

The Epistle

Resolution to Read



What is your New Year’s resolution? Will you lose weight? Eat more healthily? Spend less money? Does the enthusiasm that you feel for your New Year’s Resolution ever fizzle out? Do you find yourself feeling empty and disappointed? This year, let us all commit to a resolution that is sure to satisfy and will always be a source of comfort. This year, let us resolve to read and listen to Scripture.

When we read the Bible, God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit to bolster our faith and to guide our lives.

(Continued on page 2)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Dorcas Circle & Srs. Flying Solo 4
- Celebrations 6
- Drama Ministry..... 6
- Ministry Schedule . 7
- Prayer Requests..... 8
- Live Nativity 9

Quarterly Meeting Jan. 29

In our first-quarter congregational meeting, after worship on Jan. 29, we will review 2016 and 4th quarter financials.

Resolution to Read cont'd

God longs to speak to you and to encourage you.

How are we to read the Bible? Martin Luther, the great reformer of the Church in the 1500's after whom we Lutherans are named, taught that we may practice three steps whenever we read a Biblical passage to help us understand Scripture and apply it to our daily lives:

Pray: Pray that God will speak to you through the Holy Spirit so that you may understand what you are

God longs to speak to you and to encourage you.

Valley Inter-faith Donation Items of the Month:

Toothpaste and Toothbrushes



reading. Jesus says, "If you... know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13). For this reason, you may be confident that God will answer your prayers by sending the Holy Spirit to speak the words of encouragement, guidance, conviction, or healing that you need to hear from the Bible.

Ponder: Think deeply about what you have just read. Read the passage aloud several times and memorize verses. What particular words, phrases, or images call to your heart? Reflect intentionally on whatever catches your attention as you read a passage. Meditate by asking in prayer what the Holy Spirit desires for you to learn from your reading.

Practice: Practice living out what God has revealed to you in Scripture. Recall the passages that you have memorized in times of sorrow, suffering, struggle, and fear. When we recall Scripture in our troubles each

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Resolution to Read cont'd

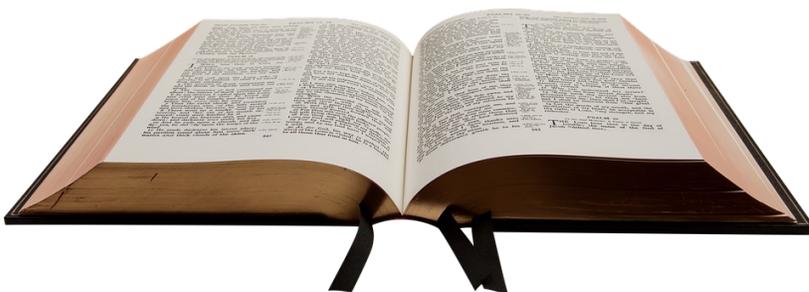
day, we discover the Bible's power and relevance.

When we Pray, Ponder, and Practice what we hear from the Bible, we will experience God speak to us to strengthen our faith in his promises for our lives. If you would like to deepen your understanding of Scripture, hear God's word for your life, and learn with others how to practice these three steps to reading the Bible, then please attend one or more of the Bible studies offered this month.

In addition to the weekly Bible study Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. on the upcoming Sunday Scripture passages and the Men's Lunch and Bible Study on January 11, a **new Bible study series** is offered on Thursdays from 7-8:30 pm starting January 19. The series is entitled "*Here I am, Lord*," and will study stories of people in the Bible who were called by God for special purposes so that we might learn how God is calling each of us. This series will also complement our Mission and Visioning work this year by preparing us to listen for who God is calling St. Paul to be and what God is calling us to do for our neighbors. No prior knowledge is necessary to attend, and all are welcome!

In the name of Christ who comes to us in God's Word,

Pastor Emily Beckering



Epiphany Service Jan. 6



Epiphany is the celebration of the three wise men visiting Jesus. God led the wise men to Jesus by the star, which shone to reveal Jesus Christ to all nations. The wise men brought the news of Jesus Christ back to the East, helping the Gospel to spread throughout the world.

On Epiphany, we celebrate that Jesus is the savior of the whole world. We'll celebrate this festival in worship with a procession for children of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh on Friday, Jan. 6th, at 7:00 pm rather than on a Sunday, so don't miss it!

Thrivent Workshop for Couples, Jan. 15

Money is the number one cause of fights in a marriage... but it doesn't have to be.

Join us for *From Me to We* on Sunday, January 15, 2017 from noon to 1:15 pm here at St. Paul Lutheran Church. We'll discover what values you and your spouse have in common, where your financial attitudes may differ, and create common goals to help you reach your dreams for the future. In just 75 minutes, couples will learn what it takes to get their marriage off to a strong financial start.

The interactive, free workshop will be presented by Thrivent Financial representative Mark N. Wilkins. No financial products
(Continued on page 5)

Dorcas Circle

The ladies are ready to pick up their pins and needles and scissors again on Wednesday, January 18 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. (or as long as we can still function). We did not meet in December because it was so close to Christmas, so there will be a couple of make-up days in the coming months. The ladies are always so grateful to

be able to come and WORK twice in one month! If any ladies (or men) would like to join us, we can always find something for you to do.



Seniors Flying Solo

We enjoyed immensely our "Craft Day" with Chrissy Harris, and we thank her for the patient coaxing she exhibited! It was such a fun day that perhaps we will schedule another day in a few months.

Our next activity will be on **Wednesday, January 25**. We plan to meet at the church at 11 a.m. and go to Lucy's for lunch together. Then—return to the church library to view the film *Come Dance at my Wedding*, a story of an estranged father/daughter relationship that... If you prefer to only join us for the movie, be at the library by 12:15.

IMPORTANT! On Friday, March 10, we have reservations to go to LaComedia Dinner Theatre for lunch and to see The Church Basement Ladies in *Away in a Basement*. We have seen these ladies several times in the past and have enjoyed the fun. Cost for the lunch and performance is \$38, which I must send to LaComedia by February 10. So please let me know ASAP if you plan to attend with our group. I will need the amount due by **Sunday, February 10**. This is only two months away, so make your plans now for a fun day!

Challenge Result: Blessings for All!



The results from the Christmas Challenge sponsored by the Stewardship Committee for our families in need are in: THE YOUTH WIN at \$503.97! Adults contributed \$409.88!

After the close of the competition, an additional \$500 was given. That's \$1413.85 that you, the people of St.

Thrivent cont'd will be sold.

To reserve a seat, please email Jane Owen at mail@stpaulreading.org or call the church office at 821-0987. There is no cost to participate. The deadline to register is Thursday, Jan. 5.

Together, we were not only able to purchase a furnace, we also provided for nine other families in need at St. Paul this Christmas.

Paul, gave in the name of Jesus! Seven other ELCA congregations here in Cincinnati had offered to contribute financially when they heard about one family's need for a new furnace, but due to your exceptional generosity, we only needed to accept the gift from Good Shepherd Lutheran in Kenwood. Together, we were not only able to purchase the furnace, we also provided for nine other families in need at St. Paul this Christmas, and will donate \$100 to Lutheran Disaster Response so that we can help other families beyond our walls just as our fellow ELCA congregations here in Cincinnati helped us.

This story is a testament to our need for our sisters and brothers in the synod. You have witnessed to God's abundance and to just what God can do through the body of Christ!

Thank you for embodying Jesus—for being Jesus with and for one another—in such a tangible way during this Christmas season.

God is good, and God is at work in you in powerful, life-changing ways, dear people of St. Paul.

Pastor Emily and the Stewardship Committee

For more information, please contact Pastor Emily at 821-0987 or stpaulpastor@gmail.com.

No products will be offered for sale at this workshop.

Thrivent Financial representatives are licensed insurance agents/producers of Thrivent Financial, the marketing name for Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Appleton, WI. They are also registered representatives of Thrivent Investment Management Inc., 625 Fourth Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55415. For additional important information, visit Thrivent.com/disclosures.

Service of Christian Uni- ty, Jan. 22

St. Paul will be hosting a Service of Christian Unity in partnership with the Reading Council of Churches. We will gather at noon in the fellowship hall for a potluck luncheon with our sisters and brothers from these congregations. St. Paul is responsible for main dishes, so please bring a main dish to share.

Following lunch, we will worship together as a celebration of the unity that the Holy Spirit brings across denominations. As we commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, we celebrate that despite years of separation in church history, today we can worship and work together in Jesus' name in Reading.

Celebrations in January



- 4 Jack Moorhouse; Erin Detzen
- 10 Rick Hedges
- 11 Pat Edwards

- 14 Michelle Flege Hollon
- 18 Jeff Ford; Chris Geiger
- 21 Sherry Bronner; Janet King
- 23 Ali Truax
- 24 Christian Lohmeier
- 28 Mathea Harbaugh
- 29 Chandler Clemmons
- 30 Jamie Hirt; Robyn Reed

Drama Ministry

I would like to thank everyone for their help with the Drama Ministry and this production of *Over the River and Through the Woods*, especially the Cast and Crew and the Kitchen Staff. Thank you, Thank you, and Thank you.



It was a great success. The Pasta Bar Lunch raised \$280.00, the Raffle raised \$375.00. With Donations \$75.00 and the Ticket Sales of \$1065.00, minus the expenses, we have \$696.14 to the good. Thank you Lord for blessing the Drama Ministry, and Thank you all for your help and support.

Coming up next will be the Lenten Show. If you are interested in acting or helping out in any way, please let me know. Many hands make light work.

David Hill

St. Paul Players

January Ministry Schedule

<p>Month-Long Ministries</p>	<p>Altar Guild: Mary Wagner, Linens; Marty Lohmeier, Setup; Linda Lawson, Clean-up Bulletins: Ron & Carole Replogle Greeters: <i>Volunteer Needed</i></p>
<p>Jan. 1 1 Christmas</p>	<p>Assisting Minister: Terry McDowell Acolyte: Bridget Cathcart Reader: <i>Volunteer Needed</i></p>
<p>Jan. 6 Epiphany</p>	<p>Assisting Minister: Leandra Hawkins Acolyte: Grant Lohmeier Book Bearer: Katie Sturgill Reader: Sarah Papin</p>
<p>Jan. 8 Baptism of Our Lord</p>	<p>Assisting Minister: Taylor Beckering Acolyte: Cole Isaacs Book Bearer: Matthew Lawson Reader: <i>Volunteer Needed</i> Communion Ministers: Ron & Shirley Harbaugh</p>
<p>Jan. 15 2 Epiphany</p>	<p>Assisting Minister: Doug Lohmeier Acolyte: Annie Lohmeier Reader: <i>Volunteer Needed</i> Communion Minister: Elinor Schieman</p>
<p>Jan. 22 3 Epiphany</p>	<p>Assisting Minister: Nancy Erbeck Acolyte: Maggie McDowell Reader: <i>Volunteer Needed</i> Communion Ministers: Ron & Shirley Harbaugh</p>
<p>Jan. 29 4 Epiphany</p>	<p>Assisting Minister: Terry McDowell Acolyte: Donny Cathcart Book Bearer: Alanna Cathcart Reader: <i>Volunteer Needed</i> Communion Minister: Elinor Schieman</p>

Thank you! and Dedicating the New Year

As we begin a new year, we reflect on what God has done for and through us in 2016. Thank you for contributing your time, talents, and financial resources to fund St. Paul's mission of helping others know Jesus.

You and God know all the ways that you have served his people this year, and we are grateful. We will give thanks to God for 2016 and dedicate 2017 to the glory of God during worship on Sunday, January 1st—New Year's Day. Plan on coming to worship on New Year's Day to start the year in the Name of Jesus.

Thank you from the Stewardship and Worship Committees

Our Life Together

For emergency pastoral care, please call Pastor Emily Beckering, 513-760-5884.

If you have requests for the Prayer Chain, call Penny Huber, 513-931-6420. To remove people from the list, contact the office.

We pray for **Mary and her granddaughter Kyra** (friend of Paul Pieper); **Jim Barry** (Kathy Hirt's dad); **Berkeley** (the Curlesses' great-grandson); **Jimmy Bertheaud** (friend of the Portmanns); **Bill Corbett** (Kings' neighbor); **Harold Curless; Debbie, Steve, Jessica Davis** (friends of Holly Ford); **Amberly Derby** (friend of Molly McDowell); **Jeremy Doan** (Jean Winkle's grandson); **Jerry Doan** (Jean Winkle's son-in-law); **Kathy Downie** (Sieckmans' neighbor); **Bus Faulkner; Larry Faulkner** (Bus and Freda's son); **Justin Feldman** (Bess Sturgill's father); **Steve Headley; Les Helmich and his daughter Elaine; Greg Hershey** (Steve Headley's cousin); **Sandy Hill** (David Hill's sister-in-law); **Matt Huber** (Penny Huber's son); **Karen Kerlin; Kevin Kilgore** (the Spelmans' niece's husband); **Jay King** (son of Jamie King, who cleans the church); **Steve Koller and family** (Adam and Kathy Pirmann's brother/in-law); **Loretta Kombrink** (Marilyn Portmann's aunt); **Charlotte Langefeld; Marty Lohmeier; Cindy Mayhugh; Doug Meyers' family** (friends of the Portmanns); **David Oaks** (Bus Faulkner's son-in-law); **Craig Olsen** (friend of the Sieckmans); **Owners of Alreddy Coffee & Café; William Pratley** (friend of Pastor Emily); **Ron Replogle; Sarah Rupert** (Carolyn Koehl's sister); **James Savory** (Jean Winkle's great-grandson); **Pauline**

Schauer (Cindy Sieckman's cousin); **Michael Schmitt** (Jean Winkle's son-in-law); **Kim Sieckman; Jason Simpson** (Bus and Freda Faulkner's grand-nephew); **Speedy Sizemore** (friend of Marie Calhoun); **Scott Songer** (friend of Jean Winkle); **Crosley Spelman** (Jack and Joyce Spelman's grandson); **John Spelman** (Jack & Joyce Spelman's son); **Britney Jean Teems** (Jean Winkle's granddaughter); **Sherman and Mike Waddle; Susan Winkle** (Jean Winkle's daughter-in-law).

At the death of: **Anna Louise Witker** (Carolyn Koehl's mother).

We pray for those with ongoing health concerns who are unable to come to church every week: **Bernice Baglien, Dottie Bangert, Pat Edwards, Bus Faulkner, Mary Jane Flege, Ruth Jones, Carol Leonard, Marge Malin, Jack and Barbara Moorhouse, Jean Nolte, Heather Segar, Edna Willet.**

We pray for our armed forces members: **Paul Cordes** (Elinor Schieman's grandson); **Jared Forst** (Jim and Loretta's grandson); **John Garbrecht** (Carolyn Koehl's nephew); **Beau Glenn** (Karen Koehl's son-in-law); **Kylie Hahn** (Gretta Hahn's granddaughter); **Chad Harris** (Donald Harris's cousin); **Donald Hosea** (Karen Koehl's son); **Jobeth Ramirez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Joshua Rodriguez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Trent Schwegman** (cousin to the Erbecks and Fords); **Mack Thompson** (Freda and Bus Faulkner's grandson).

Live Nativity 2016 (Pictures by St. Paul Members)



St. Paul
Lutheran Church

Mission
Statement

“As a community of Christian believers, we are called by God to use the many gifts He has given us, within the church and the community, so others may come to know Him.”

Focus on the Forum: History Timeline

This month in our Visioning and Mission process, we are considering how God has been at work in St. Paul and in Reading throughout our history as a church.

Look for a timeline posted in the narthex. All through the month of January, you can write personal stories and memories of the congregation on the timeline.

On Jan. 22, during the adult forum, we will take a tour of the timeline and share our memories of St. Paul through the years so that we might reflect together on God’s faithfulness throughout our history. Focusing on God’s faithfulness in our past will prepare us to wonder about God’s preferred future for us.

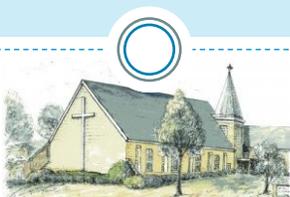
Please take time to write your stories of St. Paul so that we might listen for how God has formed us.

In Christ, Pastor Emily Beckering

St. Paul
Lutheran Church

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
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