

St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA

1701 Sixteenth Avenue
Sterling, Illinois 61081-1543
Phone (815) 625-3069

Email: stpaulsterling@comcast.net

Website: www.stpaulsterling.com

AUGUST 2025

"The Purpose of Worship"

My primary role as the part-time interim pastor for St. Paul in this time of pastoral vacancy is to serve as your worship leader and the preacher of the Word. I must say that it is a joy for me to do so! And I look forward to doing so a good many times yet this year as my "contracted" time with St. Paul has now been extended until the end of 2025.



But if our primary time of being together is to gather together in worship, it's probably a good thing to ask this question: *What is the purpose of worship?* The answer to this question - a question that we may not really think about because, well, worship is just something we do! - is really important. Because what we see as our purpose will shape "what" and "how" we worship. And if we don't really *know* what our purpose for worship is, that will also shape (or mis-shape) our worship.

In trying to answer a question like this, sometimes it's easier to start with what something is not. So, what is NOT the purpose of worship? As members of a Lutheran (i.e. Church of the Reformation) congregation, we certainly know that participating in a time of worship is *not* something we do to "check off" a particular command of the Lord and, in doing so, feel we gain some kind of merit or "brownie points" with God. No! If your attitude after worship is something akin to "*there, I got that done for the week,*" then you may very well not have a right understanding of the true purpose of worship.

Maybe we can be directed towards a good "purpose answer" by asking ourselves which way our worship is to be directed. Is worship our *response* and *offering*

to God for God's saving grace that we have been shown in Jesus Christ? In other words, is worship something that is directed to God?

Or, is worship a time in which we "re-present" and re-tell the salvation story - the story of God's saving grace for God's people? In other words, is worship directed to people?

I think, in most situations, it should have aspects of both of these. And since way too many church members across this country and in our communities are not involved in a regular life of Christian *education*, worship also needs to have some "teaching" aspects to it.

With these questions in mind, I ask you: Are your times of worship directed to and for God or to and for people? I encourage some prayerful reflection on *both* aspects of worship.

First, open yourself up to the fact that there are many reasons to come to God in worship: gratitude, concern, praise, need, etc. So, in worship, present yourself to God in gratitude and need and *then* be open to God's gifts through the Word, the sacraments, and those around you. And then be open to how God is gifting you in that time of worship for the sake of others - the others in that worship sanctuary and those in the mission field of the world that awaits you outside that room.

Try to think of the purpose of every single thing that we do, say, hear and sing in worship as directed both to and from God and then to and from us. That word of forgiveness that we so often hear as we begin our worship times together? It begins with a word of confession to God, then God's word of forgiveness is declared to us, and then our lives are freed to live more fully and fruitfully *for the sake of* others. Those prayers for others? God has gifted us with these others, we lift our concerns for them to God, and then we trust that God will care for those we love - as we also are reminded to do.

I encourage you to reflect on every aspect of our worship services as directed both to and from God and then to and from people. Hymns, Scripture readings, sermon, offering, etc. I am confident that doing so will help you to realize the true purpose(s) and direction(s) of our worship life together.

One more thing: Thinking only about *oneself* in regards to worship is self-centered and, therefore, idolatrous. (In other words, worship is then directed towards the wrong individual.) Please work to focus on God and how God is calling you to care for others in your worship life. This focus will most certainly help you keep on the right track of the true purpose of worship.

Looking forward to worshipping with you again, (and again),

Pastor Mark S. Luepke



This past month we have prayed for the following: Sandy Julifs, Mike, Lori Dewey, Dylan Wescott, Ken & Sharon Mager, Dianne Miller, 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 August outing is on Monday, August 25. Watch the bulletin announcements to see where they will be going. 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, August 4 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



Work Day

All hands on deck to clean the wood in the sanctuary. Volunteers are needed. We'll meet at the church at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, August 11. If you have any questions, please talk to Nancy Eilers.

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 \$171,262

Offerings/Interest \$74,880

Expenses \$96,978

Lutheran World Relief Quilting

Our next quilting day will be August 27. We will be in the Social Hall from 9:00 a.m. – Noon, assembling and tying, pinning and sewing quilts.

We have received a lot of nice fabric and filler to use within our quilts. We thank you for your generosity.

Thank you also for the school supplies to fill the backpacks. We will box them up and take them to the ingathering in October.

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



Stewardship – Give With Love

Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our minds to the unexplained worlds occupied by the needs of others.

**No one has ever become poor by giving
Give generously with a grateful heart!**

Volunteer and Information Needed

- We have a member that is looking for a ride to church each Sunday. They live in the area and not too far from St. Paul. More information can be provided by talking to Sue in the church office.



- We have a member that is seeking affordable housing. They will be losing their apartment in the near future. If you have any information or suggestions, please give Sue a call in the church office.

Please prayerfully consider helping out in any way you can.

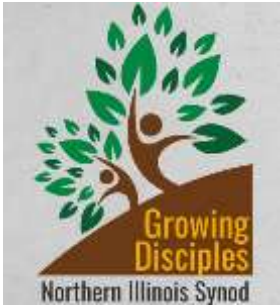
BIRTHDAYS FOR OUR CHURCH MEMBERS & FRIENDS

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.

3	Andrew Eakle	<u>Happy 33rd Anniversary</u>
4	Payton Volk	August 1, 1992
	Vann Reitzel	Greg & Dawn Zeigler
6	Jennifer Metzler	<u>Happy 36th Anniversary</u>
7	Brian Lobdell	August 5, 1989
8	Jeff Waite	Paul & Dianne Adams
10	Dan Dir	<u>Happy 60th Anniversary</u>
	Wade Steinke	August 6, 1965
12	Jill Straw	Carl & Jeanne Crane
13	Stacey Avelar	<u>Happy 13th Anniversary</u>
14	Tracy Volk	August 10, 2012
18	John Renner	Dennis & Margarita Biester
	Ron Ukenka	<u>Happy 32nd Anniversary</u>
19	Nancy Beck	August 14, 1993
22	Jordyn Eilers	Scot & Berta Beyer
24	Matthew Spaulding	<u>Happy 43rd Anniversary</u>
26	Tony Eakle	August 27, 1982
	Victoria Metzler	Larri & Sue Dirks
27	Kelci Eakle	
29	Cheryl Gorman	
	Julie Woessner	
30	Alex Avelar	



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.

To encourage is to build community. Beyond the initial actions of welcoming people into the community are ministries of friendship and support. Encouragement is the cluster of friendly attitudes and actions that forge relationship, building a diverse set of people into a community in Christ.

Encouragement makes it possible to cross lines of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, politics, economic class, educational level, and generation. Common social skills are transformed by the presence of the Holy One into acts of discipleship whereby the body of Christ is continually built up and strengthened for mission and ministry.

The word "community" is rooted in sharing. Shared experiences, shared values, and shared space lead to community. The church shares the love of God, the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit who continually calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies us.

What does it look like to gather a diverse group of people into community?

Take some time to reflect on the attitudes and actions that promote community. What are the attitudes and actions that tend to divide or break up community?

What are some real-life acts of encouragement that will make your congregation a stronger faith community?

Let us pray. Beloved God, you have made us all in your image. We thank you for the wonderful variety of interests, abilities, and backgrounds represented here. Enrich our lives by an ever-widening circle of fellowship. Show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until we are made perfect in love for you and love for all your children. Amen.

Encouraging



Youth News!

Hot Dog Day Friday, August 1, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Downtown Sterling

Featuring 25¢ hot dogs, chips & drinks at various locations throughout the downtown, along with side walk sales, a car wash, fun fair and more! Come see St. Paul's Face painting booth at the Fun Fair with FREE children's activities from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at the Sterling Marketplace (111 W. 2nd St). If you would like to help with the face painting, please let Gabby know.



National Night Out is Tuesday, August 5. This event, sponsored by the Sterling Police Department, will take place at Grandon Civic Center in Sterling from 5:00-7:00 p.m. **We will be setting up and overseeing the Bounce House for this event. If you can help with this, please let Gabby know.**

Backpack Blessing On Sunday, August 17, we will have a Backpack Blessing. Students or anyone in education--Bring your backpacks or bag to worship. There will be special Blessing around the backpacks during Worship for the students as they begin their new school year. **Plan now to attend! And don't forget your backpack!**



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 August Children's offering will go to towards the shipping of the LWR School Kits that have been collected.



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 August! 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.

Join us for BBT in August on Monday, August 4 at 11:30 a.m. at GX Restaurant (1204 W. Rock Falls Rd., Rock Falls) and Monday, August 18 at 11:30 a.m. at Urban Eats (130 E. Main St., Morrison). Come and share life with God and each other at BBT!

**Breaking
Bread
Together
BBT**



AUGUST
 BARBECUE
 BASEBALL
 BEACH
 BIKE
 BOAT
 CAMP
 FAMILY
 FISHING
 FLIGHT
 FLIP FLOPS
 FLOWERS
 FRIENDS
 GARDEN
 HEAT
 HOLIDAYS
 HOT
 HUMID
 ICED TEA
 INSIDE
 JULY
 JUNE
 LEMONADE
 OUTSIDE
 PARK
 PICNIC
 PLAY
 POOL
 RELAX
 SANDALS
 SHORTS
 SKATEBOARD
 SOCCER
 SUNSCREEN
 SUNSET
 SWIMMING
 TAN
 TANK TOPS
 TENT
 THEMEPARK
 TOUR
 TRAVEL
 TRIP
 VACATION
 WATERPARK

HUGE SUMMER

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE



F	R	I	E	N	D	S	O	C	C	E	R	U	I	F	F	L	S	L	T
C	H	O	T	D	K	F	A	M	I	L	Y	X	V	S	O	K	E	E	S
R	B	W	L	V	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	N	W	O	A	M	N	I	G
T	A	U	G	U	S	T	A	D	P	Y	P	I	P	T	O	T	P	A	K
A	S	V	S	E	O	D	Q	P	L	C	M	L	E	N	E	M	R	R	C
N	E	U	I	K	Y	G	I	U	E	M	Y	B	A	J	F	D	A	Z	B
K	B	I	C	I	I	N	J	M	I	M	O	D	V	Y	E	P	Z	H	W
T	A	T	E	B	N	I	G	N	U	A	E	R	Z	N	R	T	R	I	P
O	L	S	D	N	S	H	G	P	R	H	I	H	E	E	J	R	D	B	M
P	L	S	T	O	I	S	G	D	P	T	K	H	T	L	R	W	S	I	H
S	R	A	E	I	D	I	W	S	I	H	F	A	S	U	A	P	S	Q	O
T	E	T	A	T	E	F	Q	Y	C	P	W	U	B	A	O	X	T	T	L
H	A	E	O	A	R	T	Y	A	N	Y	N	A	E	L	F	F	R	A	I
K	B	S	T	C	A	J	E	Q	I	S	R	U	F	D	L	P	O	O	D
R	G	N	R	A	M	B	P	X	C	B	E	P	A	I	I	K	H	B	A
A	T	U	A	V	W	M	J	R	E	G	I	N	G	R	X	S	S	I	Y
P	A	S	V	H	A	X	E	C	X	L	D	H	U	Z	U	H	T	D	S
R	N	T	E	C	K	E	U	D	F	X	T	G	Q	J	I	O	K	U	Z
I	V	C	L	E	N	E	J	V	S	L	A	D	N	A	S	A	T	P	O

The words appear UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, and DIAGONALLY. Find and circle each word.



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.

Email: stpaulsterling@comcast.net

Website: www.stpaulsterling.com

Facebook: St. Paul Lutheran Church – Sterling, IL