

St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA

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Sterling, Illinois 61081-1543
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JULY 2025

In re-reading a portion of Frederick Buechner's book *"Whistling in the Dark: An ABC Theologized,"* I came across these powerful words about the Lord's Prayer. May they help us in our prayer life - individually and corporately as a congregation.

"In the Episcopal order of worship, the priest sometimes introduces the Lord's Prayer with the words,

"Now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say...." The word **bold** is worth thinking about. We do well not to pray the prayer lightly. It takes guts to pray it at all. We can pray it in the unthinking and perfunctory way we usually do only by disregarding what we are saying.

"Thy will be done" is what we are saying. That is the climax of the first half of the prayer. We are asking God to be God. We are asking God to not do what we want but what God wants. We are asking God to make manifest the holiness that is now mostly hidden, to set free in all its terrible splendor the devastating power that is now mostly under restraint. *"Thy kingdom come . . . on earth"* is what we are saying. And if that were suddenly to happen, what then? What would stand and what would fall? Who would be welcomed in and who would be thrown the Hell out? Which if any of our precious visions of what God is and of what human beings are would prove to be more or less on the mark and which would turn out to be phony as three-dollar bills? Boldness indeed. To speak those words is to invite the tiger out of the cage, to unleash a power that makes atomic power look like a warm breeze.

You need to be bold in another way to speak the second half. Give us. Forgive us. Don't test us. Deliver us. If it takes guts to face the omnipotence



that is God's, it takes perhaps no less to face the impotence that is ours. We can do nothing without God. We can have nothing without God. Without God we are nothing.

It is only the words "Our Father" that make the prayer bearable. If God is indeed something like a father, then as something like children maybe we can risk approaching him anyway."

There are a lot of helpful things about the Lord's Prayer in these few words from Buechner. I invite you to read through the above once again - this time a bit more slowly, unpacking each sentence as you go. And let us pray.

Praying with you,

Pastor Mark S. Luepke



This past month we have prayed for the following: Sandy Julifs, Mike, Lori Dewey, Debbie Dybinski, Stacy Verdick, Dylan Wescott, Ken & Sharon Mager, Dianne Miller, Bev Julien, JoAnn Garcia, Betty Steinke, Larry Wahler, and Lila Edeus.

Please contact Sue in the church office if you have a prayer request for the congregational prayer list.

Church Announcements

CLEO (Church Ladies Eating Out)

CLEO meet monthly at 5:30 p.m. at a designated restaurant. The June outing is on Monday, July 28. They will be going to Primo's in Sterling. If you are unable to attend because of bad weather or personal reasons, please join us the next month. If you need a ride or have any questions, please contact Judy Bartel at 815-751-6768. All are welcome!



Menz Group will meet at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sterling on Monday, July 7 at 6:00 p.m.

Please keep our home visitation members and friends in your thoughts and prayers. If you would like the address for anyone listed here, please contact Sue in the church office.

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Shirley Dodd | Lori Dewey | Lila Edeus |
| Katherine Janssen | Sandy Julifs | Viola Koster |
| Cliff Miller | Sandra Sweitzer | Dale Worley |





Thinking of you

Lori Dewey is currently in Chicago recovering from surgery. She hopes to return to the area soon. Anyone wishing to send her a card, her address is: Lori Dewey, 7200 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626.

Join us For Worship

9:00 a.m. worship to praise God.

The Livestream can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#)



St. Paul Year Budget Report

2025 Budget \$293,589 (\$24,466 Monthly)

Totals through June 26, 2025

Budgeted Expenses \$146,796

Offerings/Interest \$66,196

Expenses \$83,429

Lutheran World Relief Quilting

Our next quilting day will be July 16, 2025. We will be in the Social Hall from 9:00 a.m. – Noon, assembling and tying, pinning and sewing quilts.

Thanks for the donations of clean fabric to use within the quilts.

Thank you to all who donated for the Personal Care Kits. We packaged a total of 48 kits. Thus for we have 83 quilts that are complete

If you have questions regarding the quilting contact Dawn Waite (815-631-8142) or Debbie O'Brien (815-441-0257).



Stewardship – Give With Love

You can give without loving,

But you can never love without giving.

Give what you have.

To someone, it may be better than you dare to think.

No one has ever become poor by giving.

Treat your treasures as a trust; God will meet your deepest needs. Use your talents!!

Give generously with a grateful heart!



Lutheran World Relief School Kits

Through the month of **JULY** we will again gather School kits supplies. They will be sent to the needed areas at the same time we take the quilts for the ingathering.

Please purchase the following supplies and leave them in the container in the social hall. We have sewn the backpacks to be used with the supplies. You may take a backpack and fill it with the supplies and return it to the church.

Questions contact Debbie O'Brien (815-441-0257) or call Sue the church office.

Thank you for your support.

LWR School Supplies Shopping List

(All items need to be new)

4- 70 sheet notebooks of wide-or-college-ruled paper. **NO** loose leaf paper.

1-30 centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other. **Hard rulers only please**

1-Pencil sharpener

1-Eraser (2 1/2inches)

1-BLUNT pair of scissors

5-UNSHARPENED #2 Pencils with erasers

5-Black or Blue ballpoint pens (No ink gel)

1-Box of 16 or 24 count crayons



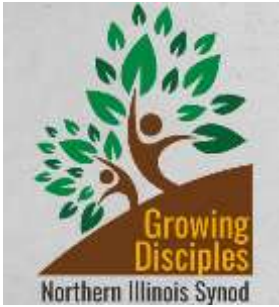
BIRTHDAYS FOR OUR CHURCH MEMBERS & FRIENDS

If you don't see your name on this list or there is a correction to be made,
please let Sue know in the church office.

| | | |
|----|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Pat Glafka | <u>Happy 21st Anniversary</u> |
| | Christy Lincoln | July 2, 2004 |
| 4 | Bev Graunke | Adrian & Stacey Avelar |
| 5 | Bob Dillon | <u>Happy 68th Anniversary</u> |
| 6 | Max Brockman | July 7, 1957 |
| 7 | Shannon Kramer | Dale & Sharon Worley |
| 8 | Dawn Arians | <u>Happy 15th Anniversary</u> |
| 11 | Breann Grell | July 10, 2010 |
| 12 | Sandy Julifs | Dan & Susan Bartel |
| 13 | Jeff Ivarson | <u>Happy 10th Anniversary</u> |
| 14 | Lillyana Reyes | July 11, 2015 |
| 15 | Jennifer Pillars | Tim & Chrissy Zollinger |
| 19 | Daniel Straw | <u>Happy 12th Anniversary</u> |
| 25 | Emily Wolber | July 14, 2012 |
| 26 | Cliff Miller – 99 | Tim & Shannon Kramer |
| | Logan Pillars | <u>Happy 31st Anniversary</u> |
| 27 | Jim O'Brien | July 16, 1994 |
| 31 | Sandra Sweitzer | Jeff & Kjersten Ivarson |
| | | <u>Happy 56th Anniversary</u> |
| | | July 19, 1969 |
| | | Ruben & JoAnn Garcia |
| | | <u>Happy 33rd Anniversary</u> |
| | | July 24, 1992 |
| | | Jeff & Dawn Waite |
| | | <u>Happy 11th Anniversary</u> |
| | | July 24, 2014 |
| | | JJ & Lana Shore |



Northern IL Synod 2025 Focus



The experience of God's love in one's life is a gift the growing disciple feels compelled to share with others. One way our faith becomes active is when we put into words what God has done for us. Words of witness and acts of genuine hospitality directed toward our neighbors create the opportunity through which the Holy Spirit brings others into a relationship with Christ and with the church.

The biblical model for evangelism is relational: friends bring friends to Jesus. The disciples plant seeds and invite our neighbors to come and see. The invitation to come and experience the love that God has poured out, the grace that we have received to be ourselves. The invitation to come and see what it means to dine at the table with sinners, to live and to love like Jesus did.

Sharing our faith with our words and actions is inviting others to join us as we live into the new kingdom Jesus offers us through his death and resurrection.

"Go there and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." - Matthew 28: 19-20

We have received the power of the Holy Spirit in our baptism to be witnesses to the Gospel. This is the same call that the disciples received after Jesus' resurrection.

God prepares other people to experience and respond to the Gospel. God promises to be with us in our effort to share our faith with others.

How might you share your faith with others in the course of daily life? In times of struggle and pain? In your neighborhood? In your home and with your family? At times of life passage and celebrations?

The way each of us shares our faith is personal to us and is a testimony of what God has done in our lives. It is through our words and our actions that others can see who God is and the love that God has poured out. You are invited to find ways each day to invite others to experience the Gospel.



Youth News!

STUDENT MUSICIANS:

This summer, the **UNITE** churches are again hosting student musicians from the Sterling/Rock Falls area. This includes any student completing 7th grade – a just graduated college student. We ask that students share a piece with St. Paul and then arrange to play that piece at other **UNITE** congregations, where you will be paid \$25/service as a guest musician. This is a chance to keep your music skills tip top over the summer, share an IMEA or audition piece you may be working on, or another special piece. Please contact Dawn Zeigler 815.275.3775 or dawn@stpaulsterling.com for all of the details! We can't wait to hear you!



Children's Offering

The July Children's offering will go to towards the purchase of supplies needed for LWR School Kits. Families are also invited to shop for the needed supplies or contribute monetary donations to be used to purchase the items. Grab an empty bag from the coat rack at the back of the sanctuary to take with you. The list of items is attached to the bags.



Mark your Calendar!

Registration is now OPEN for **Community VBS 2025!** Join us **July 20–24** at **Immanuel Lutheran Church in Rock Falls** for True North: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World—an unforgettable week of adventure, worship, and faith-building fun for kids **entering Pre-K through 5th grade**. VBS runs from **6:00–8:00 PM each night**, with a **free dinner served at 5:30 PM**. We're also

looking for volunteers (6th grade through adult) to help lead games, crafts, music, Bible stories, and more. Whether you love being on stage or serving behind the scenes, there's a place for you! Scan the QR code to register kids or sign up to volunteer. Let's help kids discover that when life gets wild, Jesus is our True North!



CommUNITY VBS Worship is on July 27 at 9:30 a.m. at Grandon Civic Center. If it rains, worship service will be held at Immanuel.



JOIN US FOR

SPLASH DAY

AUGUST 10TH

STARTS AT 10:30
DIRECTLY AFTER SERVICE

FREE EVENT WITH SNACKS
AND DRINKS AVAILABLE

ACTIVITIES

SPRINKLERS, WATER
BALLOONS, CHALK,
PLAYGROUND,
TODDLER/BABY FRIENDLY
WATER TOYS, AND MORE!

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
1701 16TH AVE, STERLING, IL 61081

Community Announcements

Breaking Bread Together (BBT)

Please join us for BBT in July! Breaking Bread Together or BBT is a time of sharing life, God's love and a meal together! These are no host gatherings for all interested parties. People of St. Paul, St. John's and friends are welcome!

**Breaking
Bread
Together
BBT**

Join us for BBT in July on Monday, July 14 at 11:30 a.m. at Rockwood Restaurant & Marina (18301 Lake Road, Morrison). We will meet at 11:00 a.m. at the Immanuel parking lot to carpool. Come and share life with God and each other at BBT!



2025 SYNOD ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

"Each of you has a call and gifts for living Jesus' work in the world. And you are given opportunities every day to live that out, to be the body of Jesus to someone else and to grow as a disciple. Because you, Beloved Child of God, have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. God is with you in the questions."
- Bishop Stacie Fidlar



ACTIONS TAKEN

- Blessed new synod paraments, thanks to the 38 congregations who pieced together quilt blocks
- Heard from Deacon Jessica Noonan from LEAD Connects about learning from our neighbors
- Passed the Fiscal Year 2027 Northern Illinois Synod Budget
- Passed the 2026 Rostered Minister Compensation Guidelines
- Elected several members to serve on Synod Council and synod committees
- Heard from Bishop Fidlar about discovering our why
- Heard from Ms. Becca Payne and Mrs. Rahel Mwitula Williams from the ELCA
- Blessed those who will be voting members at the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly
- Celebrated our Rostered Minister ordination anniversaries and remembered our Rostered Ministers who died in the last year

RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were passed by the assembly:

- **R-1: Resolution for National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding School**
- **R-2: Northern Illinois Synod to Be a Reconciling in Christ Synod**

ELECTIONS

Synod Council

Trace Gallagher, Ms. Janice Forrest, Mr. Bill Wescott, The Rev. Shellie Knight, The Rev. Rob James

Congregational Life Committee

Mrs. Somar Bryson, Deacon Laura Gorton, The Rev. Tom Redig

Global Missions Committee

The Rev. Amy Michelson, The Rev. Ron Larson

Ministry Support Committee

Ms. Susan King, The Rev. Dr. Sharon Rogers

Outreach Committee

Ms. Cortney Breedon, Mr. Don Kinney, Mr. Dirk Hellinga, The Rev. Anthony Windau

Social Ministry Committee

Mrs. Kim Halper, The Rev. Frank Langholf

Committee on Discipline

Ms. Marcia Clausen, Mr. Shawn Wolfe, The Rev. Elise Rothfusz, The Rev. Joel VanderWal

Consultation Committee

Ms. Bev Lindsay, Mr. Ray Bergles, The Rev. Jill Flynn, The Rev. Bill Callister,



Growing Disciples
Northern Illinois Synod 2025

TELEPHONE PRAYER SUPPORT GROUP

We welcome your prayer requests and also your praise reports:

(Want to be a part of this? Call the church office.)

Church office – 815-625-3069

Janie Billings

Judy Bartel

Greg Zeigler

James 5:16 *Pray one for another.*

DIRECTORY OF STAFF and CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Pastor Mark Luepke

pastormark@stpaulsterling.com

Sue Dirks, Parish Secretary

(815) 535-3574 – sue@stpaulsterling.com

Gabby Law, Children Ministry

(815) 981-6470 – gabby@stpaulsterling.com

Dawn Zeigler, Music Coordinator

(815) 275-3775 – dawn@stpaulsterling.com

Julie Woessner, Children's Music Leader/Worship Song Leader

(815) 441-8084 – 4woessner@comcast.net

Shawn Andrews, Custodian

(779) 775-4530



2025 Congregation Council

President – Greg Zeigler

Vice President – Mary Ordean

Treasurer – Chrissy Zollinger

Secretary – Stacey Avelar

Christian Education/Youth

Stacey Avelar ('27)

Stewardship

Greg Zeigler ('27)

Social Outreach

Stacey Avelar ('27)

Lay Ministry & Worship

Chrissy Zollinger ('27)

Julie Woessner ('27)

Property & Management

Dan Bartel ('26)

Members-at-large

David Carrillo ('27)

Mary Ordean ('26)

Rayce Gale ('27)

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
1701 Sixteenth Ave.
STERLING, ILLINOIS 61081

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**– DATED MATERIAL –
PLEASE DO NOT HOLD**



LOVING – SERVING – SHARING

DIRECTORY

Office (815) 625-3069

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday; 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday – 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Pastor Mark's hours – Tuesdays – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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Facebook: St. Paul Lutheran Church – Sterling, IL