermons, devotions, music, Bible verses, etc. on Social Media. We do this by not spreading rumors or at risk of being cliché “fake news”. We do this be being known more for our faith than our political persuasions.

You indeed are the church. You indeed carry the brightest of lights through the darkness of a troubling 2020. This Christmas you will see houses and trees lit up in the midst of increasing

darkness (literally). You are a witness to the light of the world who hung upon the tree of the cross in the midst of total darkness. Who by his death brought life.

As we enter 2020, the question I ask is two-fold. How can our congregation be a better beacon of light to our communities? How can you personally be a better beacon of light to the mission field in which God has placed you? In 2021, it is my prayer that our congregation find direction, purpose, and vision. We as pastors need to do this. We can't do this alone. We need you. We covet your prayers for us and this congregation. I pray the opportunity may come for us to gather together to envision a day where St. Paul Lutheran Church and all of its members from the youngest to the oldest stand as a bright beacon of the hope of Jesus Christ in the midst of Ida Grove. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

A Note on Pastor Wehmas Substitute Teaching

In the middle of October, I had filled in for the speech teacher at OABCIG High School. This resulted in a number of questions and concerns from some members. I would like to clarify why I stepped in to substitute for our schools. There are a few basic reasons for substituting.

- 1) It is an opportunity for me as the Pastor to serve the community, especially as our schools are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) As a pastor who has a focus upon youth ministry, it is important that I am present on the school campus where possible. (This is also why I attend as many events as possible.)
- 3) It gives me extra opportunity to work with members of our congregation. I was able to interact with eight high school and three adult congregation members in their vocational environment. Something I would not be able to do otherwise. Every class period, except for one had one of our members. (They were in hybrid at the time, and only half of the school was there.)
- 4) It gave our congregation a good image. It opened up doors to interaction that wouldn't happen otherwise. (Generation Z (4-19 years old) is the largest age demographic in St. Paul Lutheran Church.)
- 5) It allows me to see the youth I am called to serve in their natural environments, and therefore be able to better serve them.
- 6) Filling in at schools will probably help me to become a better teacher in the congregational setting.
- 7) Simply put, substitute teaching will make me a better pastor, and help our congregation better fulfill the Great Commission.
- 8) This is not uncommon. In Sibley-Ocheyedan, the high school softball coach was the senior pastor of the Reformed church (largest church in school district). I've known pastors who have taught at community colleges. I've known pastors to drive school buses. I've known pastors to substitute teach. The Apostle Paul made tents while doing ministry. It is a great way for a pastor to increase the visibility of the congregation, and open the doors to serving others that he wouldn't otherwise.

In response to a handful of concerns:

- 1) It was included in both the September and October council reports, it was also addressed at the October Elders meeting, prior to filling in.
- 2) I will not substitute when Pastor Salcido is unavailable or it is his day off. I have turned down opportunities when Pastor Salcido was out.
- 3) It will not affect my productivity at the church. The day I substituted, I still prepared a confirmation lesson, taught confirmation, and ended the day by recording 5 devotional videos for Facebook.
- 4) It will never be more than once or (on rare occasion) twice per week.
- 5) In the case of emergency, Pastor Salcido will be available. If someone needs to get a hold of me they can text or e-mail me. I'm always connected. A situation where someone needs to get a hold of me specifically will likely be able to be responded to either later in the afternoon or the next day.

If you have any other questions or concerns feel free to contact me. Thank you and God bless you and all the ministry of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

~Pastor Neil Wehmas

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE for *ANY ITEMS* for in the **January Newsletter by December 9th**

Remember it's up to you or your family members to let the church office know if you are hospitalized.

CHURCH NEWS

OFFICIAL ACTS Helen Piper, Delores Stewart, Roma Lovett

VOTERS' MEETING HIGHLIGHTS On Sunday, November 15th, the Voters adopted the following:

- Accepted reports from the Boards.
- Declined to amend Constituion to add a Financial Secretary to the Church Council
- Adopted the budget for 2021 in the amount of \$337,420.23.
- Elected Dale Edsen as congregation delegate to the Iowa District Convention and Carl Schable as the alternate delegate.
- Nomintioned for President, 1st & 2nd Vice Presdents, and Board members -- all the incumbants.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP will consist of 3 services: 4PM which is full from reservations, 7PM and 11PM, by reservation only, please call the church office 364-2918 and let us know which service and how many. Depending on response we may offer an additional service.

NEED A DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE you can access with your cell phone, tablet, or computer? Check out the [Congregation at Prayer](#) on Facebook. Daily scripture readings, weekly hymns and parts of the catechism. This can even be used with your children. Daily Scripture readings have devotional thoughts in the comments section. Find a link to it on the church's Facebook page. If you have questions, or need a quick link to this resource e-mail Pastor Neil Wehmas, pastorwehmas@gmail.com

FROM THE ELDERS *Sean Benner, Brandon Johnson, Doyle Brown, Jeff Gilbert, Brent Harm, Aaron Hoffman*

St. Paul Lutheran Church Elders are here for you, and interested in your input or concerns.

Sean Benner 371-2034 seanibenner@hotmail.com

Jeff Gilbert 371-2608 jeff.b.gilbert@hotmail.com

Brandon Johnson 515-231-1744 brandonj2911@gmail.com

Aaron Hoffman 364-5166 aaronjen@netllc.net

Doyle Brown 369-0214 doylebrown@frontiernet.net

Brent Harm 712-210-4135 harm1477@gmail.com

PREPARE YE

In this worship series we contemplate the many ways we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christ Child on Christmas, taking cues from the psalms of old and from those whom God chose to play a part in the story of our Lord's birth. As we draw near to the manger bed of our Savior from sin and death, our hearts prepare him room for his everlasting love.

Wednesdays in December at 7:00 PM With social distancing



December 2 - **Ponder** (Psalm 48:9): We consider ways in which we can ponder the meaning of the birth of our Savior through the reading of Scripture and through reflection. Mary serves as a model for us in this pondering in the Annunciation.



December 9 - **Pray** (Psalm 69:13): We think about ways in which we can take more time during this season to communicate to our God through prayer as we wait for Christ. Zechariah, who went to the temple to pray, serves as an example for us of how hard that waiting in prayer can be.



December 16 - **Praise** (Psalm 30:4): We celebrate the upcoming arrival of our Savior through songs and shouts of praise as we prepare for him. Elizabeth, in her greeting of Mary, provides a benchmark for rejoicing with others over the good news of salvation in Jesus, even as we wait.



December 23 - **Proclaim** (Psalm 145:6): We contemplate how we can prepare ourselves and others for the arrival of Jesus through our proclaiming. John the Baptist stands as the forerunner of all future proclaimers of Christ and gives us the courage to use our own voices to proclaim our devotion to the One who is born to save.

I work in healthcare and know what COVID-19 infection can look like. I have also had COVID-19 and have had family members with COVID-19 all with varying symptoms. Please help slow the spread by wearing a face mask in public and quarantine when you are sick. Even if you aren't experiencing symptoms but test positive, please protect others by staying home. Suzanne Salcido RN, FCN

LIFE QUOTE "This Christmas, let us continue to pray for mothers who are afraid and aren't sure where to turn when they discover they are unexpectedly pregnant. Let us pray that, like Mary, they may find the courage to bring life into the world." *Right to Life of Michigan – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • www.lutheransforlife.org*



**Lutherans
For Life**

COMMUNITY BASKET Donations for **December: Breakfast items: pancake mis, syrup, cereal, cereal bars, peanut butter, jelly, etc..** All items are appreciated as well, as they can always use donations. The Community Basket is open on Thursdays (except 3rd Thursday), from 2:30-5:30PM. The **Mobile Pantry** will be in **Battle Creek Fire Station, December 17th, from 4:30-5:30PM.**

FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP & MISSIONS *Brad Zobel & Deb Clausen*



Faithful Stewards of God's Gifts. There are thousands of occupations in today's world, each requiring a special talent. There is a need for carpenters, cooks, mechanics, tailors, pastors, teachers, farmers, servers, students, police officers, etc. The important thing to note here, however, is that for every need, God has given to someone the ability to fulfill that need. Since some will be unbelievers, believers can let their lights *"shine before others, so that they may see [their] good works and give glorify to your Father Who is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16). It is important how we do our jobs. What a beautiful opportunity to witness to those around us! So, let us be **Faithful Stewards of God's Gifts.** Let's begin and live each day with the joy and vigor that come from hearts filled with thanksgiving to God for His love, His guidance, His presence, and His strength in whatever we do. The world does notice how we work, does hear how we speak, and does watch how we behave. Let us let people see the love of the Lord through us.

MILITARY BIBLESTICK – VISION 2033



Every \$25.00 gift provides a valuable service member or veteran with a Military BibleStick and more... Your generosity will also equip others — those living in the outermost areas of the world who have little or no access to Truth — with the vital weaponry of Audio Scriptures. This is Faith Comes By Hearing's Vision 2033: To share God's Word with the oral majority by the year 2033 whether that's a service member, village, community, or persecuted church. And there's more. For every congregation whose **combined** giving totals \$2,033 or more, Faith Comes By Hearing will partner with your missions' outreach by providing free resources empowering your church family to reach those within your sphere of influence with God's Word. By working together, we can fulfill the Great Commission. Please give through our Church Office. Make your check payable to St. Paul Lutheran Church and on the memo line write "BibleStick." In past years we have averaged between \$3000 -\$4000. Let's see what we can do in 2019! **Deadline for donations is Dec. 27 for matching funds.**

FROM SHARA OSIRO IN KENYA



Eleven years down and more to go... Where does the time go? It seemed like yesterday I boarded the plane bound for Africa unaware that I would still be here eleven years later. I admit that I didn't understand what I had said "yes" to, but God did. Over the years I have learned much and grown in my relationships with Christ, my colleagues, and church leaders. I call Africa home; now that the Lord has blessed me with a partner in life and ministry, I continue to gain a better understanding of the diversity and richness of the African cultures and strive to share that knowledge with many. I am blessed beyond measure to be part of God's mission and share His love and I look forward to many more years of service.

Prayers & Praise

- Pray for God's strength and guidance as Michael and I serve in Africa.
- Pray for God's peace in the midst of the fear and panic due to the coronavirus.
- Pray for Rev. Shauen Trump as he serves a regional director.

- Pray for the church bodies that we serve alongside in Africa.
- Praise God for all of the love & support that you give to me and Michael.



MISSION CENTRAL EVENTS Mission Central – LCMS World Mission

40718 Highway E 16, Mapleton, Iowa 51034 PH: 712-882-1029

Gary.Thies@lcms.org 712-882-1029 Brent.Smith@lcms.org 703-713-2851

Be sure to check the bulletin board in the hallway by pastors' offices for information on Missionaries visiting Mission Central this month.

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES *Ross Ladwig, Jeremy Mason, Doug Hanson & John Brinkman*

Project Updates:

- Repairing Education building heating and air-conditioning.
- Installation of outdoor solar lighting outside north entrance doors.
- Investigating installation of cameras at all exterior doors.
- Investigating Internet provider upgrade – can't live stream – if updated could show/ live stream on Facebook at 9:00am.
- Thank you Dale Edsen for repairing the lighting for the steeple on the church.

FROM THE BOARD OF EVANGELISM / ASSIMILATION *Jen Hoffman & Kristy Gilbert*

MAIN STREET LIVING IS A LUTHERAN TELEVISION PROGRAM that is endorsed by the Iowa West District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The program receives no funding from the District, but is totally funded by viewers and congregations of the KCAU Viewing area. The program is broadcast on **KCAU, the ABC network affiliate in Sioux City on Sunday morning, starting at 10:00 AM.** The first 30 minutes are remastered episodes of the popular "This is the Life" series that was very popular in the 70's and 80's. The second half of the program is a modified Lutheran worship service that features a different Pastor each week, from the station's broadcast area.

FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION *Jon Devitt & Robyn Devitt*

4th - 6th grades and 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation- will not be meeting December

Wednesday Morning Bible Class will not be meeting for December.

FROM THE BOARD OF YOUTH AND FAMILY LIFE *Amy Bennett*

Lutheran Youth Fellowship December 2020

Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

Watch email for details or updates on these events due to current COVID situations / restrictions

"The Way" Youth Night (7th-12th Grade)

THEME: Christmas Party St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ida Grove

Movie, Christmas Cookies, Secret Santa, Jesus Sunday, December 20th @6pm

"The Highway" High School Youth Night (9th-12th Grade)

Theme: Happy New Year Sunday, January 3rd @6pm St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ida Grove

"The Way" Middle School Youth Night (6th-8th Grade)

Theme: Morality Sunday, January 17th @6pm St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ida Grove

Keep an eye on your e-mails, Facebook, and Instagram (@stpaulig_lyf) for information on future events.

Higher Things Conference—Forgiven 2021—Deposit \$150

Pick Up Registration form at the Church

June 29-July 2, 2021

North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND

July 6-9, 2021

Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

July 20-23, 2021

Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI

July 27-30, 2021

Concordia University-Texas, Austin, TX



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DECEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
		1 Elders 7:00PM	2 10:00-4:00 Bloodmobile 7:00PM Advent Worship	3	4	5	
Second Sunday in Advent 9:00AM Worship w/Communion social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 2:00PM online & local cable channel	6	7	8 Church Council 7:00PM	9 7:00PM Advent Worship	10	11	12
3 rd Sunday in Advent 9:00AM Worship social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 2:00PM online & local cable channel	13	14	15	16 7:00PM Advent Worship	17	18	19 Wedding Karlie Mandernach & Kent Krager
4 th Sunday in Advent 9:00AM Worship w/Communion social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 2:00PM online & local cable channel	20	21	22	23 7:00PM Advent Worship	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship 4:00PM 7:00PM 11:00PM	25 Christmas Day Worship w/Communion 10:00AM	26
First Sunday after Christmas 9:00AM Worship social distancing parking lot tune into 97.1 2:00PM online & local cable channel	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve Worship w/Communion 6:00PM	1 Church Office Closed	2 Wedding Christine Bennett & Eric James