



St. Paul News

St. Paul Lutheran Church

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Ida Grove, Iowa

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FEBRUARY

2026

70 Days to Easter

By Pastor Neil Wehmas

As many of you are well aware, my month of December and start of January brought its challenges. Between a strained knee and battling two rounds of the cold, I found myself resting and less active.

However, it also gave me opportunity to work on changing my own personal habits for the better (especially with the new year fast approaching). I started with regular practice of Matins and Vespers (making use of the Treasury of Daily Prayer and Portals of Prayer). This means every day I begin in God's word and in a time of prayer. I ended the day in the same way.

I've taken to changing my diet, exercising, reducing my time on my cell phone and social media. I am not alone in taking up these practices, rather it is a nationwide movement amongst Lutherans.

This year, February 1st marks the start of the journey to Easter, with the Pre-Lent season. Ash Wednesday will be February 18th and mark the start of Lent. So, I ask you, what in your life is an idol? What are you spending too much money and time on? How can you set it aside in order to focus more upon your faith?

What can you do to find yourself spending regular time in the scriptures? If you are married and/or have children, what can you do to make the reading of scriptures, singing of hymns, meditation on the catechism, and of course prayer, a regular part of your families life?

Every one of us has allowed for our belly (food) to become an idol, a thing that controls and directs our life. Christianity has a long history of the faithful opting to take part in some type of a fast during Lent. It might be eating less food, giving up sweets or snacking. It might be intermittent fasting, or skipping meals. What do you do with the time that is freed by the lack of eating and food preparation? Spend it in the scriptures and in prayer.

The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod has for many years has encouraged believers throughout the Lenten season to pray the Litany every day at noon. This simple practice reminds your mind and body that we live not on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Think about your cell phone. If you are like me, you find yourself often consumed with what is often called "doom-scrolling". Scrolling through Facebook or TikTok videos or YouTube. If you are a gamer, you may find yourself spending too much time playing Fortnite or some other popular game.

When you wake up in the morning, aside for perhaps going to the bathroom, what is the first thing you go for. It might be that you grab for breakfast or your smart phone. Perhaps, you dedicate yourself to begin those days with God's word and prayer.

Our congregation has many options for helping with your devotional life. "The Congregation at Prayer" is printed every week. We also offer "Portals of Prayer" and "Strength for the Day" as devotional options. The "InPrayer" app on the Apple or Google stores provide phone-based subscriptions to the Treasury of Daily Prayer and Portals of Prayer. KFUEO has a number of daily devotions options.

You might even consider checking in with the LCMS international center or Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne for their daily chapel services. There is a multitude of resources available to you for the purpose of strengthening your walk with God.

You might be wondering what is even the point of such disciplines. While, you are certainly not sinning by not taking part in these practices. Nonetheless, it has three benefits for the Christian. 1) It exposes our idols, and how we unknowingly depend and rely upon things other than God. This naturally leads us to repentance, and as we fast are redirected towards dependence upon our Lord. 2) Some of your disciplines, you fine might end up saving you money. Especially eating less or possibly cutting back on streaming services. That money, give it towards the mission of the church or towards food pantries. 3) When Easter does come around, and some of these things get restored to your life, you might find yourself appreciate them more as a gift given to you from God.

Whether you take up such a journey starting with pre-Lent (February 1st), Ash Wednesday (February 18th), or even just part of Lent or just Holy Week. I pray that God be with you, guide you, and shape you more into the person he created you to be. You might even find yourself to be better parents, children, employees, students, etc.. Blessings on wherever, and however God leads you.

In Christ,
Pastor Neil

"Thank you to everyone for the gifts and cards during the Christmas season. I am truly blessed to be allowed to serve St. Paul Lutheran and Ida Grove. I thank you all for thinking of me in the Christmas season. Blessings to all of you in 2026. Glory to Christ our Lord. ~Pastor Neil Wehmas."



BOARD OF HUMAN CARE is looking for volunteers to help with visiting shut in's, those in the nursing home, assisted living or other individuals.. If you are interested please let Synda Jepsen or Nancy Schoen know, there is a sign up sheet available on the narrow table in the narthex, please put your name and phone number down and they will contact you.

HUMAN CARE TEAM will meet February watch the weekly bulletin for date and time.

VIDEO UPGRADE: The new video system is complete. Anyone interested in learning to operate the system, please let Dennis Clausen, David Petersen, Brad Zobel, the church office know, or you can indicate on the friendship register pad as well. **We would like to encourage the youth to get involved.**

NEW MEMBER CLASS, if you are interested in becoming a member of St. Paul, Pastor Wehmas will be having a class soon, please let Pastor Neil know or indicate on the Friendship Register pad with your phone number and or email. You can also email the church at stpaulidagrove@gmail.com

SUPER BOWL CHALLENGE - Our Missions Board would be encouraging this fun challenge for our Community Basket Food Pantry. Please bring a non perishable item for the pantry. The monthly suggested donations for February are listed below but ANY non perishable, canned item, peanut butter, box of cereal, etc. Place it on the indicated side of your winning team prediction. The teams are: the AFC Team: New England Patriots will be on the Pulpit side and the NFC team: Seahawks will be on the Lectern side



You can bring in your item any time and place it up front, but for sure bring on Sunday, February 8th. Ultimately the winner will be our Community Basket Food Pantry with your help!



COMMUNITY BASKET DONATIONS FOR FEBRUARY: Laundry/ Kitchen Items: detergent, bleach, dryer sheets, fabric softener, dish soap, etc.. and any other related items. Place your donation in the shopping cart in the Narthex or hallway. **Any 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 ****They can always use canned vegetables, canned fruits & canned soups. Also note:** they can use outdated items that are within a year of expiration. Mobile Food Pantry will be Arthur Community Center, Arthur, IA on Thursday, February 19 from 4:30-5:30PM. Its helpful to bring a laundry basket or container for your food items.



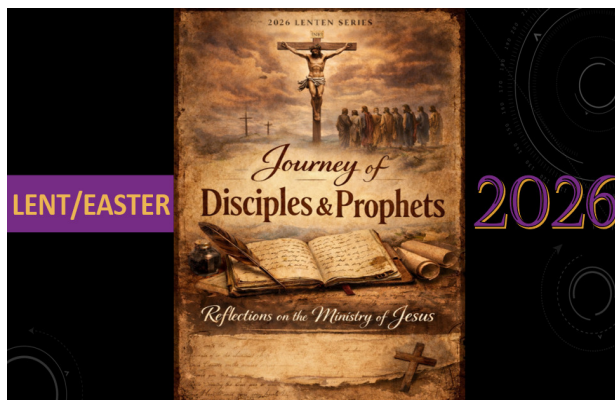
**ASH WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY, 18**

**IMPOSITION OF ASHES
7:30-9:30AM and
12:00-1:30PM**

**ASH WEDNESDAY MEAL
will be serviced by St. Paul Jr
High Youth
from 5:00-6:15PM, this is a
free will donation fundraiser.**

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP w/Imposition of Ashes 6:30PM

**LENTEN SERVICES ARE AT
6:30PM**



JR High and SR High Youth Pancake and Sausage Breakfast



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

SERVING IN FELLOWSHIP HALL FOLLOWING WORSHIP SERVICE

Come and enjoy breakfast !

FREE WILL OFFERING



Sunday School

Class from 10:15-11:15am

Children ages 4 yr old Preschool-12th grade

6th-8th - Middle School Youth Room

9th-12th - High School Youth Room



Cross Explorations Wednesdays,
at 4:00-5:15pm for 6th/7th/8th grades
and 4:00-5:00pm for 3rd-5th grade

School Early Out Feb. 4 Class at 1:30PM

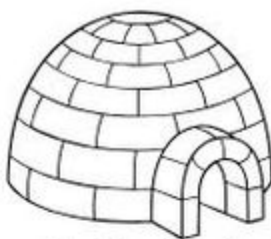
School Early Out Feb. 25 Class at 1:30PM

WEDNESDAY CROSS EXPLORATIONS REMINDER as winter weather inches closer, we remind parents that when school gets dismissed early due to weather, or there is no school it automatically cancels Wednesday, Cross Explorations. We try our best as well to put the word out via our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/StPaulIdaGrove>

We also encourage parents to fill out an information sheet and put in the white box, so we have cell phones for weather related cancellations or emergencies.

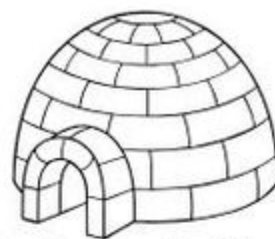
MIDWEEK SNACKS - A donation bucket is available if you would like to donate towards midweek snacks or another idea is a FoodPride gift card to help with the purchase of items or the following snack items are appreciated. Or if you want to donate prepacked items you know your kids will eat is appreciated as well.

A reminder if school is cancelled or dismissed early due to weather, it automatically cancels Wednesday, Cross Explorations/Catechism. It will also be posted on Facebook



WINTER

WORD SEARCH



S T S D T B G G K J X M Y L Q H H R O M
N D B S Q D Y L S S U N K B O F F L G K
O D U R F Q K O S N D A A C W N X L H D
W M R S E N H V C O O O K M S S F U O C
B L D A O T R E S W J E R X W I J N L Y
O F J A Z F A S M B Y E A H R O S A I E
A R I M E Z D E O G T Y W E N O N O D E
R K H N A F I W W N K D P X E H O S A R
D V R R O G T L I S M L T Q D L W E Y T
Z H E W V V H W B I A G S B G H B C S E
T V B I E K A Q P C C F T I Y I A A S N
J W M N R V T M E I S I R I P P L N H O
I D E D C F L H N G Z A C A V N L R E C
R P C L O B M T H N N K O L C H V U A E
B O E P A Z A I M W K I O C E S O F T N
O P D L T J L X T A Q K Z L O V V C E I
O H Z O E E R E H T A E W E E C C I R P
T C T H D S P N G I E Q H N E N T U P F
S N O R T H P O L E S N X O T R T O L M
U I T A W C O N J M Z S S N H X F F H G

WORD LIST

BLIZZARD	FURNACE	HOLIDAYS	NORTH POLE	SCARF	SWEATER
BOOTS	GLOVES	HOT COCOA	OVEN	SNOW	TREE
DECEMBER	HAT	ICICLE	OVERCOAT	SNOWBALL	WEATHER
FIREPLACE	HEATER	IGLOO	PINECONE	SNOWBOARD	WIND
FREEZING	HOCKEY	MITTENS	RIME	SNOWMAN	WINTER