



Walking Together

St. Paul Lutheran Church and School
Catonsville, MD
December 2025

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Advent is not the biggest church year season. Certainly, Christmas and Easter and even Lent get more attention. But Advent seems to capture our situation and what it is like to live in this world.

Advent situates us in the darkness. There is less and less light when we go outside. The days are getting shorter, leading to the “shortest day of the year”. The sunlight wanes and often hides behind gray clouds. The lessons and hymns point out that this darkness out in the natural world only mirrors what is true of us in our spiritual lives and in the world. It is dark out there. We stumble around perpetually trying to improve ourselves, but we always crash into the reality of our inability to really change who we are. The world we live in is forever plunging into the darkness of some new crisis or cruelty or injustice.

But the Scriptures we hear in this season point to a new hope, a new story that begins in the darkness but will overcome it. Christ will return, there will be a new heaven, and a new earth, sin and sighing will melt away. The birth of this new one, celebrated at the very darkest time of the year, with its lights and carols and Luke chapter two directs us to the incarnation of God among us. He is the light and shines His light on us. He does not shun us in our mess but come to give Himself to us in mercy.

We know all this only by faith. It is still December, it is still cold, it is still dark. The good news is now but not yet. We have and believe and grasp God’s promises but must live through the opposites day to day. That’s Advent! Christ is coming, the angels are singing, drawing us to Bethlehem. The new world we long for lays in a manger amid the cattle and the straw and the glory to God in the highest. It may be dark but there is light, the light of Christ.

Pastor Alms

NEWS FROM THE ELDERS

Networking St. Paul's Reach

At the elders meeting in November, The elders discussed the “St. Paul 2030” document. This document, put together mainly by Pastor Alms, Chris Parsons, and Aaron Nelson, lays out our congregational direction over the next 5 years. Unifying our direction will indicate our priorities and will allow St. Paul to develop plans and set goals to achieve those outcomes. There are 3 outcomes named: 1) enhancing St. Paul School, 2) expanding our outreach programs, and 3) strengthening St. Paul congregation’s ability to help its members grow and develop spiritually. The 2 outcomes that the elders have fully embraced and will take some responsibility for are expanding our outreach programs and strengthening St. Paul congregation’s ability to help its members grow and develop spiritually. Expanding our outreach programs means that St. Paul would partner with other LCMS churches and organizations in order draw new people to Christ and connect them to our Lutheran community. This could mean, for example, developing a Bible study for students at the University of Maryland – Baltimore County (UMBC) or even planting a new church within about 10 miles of St. Paul. Spiritual growth and development occur not just in Bible classes but also within the context of fellowship opportunities that result in trusting friendships and relationships. It would also enable many topics such as parenting and other practical Christian topics to be discussed in addition to maintaining a focus on Lutheran theology and doctrine. By 2030, St. Paul’s members will have expanded our community.

St. Paul Prayer Chain

The St. Paul Prayer Chain began and exists to inform St. Paul members of the prayer concerns of our members, family, and friends via email. At this point, there are 47 members of the Prayer Chain. If you would like to join and receive these prayer requests, please contact me in church or email me (Kevin Dungey) to be added to the distribution list. This is a powerful ministry of St. Paul. It is a profound blessing to be linked together in praying for others to our Loving God.

New Member Orientation

A “Welcome to St. Paul” event will be held on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at 9 AM. This event is an orientation for our new members (and anyone else who is interested) to the workings of St. Paul, to how St. Paul is organized and what the various Boards and committees do.

In His service,
Kevin Dungey,
Board of Elders

ADVENT SERVICES: A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

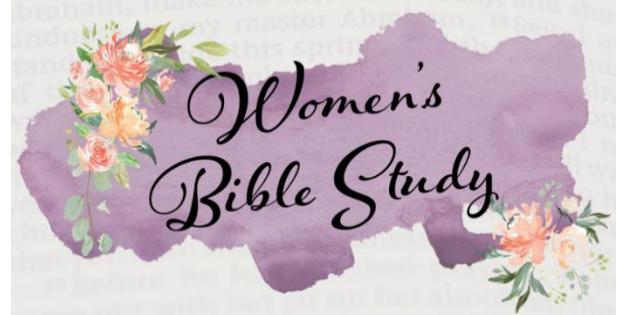
Advent services at St. Paul will be held December 3, 10 and 17. Times will be at 11 am and at 7:00 p.m. Our Advent theme will be” A Light in the Darkness” We will see how Christ brings light to a dark world and to us. Plan to come to prepare for the coming of Christ and for the celebration of his birth.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD: SERVICES

Christmas Eve: Family Service, 7 p.m. (no Communion)
Christmas Eve; Candlelight Service, 10 p.m. (Communion)
Christmas Day: Lessons and Carols, 10 a.m. (Communion)

PREPARE YOUR HEART FOR CHRISTMAS – WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Join us for a special 3-week Women's Bible Study on Sunday mornings, November 30–December 14, as we prepare our hearts for Christmas! Each week we'll explore themes of hope and faith from the Winter 2021 Lutheran Woman's Quarterly



SUNDAY SWEETS AND TREATS

It's so nice to share a sweet treat after church as we gather for fellowship. There is a regular group of people who donate delicious snacks and treats, but there are times when no one signs up. Emily Kolenda and Lynette Frech are coordinating the Sweets and Treats sign up which is located on the volunteer board at the top of the stairs.

If you wish to make a monetary contribution or supply a snack, just let us know. We will provide set up and clean up. It would be our pleasure to serve your cakes, cookies, cheese and crackers, or fruit. Whatever you'd like to donate is greatly appreciated. The drinks and paper products are provided. So grab your partner and start baking.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS AVAILABLE

Advent devotional books are available in the Narthex. The January – March Portals of Prayer is also, in the Narthex.

CHRISTMAS HAPPENINGS/OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. PAUL

Food Bags for St. Thomas: Last day to bring your bag is December 19th
ECC Christmas Program: December 12th at 10 a.m.
Kids Christmas Morning - December 13th
Cookie Walk: December 14th
Coat Collection: Last Day is December 17th
Elementary School Christmas Program: December 18th at 6 p.m.

KIDS CHRISTMAS MORNING

Join our St Paul family on Saturday, December 13th as we celebrate the “Reason for the Season!” We’ll hear the Christmas story, make crafts and gingerbread houses, and take photos with Santa! Register for timed entry. (Annual Kid's Christmas Morning - St. Paul Lutheran Church And School) To joyfully volunteer, see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, or contact Karyn Borth.



ANGEL TREE

The Angel Tree board is in the narthex. Please choose an angel, sign your name on the list, buy and return your present by Wednesday, December 17. If there are any questions about the gifts needed, contact Betsy Mitchell or Irene Giguere for an alternative gift. Giving a gift is a wonderful way to start the Christmas season!



OGT COAT DRIVE

Thank you for those bags of warm coats! The red Coatmobile will continue to be in the church parking lot Sunday mornings until December 14. Since November 1st , we had 2 major coat deliveries, several hundred coats each, to the Wyneken Project (St. Thomas LC) and Appalachia. Coats are now being given out to Faith & Work, local schools, Linda's legacy and local charities to distribute to those in need in their areas. Children's coats/jackets are still a major need-they go out as fast as they come in. Let Irene Giguere know if you would be willing to go to the Warehouse on Mondays in December to sort, pack and label coats for distribution.



SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS: LUTHERAN WORSHIP

Vicar Malmstrom will present a Bible Class on “Lutheran Worship” on December 7, 14, 21 and 28th.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD: THANK YOU!



Church and school put together over 140 shoeboxes this year. They go out to children in need around the world together with the message of the Gospel. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

GREETINGS FROM THE ASSET MANAGEMENT BOARD!

Learning Cottage Update

We are still making slow progress on the Learning Cottage. Construction on the Learning Cottage modular itself is proceeding while we are working with a civil engineering firm on a site plan for the building permit as well as a zoning analysis. Once the building permit is obtained and construction is complete, we will be able to determine a date for delivery and installation.

We will continue to provide progress updates on the Learning Cottage via the newsletter.

Cemetery House Sale

We are still having trouble getting the local government to correct the use designation error with the cemetery property and have filed an official appeal. As with the Learning Cottage, we will keep providing updates via the newsletter as we have them.

Other Updates

We have been experiencing more problems with the boiler system in the month of November. Back in May, when the congregation voted to use the ERC funding toward the Learning Cottage, we also voted to use the remainder of the ERC funding toward replacing the aging boiler system with a new, modern design with built-in redundancy. While it is not feasible for the replacement to happen during this winter, we are working on putting together all the required information to begin soliciting bids for the project, in the hopes that we will be in a position to start the boiler replacement over the summer of 2026.

If you have any questions or concerns for the Asset Management Board, please see Brad Johnson.

Blessings to all,
Brad Johnson

GENEROSITY AND GIVING NOTES

1. We continue to ask you to think about and pray about how much you should give to St. Paul in 2026. The simple answer is probably more than you give now. St. Paul very much appreciates your generosity and support of the church and school.
2. Offering envelopes for 2026 will be available in the month of December. Remember that the “white envelopes” are the main avenue for general fund offerings. The “blue envelopes” are for the mortgage and utility expenses.
3. Online giving is available via text (410-888-0161) and on the church website: <https://stpaulcatonsville.org/donation/>.
4. End of the tax year giving: to be included for tax year 2025 St. Paul need to receive your donations by December 31st. The last worship service opportunity for offerings is December 28th.

You may send a check via the US mail to St. Paul Lutheran 2001 Old Frederick Rd., Catonsville, MD 21228. These must be postmarked by December 31st. You may give electronically until the end of the day December 31st.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH EVENT

All high school youth are invited to a game night and ornament decorating on Friday, December 5 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

ORDER POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Order poinsettias to help beautify our worship for Christmas. Orders are \$15.25 each and are needed by November 30th. Envelopes are on the credenza in the narthex, and orders can be left in a box there.



MILK OR JUICE CARTONS NEEDED

We are collecting cartons for the Gingerbread House activity at Kids Xmas Morning. Please wash with hot soapy water and air dry. The lids are not needed. Drop them off next to the candy bin in the foyer.

CANDY DONATIONS NEEDED

We are accepting candy donations for Kids Xmas Morning. Please take a list from the bin in the foyer. Right now we especially need 2 pound bags of powdered sugar and any brand plain, regular size graham crackers.

WOMENS GUILD

Ladies please pay attention to news and notes over the next few weeks as we begin to gear up for the Holiday Season.

Carolyn Louden



NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOL

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

Is there any other season in the school year that can stir up as much fervor as Advent and Christmas? It's particularly exciting for us because we can talk every day about looking forward to the birth of Jesus and the difference his life and love make in our daily lives. November 30 is the first Sunday in Advent. Time to break out the Advent calendar and count down our days until Christmas.

This is a great season for you to get involved in our school activities and see the difference your support is making in the lives of our students and their families. If you attend the morning Advent services on Wednesday at 11:00 am, you'll enjoy music from an assortment of our students, featuring not only our students' voices but also the bell choir.



Please join in on the excitement of Christmas and attend our elementary Christmas program on December 18 at 6:00 p.m. in our sanctuary. If you're not a night owl, you can join us for the final Dress Rehearsal at 1:00 p.m. on December 18.

If you prefer a shorter show and younger students, you'll want to attend our preschool show on December 12 at 10:00 a.m. Either way, we're sure not to disappoint.

Finally, we are taking applications for the 2026/27 school year. I love to keep friends and family close. In that light, please ask your people to contact the school office today to arrange a tour and more information. (410) 747.1924.

LCMS PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT NOMINATIONS

In preparation for the triennial national LCMS convention next summer in 2026, St. Paul may nominate for several positions by February 18th. The nominations are for President, 1st Vice President, and the East-Southeast Regional Vice President. The first two are full-time positions while the third is a not paying, "volunteer" position. All nominees must be ordained pastors of the LCMS. St. Paul may nominate up to two names for each position. If anyone has a name they wish to be considered by St. Paul, please submit to Aaron Nelson by January 15th. St. Paul will hold a Voters meeting to select nominees in late January or early February.

SERVING IN NOVEMBER

	Reader	Greeter	Usher 1	Usher 2
Dec 7	Ken Waibel	Robbin Dungey	Ken Waibel	Jon Brooks
Dec 14	Karen Eichelman	Karyn Borth	Bruce Staudinger	Paul Lubell
Dec 21	JB Jaeger	Joy Brooks	Jim Kyne	David Nguyen
Dec 24 7pm	Kate Baeder	Irene Giguere		
Dec 24 10pm	Ed Cohen	Dave Carnes		
Dec 28	Suzanne Giguere	Pat Wesselman	Roy Krakat	Ed Kester

ESL class

Our Fall session of English classes finished on November 24, with a Thanksgiving party. Students and teachers enjoyed food ranging from dumplings to flautis to burruelos. We had 14 students who faithfully came to class twice a week (the first time in years that we had such consistent attendance). Our winter session begins on Monday, January 19, and our students are already looking forward to the 2026 classes. They are such a joy to teach and are willing to participate in all the learning activities. They also have formed a bond with each other that shows when they laugh together and help each other.

In this season of thanksgiving, I'm very thankful for the wonderful assistants that generously give of their time to partner with these students as they struggle to learn the vocabulary and nuances of our language.

Thank you: Joyce Waibel,
Brian Erwin,
Kirsten Hall,
Martha Wagley,
Mary Techau,
Toni Hiteshew,
and recently
returning, Betsy Whipps.

This ministry makes an impact on peoples' lives because of you

Gratefully, Irene Giguere



DAILY READINGS

ADVENT 2025	Nov. 30 2025	First S. in Advent	Isaiah 2:1–5	Psalm 122	Rom. 13:(8–10) 11–14	Matt. 21:1–11 or Matt. 24:36–44
	Dec. 7	Second S. in Advent	Isaiah 11:1–10	Psalm 72:1–7	Rom. 15:4–13	Matt. 3:1–12
	Dec. 14	Third S. in Advent	Isaiah 35: 1–10	Psalm 146	James 5:7–11	Matt. 11:2–15
	Dec. 21	Fourth S. in Advent	Isaiah 7:10–17	Psalm 24	Rom. 1:1–7	Matt. 1:18–25
	Dec. 24	The Nativity of Our Lord (<i>Christmas Eve</i>)	Isaiah 7:10–14	Psalm 110:1–4	1 John 4:7–16	Matt. 1:18–25
CHRISTMAS 2025	Dec. 25	The Nativity of Our Lord (<i>Christmas Midnight</i>)	Isaiah 9:2–7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11–14	Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)
		The Nativity of Our Lord (<i>Christmas Dawn</i>)	Isaiah 62:10–12	Psalm 98	Titus 3:4–7	Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)
		The Nativity of Our Lord (<i>Christmas Day</i>)	Isaiah 52:7–10	Psalm 2	Heb. 1:1–6 (7–12)	John 1:1–14 (15–18)
	Dec. 28	First S. after Christmas	Isaiah 63:7–14	Psalm 111	Gal. 4:4–7	Matt. 2:13–23
	or	The Holy Innocents, Martyrs	Jer. 31:15–15	Psalm 54	Rev. 14:1–5	Matt. 2:13–18
	Dec. 31	Eve of the Circ. and Name of Jesus (<i>New Year's Eve</i>)	Isaiah 30:(8–14) 15–17	Psalm 90:1–12	Rom. 8:31b–39	Luke 12:35–40

ST PAUL SUPPORTS : OUR MISSIONARIES IN ROMANIA

Benjamin and Ella Goehring serve the Lord through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the Eurasia region, based in Brasov, Romania. In this role, Benjamin teaches English as a second language to non-native English speakers. These classes provide practical assistance while also serving as a vehicle for proclamation of the Gospel. Their home congregation is St. Paul Lutheran Church, Clarence Center, N.Y.

Benjamin holds a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Russian from the University of Rochester (2018) and a Master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from the Warmer School of Education (2020). In 2016, Benjamin studied abroad at St. Petersburg State University in Russia. He taught English as a New Language for four years in Greece Central School District, also located in Rochester, N.Y.

Ella also attended the University of Rochester to study Linguistics and Russian. During her time at the university, she served as a workshop leader for linguistics classes and volunteered by visiting elderly Russian-speaking Jews in the community. In their free time, both Benjamin and Ella enjoy playing the fiddle and learning languages.

Pray for Benjamin and Ella as they serve in Romania and ask God to be with them as they adjust to life in a new country. Pray also that they would forge strong connections with people — both those in Romania and those in the United States — and that the Holy Spirit would open the hearts of everyone they meet to the Gospel. Give thanks to God for sending Benjamin and Ella to serve His children in this part of the world.



SERVING THE LORD IN THE

Dominican Republic (DR)

NEWS FROM STAN & DANA STIGDON



Fall 2025



Praise & Prayers

• Praise:

- Dana's mom had a successful pacemaker surgery and was able to visit us in the Dominican Republic.
- Healthy granddaughter born in late September.
- An abundance of short term teams to serve in the Dominican Republic next year!

• Prayers:

- Our son Tommy will be having Spinal fusion surgery on December 1st.
- For Stan and Dana as they are separated while Dana cares for Tommy.
- Smooth transitions for Pastor Anderson (Panama) and Makia Adler (Belize) joining LAC to serve as missionaries.
- Fellow missionary Robin fighting breast cancer.



There are many mission service opportunities open to all, both short-term and career. Check out the current list at lcms.org/service.

FORO season is wrapping up! I supported the DR FORO in September and Stan is connected to all of them throughout the region. It's one way to celebrate the arrival of spring and fall, especially since we only have hot/humid and warm/wet as our seasons. We enjoy both seasons, but we especially cherish the people here. They're content, happy, and always ready to lend a hand, as they did with our first flat tire on a major street with cars zipping past. Plus, they're open to hearing the truth in God's word. When we share the clear Gospel, most people are eager to learn more about God's unconditional love. Your support makes this possible.



Eyeglass Clinic

I hosted a MOST Ministries team who provided an eyeglass clinic at a local congregation, Pueblo Nuevo, and its mission outpost, Cien Fuegos. (Yes, you read that right, church plants are starting church plants!) 573 people were reached with the gospel message, eye health information, an eye exam, and 784 glasses were distributed. This not only physically blessed the people of the community, but also exposed them to the church and the clear gospel. This generated enough contacts and interest that the mission in Cien Fuegos is now celebrating the Divine Service weekly.

A View from the Regional Business Managers Desk

What exactly is a FORO? It's a collaborative effort between LCMS Districts, Congregations, Individuals, RSOs, and the LWML, along with local communities, to organize programs and budgets that support spreading the gospel, planting Lutheran churches, and showing mercy. Throughout the region, we have 13 FOROs supporting 42 church plants. We hold planning meetings in the Spring and Fall. If you're interested in experiencing missionaries working with the local people and learning about FOROs consider "shadowing a FORO." The DR is one of the easiest to shadow, but Belize, Chile, Peru, Panama, and Puerto Rico are also great options. Feel free to reach out to me to learn more.

Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Stan & Dana. Make checks payable to LCMS at:

Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, IA 51034
On the memo line include
Stigdon-Dominican Republic
or call a donor care
representative: 888-930-4438.

Local mailing address
(for cards or letters only):
Stan & Dana Stigdon
Apartado 1356
Santiago de los Caballeros
51000 Dominican Republic



QR code to switch to newsletter by email + access to photo album

Orphan Grain Train



COAT COLLECTION: November 1 – December 15

Orphan Grain Train will again be collecting winter coats and jackets. The garments will be given to several inner-city Lutheran churches to distribute to their surrounding communities. They will also be distributed through local relief organizations. We have need of new or gently used winter coats/jackets for men, women and children - but this year especially, for children.

Coats and jackets can be brought to St. Paul any Sunday morning from 9 – 11:30 a.m. starting November 9 and continuing until December 14. The Giguere COATMOBILE (i.e. red pickup truck) will be in the parking lot. Bag your coats and put them in the bed of the truck. You may also place other items for OGT (bedding, clothing, fabric, medical equipment, shoes, soft toys, children's books, etc.) in the truck. If you desire, coats can also be brought to the OGT Warehouse, 621 East West Blvd, Millersville on Tuesdays, 9- 12 noon, 5 – 7 pm.