



St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA

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NOVEMBER 2025

"Thanks-Giving Guidance from the Bible"

With Thanksgiving Day at the end of November and you possibly receiving this newsletter in the midst of Halloween, you may not be in the Thanksgiving Day spirit just yet. But I hope that you get there! And hopefully we don't consign our giving thanks for what we have and have been given to just one day a year. But setting aside a special day in which to do so can serve to remind us of the ongoing importance of remembering, realizing our many reasons to be filled with gratitude, and then "giving thanks."



So what does the Bible have to say to us about Thanksgiving? There are many verses and Scripture passages that help direct us to the One **to whom** we are to be ultimately thankful - God, the giver of all that is good. But they also guide us to think about the "**why**" and the "**for what**" of giving thanks. And how about **when**? And then there is the all-important **how** question. What are some **ways** in which we can give thanks to God? Here are a few verses that may help guide you in your giving thanks in the course of this week and then every day of your life.

Why and for what?

"I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, and you comforted me." (Isaiah 12:1)

"I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation." (Psalm 118:21)

"I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him...." (1 Corinthians 1:4-5a)

"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57)

"We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign." (Revelation 11:17)

When?

"Then Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them to the crowd." (*Give thanks for and before a meal.*) (Mark 8:6)

"I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers." (Ephesians 1:16)

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

How and in what ways?

"With my song I give thanks to the Lord." (Psalm 28:7)

"I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds." (Psalm 9:1)

"O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds...." (1 Chronicles 16:8)

Giving thanks to God with and for you,

Pastor Mark S. Luepke



Don't forget to set your clocks back an hour before going to bed on Saturday, November 1. You might be early to church the next morning!

Join us For Worship

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

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



This past month we have prayed for the following: Michelle Klinger, Matt Friel, Sandy Julifs, Mike, Lori Dewey, Pastor Bree, Dylan Wescott, Ken & Sharon Mager, Phyllis Jacobson, Betty Steinke, Larry Wahler, the family and friends of Raymond Graftaas and the family and friends of Dennis Wiedman.

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

Church Announcements



RETIREMENT CELEBRATION: St. John's will celebrate Pastor Leo Patterson's 20-year ministry with them on Sunday, November 16th. We will enjoy a meal together following worship. Everyone is welcome! Pastor Leo will have friends and family attending the service on that day as well as the luncheon following. To assist with planning preparations, please indicate if you will be joining us by November 3 by calling St. John's: 815-625-2634

CLEO (Church Ladies Eating Out)

CLEO meet monthly at 5:30 p.m. at a designated restaurant. The September outing is on Monday, November 24. 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!



St. Paul Year Budget Report

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

Totals through October 30, 2025

Budgeted Expenses \$244,660

Offerings/Interest \$129,037

Expenses \$149,743



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



Lutheran World Relief Quilting

Our next quilting day will be on Wednesday, November 19, from 9:00a – 12:00p in the Social Hall. Please join us to tie and pin the quilts.



Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

A big thank you to Paul Wolfe for taking our Personal Care Kits and School Backpacks to the ingathering at Zion Church on October 4th. Total count for 2025 was 113 quilts, 54 school backpacks, and 48 personal care kits.

We completed 8 quilts in October and are collecting materials to use for many more quilts. If you would like to donate, please leave materials in the closet by the kitchen.

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



Stewardship

It's important to realize that you are living
inside one of your answered prayers
while you wait for your next one
There always a place for gratitude!

Gratitude Sunday will take place on November 16, 2024. This will be a time for all of us to volunteer our time, talents and treasures for 2026. It takes commitment from everyone to keep St. Paul running smoothly. If you can't be here November 16th please return your donation cards, time and talent sheets to the office. Thank you!

Please prayerfully consider how you can help support life-giving ministries at St. Paul by volunteering your time, treasurers and talents. Thank YOU!

*Dearest Lord, teach us to be generous:
Teach us to serve you as you deserve:
To give and not to count the cost.
Amen*



Church Decorating

Watch the Bulletin announcements for the dates we will be decorating for the Christmas season. Kids and families are welcome to help us decorate. Many hands make lite work!

Please join us for BBT in November!

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. BBT is meeting twice this month:

Monday, November 3 at 11:30 a.m. at Buffalo Wild Wings (4304 E. Lincolnway, Sterling). We will meet at the restaurant.

Monday, November 17, at 11:30 a.m. at Mom's Diner

(1101 N. Galena Avenue, Dixon). We will car pool from Immanuel at 11 a.m.

Come and share life with God and each other at BBT!



LSSI Holiday Hope Chest

Once again, we are going to participate in LSSI'S Holiday Hope Chest. LSSI anticipates serving close to 500 clients this year. Because the need is great, we are increasing the number of gifts to purchase for clients. We have spoken for 10 children, 5 teens and 5 adults. Other options will be provided also. Lists should be available the first part of November. Once again, gifts will need to be returned to the

church (unwrapped) by Thursday, December 4th.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at: 815-718-5223. Thank you. ~ Carolyn Duncan



Menz Group will meet at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sterling on Monday, November 3 at 6:00 p.m.





Tri-Church WELCA News!

First, to be sure we are all on the same page, WELCA means Women of the ELCA. It is open to all; you are already a member simply because you are in one of our three congregations. Women gather as WELCA to grow faith, enjoy friendships, and offer service to others.

Thank you to all who were able to be together for our very first Tri-Church WELCA event! It was awesome to see the variety of ages and the interactions of the women! We ate a little, made connections with new and old friends, and shared our curiosity for what can be. We started answering the questions about what we want our chapter of WELCA to look like and what our groups within that chapter might be about.

We created poster idea boards that night which will be visiting each of our churches in the next month. These are a work in progress; if you were at this first meeting and have more ideas - or couldn't be there, but can add to the ideas - please feel free to grab a new sticky note and be a part of this process. Our groups will be what we want them to be, so this is an important part of our getting started.

As promised, we will keep in touch through our newsletters and bulletins. Please look for the WELCA logo for this group's news.

So what comes next? We will be sharing more and defining our next steps at our next get-together after the new year. Watch for that date and details about that in the near future! In the meantime, please talk with one another and pray for this new group and your part in it!

For more dialogue or information, contact a committee member.

In thanksgiving for the gift of this new opportunity,

Ronda Borgmann, Immanuel

Emily Taylor, St. John's

Karen Wolfe, St. John's

Dawn Zeigler, St. Paul

Chrissy Zollinger, St. Paul

Tri Church WELCA Bible Study will be held on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at Immanuel. Please bring your Bible and "Gather" magazine. All women of Immanuel are members of WELCA and welcome to join WELCA for a time of fellowship and Bible Study!



Women of all ages--Join us at the 2026 Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa, July 16-19, 2026! This multiday event gathers women from throughout the ELCA for worship, learning, service and fellowship. The theme for the 2026 Triennial Gathering is "I Am Worthy," based on Psalm 139:14: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." We hope to take a group from our community of faith and raise some funds to offset the costs. If you are interested in participating please speak with Chrissy Zollinger. The

gathering cost is \$475 plus housing and meals (if you sign up by January 5). Event fee is due at the time of registration. You can learn more at: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page>





Rock River Hospice & Home 2025 Festival of Trees

Trees on display for viewing & bidding from Nov. 9-15 at McCormick Center, (205 E. 3rd Street, Rock Falls). Bid sheets will be used; please bring your own pen.

Tree of Memories —Rock River Hospice & Home recognizes that the holidays are a time of joy and celebration and also a time of reflection. **Loved ones can be honored and remembered during the holiday season with the Tree of Memories during the Festival of Trees. Personalized memorial ornaments** can be ordered in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Orders may be made by stopping by the hospice office (2706 Avenue E, Sterling), visiting www.hospicerockriver.org or calling 815-625-3858 for an order form, or purchasing the impersonalized memorial ornaments at the **Country Store** at McCormick Center, (205 E. 3rd Street, Rock Falls) between November 9th at 11:00 a.m. - November 15th 12:00 p.m. Following the Festival of Tree, ornaments may be picked up at on Saturday, November 15th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Festival of Trees or the hospice office beginning Monday, Nov. 19. For more information or to order, call Rock River Hospice & Home at 815-625-3858 or visit www.hospicerockriver.org.

Hospice Cookies

Thank you to all who signed up. A reminder that your cookies need to be taken to the Rock River Hospice & Home (2706 Avenue E, Sterling) on Saturday, November 8 between 9:00-9:45 a.m.

Myra Oelrichs – 4 dozen

Susan Bartel – 4 dozen

Patty Arians – 4 dozen

Carolyn Duncan – 4 dozen

Nancy Beck – 3 dozen

Bev Graunke – 3 dozen

Debbie O'Brien – 4 dozen

Donna Kendall – 3 dozen

Mary Ordean – 3 dozen





A Stable Lamp is Lighted

Look for these Advent materials: Advent Study Guide; Advent interactive Calendar; and Stocking the Streets shopping list. They will be available to take home beginning November 23.

All of us at ELCA World Hunger bring you warm Advent greetings!

This season's Advent calendar and study guide from ELCA World Hunger invite you to prepare room in your home and hearth for yourself and your loved ones before going into the world to act on behalf of your neighbors. In a time of global suffering and anxiety, Richard Wilbur's hymn "A Stable Lamp Is Lighted" calls us to embrace the tension of the moment, the natural desire for a place of our own, and our call to care for the stranger:

**A stable lamp is lighted
whose glow shall wake the sky;
the stars shall bend their voices,
and every stone shall cry.**

The simple act of making a hospitable, warm, cozy place — even in a stable — moves the sky, the stars and the stones to tremble. ELCA World Hunger's seasonal packet has resources for creating a place of care, rest and reflection for you and your family so that you feel prepared to strengthen your community.

Calendar

The Advent calendar evokes feelings of a welcoming hearth during the harsher months of winter. The activities inside start with a standing nativity scene, ready to be colored throughout the season. Alongside each day's craft activity, the calendar includes:

- Opportunities from ELCA Good Gifts to generously support the church's national and global work to end poverty.
- Everything you need to create "Stocking the Streets" bags for your unhoused neighbors.
- Scripture, prayers and hymns for seasonal reflection.

Advent Study Guide

We are thrilled to invite you and your community to learn together this Advent with our new, short video documentary “Intersections: Justice Ministry With ELCA Partners.” The video is designed to introduce people concerned about poverty — people such as you — to some of its overlapping causes, through stories told by ELCA World Hunger companion ministries that are supported by your generosity.

This is a three-session study. Each session focuses on one segment of the video, following a different ELCA partner as it fights hunger at its roots. We welcome you to gather family, neighbors and church members to join in, but you can use the study on your own too. All sessions include:

- A biblical passage appropriate to Advent and the respective video segment.
- A short introduction to the “Intersections” clip and reflection theme.
- Questions for reflection and discussion. We recommend that you prepare by reading the biblical passage, introduction and questions before watching the clip.
- Resources for action and further learning. Let your learning inspire ministry with your community!

The welcoming space you create for reflection will also deepen your discussion. In the spirit of the season and our ELCA World Hunger Advent theme, “A Stable Lamp Is Lighted,” we invite you to make your study environment more hospitable. Share food, welcoming crafts and warm things, and meet in a place where people feel comfortable. This study offers you a chance to rest, learn and grow together before going into the world to do God’s hard gospel work of loving the neighbor.



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.

2	David Carrillo	<u>Happy 31st Anniversary</u>
5	Abby Lobdell	November 5, 1994
7	Dianne Miller	David & Susan Metzler
9	Gunnar Page	<u>Happy 54th Anniversary</u>
10	Joe Machan	November 13, 1971
11	Susan Metzler	Ron & Janie Billings
12	Mike Zigler	
15	Mia Arians	
16	Judy Bartel	
18	Reganne Springman	
19	Jacy Woodworth	
21	Andrew Invarson	
22	Andra Shaw	
23	Luciller Beyer - 95	
	Jeann Crane	
	JoAnn Garcia	
	Joshua Waite	
25	Diane Yoeckel	
26	Brian Klein	
27	Mark Arians	



Youth News!



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!

Tri Church Teen (6th - 12th graders) Time in November will be a service event of packing buddy bags on **Wednesday, Nov. 19** from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the Wesley United Methodist Church (2200 16th Ave., Sterling). Please meet us at Wesley United Methodist. IMPACT Hours are available. Come and serve with us!



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 November & More

November 2, 2025; *Deposits for the Wisconsin Dells Youth Quake are due.*

November 19, 2025; 7 p.m.; Buddy Bags Packing at Wesley Methodist

November 23, 2025; Tri Church Confirmation from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Immanuel

December 7, 2025; Tri Church Confirmation from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. John's

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



Children's Offering

The November and December children's offering will be for the God's Global Barnyard through the ELCA Good Gifts. A gift to God's Global Barnyard will be used where needed most to support livestock, agriculture and other sustainable-development projects, which help farmers and families with the resources they need to thrive.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Students and families: Thank you for being a part of our combined Christmas program this year! St John's and St. Paul have paired up so we can have an even bigger group of students for our 2025 program. It may be confusing and different than previous years, but when we work together to share God's unconditional love, our message can reach much further than we

could ever imagine. By joining forces we are also giving students a chance to meet and work with other kids within the ELCA. We hope every student and family will enjoy working together and that we can all find joy in putting on our Christmas program. Our practices will take place at both churches, alternating locations. We will perform the Christmas Program twice. First at St. John's on December 14th, then at St. Paul on December 21st.

Would your family like to light the Advent wreath and share the reading and litany in worship this Advent? Families are needed to assist with Advent Wreath Lighting and Litany on November 30, December 7, December 14 and December 21 during worship. In addition, families are needed for the Christmas Eve worship service. Please let Sue know if any dates work for your family. Thank you in advance!



Christmas PROGRAM

ST. JOHN'S AND ST. PAUL
LUTHERAN CHURCHES

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Christmas PROGRAM

ST. JOHN'S AND ST. PAUL
LUTHERAN CHURCHES

Nov.
9

Practice @St. John's 10:30am

For our first practice, we will meet at St. John's. We will hand out scripts, pick parts, and pick out costumes.

Nov.
16

Practice @St. Paul 10:30am

We will review and do a full run through of the program.

Nov.
23

Practice @St. John's 10:30am

We will review and do a full run through of the program.

Dec.
7

Practice @St. Paul 10:30am

We will review and do a full run through of the program.

Dec.
14

Christmas Program @St. John's

We will meet at St. John's early before service. Costumes will be passed out and we will do a quick run through/sound check.

Dec.
21

Christmas Program @St. Paul

We will meet at St. Paul early before service. Costumes will be passed out and we will do a quick run through/sound check.

Community Announcements

2025 Sterling Township Thanksgiving Voucher

You can bless someone's holiday by supporting 2025 Thanksgiving Holiday Certificates for Sterling Township **Thanksgiving Voucher** for Sterling residents! Your donations assist in providing food for needy families in our area. Sterling resident vouchers are from County Market. Donations for Sterling residents are payable to: Sterling Thanksgiving Voucher. Please mail your donations to:

Sterling Township (Thanksgiving)

505 W. Lynn Blvd.

Sterling, IL 61081

ALL donations will stay in our local area. Thank you!



If you live in Sterling, your households can receive a voucher in person at the Sterling Township Office thru November 3-20 with photo ID, proof of address and SNAP card. The Sterling Township office is open Mon. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Any questions call 815-625-3990.



Every child deserves a family

LSSI Foster Parents Needed—Make a difference in the life of a child by becoming a foster parent through Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). Foster parents can be married or single, and once qualified, they receive ongoing support, training, and a monthly stipend. LSSI has two programs, traditional foster care and therapeutic foster care. For more information, visit LSSI.org/fostercare.

Christmas Community Concert

You are invited to join in **FREE** Christmas Concert of music provided by local talent, great fellowship and a great array of treats on Thursday, December 4th at 7:00 p.m. at the Big Red Church (311 2nd Avenue, Sterling)





Clinton
Symphony
Orchestra

Silas Nathaniel Huff
Music Director and Conductor

"...right here where we live!"

~ 72nd season ~

The Chicago 1933 World's Fair



- Theme Song by John Phillip Sousa
- A Dance by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor
- Music of Duke Ellington
- A Symphony by Florence Price

7:30 p.m. — Saturday, November 8, 2025
Centennial Auditorium at Sterling High School



Bus transportation is
available from Clinton.
Call 563-503-4886 for
reservations.

Adults – \$20

Students admitted free.

Student may sponsor one adult for ½ price.

Tickets available at the door

Visit us online at www.clintonsymphony.org and on Facebook



Poinsettia Order Form

We are taking orders for poinsettias for the Holiday Season. The cost is \$10.00 per plant. The plants will be ordered from County Market in Sterling.

The deadline to order is November 16.

Please fill out this order form and place in an envelope along with your \$10.00 and turn it in to the church office. You may also use a pew envelope and put it in the offering plate.

Name: _____

In Memory of:

In Honor of:



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.

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Facebook: St. Paul Lutheran Church – Sterling, IL