

September 2020 Newsletter

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, School, & Preschool
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)
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Worship Schedule Alert!

For safety and logistical reasons, our Church Council has determined that we will continue our summer worship schedule for at least the month of September. That means services will be held Thursday at 6:30pm, Saturday at 6:30pm, and Sunday at 9:00am throughout the month of September.

Bible Study will resume Wednesday, September 9th at 8:45am and Sunday, September 13th at 10:00am in the church sanctuary.

Branches Band

Will be here September 17, 19, and 20!

We look forward to having WELS musicians *Branches Band* with us for worship the third weekend of September! Andy & Rachel Braun and Jeremy Bakken will share God's Word through song during our services. Jeremy is the grandson of member Yvonne Schmolesky. While based in Milwaukee, the group has served over 500 WELS and ELS churches all over the country and Canada. We welcome them back to St. Paul's!

Sunday School News

Sunday School will begin this fall in our homes. Materials from Northwestern Publishing House will be sent/given to each home and the Bible stories will be presented by trained WELS teachers online. We hope to get back to the classrooms as time passes, but for now this is our best option as determined by our staff and Council (because of room use, teacher and student safety, and contact tracing). Other area WELS congregations are doing this also or something very similar.

Bible Study

If you are a bit on the hyperactive side or have had trouble concentrating during the lingering viral malaise, this fall's Bible study is for you! We'll look at *brief* biblical topics and learn some amazing and sometimes rather weird facts about Bible times. We'll send the pack of information home with you as well so you can look ahead and perhaps Google interesting information on each topic that you can add to the mix as we progress -- if you want. We will build off of one another's knowledge and hopefully have some fun doing it!

- Is Carmel an ice cream topping (or is that caramel?)
- Who wore an ephod, and why in the world?
- What kind of games did people play when they were bored 3,000 years ago?
- Can you give me the recipe for papyrus?

You get the picture. So that we can spread out, we will meet in the church sanctuary on Wednesday mornings at 8:45am and Sundays at 10:00am. BYOC (bring your own coffee -- in a spill proof container ☺) for the time being. All adults and teens are invited.

Watch for Activity/Group Updates

More information will be coming in future weeks about various organizations and when they will resume. WInGS, Senior Choir, Chimes, and Girls and Boys Pioneers will be off during the month of September.

We will have information about opening dates or postponements in the bulletin and on our website.

Public School Catechism

Our 7th & 8th grade catechism students will meet in person on Monday evenings in the fellowship hall. We will meet for a shorter period of time -- about an hour. Some learning will be done here and some at home.

A parents meeting will take place (or has taken place, depending on when you read this newsletter) Monday, Aug. 31 to give families all the details and plans. We look forward to forging ahead with instruction in the life giving Word!

Welcome, New Members!

How blessed we are to receive new members into our St. Paul's church family over the past months! It's exciting and encouraging to know that the Lord has led these new brothers and sisters in the faith to be with us for worship, fellowship, and prayer!

- *Roger and Rita Stahmann, Amanda Stahmann*, from St. Peter's, Fond du Lac.
- *Marion Stahmann*, from St. Peter's, Fond du Lac
- *Cathy Mensch*, from Trinity, Kiel (back with us at St. Paul's)
- *Joseph and Abby Loescher*, from St. Paul's, North Mankato, MN
- *Joshua and Rogette Engle, Lillie, and Waylon*, from Faith, Fond du Lac
- *Mike and Linda Mathwig*, from St. Peter's, Fond du Lac
- *Gary Peterson*, by adult confirmation
- *Tyler Meyer*, by adult confirmation
- *Kathie Sebestyen*, by profession of faith (back with us at St. Paul's)

Welcome! May God bless and keep them in his care as we work together to bring Christ's saving, forgiving love to many more!

Financial Update

Our Council has been amazed at the generosity of our members during the virus outbreak and the closure of our church for a couple of months. While we had services online, people still brought their offerings to church on Sunday mornings, sent them in by mail, or used our electronic giving options. We thank God for moving the hearts of his dear people to do so!

We would like to note that our summer has again brought about a drop off in our offerings. You can see the fluctuation in the numbers below. St. Paul's is "open for business" -- school and all! Thankfully, the last seven months we have underspent our budget by about \$7,023.

2020	<u>Current</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Mortgage</u>
Feb	-\$12,431	-\$1,041	+\$6,348
Apr	+\$15,663	-\$ 433	+\$4,987
May	+\$18,334	+\$ 822	+\$3,206
Jun	+\$ 8,433	+\$1,914	+\$ 774
Jul	-\$ 515	+\$1,071	-\$1,040

Retirement

After 34 years in North Fond du Lac and 38½ years in the ministry, the Behnkes will begin their retirement days at the end of 2020. We praise our good and gracious Lord for the opportunities he has given us to serve the congregation and community and for the blessings we have received through you! At the present time we plan to continue to live in our home on the north side of town as we weigh our future options. *"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven"* (Eccl. 3:1).

Please watch for upcoming information about a Call Meeting at which the voters of the congregation will extend a divine call to an associate pastor. Also, there will be announcements from the trustees in the coming weeks about the secretary position.

God Is With Us

What strange times. For some, what a dangerous time, physically and emotionally. For others, what an economically troubled time. The times might be unprecedented for us, but others have gone through even worse times: wars, plagues, tsunamis, earthquakes. We think we'll never have to go through such things, then reality hits us like a ton of bricks: this fallen world is not paradise. In fact, it can sometimes be downright hard and cruel. We have all learned that the tough times can linger past our threshold of patience. Here are a few thoughts:

- It is not wise for us to put "all our stock" into the things of this world. Earthly things can be gone in moment or over many moments.
- We are all learning not to take things for granted that we once simply accepted as normal. We long for "normal" -- and perhaps will appreciate it much more in the future.
- Let's not let the times divide us. That's what the devil is trying to do. He wants to divide individuals, communities, societies, and especially churches. We are in this together.
- We can remember, as David wrote, "My times are in your hands" (Ps. 31:15). Whatever number of days we have and whatever the circumstances in which we live, God is with us; and because of Jesus we will be with him in the perfect joy of heaven. No strange times there.