

**Address:**

605 S. Center St.  
Bremen, IN 46506

**Telephone:**

Church:  
1-574-546-2332  
School:  
1-574-546-2790  
Preschool:  
1-574-546-2848

**Fax:**

1-574-546-3242

**E-Mail:**

church@stpaulsbremen.org

**Website:**

stpaulsbremen.org  
facebook.com/stpaulsbremen

**Church Office Hours:**

M,W,Th, F 8:30 – 11:30 am

**Sunday Schedule:**

Worship: 8 & 10:30 am  
Sunday School & Adult  
Bible Class: 9:15 am  
Unity Sunday: 9:30 am with  
Sunday School following

**Pastors:**

Rev. Roger Rohde  
Office Hours:  
M & Th 8:30 – 11:30  
1-574-209-0306 (H)

Rev. Neil Wonnacott  
Office Hours:  
W & F 8:30 – 11:30  
1-574-301-9291 (H)

As you look to enter upon a new year, what is going to be new for you? Hopefully you will be new each and every day. That is what the Apostle Paul emphasized to the people in Ephesus. To give them a true perspective of their identity in Christ, he wrote: “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Having our minds renewed and putting on a new self is not a once in a lifetime activity. It is something that Christians need to do daily if their attitudes are to be like Christ Jesus, and their actions are to glorify His name.

Martin Luther noted the importance of daily spiritual renewal when he addressed the significance of Holy Baptism: “It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.”

Two former ladies of our congregation now dwelling in heaven had two different approaches to helping them live the new life in Christ each day. One woman began each day with a shower. During that shower she recalled how in Baptism Jesus tied her to the blessings of His death and resurrection. As the water went over her body and down the drain, she recalled that in Baptism Jesus cleansed her with His precious blood so that her sins went down the drain. She recalled that in Baptism she was made a forgiven child of God, empowered by God to live her new day for Him.

The other woman made sure that her day always began with the appropriate food needed to walk in the newness of life. She would not eat physical food until she had taken time to sit at the feet of Jesus and be instructed and empowered by Him through daily Bible reading.

There is no prescribed avenue to take that we would be the new people God has made us to be each day. How you renew yourself in Christ is your decision. That you renew yourself each day in Christ is His command. As we begin a new year, let us begin or continue a daily practice of starting each day refreshed in Jesus' grace and wisdom. May each of you have a blessed New Year in Jesus.

## **Lessons In Stewardship: Don't Forget About Yourself!**

The life of Jesus is described in many ways, but one of the forgotten descriptions of His life appears several times in the Gospels: "He went by Himself to pray."

Think about what Jesus was doing here. People made great demands on Him. He was rarely alone, and people were always asking for His help. If Jesus as true man had not renewed Himself, His energy level and spirit by which He ministered would have been negatively affected.

When we think of stewardship, we often think about using our time, talents, and treasures for others. Like Jesus, however, good stewardship also means that we use our time and money to renew ourselves that we can continue to do the ministry God calls us to do.

God created the world in six days. He used the seventh day to rest. Don't forget about your Sabbath Day each week this year. It is to be a day of spiritual and physical renewal so that you may continue to do the Lord's will affectively and to His glory.



**THE DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY EPISTLE IS JANUARY 20TH!!!** Epistle articles, comments, ideas may be deposited in the epistle box in the Narthex mail slots or better yet e-mailed to Deb Burcham at [dburcham@stpaulsbremen.org](mailto:dburcham@stpaulsbremen.org). I appreciate all of your articles, ideas and comments!

### **IMPORTANT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

There will be a very important meeting for all members of the congregation on Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm in the church sanctuary. The purpose of the meeting will be twofold: (1) for information on the church's declining general fund balance and (2) our response, which could include necessary cuts in the preschool and K – 8 programs and personnel. Because of the critical nature of this decision, each family of the congregation should be represented. Please attend the meeting to speak in Christian love to the possible solutions that will help us to move into the future with an effective ministry. The meeting will be followed by the regularly scheduled January voters meeting with an abbreviated agenda.

Pastor Wonnacott will be on vacation January 1<sup>st</sup> through January 8<sup>th</sup>.

## This is Why I Carol

It was the Christmas of 1999. We were living on a large military base in eastern North Carolina. It felt like Camelot. Our neighborhood was 4 rows of WWII era two-story homes, all filled with young families. The elementary school was nearby, as was the commissary, playgrounds and the beach. Most of the members of my Sunday school class lived in these 4 rows of homes. It was here that I learned about community.

One neighbor in this community was in the process of a long recovery from surgery following the removal of a brain tumor. He was a young Marine Corps officer who left home one evening to pick up carry-out, suffered a seizure while at the club, and his family's life was forever changed. When we see our friends experience hardship, we learn a great deal about them.

Trials seem to either shatter one's faith, or reveal it. Matt and his wife, Lisa, lived a faith that taught the rest of us about standing firm in what we know about God and trusting Him with our futures. Those of us who feebly offered to help or support them were witnesses to the immeasurable grace of Christ Jesus. Matt had regained most of his motor function, but was still lacking full use of right hand and right foot. He had returned to work, returned to choir practice, returned to sharing his faith with others.

The members of our Sunday school class participated in an annual caroling party. We counted on Matt's voice to carry over those of us who just showed up for the food and fellowship. It was always a noisy, joyous event. A dozen or so adults were accompanied by roughly 15 children under the age of 10. The kids were busy being kids: running, shouting, singing, crying and generally creating a clamor. So we lurched through the neighborhood in a disjointed crowd with some children running ahead, some adults pushing strollers or carrying little ones on their shoulders. It was not the tight little band of carolers seen on TV.

It was dark outside and the night air filled with voices. I had fallen back to check on my youngest who was riding in a double stroller with her buddy, Sam. I jogged to catch up to regain my spot in the mob and saw the image that continues to draw me to caroling parties all these years later. There was Matt, kneeling in the starlight to tie his three year-old daughter's shoe with one hand. Our pastor stood above the pair, holding a flashlight, keeping back the darkness amid the din of friendly voices. I like to think it could have been any one of us holding the light, but I know the image is stronger because it was one who wears the robes.

Isn't this what life in Christ is about? Jesus never said it would be easy. He did say we could do things with His help that we presumed to be impossible. Tie a shoe with one hand? Impossible. Return to family, friends, joy, parenting, work, living out the gospel after debilitating brain surgery? Impossible. In the light of His glory and with His enabling Spirit, we can accomplish anything.

I know that we can all do this: hold the light for another, pray for another, remind each other of the Source of power, share the light of the Savior with others, hold back the darkness, be the background of friendly, loving, voices. This is our calling. This is the work of the gospel. This is why I carol. I don't want to miss this. When God's people gather to sing praises, He will show up. He will have something to say and I want to be there.

That night in 1999 I stood watching, frozen, feeling like I should enter in somehow, but offering nothing. I wanted to help, but didn't know what to do. Afraid of offending or intruding, I did nothing. So this is my prayer: "Let me hold the light, Lord, and thank you, thank you, thank you for all those you have provided to hold the light for me."

Submitted by Joanna Fox



## **Board Briefs:**

### **Christian Education:**

Sunday School Mission of the Month – Women’s Care Center - \$75

### **Church Office:**

Membership Changes

Adult Confirmation: Mary McMahan

Baptism: Cooper Hinds

Deaths: Evelyn Leeper, Ted Kiefer

Transferred to Lutheran Church: Joel & Staci Sienicki

### **Parish Fellowship:**

Euchre Party is Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, from 7-9:00pm in the Bethany Room. Anyone 16 and older can join us for fun and fellowship, and please bring a snack to share. Please bring cards and a card table if possible. Beverages will be provided. Come and bring a friend!

Men’s Group takes place on Sundays, January 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 4-6pm for all men ages 15 and above. We will meet in the gym for basketball and fellowship and will close with a prayer.

Thank you from the Public Relations, Evangelism, and Parish Fellowship boards for all who served to make the Thanksgiving Day dinner, and both advent meals. They were delicious and the fellowship was great for our members and members in the community. May the Lord continue to bless us to be a blessing to others! We also thank Thrivent members who used their action team cards to help in our ministry.

Check out the new booklets in the revolving rack in the narthex. Thanks to a Thrivent Action Team card we have booklets on many different topics, and more will be displayed in the coming months. We even have three different booklets just for kids! If you are looking for a booklet on a topic that is not in the rack, please ask Christie Wonnacott about it.

### **Stewardship:**

#### **E-TITHING**

The Board of Stewardship is excited to announce that you can now manage your giving online! Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions and view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Simply follow these easy steps:

1. Visit the church website at [www.stpaulsbremen.org](http://www.stpaulsbremen.org).
2. Click on the “Offering” button located at the bottom of the home page.
3. Click on the "Create Profile" button, then...
4. Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your recurring contributions.

### **CHARITABLE AND SERVICE AGENCIES ENVELOPES**

Did you ever wonder what your offerings really went to when using your pink Charitable and Service Agencies envelope? Well, one of the agencies is the Lutheran Bible Translators.

Board news cont.

The mission of Lutheran Bible Translators is to help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts.

2017 Voters' Assembly meetings: January 23, April 24, June 5, August 28, November 27

2017 Parish Planning Council: February Retreat (no date set yet), March 27, May 22, July 24, October 23

**Altar Guild: January attendant is Dorothy.**

Altar Flowers in January:

1

8

15

22

29

The Altar Flower Chart for the 2017 Liturgical Year is hanging in the Narthex (North side), just outside the altar guild room door. Please look it over and sign up for flowers.

### ***BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITY!!***

The Ladies Encouragement Group (LEG) Bible Study meet the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month at 7 p.m. in the Jerusalem Room at church. All ladies are encouraged to attend! January 15th we will be starting a new bible study entitled Fearless Conversation – How Can We Be Fully Faithful When We're Fully Flawed. Study books are available from Joanna Fox or you can pick yours up January 15th. Please join us!



Ladies Encouragement Group  
Moving our feet, shining our light!

*Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Class meets from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. in the Jerusalem Room. All ladies are welcome!*

**ST. PAUL'S *L*utheran *W*omen's *M*issionary *L*eague **SOCIETY****

*The mission of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League is to assist each woman of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and The Lutheran Church-Canada in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.*

Many thanks for the generosity shown in the Ingathering for the Seminary Food Bank. In addition, a Thrivent Action Grant added \$250 worth of items to the many boxes & bags brought to the narthex. The items were delivered December 8, by *volunteer* Ken Eichinger.

**COMING UP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**Monday, February 6, 7:00 pm**, in the Jerusalem Room

📖 Program: Bible Study led by Pastor Wonnacott:

**Katharina Von Bora, Escaped Nun, Wife, Mother**

With the hymn: *Oh, Bless the House* TLH 325; LSB 862 📖

“I will cling to Christ as a burr clings to a coat.” *Katie Luther*

Plus on Feb 6: We will be filling “**Goodie Boxes**” for all **Away-From-Home College Students & the Seminarian's Families** St. Paul's supports.

Anyone wishing to contribute towards the boxes should bring 1 ½ to 2 doz individually-wrapped items to the church kitchen on Sunday, February 5. Better yet, join us for Bible study & bring them along. **NOTE:** If your college student's **CURRENT ADDRESS** is **NOT ON FILE** with the **CHURCH OFFICE**, your student **WILL NOT RECEIVE** a box!

*Only because we won't know who, or where, they are; so please help not to miss anyone!*



**SOUTH BEND ZONE SPRING BIBLE BREAK**

March 11, 2017 (tentative date) Watch for more details in coming Epistles/Bulletins

Host congregation: either St. Paul's LWML, or St. Peter's, Warsaw LWML

Location: likely here at St. Paul's regardless of host; with Registration starting at 9:00 AM

**INDIANA DISTRICT RETREAT**, Friday, March 31 – Saturday, April 1, 2017, at Shiphewanna Farmstead Inn. **Registration opens January 1, 2017 (online)**. Cost: \$50, covers snacks, meals, & materials. Hotel rooms will have an “LWML price” so be sure to mention this! We hear “Katie Luther” is attending!

Web sites: 'National' LWML: [lwml.org](http://lwml.org)

Indiana District: [indianalwml.org](http://indianalwml.org) – South Bend Zone under drop down 'Area 1' tab

FYI: **INDIANA DISTRICT** includes the *entire* state of Indiana & the six northern-most counties of Kentucky

**SOUTH BEND ZONE:** is comprised of the *Congregations* of *St. Paul's*, Bremen; *Trinity*, Culver;

*Trinity*, Elkhart; *Prince of Peace*, Goshen; *St. Peter*, Mishawaka; *Calvary*, Plymouth;

*Emmaus*, *Our Redeemer*, & *St. Paul*, South Bend; *Redeemer*, & *St. Peter's*, Warsaw; *St. Paul*, Woodland

***SERVE the LORD with GLADNESS***

The altar guild would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Church Properties for their work in putting up (and taking down later this month) the Chrismon tree. Also thanks to those who came and helped adorn the Lord's house and narthex for the Advent/Christmas season.

The Chrismon tree will be taken down beginning Monday, January 9. Anyone wishing to help with that task is appreciated & work will begin around 2:00 pm (you need only stay as long as you are able).

The FLOWER CHART for the calendar year 2017, is located in the narthex just outside the altar guild room (aka north balcony stairs inside wall).

*May the  
Miracle of  
Christmas  
fill your heart  
with joy*

We put the FUN in FUNdraising!

Please join us for this special event!

Date: January 17th, 2017

Time: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Place: Bremen Dairy Queen

Dairy Queen will be donating 10% of their sales to St. Paul's PTL!

# SCHOOL NEWS AND NOTES

School Office phone: 546-2790

Fax: 546-3242

e-mail: [schools@stpaulsbremen.org](mailto:schools@stpaulsbremen.org)

January 2017

Our theme for the 2016-2017 school year is Upon this Rock. This is based on Is. 26:4 (ESV): “Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock” We give thanks to God for His gracious care for us all!

This school year keeps moving forward. January 11 marks the END OF FIRST SEMESTER, the midpoint of the school year. Please continue to pray for our students, teachers, and volunteers.

Join us in encouraging our school BASKETBALL teams. This month we have seven home games. The game dates and times are listed in the Epistle Calendar, or elsewhere in the Epistle. These games and other activities would not be possible without the gym. Please continue your support of the effort to pay off the gym debt.

OUR SPECIAL CHAPEL emphasis for January & February is Seminarian Support. Our offerings will go to support our congregation’s adopted seminarians; plus we donate \$20 per month to our Tuition Aid Fund.

If you would like to donate to this project please contact St. Paul’s School office.

**VOLUNTEER FOR THIS COMING YEAR!** We welcome all helpers, even one-time helpers. We can use your assistance with a variety of tasks. If you would like to help please contact the school office.

**PTL:** Please save ALUMINUM CANS. These cans may be deposited in the shed on the south end of the parking lot. If you have other aluminum items to donate, call the school office at 546-2790. Also please save the small logo printed on the labels or the lids/caps of CAMPBELL LABELS items. Thank you.

**THE TUITION AID FUND** seeks your contributions to help those who desire a Christian Education for their children but who need a little help to meet the costs. Your generosity will greatly benefit the cause of Christian Education for both members and non-members. We are also seeking donors who would like to SPONSOR a child or family directly. Please contact Mr. Russell.

**NOTE:** Contact the church or school office if you have questions concerning scheduling the use of any of the facilities.

**\*\*\*Please check the Church Calendar for other school events.**

## January Devotion: "Listening"

*He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? He who disciplines the nations, does He not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge -- the LORD -- knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath. Psalm 94:9-11*

There are times when my wife tells me she's talking, but I'm not listening. It is at such times that the story of King Alfonso of Spain comes in very handy. Alfonso, who ruled that grand nation from 1866 to 1931, had many admirable qualities. Music appreciation, however, was *not* one of those qualities.

The truth is Alfonso was so tone-deaf that he hired an individual who became known as the "anthem man." This man's job description consisted of one thing: he was supposed to call the king to attention whenever Spain's national anthem was played. Because of Alfonso's disability, it was impossible for the monarch to recognize the tune.

Now I've noticed many other people seem to have a similar complaint. No, not when it comes to music. Music people remember. Trivia people remember. TV shows people remember.

People seem to have their greatest difficulty in listening to the Lord. In His Word He speaks to us, but many prefer to ignore, deny, and disregard what He says.

This is just one more reason I give thanks for the greatness of our God. The Psalmist said it well: "He who planted the ear, does he not hear?"

The Lord *does* hear and His hearing is not based on how much we listen to Him. No, the Lord is glad to hear the pleas of our hearts; He listens to the words on our tongue. He knows the requests we are thinking, even before those thoughts are fully formed.

He who has made us, who sent His Son to be sacrificed so we might be saved, stands ready to listen to everything -- anything -- we have to say.

So, if I might play the part of the *anthem man* for just a moment . . . if you have up to this point in time, been tone deaf to the words of the Lord -- it may be time to start paying attention.

God has something to say, and if you really do listen, you may realize God has given you good news of great joy: you have a Savior who loves you very much.

**THE PRAYER:** Dear Heavenly Father, I am grateful You hear my cries, my laughter, my joys, and my tears. Now may I, in gratitude for all my Savior has done, be just as ready to listen to You. May I appreciate and cherish the wonderful good news that comes in my crucified and risen Savior. In His Name. Amen.