

St. Paul's

December
2022



THE BEACON



From the Pastors Desk
Pg. 2

Church Council
Pg. 3

January & February
Birthdays
Pg. 4

Church News
Pg. 5-7

Thank You
Pg. 8

Usher Schedule
Pg. 9

St. Paul's Prayer List
Pg. 10

SCRIP
Pg. 11



NEXT BEACON
January 20th
All articles are due in by
January 11th



Dear Friends,

This is our last Beacon for 2022. Where did the year go? Is it really possible that next March will be 3 years since the church suspended in-person worship and we will have been back worshipping in person for almost 2 years? My internal clock still has not readjusted to "pre-Covid" time.

It's remarkable to note how certain events in life can change our perception of time. We are now in what the Church calls a "Holy Season." What is that? It is the recognition that something has happened, an event has occurred, which has changed our lives. God has come to earth in the child of Bethlehem! That event led to a series of events that has literally transformed our sense of time. We live in 2022. Even though CE (the Common Era) is a modern title given to the year in the admirable service of cultural inclusion, this date is still recognized by many as A.D. - Anno Domini - "the year of the Lord." (Making it anything but "common.") God has come to us in Jesus Christ. He is Immanuel: "God with us." He began a new era in human history. This era is the era of the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God. It is an era of hope as every year the calendar page is turned brings us one year closer to the promised establishment of "a new heaven and a new earth," when God will dwell with God's people forever. The words "holiday" actually means "holy day." This is a holy season for we celebrate an event that changed everything.

Peace,

Pastor Greg

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Rev. Gregory Lucas, Pastor

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Follow us on Facebook & Instagram: [stpauls_ucc_cl](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsucccl)

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Via Facebook Live or streaming on website.

Church Office Hours

8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

December 2022



Dear Church Family,

As I write this, I am mindful that this is the last Council News article I will be writing to you, given that my term as President expires at the end of this month. I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to communicate with you about the many activities going on at St. Paul's and your Church Council. My love and respect for you all has grown as a result of these monthly reflections of where we are as a church community. Thank you so very much for that opportunity!

At our last Council meeting of the year this past Tuesday, the current Council members had an opportunity to welcome the incoming 2023 Council nominees who attended the meeting, as is customary. I can assure you that you are in marvelous hands with your 2023 Church Council, whose members possess a diverse set of talents, a firm commitment to St. Paul's, and a strong faith—all essential ingredients for an effective Council. At the meeting, I summarized the key actions Council has taken over the past year and noted matters that were ongoing in order to help provide a smooth transition. The Council nominees also had an opportunity to ask questions to clarify things they will need to know going forward. I will remain available to them as needed to help clarify any questions that may come up about actions taken during my term, since there will only be one current Council member, Janis Braun, continuing her term in 2023. Please rest assured that we have done our best to provide a smooth transition under these unusual circumstances and to enable the positive momentum St. Paul's has experienced to continue.

In addition to welcoming our new 2023 Council nominees, we faced the difficult task of reviewing and discussing a proposed 2023 budget to present to the congregation at St. Paul's Annual Meeting in January. While always challenging, this process was made more so by the assumptions that needed to be made regarding the timing and specifics of an Interim Pastor coming on board after Pastor Greg retires at the end of May. Council has consulted and will continue to work with our Illinois Conference UCC, whose well-established guidelines and platform provide a solid basis for our proceeding along this path. In addition, we discussed how best to provide for existing and proposed new staff positions. As evidence of our thorough discussion, our meeting lasted for 3 hours (!) and I am happy to report that we are well on our way to having a solid proposed 2023 budget to present to you at our Annual Meeting in January.

In closing, I want to wish each of you a wonderful Christmas season. The older I get, the more I have come to appreciate and derive comfort from the true meaning of Christmas. In the familiar words of *Luke 2: 10-11* "...for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Good tidings of great joy, indeed! May you find strength and comfort in this most wonderful news in the New Year and years to come.

With love and best wishes to you all for a very Merry Christmas,

Nancy Bellis, Church Council President

Let's Celebrate Birthdays



Michele Eich	1/1
Jean Hautzinger	1/4
Jane Gulino	1/5
Haylee Sopchyk	1/5
Eugene Virzi	1/6
Rebecca Burns	1/7
Martin Barski	1/11
Shirley Berghorn	1/11
Brian Kriegel	1/12
Carey Pagnotta	1/14

Eli Rickard	1/15
Virginia Covalt	1/15
Karen Radovich	1/16
David Burdloff	1/17
Garry Winter	1/17
Emma Mecwan	1/21
Larry Roewer	1/23
Hazel Kriegel	1/24
Janet Kay	1/28
Luke Janik	1/31
Julie Menke	1/31



Karen Christensen	2/1
Scott McDowd	2/2
Calvin Reckamp	2/4
Lauren Henneman	2/4
Jake Monahan	2/4
Nancy Haskins	2/6
Hannah Virzi	2/7
Harry Speros	2/7
Everett Kalisz	2/8
Dick Hautzinger	2/9
Rebecca Lucking	2/10
Fred Mullard	2/11
Olivia Pagnotta	2/14

Anthony Tuscano	2/16
Bonnie Goldman	2/17
Sammie Kay	2/17
Rodney Hopkins	2/18
Sondra Matterness	2/19
Cheryll Triefenbach	2/19
Donna Layne-Albano	2/19
Kolten Heggem	2/21
Jennifer Wikman	2/26
Arlene Tuscano	2/26
Andrew Chappell	2/26
Karen Ryberg	2/26
Amanda Lotesto	2/27

Church News

Building Improvements

This month we had a significant upgrade to our sanctuary lighting toward the altar. Scaffolding was erected all the way up to the ceiling to allow the crew of Steve Tobin, Ken Hansen, and Ken Thrun to replace the sanctuary ceiling incandescent lights with much more energy efficient and brighter LED flood lights. Not an easy task but our crew was up to the challenge.

Also...if you drive by the church at night, these new lights really illuminate sanctuary window and make it really stand out!

A HUGE thanks to the guys!



Capital Project Progress and Update

We continue to move forward with our renovation projects for our church. As previously reported, the S.P.A.C.E. center roof was replaced in early fall, the deteriorating church chimney bricks as also repaired this fall.

As many of you may have seen, work on the lounge renovation is in full swing. The paneling has received new drywall, the brick wall's leaching has been scrubbed, the walls and windows painted, the overhead beams painted, and the kitchenette painted.

As the pictures show, work is well underway to install a new drop ceiling and lighting (thanks Ken and Ken!). Faux leather arm chairs are on order as are some sample meeting chairs. Carpeting and plank (kitchenette flooring) should be installed in the next couple of weeks.

Target is to have our lounge "back in service" by the end of January!

Thanks to ALL who supported these much-needed building improvements!

Rob Reuak (aka project coordinator)

Church News



Review

What a semester it has been! This is what St. Paul's Guiding Light Preschool Outreach looks like in a snap shot:

In October we collected over 40 pairs of mittens for the children at North Elementary to add to their mitten tree. In November we collected over 50 pairs of new and used children's winter/rain boots for the Ruth Project which supports local adoptive and foster families. In December we were excited to have the opportunity to support a family for Christmas. Our families and students have extremely generous hearts. An additional *thank you* goes to our congregation for knitting, shopping, and contributing to these efforts. We love you.

I am still smiling about the turnout for our Trunk or Treat event this year. 5 preschool families joined us and we believe nearly 400 folks (approximately 250 children) from the community enjoyed the festivities. The food truck sold out and Mother Nature cooperated and gave us a glorious harvest moon as a backdrop. The entire church came together and I believe it was a "feel good" event all around. I see both the preschool and the church serving the neighborhood here in surprising and beautiful ways. We are learning about the local needs and striving to meet them with God's help. We love being a part of that.

The preschoolers arranged flowers and made decorations for the Thanksgiving Dinner. Only one preschool family joined us, but it was a family of 9, so I'm still overjoyed. *My heartfelt thanks goes to each of you that welcomed them.*

Friday Dec 2 our Live Outdoor Nativity was held on the front lawn. The preschool families dressed in costume to portray the scene that very first Christmas in Bethlehem. Steve Tobin graciously agreed to build the stable set up and provide lighting. Our fearless Lena Vocalino stepped in for a shift as Joseph, and live goats and sheep joined us to add to the evening. Lots of love to Bill and Shirley Berghorn for organizing costumes, serving cider and cookies in the narthex for families that needed to warm up and take a little break, and for assisting with clean up. Again we are *so appreciative* to the congregation for attending and supporting this special event.

Our students are growing by leaps and bounds each day academically, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Sometimes it takes my breath away. Truly it is an honor to share this journey with them. I can only imagine what 2023 has in store for us.

Merry Christmas!

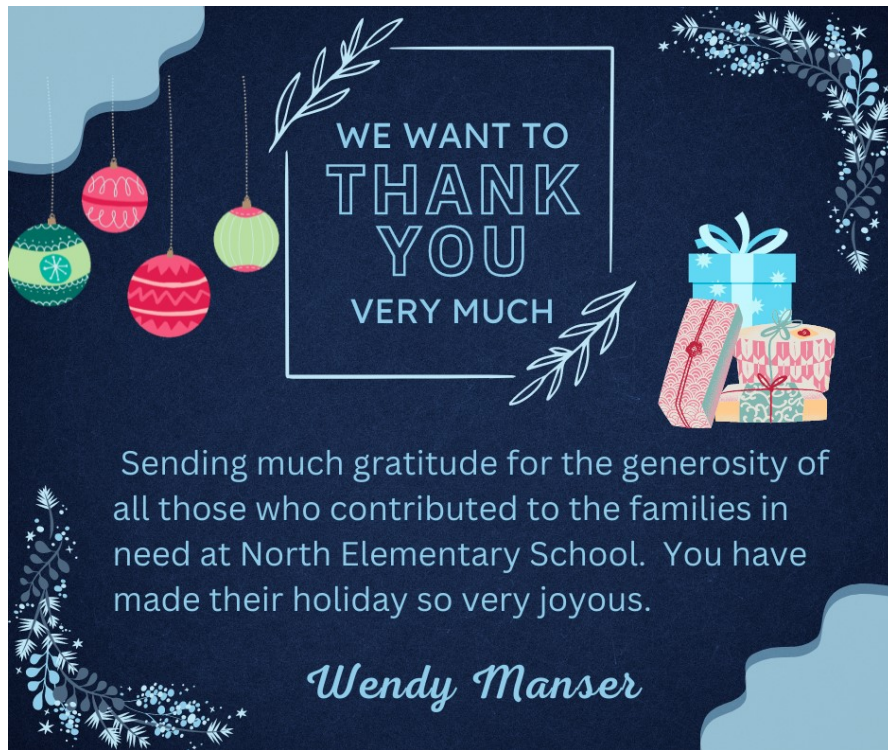
Rebecca Lucking
Preschool Director

Church News

PRESCHOOL



Thank You



Usher Schedule

December
Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m.

USHERS

December 4th

Jim Henneman Jr. - Captain
Lauren Henneman & Bill Berghorn
Greeter: Janet & Jim Henneman
Reader: Eric Mason

December 11th

Ken Hansen - Captain
Karen Hansen & Don Roxworthy
Greeter: Jan Czosnyka
Reader: Rebecca Eckhardt

December 18th

Ken Thrun - Captain
Gene & Lynn Virzi
Greeter: Elizabeth Speros
Reader: Arlene Tuscano

Blue Christmas 3:00 pm

Ken Hansen - Captain
Karen Hansen

December 24th - 5:00 pm

Christmas Eve
Sheryl Gee - Captain
Gary Gee & Jane Dawson
Greeters: The Eckhardt Family
Reader: Wendy Manser

December 25th

John Whetham - Captain
Ken Hansen & Sondra Matterness
Greeter: Regina Lombardo
Reader: N/A

January
Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m.

USHERS

January 1st

Ken Hansen- Captain
Karen Hansen
Rebecca Eckhart
Greeter: Gary & Sheryl Gee
Reader: TBD

January 8th

Jim Henneman- Captain
Lauren Henneman
Jane Dawson
Greeter: Mariann Deacon Davis &
Rick Davis
Reader: TBD

January 15th

Ken Thrun- Captain
Gene & Lynn Virzi
Greeter: Jen & Ernie Good
Reader: TBD

January 22nd

John Whetham - Captain
Kevin Kruse & Nancy Bellis
Greeter: Steve & Margaret Tobin
Reader: TBD

January 29th

Ken Hansen - Captain
Karen Hansen
Elizabeth Speros
Greeter: Sondra Matterness
Reader: TBD

St. Paul's Prayer List



St. Paul's Homebound Friends

Arlene Kopsell, Barb Biscomb

Deceased Members and Friends

Doris Bellis, Ann Albrecht, Edward Butler

Friends

Barb Eich, Fred Albrecht, Marilyn Koch

Military - Stateside

Todd Whetham

Sponsored Children

Alberly (Dominican Republic), Andrian (Indonesia), Daniel W. (Indonesia), Nicole V. (Bolivia), Nicole S. (USA), Tran Thi Chin (Vietnam), Breny (Columbia), Alfred (Tanzania), Isack S. (Tanzania), Maria, Jobenta M. (Haiti), Emyli (Guatemala)

St. Paul's Vision

Call to serve

Our

Neighbors' and Members'

Needs by

Engaging as

Christ's people

Through service and Love

Follow Us on Social Media!

Keep up with St. Paul's latest news, information, and connection. LIKE and share our on social media.



Church Staff

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Church Council

Nancy Bellis, Council President

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Rob Revak, Council Vice President

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Janis Braun, Secretary

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Fred Mullard, Treasurer

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Jennifer Good, Financial Secretary

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Jane Dawson - dawson247@comcast.net

Gary Gee - ggwn@aol.com

Give the Gift of **SCRIP**



IN STOCK SCRIP CARDS as of December 5th, 2022

Buffalo Wild Wings	2 @ \$25
Chili's	2 @ \$25
Chipotle	3 @ \$10
Darden (Olive Garden, Longhorn)	5 @ \$25
Dunkin	1 @ \$10
IHOP	1 @ \$25
Jewel	3 @ \$25/ 15 @ \$100
LL Bean	2 @ \$100
Mariano's	4 @ \$50
Menards	1 @ \$100
Panera	5 @ \$10
Red Lobster	8 @ \$25
Speedway	16 @ \$25/ 1 @ \$100
Starbuck	15 @ \$10/2 @ \$25
Synergy (Mobil)	6 @ \$50
Steinmart	1 @ \$25
Subway	3 @ \$10
Target	4 @ \$25
TJ Maxx (Sierra, HomeGoods, Marshall)	3 @ \$100
Walmart	5 @ \$100

If you need any of the above cards, they can be dropped off at church for pick up. If you want to order any particular cards, please let me know. As always, checks are made payable to St. Paul's.

Karen Radovich nuknees@mc.net

EASY AND CONVENIENT

These products make it easy to earn on the go.

PrestoPay™

The secure online payment system for families that lets them pay for orders and receive e-gift cards and reload their cards immediately.

MyScripWallet™

Our mobile website where families can buy physical gift cards, reloads, and eGift cards. Directly onto their phones great for when you are in line at a store. you can reload or buy cards to go straight to your phone!