

St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA

1701 Sixteenth Avenue
Sterling, Illinois 61081-1543
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OCTOBER 2025

"Reading the Bible"

Throughout the years of my non-retired ministry, I often began the fall sessions of the confirmation classes with a couple of sessions in which the young people got acquainted with (and/or re-acquainted with) the Bible - its chronology, books, major characters, etc. With October being a month in which the Bible is especially lifted up, because of its centrality in the history of the Reformation, I thought it might be helpful to share some thoughts with you on "how to get started" reading the Bible.

It is important to have a good starting place when reading the Bible. Since the Scriptures tell us that Jesus Christ is the Word of God made flesh, starting with **Jesus** is probably the best place to start reading. (Remember: The Bible is a *collection*, or a *library*, of 66 different books and writings. So you don't have to read them in order! In fact, it may not be that helpful to do so. If you *do* read them in order, you may very well not make it past Leviticus!)

1) **Start with one of the gospels.** **John** sets forth Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man. John selects a few events and builds on them. **Mark** is a good choice for catching the main events of Jesus' life - but there is no Christmas story. One of **Matthew's** strengths is his "grouping" of Jesus' teachings - the Sermon on the Mount, parables of the Kingdom. The "last days/end times" section is more direct and more easily understood than the book of Revelation. **Luke's** account may be the clearest one of Jesus' ministry to the weak, the suffering, the outcast, and those in need.



2) **Then dip into the Old Testament.** Read **Genesis**. The first chapters give the creation stories. (Yes, there is more than one creation story in the Bible and they are different from each other!) The stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph start at the twelfth chapter. **Exodus** shares the Old Testament story of salvation. You will read about the life of Moses, the rescue of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt, the origin of the Passover Feast, and the giving of the Ten Commandments. There are lots of other important stories in the Old Testament. Picking just one important figure, read **Second Samuel** for the story of David.

3) **Head back to the New Testament.** **Acts** is a history of the first Christians - the beginning of the Church. Then read some of the letters - the correspondence - between Christians in the years after Jesus' resurrection. **Galatians** builds on the history of Acts. It includes the clear gospel of grace and faith - and offers practical advice for those who are blessed with the Spirit of God. **Philippians** is brief, gentle, and joyful. It is a loving letter of encouragement to follow the mind of Christ. **Ephesians** just soars in its description of God's plan to bring all of humanity together in Jesus Christ. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters are excellent in addressing relationships between and among Christians. **Romans** is seen by many as the heart of the letters of the New Testament. It probably isn't the one to start with - but get there!

Others: **First John** - lifts up the love of God. **First Thessalonians** - what Christ's second coming means for us today. **First Corinthians** - primarily talks about specific problems in the church.

The Bible is a gift - and shares so many gifts. But depending on where you start reading, you might not recognize the gifts as such.

I encourage you to read, listen to, and receive God's Word through the Bible. As we will hear proclaimed on Reformation Sunday, Jesus said: "*If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free!*" This is my prayer for each of us.

Receiving God's gift of the Word and sharing the Word with you,

Pastor Mark S. Luepke



This past month we have prayed for the following: Raymond Graftaas, Matt Friel, Sandy Julifs, Mike, Lori Dewey, Dylan Wescott, Ken & Sharon Mager, Betty Steinke, Larry Wahler, and the family and friends of Judi Huseh 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 September outing is on Monday, October 27. 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, October 6 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	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 September 19, 2025

Budgeted Expenses \$220,194

Offerings/Interest \$87,475

Expenses \$135,012

Lutheran World Relief Quilting

Our next quilting day will be the third Wednesday in October. The date is October 15, from 9:00a – 12:00p in the Social Hall. 54 school kits, 48 personal care kits and 96 quilts will be taken to the ingathering on October 4, 2025. Thank you all for your donations and to the ladies who help with the quilting and packing the quilts.

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 – Northern Illinois Synod



Generosity isn't just about what or how much we give. Together, we can do far more than we could on our own. Generosity is about giving when we can and being present in God's work, even when we cannot be there in person.

We all give. We all receive. Even when our barns feel empty, we still have gifts to share. And through those gifts, whether big or small, seen or unseen, we are part of God's work in the world, sustain one another and ensuring that on one is left without.

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

What is WELCA? It's Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All women of Tri Church are invited to an informational meeting about starting a local unit of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA). We will discuss our interests in Bible studies, service projects and fellowship activities. Please bring your ideas and appetite - heavy hors d'oeuvres will be provided on **Tuesday, October 14 at 5:30 p.m.** in the community room at the Sterling Public Library (102 W. 3rd St). For more information, please contact a committee member, Chrissy Zollinger or Dawn Zeigler.



Tri Church WELCA Bible Study will be held on **Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.** at Immanuel. Please bring your Bible and "Gather" magazine. All women of St. Paul are members of WELCA and welcome to join WELCA for a time of fellowship and Bible Study!

Please join us for BBT in October! 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, October 13 at 11:30 a.m. at Primo's Bar & Grill (1711 W. 4th St., Sterling) and on **Wednesday, October 27, at 11:30 a.m. at Pizza Ranch** (3900 E. Lincolnway, Sterling). Come and share life with God and each other at BBT!

**Breaking
Bread
Together
BBT**



Tri Church Corner: Cledy's House of Hope

This past spring and summer, Cledy's House of Hope in Rock Falls, a sober living facility for women, was a God's Work Our Hands project for Tri Church. Some members painted at the facility, while others donated items. In June, Ashley, a staff member from Cledy's, shared her story in a Sunday morning temple talk. Tri Church has committed to continuing its partnership with Cledy's.

There is so much to learn about Cledy's. The plan moving forward is to have bi-monthly information about Cledy's in a question & answer format.

Who can live at Cledy's?

- Women 18 years of age and older who are serious about finding long-term recovery from substance abuse (for example – alcohol, drugs, prescription medication).

How long can a woman live at Cledy's?

- The program is structured to last around a year but may take an individual less or more time depending on their personal situation. Together with their recovery coach, a personalized recovery plan is developed.

How does a woman get into Cledy's House of Hope to benefit from its program?

- Staff recommend that a woman transition from the completion of an inpatient program or graduate/transition from another sober living facility. A woman currently involved in an intensive outpatient program or other recovery program may also be eligible. A letter of recommendation is required from their counselor or caseworker followed by a completed application and a \$50 application fee that covers their background check and drug test upon entrance to Cledy's.

In the December newsletter, you will learn more about the structure and programming at Cledy's. You can also find more information at the Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery website www.svvor.org.

Deb Keaschall
Tri Church Convener

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 | Mel Arians | <u>Happy 15th Anniversary</u> |
| | Amelia Pfundstein | October 2, 2010 |
| 2 | Sue Dirks | Tracy & Jason Volk |
| | Janet Beiler | <u>Happy 38th Anniversary</u> |
| 3 | Katelyn Grell | October 3, 1987 |
| 7 | Pam Machan | Ron & Rhonda Hulteen |
| 10 | Katherine Eilers | <u>Happy 20th Anniversary</u> |
| 11 | Jessica Reyes | October 8, 2005 |
| 12 | Rhonda Hulteen | Chad & Jill Straw |
| 13 | AJ Avelar | <u>Happy 56th Anniversary</u> |
| 15 | Dave Koster | October 11, 1969 |
| 20 | Keith Grell | Jim & Cheryl Gorman |
| | Valerie Petty | <u>Happy 5th Anniversary</u> |
| 21 | Jim Gorman | October 11, 2020 |
| | Russell Page | Seth & Reganne Springman |
| 24 | Leta VanZuiden | <u>Happy 39th Anniversary</u> |
| | Brandon Adams | October 18, 1986 |
| 27 | Mike O'Brien | Andy & Marilyn Geiger |
| | | <u>Happy 35th Anniversary</u> |
| | | October 20, 1990 |
| | | Keith & Dawn Grell |
| | | <u>Happy 15th Anniversary</u> |
| | | October 23, 2010 |
| | | Andra & Ronald Shaw |



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.

Giving begins with compassion.

A compassionate heart moves us toward generous giving.

When have you given out of compassion? What situations or people stir your compassion most deeply? How have you experienced someone else's compassion in a way that changed you?

Throughout Scripture, we see people whose compassion leads them to act generously by caring for their neighbors and strengthening their community. The Good Samaritan tends the wounds of a stranger and pays for his care (Luke 10:29–37). Jesus, moved by compassion for a hungry crowd, multiplies loaves and fishes so that all are fed and satisfied (Mark 6:34–44).

The churches of Macedonia give beyond their means out of compassion for fellow believers in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8–9).

In each of these stories, compassion is at the heart of generosity. Yet it is not compassion for its own sake. It flows from a deep awareness of the grace we ourselves have received from God.

When have you been motivated to give because you cared about the welfare of the community? When has the generosity of someone else moved you to give?

As disciples, we give compassionately because God has first been generous with us: in love, mercy, and grace. Our generosity is a response to that gift. By opening our hands and hearts, we reflect Christ's love, so that others may encounter the compassion and love of God through us.

Who in your community is God calling you to see with compassion right now? How might your generosity allow someone else to experience the compassion of God? What resources (time, skills, money) has God entrusted to you that you can share with others? What small step of generosity can you take this week?

Giving





Make plans to join us for Autumn Fest on Saturday, October 11 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.! It will be a day of fun at camp including Pumpkin Carving, Cider Pressing, Crafts, Wagon Rides, Hikes, Campfire S'mores, and a "Taste of Camp". Lunch will be available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (\$10). Worship service at 3 p.m. Signup for lunch or to volunteer at <https://lomc.org/autumn-fest/> LOMC is located at 1834 S. IL Route 2, Oregon. All are welcome!



We are pleased to announce that a date has been picked for the installation of Pr. Riley and Pr. Anthony as co-pastors of St. Paul and Immanuel Lutheran Churches of Dixon. **They are having a service on Sunday, October 26th at 2 p.m.** They will also celebrate one year of joint ministry as "Two Churches, One Mission."

Friends, family, community members, and both congregations are invited to attend this joyous event. Please note! The worship service will begin at Immanuel Lutheran Church, (421 S. Peoria Ave, Dixon) but halfway through, we will drive to St. Paul Lutheran Church (1013 Franklin Grove Road, Dixon) where the service will conclude and the reception will be held. You won't want to miss this unique service. Clergy are invited to vest and wear red.



We have been asked to provide 30 dozen cookies for this year's Hospice Festival of Trees County Store. There is a sign-up sheet on the kitchen counter in the Fellowship Hall. Cookies will need to be delivered to the Rock River Hospice & Home (2706 Avenue E, Sterling) on Saturday, November 9 between 9:00-9:45 a.m. Thank you!

Any Variety (i.e. Christmas cookies (a favorite), snickerdoodle, sugar, cut-outs, oatmeal, peanut butter, thumb prints, chocolate chips, peanut blossoms with Hershey kisses, etc. Cookies should be in disposable containers that do not need to be returned.



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!

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 October & More

**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

**October 28, 2025; 4:00 p.m. 6th-12th Graders head to Selmi's Corn Maze & Apple Cider Donuts*

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



Trick or treat UNICEF collection will be received on Sunday, October 26. Young people are welcome to wear costumes and will be collecting offerings after worship at the back of the

sanctuary.

UNICEF was established on December 11, 1946 by the United Nations to meet the emergency needs of children in post-war Europe and China. UNICEF is the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. For over 70 years, across 190 countries and territories, UNICEF defends the rights of every child. In cooperation with governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UNICEF saves and protects the world's most vulnerable children, working to ensure child rights and providing health care, immunizations, nutrition, access to safe water and sanitation services, basic education, protection and emergency relief. You can learn more about UNICEF at www.unicef.org.

6th -12th Graders—JOIN US for Tri Church TEEN TIME this month! We will be gathering outdoors at Selmi's (1206 Dixon Avenue, Rock Falls) **on Tuesday, Oct. 28th at 4:00 p.m. and adventure through the Maze together before enjoying some Cliff's donuts.** All 6th-12th graders are welcome! This event is free! Meet us in front of the ticket booth at 4 p.m. if you plan to participate! (If you are running late, please call or text Gabby at 815-981-6479.) We will also dive into God's Word a bit together and continue to know God, ourselves and each other more! If it is storming, this event will be cancelled. We are hoping for an outstanding early evening of sharing life and God's love together!





6th-12th graders: Mark your calendars and make plans to participate in the Wisconsin Dells Youth Quake, February 13-15 with Packer Dave! Youth Quakes are weekend long youth events with a band, speaker, Bible teaching & more! The Wisconsin

Dells Quake is at the Wilderness Territory Resort. **A deposit of (\$25) for the Quake is due Nov. 2,** so that we can register with the lowest price. Youth from Bethel Reformed, St. John's & Immanuel are also planning to attend! Friends are welcome!

Trunk or Treat opportunities

Trick or Treat will be held at participating uptown Rock Falls businesses on Friday, October 24th from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Free treats and kids activities.

Trunk or Treat will be held on Saturday, October 25th from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church (1701 16th Ave., Sterling). All are welcome!

A sign-up to donate treats is available in the Sunday school hallway.

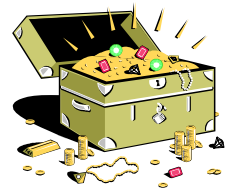


Trunk or Treat will be held on Wednesday, October 31st from 4:30 - 7:00 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church (703 3rd Ave., Sterling). All are welcome!



Children's Offering

During the month of October, our children's offering at worship is going toward Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) Holiday Hope Chest. LSSI offers children and their families gifts for Christmas through the purchase of gift cards to specific vendors. Thank you for helping young people served by LSSI have gifts for Christmas this year! More information will be coming in regards to purchasing gift cards/gifts on your own.





Women^{of the} ELCA

**Please join a conversation about
Tri-Church WELCA - Your Thoughts
and Input are VERY IMPORTANT**

WHAT IS WELCA?

IT'S AN EASY WAY TO SAY WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA.

QUITE A MOUTHFUL, WE KNOW. WELCA IS A COMMUNITY OF WOMEN CALLED TO GROW IN FAITH, AFFIRM THEIR GIFTS, AND ENGAGE IN MINISTRY AND ACTION.

WELCA INCLUDES LUTHERAN WOMEN WHO GATHER IN MORE THAN 4,500 LOCATIONS IN THE U.S. AND THE CARIBBEAN, FOR SERVICE, BIBLE STUDY, ADVOCACY, FELLOWSHIP AND MORE!

THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU IN WOMEN OF THE ELCA.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

ALL WOMEN OF TRI-CHURCH ARE INVITED TO AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING ABOUT STARTING A LOCAL UNIT OF THE WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (WELCA).

THIS IS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD FRIENDSHIPS AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER IN OUR CALLINGS.

WE WILL DISCUSS OUR INTERESTS IN BIBLE STUDIES, SERVICE PROJECTS, AND FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES.

PLEASE BRING YOUR IDEAS AND APPETITE - HEAVY HORS D'OEUVRES WILL BE PROVIDED.

**WHEN: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14
TIME: 5:30PM
WHERE: STERLING PUBLIC LIBRARY
ROOM: COMMUNITY ROOM**

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER

**RONDA BORGMANN, IMMANUEL
EMILY TAYLOR, ST. JOHN'S
KAREN WOLFE, ST. JOHN'S
DAWN ZEIGLER, ST. PAUL
CHRISSY ZOLLINGER, ST. PAUL**



815.714.6354 | www.trinitygum.net



A VISIT WITH CORRIE

Compelling and inspiring portrayal by Gayle Haas of the Nazi concentration camp survivor and Dutch resistance fighter Corrie ten Boom

Saturday, November 1 at 1:00 p.m.

Free admission | Reception after performance

Registration appreciated, please scan the QR code

Trinity Lutheran Church | 308 E. Brayton Rd., Mt. Morris



Donations will be accepted for national and global women's ministries of the N.I. Synod Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America



Pathways Through Grief

Losing a loved one is difficult and brings so many challenges and heavy emotions. Hope Cancer Wellness Center offers a 6-week series that will provide tools to ease the pain and sadness as well as allow you to work through your grief. Our grief facilitator, Claire Bianco, an End of Life Doula, will be leading this class. We schedule this program periodically based on interest. This is completely free to attend so please don't hesitate to sign up.

We are here for you!

Call us today to sign up 815-288-4673

Hope Cancer Wellness Center
1637 Plock Dr. Dixon, IL, 61021



CELEBRATE RECOVERY IS FOR **EVERYONE**



Find Recovery from your Hurts, Habits and Hang-ups

Weekly Meetings begin Tuesday

October 7 at 6pm—8pm

16th Ave Church of Christ

1902 16th Ave Sterling IL

Call: 815-625-2251

Email: leo.woodman@gmail.com

You are
not alone

Never give
up

Keep
going



Puzzle!

Complete this Bible passage by adding the missing vowels.



F _ r by gr _ c _ y _ _ h _ v _
b _ _ n s _ v _ d thr _ _ gh
f _ _ th, _ nd th _ s _ s n _ t
y _ _ r _ wn d _ _ ng; _ t _ s
th _ g _ ft _ f G _ d — n _ t th _
r _ s _ lt _ f w _ rks, s _ th _ t
n _ _ n _ m _ y b _ _ st.

_ ph _ s _ _ ns 2:8-9, NRSV



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

Nancy Eilers, Custodian – (815) 441-4435

Joanie Whipple, Custodian – (815) 499-2012



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