

From the Pastor's Desk

A Counter Cultural Christmas

We spend a lot of time as Americans trying to be different, unique individuals. We tend not to value being a part of the crowd but the one who strikes out on his own. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer gets his own show but the other reindeer who are just a part of the reindeer group are lost to obscurity. We like to think of ourselves as doing our own thing, standing out from others, counter culture.

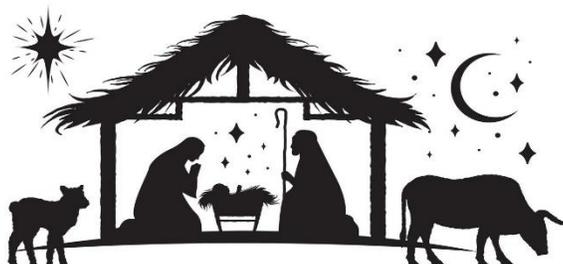
This year challenge yourself to have a counter cultural Christmas. Be different. Don't be like everyone else. Be unique.

What might that look like? Here are some random thoughts. Buy less presents and be less busy. Put away your phone and eat dinner together with whoever is in your house. Pray before you eat. Memorize a Christmas Carol and sing it each day of the 12 days of Christmas. Those are just suggestions. You should of course ... do your own thing.

But here is one way you can really be different and stand out and be a counter cultural rebel. Go to church. Listen to the Christmas story. Sing hymns with other people you may not know and sing the same words as they do and sing so that you do not hear your own voice at all but the voice of the whole, the congregation. Sing words that people 1000 years ago also sang. Pray there in that public place with other Christians. Humble yourself to think that the God who made all things became really really small for your sake. Rejoice that to lift us up, us lost, weak, wrong minded people, God laid down in a feeding trough.

Now that is different. Most people won't do that this year. Why don't we try it? A counter cultural Christmas. See you at church.

Pastor Alms



Jesus calls us to be a Lutheran community gathered around Word and Sacrament and sends us to reach the lost, disciple the saved, and care for our neighbors everywhere.

Advent Events and Happenings at St. Paul

Advent Midweek Services: Stop, Look and Listen

Dates: November 30, December 7, December 14

Times: 11 am and 7 pm

The Story of Christmas – Sunday Bible Class

Come study and dive into the Christmas story in the Scriptures in Advent. Kevin Dungey will lead a deep look into the birth of Jesus, how it happened and what it means. Sundays at 8:45 am in the Fellowship Hall, November 27 through December 18.

Congregational Decorating of the Sanctuary

Saturday, December 3rd at 4 pm. All hands needed. Sponsored by the Youth Group.

Kids Christmas Morning

Saturday, December 10th 9 am to 12:00 noon.

Cookie Walk

Sunday December 11th. Don't miss bringing home some delicious goodies.

St. Paul School Christmas Program

The children have been working hard on "The Story of Christmas as Told By Mary."

Wednesday, December 14th at 1:15 pm or Thursday, December 15th at 6 pm in the sanctuary

Ladies Guild Potluck Dinner

Thursday, December 20th at 6:30 pm. It will be held at the home of Irene Giguere.

Christmas Eve Services: 7 pm and 10 pm

Christmas Day Services: 10 am (No bible class or Sunday School)

New Years Day Service: 10 am (No bible class or Sunday School)

Angel Tree Board



Angels have flown in! We have names from the children in the inner-city community around St. Thomas Lutheran Church. We have taken 21 children to gift this Christmas. Each child has asked for 3 presents, and we have listed one gift per angel.

Procedure: select an angel gift. Write your name next to the RED number on the angel tree list. Buy the gift and wrap it. Then attach the angel securely to the gift, NAME AND NUMBER showing. Return gift to green bin in the narthex by

Wednesday, December 14.

If gift is too expensive (like a bike), you can find a gently used one. If you have questions, contact Betsy Mitchell or Irene Giguere. Thank you for giving these children a special Christmas-and by reaching out with God's love.

From the Congregational President

Thanksgiving was a wonderful time to spend with family and enjoy great food, football (both types), and be thankful for everything that God has provided us. We now look toward Christmas to celebrate the wonderful gift that God has given us.

We did not have a meeting in November, but we did have one in October and will have another in December. A few things for everyone to note:

- We have received quotes from multiple companies on the sound board and will be moving forward with the purchase of the sound board and mics. There are long lead times with delivery, so it may be a while before we get them.
- The renovation of the downstairs storage room into a classroom will be put on hold till next year because of delays in getting quotes and approvals.
- The renovation of the media center is progressing, but slowly due to delays in getting county approvals.
- Council approved moving forward with selling the house at the cemetery. The cemetery committee is looking into next steps.
- There are some major repairs that are needed for our boiler system and we are looking at ways to get this replaced and temporary fixes to repair prior to replacement. This is a big undertaking but is critical to making sure the school and church is heated properly over the winter.
- Council is getting ready to gear up for budgets. Our Operations Officer and Principal will be drafting up the bulk of next year's budgets for review by the Asset Management and School Boards, while other boards will be preparing their own. God has blessed us with all that we need and more over the past few years, and we will strive to be good stewards of the gifts he has given us.

Council is still in need of a Vice President. As mentioned before, it is a light commitment and can provide insight into how decisions are made and how the council and boards work together. The VP also chairs the personnel committee to help shape various aspects effecting the employees of the church and school (like pay scale, personnel manual, etc.). If you are interested in this position, let me know.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns you would like to see addressed, please let us know. Our next church council meeting is December 13th, 2022 at 7 pm.

Blessings to all,
Aaron Nelson
nelsaar@yahoo.com

New Member Sunday

We will welcome new members on December 11th. We have a group of people God has led to join our congregation. Be sure to welcome and rejoice with them!

News From the Elders

These are the Elders for 2022-2023; contact any of us with personal concerns:

Kevin Dungey (Chairman)
Jim Baeder
Norm Giguere

Bill Oldhouser
Jeff Piegols
Bruce Staudinger

The 2022 Advent services

Wednesday Advent services will be offered at 11 AM and 7 PM on November 30, December 7, and December 14.

Christmas Eve services, Saturday, December 24, will be offered at 7 PM and 10 PM.

The Christmas Day service, Sunday, December 25, will be offered at 10 AM (No Sunday School or Bible class).

Adult Education

As we wrote for the November newsletter, the Elders and Pastor unite in wanting to increase every member's access to adult education at St. Paul, perhaps to increase Bible Study opportunities on Sundays, set up special one-time or recurring Bible Study opportunities during the week, or otherwise make it easier for members (and guests) to know more about the Bible and the Christian faith. A sub-committee of the Elders has been formed consisting of Pastor, Kevin Dungey, Bill Oldhouser, Dana Stigdon, Heather Krakat, Cameron Jones, and Brian Haberl. Please let either Kevin Dungey (kdungey49@gmail.com) or Bill Oldhouser (who@nholaw.com) or any of the committee members know what you would be interested in learning more about. What type of Bible Study do you enjoy most? What topics would you be interested in? Would you enjoy teaching an adult Bible study? You also may talk to us at church when you see us.

In His service,
Kevin Dungey,
Board of Elders

Mission Opportunities

Stay tuned for a meeting coming up in January to plan out a St. Paul mission trip in 2023. And mark your calendars for February 12th. SED President Harmon will be here for a missions brunch following worship.

Community Craft Day

Are you crafty? Do you crochet, sew, or scrapbook? Come join us for a community craft day. We will be in the Fellowship Hall from 9 AM to 4 PM on the first Saturday of each month, starting December 3rd. Are you trying to learn something new? We might have someone to help you! All are welcome for crafts and fellowship. Even if you only have a few hours, just come while you can. There's plenty of space to spread out your projects. Have questions? Contact Kate Baeder at 301-717-3936. Hope to see you there!!

Ladies Guild

The Ladies Guild is putting together food bags for St. Thomas. The ladies will provide the bread and meat, if you would like to get together a bag with nonperishable items it would be greatly appreciated. Last year we put together 17 bags and we would like to beat that number for this year, the need is great. Items needed per bag:

- 1 box stuffing
- 1 box instant potatoes
- 2 cans corn
- 2 cans green beans or peas
- 1 can sweet potatoes
- 1 jar gravy
- 1 jar peanut butter
- 1 jar jelly
- Cake mix and icing OR brownie mix

The food bags for St. Thomas need to be at church by Sunday, **September 11th** for delivery Saturday morning December 17th. We will need volunteers on the 17th to take the bags to St Thomas.

Bakers needed to bake for our annual cookie walk. We will sell cookies once again during Kid's Christmas Morning on December 10th and then before and after church on Sunday, December 11th.

All women of the congregation are invited to a **potluck dinner** on Thursday, **December 20th** at 6:30 pm. It will be held at the home of Irene Giguere. Bring a dish or dessert. Sign up sheet is on the bulletin board in the stairwell next to the Flower Chart.

What Do Your Offerings Do?

They Do Missions Around the World and In Maryland

Every week we gather an offering. What do those offerings do? One very important thing they do is support missions: the telling of the Good News and care and mercy work all over the world. There is one portion of our budget called Kingdom Growth, which is the portion of our offerings that immediately go outside the congregation to various missions. Eleven percent of all offerings given to St. Paul go to support missions outside the congregation.

St. Paul (that is, your offerings) helps fund Orphan Grain Train, a Christian volunteer network that ships donated food, clothing, medical and other needed items to people in 69 different countries. Your donations go to Augsburg Lutheran Home, a senior living facility with deep roots in Baltimore and at St. Paul. The first National Lutheran Home began as an orphanage in 1892 and began providing senior housing in the 1970s. Concordia Preparatory School, a Lutheran High School in Towson, receives support from your offerings as does Food for the Poor, a worldwide housing and mercy ministry. Your money supports the Lutheran Mission Society, a network of eight Compassion Centers helping those in need with food, clothing and personal care items in Baltimore. St. Paul sends support to the Ramirez Family, LCMS missionaries in Peru. Finally, your offerings go to the Southeastern District of the LCMS where they do things like church support, ethnic ministry and school ministries and from there your donations go to the LCMS and around the world to support Lutheranism worldwide and Lutheran missionary work.

Your offerings are hard at work. Thanks for your generosity!

St. Paul Day School News

For the first time since the advent of the Covid pandemic and resulting closures, St. Paul School celebrated Thanksgiving with a Thanksgiving lunch feast for all school children Early Childhood and Day School children the Tuesday before Thanksgiving.

The families of every student supplied the means for the feast.

- Toddler - 15 oz box of instant mashed potatoes & 1 gravy packet
- Pre 2 - 16 oz. size bag of shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- Pre 3 - 64 oz. container of apple juice
- Pre K - 1 box of instant vanilla pudding & 1 tub of Cool Whip
- K - 2 boxes of Stove Top stuffing
- 1 st grade - 2 (6 packs) of apple sauce cups (12 individual cups)
- 2 nd grade- 1 16 oz. bag of frozen corn & 1 small bag of uncooked mini carrots
- 3 rd grade - ½ gallon of milk & 16 oz. container of uncooked macaroni noodles
- 4 th grade - 1 dozen dinner rolls and 1 box of butter/margarine
- 5 th grade - 30 oz. can of pumpkin pie filling

Melissa Sunstrom, with the help of her daughter, Maddie, son-in-law, and other volunteers, supervised the cooking of the entire Thanksgiving meal, remembering Melissa's mother's tradition of supplying and cooking the turkey. Melissa and the third grade students made the pumpkin pudding. The fourth grade helped with the set up and the fifth grade helped in the kitchen. Below are before and after pictures of this event.

The Day School Board



From the Mission Board

Trunk or Treat Recap

A big THANK YOU to all the participants in this year's Trunk or Treat. The weather was perfect, trunks were creative and fun, and the volunteer help was amazing. There were 15 decorated trunks, 233 children attended (along with parents and grandparents), candy galore (thanks to generous congregation members), and a wonderful feeling of community spirit. Everyone looks forward to next year!

Thanks to the following for trunks: Dave Carnes, Janet Lister, Denise Fabric, Kirsten Hall, Stan Stigdon, Pastor Alms, Maria Franz, Christina Unglesbee, Cat Garvy, Kate Baeder, Diamond Pryor, Sharon Petty, Betsy Mitchell, Angela Williams, Deanna Dell'Acqua.

Thanks to the following for helping before, during and after: Steve Haar (logistics), Stan Stigdon (printing), Brian Erwin, Kevin Dungey, Andia Orujov, Barb Haar, Linda Klingmeyer, Karyn Borth, Paul Baeder, Norm Giguere, Cameron Jones.

We had 2 prayer requests, were able to give out some family devotional booklets, and offered all who attended the opportunity to participate with us in the Shoe Box project.

Thank you again! Trunk or Treat Committee (Linda Klingmeyer, Betsy Mitchell, Irene Giguere)

Kids Christmas Morning – December 10

Christmas Story, crafts, gingerbread houses and photo op with Santa and Mrs. Claus! It's a wonderful opportunity for children to celebrate the Christmas season. Help is needed to set up Friday night (6:30 – 8:30 pm) and on Saturday to lead crafts, help with crowd flow, and clean up. To joyfully volunteer, see Irene Giguere.



ESL (English as a Second Language)

Our Fall session has ended. The Winter Session begins on January 23. Classes meet on Monday and Thursday nights, 7:15 – 9:00. If you are interested in volunteering, please talk with Irene Giguere.

Missionary Support

Deaconess Caitlin and Pastor Jeancarlos Ramirez are back in Lima, Peru. Check out their work online: www.facebook.com/RamirezMissions

Coat Collection- OGT

The OGT coat collection continues until December 15. We have already delivered 140 coats to St. Thomas, which were given out during their free Thanksgiving dinner. In the next several weeks, coats will be given out at a Baltimore City school and also delivered to Faith and Work, to be distributed to the community in West Baltimore. Coats are also shared with Helping Up Mission, Linda's Legacy, and other churches and charities. Thank you for coat donations and prayers!

Invite Your Neighbors

Watch your email for the following digital image that you can use on social media to invite others to our Christmas services. We will also have printed postcards for everyone to take home and hand out to all you meet.



Come and see the
Newborn King
at
St. Paul

Christmas Eve Services (Sat., 12/24)
7 PM Family Service
10 PM Candlelight Festival Service

Christmas Day (Sun., 12/25)
10 AM Christmas Morning Service

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www.stpaulcatonsville.org

News from Concordia Prep

Cookie Walk Fundraiser for the Music Department at Concordia Prep

The CPS Music department will be putting on a Cookie Walk fundraiser on Sunday, December 4th from 4-6 PM. There will be a wide variety of cookies, as well as hot chocolate and cider. There will also be special music performances from 4:30-5:30 by our very own CPS students, concluding with a Christmas Sing-A-Long led by the Middle school and Upper School choirs. Put on your favorite Christmas sweater and join us in the Bridges Media Center on December 4th!

Christmas Program

The Concordia Prep Music Department will present its annual Christmas concert on Tuesday night December 13th at 6:30 PM. This program will feature Sacred and Secular Christmas music from the Middle School and Upper School music groups. It will take place at Immanuel Lutheran Church at 5701 Loch Raven Blvd, Baltimore, MD 21239. Doors to the church will open at 6:00 PM and we would love for you to join us as we make a joyful noise to the Lord!.