



The Messenger

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL (WELS), GREEN BAY

December, 2024

The Sign of Christmas

— Pastor Ben Enstad

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14

Halloween barely seemed to have passed, and the orange and yellow hues quickly turned to sparkling reds, greens and whites of Christmas. You might even have seen Christmas decorations and candies out for sale before Halloween came! Christmas is such a big deal in our culture that the preparation and the sales seem to start sooner and sooner each year. Maybe one day “Christmas in July” will simply meld with Christmas in December.

With as big a deal as Christmas is in our culture, many struggle to see Christmas for what it is, including each of us. Some don't see at all! With all the signs that Christmas is near, **the** sign of Christmas is often lost in the shuffle or its recognition doesn't go any farther than a nativity scene.

Isaiah spoke of **the** sign of Christmas when he wrote: **Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.**

Lights, trees, ornaments, gifts and the like can all be fine signs of Christmas. With the knowledge of **the** sign, all these

things can be beneficial for the believer and remind them of **the** sign. Lights remind us that the Light of the World came to enlighten our hearts with his truth and how his birth was marked by the light of the Christmas star. The evergreen Christmas tree reminds us of God's everlasting love and the everlasting life that waits for all God's people. Many ornaments teach the Christmas account. And gifts are given in love, reminding us of The Gift of Christ given to the world.

But none of these signs would be known, none of them would matter if not for **the** sign. Without the virgin birth, Christmas means nothing. Without Immanuel, God with us, Christmas means nothing. What great comfort and joy is ours to know this truth. What great comfort and joy we get to bring to others by helping them to see **the** sign.

God kept his promise of a miracle pregnancy made 700 years before he was born! God kept his promise to come and live with and for us made in the Garden of Eden after the fall into sin!

As you make all your Christmas preparations setting up all the human-made signs of lights, trees, ornaments and gifts, remember **the** sign Christmas, the virgin born Son of God. May God's promises kept fill your heart with his peace in all



the busyness of this season. May your joy in knowing God is with you encourage you to share **the** sign with others that their Christmas may be as full as yours.

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President's Message

As our 2024 church year recently ended and another begins, I am filled with gratitude for the countless blessings that God has bestowed upon our St. Paul church family. This year has been a testament to God's unwavering love and goodness. We give thanks and praise to our Lord all through the year and we especially look forward to celebrating his birth at Christmas.

One of the greatest blessings we have experienced this year is the growth of our church family. We have welcomed new members into our congregation through baptism, transfers in and profession of faith. Our fellowship events, from potlucks to bible study groups, have strengthened our faith and deepened love for one another. We are grateful for the friendships that have blossomed and the support we have in one another.

A significant milestone this year has been the completion of our new Ministry Center. The addition is a blessing from God who moved our members to generous acts of stewardship. It provides us with a wonderful space for early childhood education, community outreach and ministry planning. We have already seen the positive impact it has had on our programs and activities, and we look forward to all the ways it will serve our congregation and community in the years to come. Thank you for your continued support as we manage our monthly mortgage obligation.

Each week our worship services are such a blessing. The powerful sermons, uplifting music, and meaningful liturgies have nourished our souls and drawn us closer to God. We have also been blessed by the dedication of our St. Paul teachers and staff, and volunteer Kids Bible Hour leaders, who have guided our children in their understanding of God's Word.

We are thankful for the generosity of our members who have given their time and talents in countless ways. Our monthly food pantry distribution, our support of the Bay Area Life Center, and ESL classes have made a significant impact on those in need. Thank you to those who serve to maintain our facilities. Thank you to my brothers who serve on our Church Council. As the new church year begins, I encourage you to volunteer in any way that you can to serve others within our congregation.

Each of us is truly blessed to be part of our St. Paul family. Share this blessing with your neighbors, friends, and coworkers. Invite them to join us for worship services, Bible study and fellowship events. Let them experience the warmth and love of Christ that shines brightly in and through our church family. Share the joy and hope that comes from knowing Christ. It is the greatest gift that we can give anyone.

As we enter the Advent season and prepare for Christmas, may the light of Christ shine brightly in our lives and guide us in all that we do. Your brother in Christ,

Scott Kohls

December Worship Theme: *A Real Christmas*

A parent says, "I want to give my kids a real Christmas." What do you think that parent means? Perhaps they are thinking of a trimming a freshly cut tree or finding the perfect presents or spending the holidays with extended family. Perhaps they are thinking about all those things. "Then it will be a *real* Christmas!" Certainly, all those are wonderful things. However, none of them are what makes Christmas *real*. The sad truth is that Christmas is the most beloved holiday of so many, yet so few know what Christmas is *really* about.

If you want a real Christmas, then you need to observe Advent. Advent is Latin for "coming." In the season of Advent, Christians observe the connection between the first time the Son of God came into our world as the Savior and the second time he will come as the Judge. Advent prepares our minds and hearts, so that we might soon celebrate a real Christmas.



Sunday Worship Themes for December:

- December 1 — First Sunday in Advent: A Real Christmas Requires Remembering Why Christ Came
- December 8 — Second Sunday in Advent: A Real Christmas Is Rooted in Repentance
- December 15 — Third Sunday in Advent: A Real Christmas Results in Great Joy
- December 22 — Fourth Sunday in Advent: A Real Christmas Will Lift Up the Lowly

SPECIAL SERVICE SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

- Midweek Advent Worship**..... Wednesdays, Dec. 4, 11, 18; 3:45 & 6:30 p.m.
Hark, the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes
- St. Paul School Christmas Service**.....Saturday, December 21, 2:00 & 4:00 p.m.
Joy Has Dawned
- Christmas Eve Candlelight**.....Tuesday, December 24, 2:30, 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.
God Gives Heaven's Best Gift in Earth's Unlikeliest Place
- Christmas Day Festival Worship**.....Wednesday, December 25, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
God Gives Himself as One of Us



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School News

— Principal Stephen Miller

Our FVL theme for the year, 'Rejoice in the Lord,' is more than just a phrase. In November, we are reminded to rejoice in all circumstances, regardless of life's ups and downs. "Rejoice in the Christ-child" captures our deep joy, hope, and peace found in the birth of Jesus Christ. It celebrates the Incarnation, where Jesus, in His humility, became a vulnerable child, entering the world to fulfill God's plan of salvation and restore our relationship with Him. During December, we are called to reflect on the personal and universal significance of Christ's birth—the Savior who brings peace, joy, and redemption to all. As we live in the joy of His presence, we share His message of love and hope with those around us, eagerly awaiting His return.

November was a very busy month for our school. Our 3rd and 4th-grade students went to the Neville Museum, our 3K & 4K students went to see the Eagle III helicopter and hanger, and our 6th graders went to FVL for a special program. Our 7th-grade students began a special "quest" as part of their English Language Arts unit, looking into brain disorders. We held our very first Goodies with Grandparents, inviting all grandparents to join their 3K, 4K, and Kindergarten grandchildren for part of the day. We also conducted a mock election on election day, with each class getting an opportunity to exercise civic duty by casting their vote. We received our state test results and were excited by the outcomes. Our students outperformed the state, with 65% meeting Math and English Language Arts standards. Finally, we had our first home basketball games on Monday, November 18. For the first time in a while, we have actually fielded four basketball teams.

December is also beginning our enrollment process here at St. Paul Lutheran School. If you know of school-aged children not receiving the benefit of a Christian Education, please have their families contact me at stephen.miller@stpaulgreenbay.com. I would love to have the opportunity to give them a tour or speak with them further about what St. Paul can do for them and their families. Space is limited, so if they have any interest whatsoever, it would be good for them to reach out as soon as possible.



Goodies with Grandparents and 3rd Graders ready to cast their votes on Election Day

LWMS News

LWMS stands for **Lutheran Women's Missionary Society**. "LWMS is women dedicated to serving Jesus by increasing awareness of, interest in, and support of the mission outreach of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)".

St. Paul is a member of the LWMS Paperland Circuit. The LWMS Paperland Circuit is currently comprised of 33 WELS congregations located from Oshkosh to the tip of Door County. The St. Paul Ladies Aid pays the yearly LWMS membership (THANK YOU!!!) for our congregation. ALL confirmed women (yes, including the teens) of our congregation are automatically members of LWMS because our congregation is a member of LWMS. Learn

more about LWMS at LWMS.org and/or just ask me; I love talking about LWMS. I have been serving as your LWMS Reporter since 2011. The role of Reporter is to connect congregations with LWMS and LWMS with congregations. It is a blessing to serve!

Planning way ahead, our congregation will host the LWMS Paperland Circuit 2025 Fall Rally. The last time we hosted an LWMS Paperland Circuit Rally was in 2016. Hosting a Rally is a big effort, so we will be looking for lots of volunteers. More details to come as the date approaches.

SAVE THE DATES:

- LWMS Paperland Circuit 2025 Spring Rally, April

5th, at Martin Luther, Neenah. Grace, Neenah will co-host

- LWMS 2025 62st Annual LWMS Convention, June 26-29, 2025. Hosted by Mid-America Circuit in Tulsa, OK. More details and registration information will be available in January 2025.
- LWMS Paperland Circuit 2025 Fall Rally, October 11, at St. Paul, Green Bay.

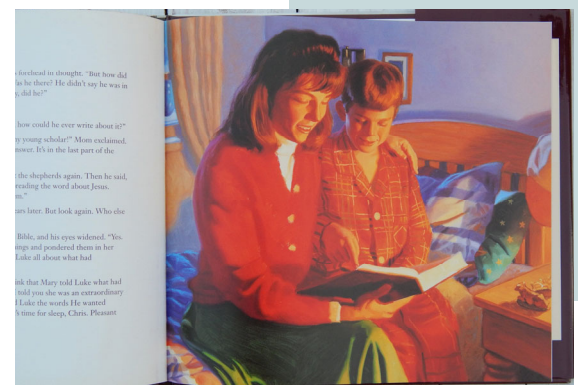
May GOD continue to bless the efforts of our Missionaries and the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS).

Lisa Koenig
LWMS Reporter
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St. Paul Book of the Month — *The Very First Christmas* by Paul Maier

A Real Christmas is why this book was written. Paul Maier builds his book around the character of Curious Christopher, who doesn't want more fairy tales but wants to hear stories about real people. So, his mother tells him the story of our Savior's birth — the Real Christmas. Christopher's questions lead to discussion about the historical setting and other details that emerge from Luke's gospel. Beautiful illustrations complement the text. Borrow a copy from our church or school library for a read with your family as you prepare for Christmas — or as addition to your Christmas celebration traditions.



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Informational Meeting — Staffing: A special congregational meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 2, 7:30 p.m. The Board of Christian Education will present information on enrollment in our upper grades and their considerations for handling the large class that is coming next year as well as preliminary plans to extend a call to fill Mr. Jammer's position; he is retiring at the end of the school year. We ask you to come to hear the information and provide feedback for decisions that need to be made.

The Ladies Aid Christmas Party and December meeting is on Tuesday, December 6, starting at 11:00 a.m. All ladies of the congregation are invited to come for lunch and fellowship.

Fellowship Breakfast: All are welcome to hang out with other St. Paul friends at the monthly Fellowship Breakfast, held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Village Grille on Hoffman Road in Allouez (801 Hoffman Rd.). Please join us on December 10, 8:30 a.m.

Bay Area Life Center Christmas Plans: The Christmas season is here, and BALC plans are in place! This year, we will offer gifts of children's books for different ages telling the real message of Christmas. We will also provide Christmas postcards to families and share church service information with them. Congregation members are asked to consider donating financially to BALC to help with the costs of these items and the ongoing costs of diapers, wipes, etc.

- Cost of one Children's Bible: \$12
- Case of diapers: \$26-\$37 (depending on size)

Thank you for your support!

Envelopes for the Bay Area Life Center are on the narthex table.



Christmas Concerts

The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chorus, a 70-voice men's choir composed of students at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, presents its annual Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 8, at 3:00 and 7:00 p.m. in the campus auditorium. Featured will be traditional and contemporary anthems for choir and hymns and carols for the audience. There are no advanced ticket sales; a free will offering is appreciated. The seminary is located 11831 N. Seminary Dr. in Mequon. Find more information on Facebook and at wisluthsem.org.

The FVL Choirs invite you to attend their annual Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 15, 2:00 p.m. The concert is free, and all are invited to join with the choirs as we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus. It will also be livestreamed on the FVLHS YouTube Channel.

Luther Preparatory School presents its Christmas concerts on Sunday, December 15, 3:00 p.m., and on Thursday, December 19, 10:00 a.m.

Martin Luther College's Christmas Concert is presented Saturday, December 7, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 8, at 4:00 p.m. in the MLC Chapel of the Christ. The combined choirs of Martin Luther College, the Wind Symphony, and the Hosanna Ringers invite you to join in the celebration of the birth of Christ under the theme "And on Earth Peace." The concerts can be seen online at livestream.com/mlc-streams/events.



St. Paul Lutheran Church exists to celebrate our freedom from sin, death, and hell through Jesus Christ; to nurture our church family with God's Word for lives of service to Him; and joyfully to share the good news of salvation with the world around us.

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL (WELS)

514 S. Clay St., Green Bay, WI 54301, www.stpaulgreenbay.com, (920) 435-8468, Facebook

Unexpected Ways to Build Connections

by Rev. Peter Janke, world missionary on the Asia One Team based in Australia

A little blonde haired boy is doing laps around a small play center in a mall near a Kmart. (Yeah, they still exist in Australia). He starts to play with a boy about his age. They chase each other and climb through the play center's obstacles to head for the slide. Each in turn, they inch down a slide that is inexplicably slow. And then they race back up



to do it again. And at least for now, it doesn't matter at all that they can't speak the same language. After a while, the boys' mothers connect and begin talking. Before they leave the moms exchange contact information for hopefully a play date for the newly formed friends zooming around a mall.

Three and a half months into living in Australia, we're just starting to get the hang of some new things. There's a different vocabulary with a serious affection for shortening words and tacking on an O (servo, arvo, bottle-o, flanno, rego, smoko, garbo, to name a few), there are exciting new food options (meat pies, TimTams, excellent coffee, and yes, Vegemite—it's excellent on toast with butter!), and there are a lot of different people groups here. We knew that experience living in East Asia would be a benefit in making friends here, and it is, but we've also met Filipinos, Japanese, Indonesians, Colombians, Malaysians, Taiwanese, and Mongolians. And the main person starting the connection with most of those people: my wife Alanna. And sometimes my son Marvin.

One of the most exciting aspects of ministry here in Australia is that we're all working on it together. Yes, the WELS missionaries, Matt and Peter (me), but also Christine (Matt's wife) and Alanna (my wife), and even unknowingly Marvin and Jonas. We're exploring, trying out things like English programs, play groups, parks, library events, cultural nights, and running into all sorts of people and making friends with so many people. Hopefully, some of those connections turn into coffee, dinners, and conversations. Conversations about God. And all that feels very normal.

I would venture a guess that in your community, wherever you may be, there's probably someone new, learning a new culture, maybe learning a new language, figuring out how to do basic things, and could use some help. And I bet that person would appreciate a friend. We've certainly appreciated all the help we've gotten from friends so far.

There's something really fascinating in Psalm 86. It's a psalm that praises God for how he listens and delivers those who trust in him. And in the middle of the psalm, the position of emphasis, there is verse nine. "All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name." It's a beautiful cause and effect explanation. God I trust in you, you save me, you deliver me, you answer me, and you help me.



December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00 AM – Communion Service 9:15 AM – Bible Hour 10:30 AM – Communion Service 11:45 AM – NO Sunday Catechism Class	2 6:30 PM – Communion Service	3 1:00 PM – Ladies Aid Christmas Party 6:30 PM – ESL Class	4 6:00 AM – Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 AM – Women’s Bible Study 3:45 PM – Advent Worship Grades 1-8 Sing 4:30-6:15 PM – Advent Supper 6:00 PM – Evangelism Committee Meeting 6:30 PM – Advent Worship Grades 1-8 Sing 7:30 PM – Choir Rehearsal	5 9:00 AM – Bible Study 6:30 PM – ESL Class	6 9:30-10:30 AM – JAMM	7
8 8:00 AM – Service 9:15 AM – Bible Hour 10:30 AM – Service Junior Choir Sings 11:45 AM – Sunday Catechism Class Christmas Cookie and Candy Fest to benefit St. Paul School Library	9 6:30 PM –Service 6:00 PM – PTO Meeting	10 8:30 AM – Fellowship Breakfast 5:30 PM – Tech Committee 6:00 PM -- Stewardship Committee 6:30 PM – ESL Class 6:30 PM – Board of Christian Education 7:00 PM – Board for Member Care	11 6:00 AM – Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 AM – Women’s Bible Study 3:45 PM – Advent Worship 4:30-6:15 PM – Advent Supper 5:30 PM – Evangelism Committee 6:30 PM – Advent Worship 7:30 PM – Choir Rehearsal	12 9:00 AM – Bible Study 6:30 PM – ESL Class 7:00 PM – Women’s Group	13 4:00-5:00 PM – Food Pantry Distribution	14
15 8:00 AM – Communion Service 9:15 AM – Bible Hour 10:30 AM – Communion Service 11:45 AM – Sunday Catechism Class	16 6:30 PM – Communion Service	17 6:30 PM – ESL Class 6:30 PM – Church Council Meeting	18 6:00 AM – Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 AM – Women’s Bible Study 3:45 PM – Advent Worship 4:30-6:15 PM – Advent Supper 6:30 PM – Advent Worship 7:30 PM – Choir Rehearsal	19 9:00 AM – Bible Study 6:30 PM – ESL Class 7:00 PM – Men of St. Paul Bible Study Group	20	21 2:00 PM – Children’s Christmas Service (Gr. 5K-8) 4:00 PM – Children’s Christmas Service (Gr. 3K-8)
22 8:00 AM – Communion Service 9:15 AM – Bible Hour 10:30 AM – Communion Service 11:45 AM – NO Sunday Catechism Class	23 6:30 PM – Communion Service	24 2:30 PM – Christmas Candlelight Worship 4:30 PM – Christmas Candlelight Worship 6:30 PM – Christmas Candlelight Worship	25 9:00 AM – Christmas Festival Worship with Holy Communion	26	27	28
Christmas Break – No School through January 5						
29 8:00 AM –Service 9:15 AM – Adult Bible Hour (No Kids or Teen Bible Hour) 10:30 AM –Service 11:45 AM – NO Sunday Catechism Class	30 6:30 PM –Service	31 6:30 PM – New Year’s Eve Worship with Holy Communion				
Christmas Break – No School through January 5						