

St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA

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SEPTEMBER 2025

"Communion Age Reflections"

Over a good many of my years of service as a pastor, I many times heard the following kind of questions from children in regards to the Lord's Supper: "Can I have some, too?" "When will I get to do this?" "Why can't I have Jesus, too?" And for many years I by-passed many a not-yet-communing child with an outstretched hand - and then saw a puzzled and/or hurt look as they turned their face up to their parent.



For a good many years I was somewhat satisfied to pat a head and whisper something like, "Your time will come." But then, over the years, I felt more and more "convicted" every time I passed by a child who gave some indication that they desired to receive the food and drink of the Sacrament with everybody else. And so, passing them by, became an increasingly painful thing to do. And, in doing so, it did not feel like I was doing a Christ-like thing.

So, let me share a very truncated version of how I came to act or "share" differently. Turning to the Scriptures, we see that there is no mention at all as to what age or grade in school one need be before partaking of Holy Communion. What Scripture *does* say in regards to a "who and how" question about the Lord's Supper is: "Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves." (1 Corinthians 11:28-29) These words certainly give us reason to see that the Lord's Supper is to be taken seriously.

Taken out of context these words seem to say that one had better be able to recognize and understand that it is Christ's body that we are receiving

and eating in the Lord's Supper. If this is the case, then it appears that a certain level of rather sophisticated mental ability would be needed. To tell you the truth, I truly doubt that my "mental abilities" were in this place when I received my first Communion as an eighth-grader. In fact, there are times in *these days* that I'm pretty sure that I'm not there!

Thankfully, read in context, these verses come across quite differently. Paul, in this portion of his first letter to the Corinthians, is writing about those involved in the Lord's Supper having some kind of understanding that they, as a part of the congregation, are the body of Christ together. (Paul was very upset that members of the church in Corinth were not treating one another as members of the body of Christ; and this "mistreatment" was evident in the way that they came together for the Lord's Supper.)

Do some of our young children have some kind of understanding that the worshipping community they are gathered together with is "the body of Christ"? I have to admit that sometimes I think that children can and do feel and understand this more so than many of us adults. And Jesus' numerous references to us needing to be like children in order to see and to be a part of the Kingdom of God may bear witness to this. (Along with this, the other Sacrament of the Church - Holy Baptism, is what makes us a part of the Body of Christ.)

So, after checking with a child's parent or guardian, I no longer "pass by" a child with an outstretched hand. And, along with this, understanding that every child of God needs to grow in their faith and understanding of the teaching and work and love of the Lord, I have tried to offer opportunities for the children of a congregation to learn and grow in their "understanding" of the Lord's Supper. (This is done with the understanding that not even the teaching pastor can fully understand it!)

Accordingly, I plan to offer some opportunities for learning about the Sacrament of Holy Communion here at St. Paul sometime this fall. These will be targeted towards both those already communing and those not yet communing, but possibly interested. So, watch for announcements and possible mailings.

Growing in Christ with you,

Pastor Mark S. Luepke



This past month we have prayed for the following: Matt Friel, Judi Huseth, Sandy Julifs, Mike, Lori Dewey, Dylan Wescott, Ken & Sharon Mager, JoAnn Garcia, Betty Steinke, Larry Wahler, Lila Edeus and the family and friends of John Carrillo.

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 September outing is on Monday, September 29. 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, September 8 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



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 August 28, 2025

Budgeted Expenses \$195,728

Offerings/Interest \$83,023

Expenses \$114,041



Call Process

On Sunday, September 6, following worship, the congregation will be given a small survey to fill out during Coffee Fellowship time. The surveys will be completed during this time and handed in before you leave. The Call Committee will be compiling the results for their next meeting. Plan on staying after church to help the Call Committee complete the necessary paperwork to move forward.

Lutheran World Relief Quilting

Our next quilting day will be September 24. We will assemble the quilts and sew the edges. We will then display some of the quilts in the sanctuary for the September 28th worship service. They will be taken to the ingathering in Rockford on October 4, 2025.



Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

Many thanks to all who donated their time and materials of this great cause.

We are always in need of clean, spot-free materials to use within the quilts. Donations can be put in the closet next to the kitchen.

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

Stewardship – Analogy



You are holding a cup of coffee and your arm is bumped and out spills coffee. Whatever is in your cup will spill out.

Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which WILL happen), whatever is inside your cup will come out.

It's easy to fake it, until you get rattled.

So, we have to ask ourselves....."what's in my cup"? When life gets tough, what spills over? Joy, gratitude, peace and humility?

Or anger, bitterness, and quitting tendencies?

Life provides the cup; YOU choose how to fill it. Let's work towards filling our cups with gratitude, giving, forgiveness, joy, kindness and love for others.

No one has ever become poor by giving

Give generously with a grateful heart!

Tri Church WELCA Bible Study will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 16, at 9:00 a.m. at Immanuel. Please bring your Bible and "Gather" magazine if you have them OR we have Bibles and copies of the study on hand. YOU are most welcome to join Tri Church WELCA for a time of fellowship and Bible Study!





Wedding News!

Congratulations to Julie Woessner & Randy DeJonge on their wedding. They were married at St. Paul on August 30. May God bless their life together as husband and wife.

New arrivals!

We've had a few new arrivals to church members in the past few months.

Congratulations to:

Rebecca (Waite) & Erik Giles

Hunter William Giles was born May 22; 6lb. 22oz. Congratulations also the grandparents, Jeff & Dawn Waite

Ashley & Shawn Platz

Elsie Grace Platz was born June 12; 7 lbs. She is welcomed home by big brother, Brody.

Reganne (Adams) & Seth Springman

Rae Anne Marie Springman was born June 19; 7 lbs.; 2 oz. Congratulations to grandparents, Paul & Dianne Adams.



Please join us for BBT in September! 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 on Monday, September 8 at 11:30 a.m. at River Edge Restaurant (2303 W. 1st St., Dixon). You are welcome to join in a car pool that will leave from Immanuel at 11:00 a.m. or meet us at the restaurant at 11:30 a.m. **We also have BBT on September 22, at 11:30 a.m. at Benny's Restaurant** (2511 Locust St., Sterling). **Come and share life with each other! Friends are welcome!**

**Breaking
Bread
Together
BBT**



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	Bill Duncan	<u>Happy 40th Anniversary</u>
	Brad Eilers	September 14, 1985
6	Donna Kendall	Scott & Eileen Wolber
	Kayla Betz	
7	Rayce Gale	<u>Happy 60th Anniversary</u>
9	Jacob Woodworth	September 18, 1985
10	Maddison Grell	Mel & Kathy Johnson
11	Jayme Eilers	<u>Happy 32nd Anniversary</u>
14	Allie Betz	September 25, 1993
16	Judy Duis	Lyle & Liz Spaulding
	Mary Wolber	
17	Sydni Eilers	
18	Elizabeth Engstrom	
	Dylan Eilers	
19	Bradyn Arians	
20	Alan Arians	
21	Sharon Worley	
22	Brent Eilers	
25	Samantha Spaulding	
27	Luke Steinke	
29	Keith Peugh	
	Scot Beyer	



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.

When you hear the word “serve,” what comes to mind? Do you think of someone bringing you food at a restaurant? Or do you think about a person who wiped your brow or brought you soup when you were sick in bed?

Christ-centered service is often transformational. It can change both the life of the one who serves as well as the person who is served. Service is a living witness to our faith that provides opportunities for us to invite others to learn more about Jesus. Through service, we encourage those who are struggling to go on and restore hope in their lives. Jesus says, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” (Luke 6:38)

Scripture frequently reminds us that, as Christians, we are to serve others, work for justice and live in community with our neighbors.

Serving is a multidimensional mark of discipleship and includes direct services, advocacy, and community organizing.

Direct services provide goods and services that benefit those in need. Advocacy involves congregations and communities working together on behalf of the disenfranchised. Community organizing efforts work to achieve justice in society.

As you think about the three prongs of serving, identify those in your community who might be disenfranchised. What new opportunities do you see for serving in your congregation and community?

When we invest time, energy, and resources to address systemic societal issues, we encourage others just as they encourage us. With God's help, we can serve by developing long-range programs and continually training up new leaders who will bring new energy and ideas. We, too, can work “...to proclaim release to the captives...to let the oppressed go free...” as we build the kingdom of God.



Tri Church Birthday Buddy Update and Fall Bowling Party

Tri Church Birthday BUDDIES

We give thanks for Tri Church Birthday Buddies! Residents of LSSI Group Homes birthdays are celebrated by Immanuel, St. John's and St. Paul on a rotating schedule. A small gift, cards and cupcakes are shared with residents and volunteers who join in the celebration. We are over a year into our partnership in this mission and it has been a mutual blessing to all involved. **What a gift it is to share life and God's love together!** You are most welcome to sign a card for Arthur who is among the Tri Church Birthday Buddies being celebrated! His card is available in the narthex thru September 3.

While birthday parties continue for the residents of the LSSI Sterling Group Home and Partnership House, a special activity is planned for September. **Tri Church is hosting a bowling and pizza party on Friday, Sept. 12th at 3 p.m. at Blackhawk Lanes in Sterling.** The party will include 2 rounds of bowling with pizza to follow at the bowling alley. Each resident received a bowling shirt for one of their birthday gifts and will be encouraged to wear their shirts that day. **You are invited to cheer on the birthday buddies as they hit the lanes on September 12th.** If you plan to attend, please let Deb Keaschall know by calling 815-718-5237 or emailing her at debkeaschall@gmail.com. You are invited to wear a bowling shirt if you have one.



LSSI continues to be very grateful for the Tri Church partnership with the Birthday Buddy program. Whether you have helped plan a birthday party, shop for gifts, attend a party, signed or sent a card, thank you for making these residents feel special and recognized on their birthday.

If you interested in being a part of the Tri Church Leadership Team, you are most welcome to do so! The meetings are on the 4th Monday of each month and the location rotates between the three churches. The next meeting is Monday, Sept. 22 at 6 p.m. at Immanuel. **We are church together!**

Gratefully—Deb Keaschall
Tri Church Convener

Youth News!



Sunday School – 2025-2026

Join us this year at St. Paul as we learn more about our relationship with God during Sunday School. We will focus on one bible story every week and learn through music, games, activities, and art. All students learn together

and lessons are adjusted weekly based on the ages of the majority in attendance. Sunday School will take place every Sunday from September 14th until May 31st, unless announced otherwise. Classes are taught by volunteers and Miss Gabby, our children's ministry leader. We hope to see you there!

Hot Dog Day

Thank you to all who helped with this event. Gabby, Bev, Dawn and Amy.



National Night Out

Thank you to all helped in any way with this event. They were very appreciative that we were there. Gabby, Rayce, Janie, Mary, Lily and Marilyn.

6th-12th graders: Join in a Youth Service Night at St. John's

On **Wednesday, October 1st from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

youth from St. John's, St. Paul, and Immanuel will pack LWR School Kits. Education is one of the strongest tools a community has for breaking the cycle of poverty. Ensuring that girls attend school, especially in places where their access is deprioritized, has even stronger results. Lutheran World Relief School Kits contain essential supplies to help children — and in some cases, adults — continue learning in the face of serious obstacles. That learning leads to a better life for them, their families and their communities. **Please come out to help assemble these resources that support our siblings down the street and around the world.**





Tri-Church Confirmation

Tri Church Confirmation classes are offered monthly on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. rotating to each of the churches. Each session will include a light lunch which the host church for that session provides. **The upcoming schedule for the year is below.** The dates with an * and in *italics* indicate a service or fellowship opportunity. PLEASE aim to participate as you are able. We do NOT expect you to participate in ALL the opportunities. Ideally, youth in confirmation will participate in the

Quake AND as many service opportunities as scheduling allows. Friends are welcome! This schedule is subject to change.

2025-2026 Tri Church Confirmation Schedule for September & More

September 7, 2025; Class from 11 a.m.-2p.m. at St. John's

*October 1, 2025; 7 p.m. 6th-12th Graders Assemble School Kits at St. John's

October 5, 2025; Class from 11a.m.-2p.m. at St. Paul

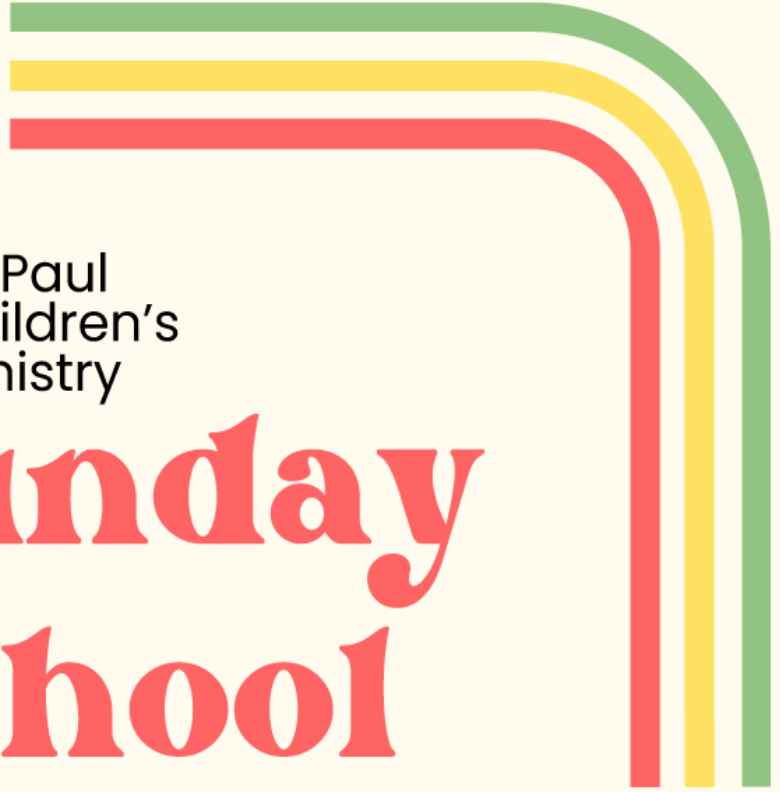
Make plans to join us in exploring your faith this year!



Children's Offering

The September Children's offering will go to towards The Buddy Bag program. Last year they saw a big increase in participation and were able to meet the need thanks to generous donations. Last spring they were packing and distributing 160 bags each week! At a cost of approximately \$3.44 per bag currently, the costs add up quickly. Be assured that every penny donated goes only to the cost of purchasing the food. All administrative costs are covered separately.

**Welcome
Autumn**



St. Paul
Children's
Ministry

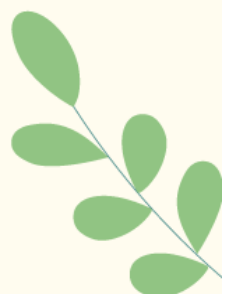
Sunday School

Grades K-7



SUNDAYS
10:15 AM – 11:00 AM

SEPTEMBER 14TH –
MAY 31ST



1701 16th Ave, Sterling, IL 61081
Email: gabby@stpaulsterling.com

Confirmation SCHEDULE

2025-2026

SEPT	7 th 11:00am-2:00pm Class @St. John's
OCT	1 st 7:00pm Assemble School Kits 5 th 11:00am-2:00pm Class @St. Paul 28 th 4:00pm Selmi's trip
NOV	19 th 7:00-8:00pm Buddy Bag Packing @Wesley United 23 rd 11:00am-2:00pm Class @Immanuel
DEC	7 th 11:00am-2:00pm Class @St. John's
JAN	11 th 11:00am-2:00pm Class @St. Paul
FEB	1 st 11:00am-2:00pm Class @Immanuel 13 th -15 th (TBD)Quake
MAR	1 st 11:00-2:00 Class @St. John's 11 th 7:00-8:00pm Buddy Bag Packing @Wesley United
APR	19 th 11:00-2:00 Class @St. Paul
MAY	3 rd 11:00-2:00 Class @Immanuel 13 th 7:00-8:00pm Buddy Bag Packing @Wesley United





Teach us to pray

In Luke 11:1-13 (NIV), Jesus teaches about prayer.

Directions: Add or subtract the letters indicated and unscramble the letters to form a new word, using hints from the passage. Then unscramble the circled letters to answer the question below.

party - t = p r a y (v. 1)

lady + i = _ _ _ _ (v. 3)

drab + e = _ _ _ _ (v. 5)

rod + o = _ _ _ _ (v. 7)

bask - b = _ _ _ _ (v. 9)

keeps - p = _ _ _ _ (v. 9)

define - ee = _ _ _ _ (v. 9)

shift - t = _ _ _ _ (v. 11)

sneaky - y = _ _ _ _ (v. 11)

sift + g = _ _ _ _ (v. 13)



What will the Father give to those who ask of him?

_ _ _ _ _ (v. 13)

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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