

**Address:**

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**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)

I find entering a new year to be somewhat emotional. We entered 2017 not knowing what we might encounter. Some of us now look back at that year and consider it to be a pretty good one. Oh sure, there were some bumps in the road, but under the gracious, providential hand of God it was a pretty good year. Perhaps we now may look back at this past year and say to ourselves, "If I had known that this is the way the year would have gone, I might have enjoyed it more.

Now we come upon the New Year with all of its uncertainties. Will our health hold up? Will my loved ones be with me at the conclusion of this year? What will life in our country be like? What challenges will we have to face? The questions can go on and on, but no matter what questions we ask the exact answers remain unknown to us.

What is known to us, and all we really need to know, is that the Lord has promised to be with us wherever we go and whatever we encounter. He promises us that He will not leave us nor forsake us. We can be strong and of good courage (Joshua 1:5-6). He will govern this New Year with His wise providence and loving care for our eternal wellbeing (Romans 8:28).

As we move forward with our lives here on earth, let us not live in fear of the unknown, but in faith of what we know for certain. Jesus has redeemed us with His blood and cares for us unto eternal life in heaven. Nothing that we encounter can separate us from His love and the eternal home He has prepared for us (Romans 8:31-39). With this in mind, have a Blessed New Year in the Lord.

**Lessons in Stewardship: What Have I that I Did Not Receive?**

This is a question answered by Job as he faced the loss of his property, animals, servants and children. All had been taken from him, but in that situation he was reminded that all he had in life was a gift from God. He said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

Job rightfully saw that all he had received in life was the result of God's grace. Sure Job worked hard for what he had, but God gave him the strength and blessed the labors of his hands.

Today we live in the comforts of one of the greatest nations on earth. Our refrigerators and cupboards are packed with food. Our closets and drawers are filled with clothes. We have warm places in which to live, and wonderful family and friends that surround us. Yet, from where did all this come? It came from the Lord Who made heaven and earth. The Lord has showered us with His grace and blessings. Let us praise the name of the Lord through our wise use of the time, talents, and treasures with which He blesses us. After all, what do we have that we have not received from God? From the life we have to the family that surrounds us, all has come from the creative and providential hand of God. May He be praised among us!

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

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**THE DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY EPISTLE IS JANUARY 21ST!!!** 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!

***BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITY!!***

Come be a part of the Ladies Encouragement Group (LEG)! We're beginning a new study on Sunday January 7, 2018 at 7:00 pm. We meet in the Jerusalem Room on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month for Bible study. All ladies are invited! Our new study is Uninvited by Lysa TerKeurst. This study includes a video journey in the Holy Land to experience scripture like never before. It's a beautiful reminder to believe that we are destined for a love that can never be diminished, tarnished, shaken or taken. With Jesus you are always invited in. Books will be available in the church office or from Joanna Fox at 574-248-0549



Ladies Encouragement Group  
Moving our feet, shining our light!

### Mission News - Haiti

Many things have been happening in Haiti since we last updated you. It has been a little over a year since hurricane Matthew hit Haiti and Jeremie is still struggling to recover. As you remember, the devastation was very extensive and all 17 church/schools that Pastor Isaac serves were either destroyed or received severe damage. We continue to be in contact with Sue Gross of the Haitian Lutheran Mission Project (HLMP). She has led several medical and construction teams to Haiti since hurricane Matthew hit in Oct. 2016. To date, 3 of the 17 church/schools have been rebuilt and HLMP will continue to rebuild more as money becomes available. All of the schools are supplied by the Trinity Hope feeding program and have secure buildings to store the food. So, even though they have no building, they can still have school.

Because of the tremendous amount of resources needed to rebuild, HLMP is changing their focus slightly so that as many people as possible can be reached with the gospel. It appears that, right now, the best way to do that is by supporting the 17 church/schools in the Jeremie District. One way to do this is by supporting the teachers through the micro-loan program. These small loans, usually around \$200, are extended to a teacher or one of their family members to start a small business so that the family can be self-sustaining instead of depending solely on HLMP to provide their salaries of \$50.00 a month. They are typically given 12-18 months to get the business up and running before they start to pay the loan back.

Another way to support the schools is to sponsor a teacher, school, or the feeding program. If we can keep the schools open, then the students will receive 1 meal a day and, more importantly, they will be fed the gospel. However, we need to have teachers to keep the schools open. That is the main reason for providing the micro-loans and asking for sponsorships for the teachers and schools.

Below are several answers to questions the committee recently asked Sue and her response:

#### **1. How can we sponsor a teacher or a school?**

**Sue :** There are 2 forms of SPONSORSHIP for a school: One way would be sponsoring all the teachers at that school who get paid \$50.00 a month each. Most of the schools have about 5 teachers at \$250.00 a month. The other sponsorship would be through Trinity Hope feeding program. That is much more expensive. Depending on the size of the school. This runs from about \$6,000-\$10,000 a year which feeds each child in the school 1 meal a day for the whole school year. (Trinity Hope is an organization that supplies **118 Christian Schools in Haiti** with enough food to feed each student 1 meal of rice and beans every school day. They feed about **25,000 children every day, 480,000 meals each month** at a cost of just \$0.25 per meal. This daily meal is often the **ONLY** one the child receives that day. Trinity Hope feeds **17 schools in the Jeremie District, about 4,071 students** every school day. The way they are able to do this is through donations from individuals, congregations and mission societies such as the **Haitian Lutheran Mission Project** who understand that feeding these children physically is important so that they can be fed Spiritually. The children come to school hungry for food and learning. What they learn at school, reading writing and the gospel, often goes home with them to teach the parents.) You can also sponsor one teacher for a \$50.00 a month commitment. There are coupon books available to help with this if you'd like one.

2. How is the bus holding up?

**Sue :** When I was in Jeremie with a medical team 1 year ago this month we used it to get to the villages we served. It did need work but it was running pretty well. It has taken a beating though.

3. We have had interest in getting another group to go to Haiti. What is the travel situation now? Can we get to Jeremie? What is the current cost? I know it was around \$2000 when we went nearly 3 years ago.

**Sue :** I am taking a team to Jeremie in January. It has gotten more expensive because of the flight from Port au Prince to Jeremie. It is only done by charter. The 9 seater plane runs about \$1,500 each way plus all the other expenses. So what I am doing now is having teams purchase their own flights to Port au Prince and meeting them there. This way they can use frequent flyer miles or special gifted miles to get their flights cheaper. Then I charge them for the charter and housing separately. This runs about \$1,800 each for 1 week.

4. Are you still working with Pastor Isaac on the motorcycles for pastors And/or the goat project?

**Sue :** I am actually backing out of several projects we once had only because it is getting too hard to keep tabs on them and making sure the money is being spent where it should and that the goats are going to people that need them. It is just too much for me to follow up on so we are sticking to the micro loans, the teacher payments, and the feeding program.

5. What about the orphanage at Pastor Isaac' house?

**Sue :** Now that most of the original orphans we grew to know and love are on their own the HLMP decided not to stretch our funds by committing to a new group of orphans entering Pastors home/orphanage. I want to thank so many of our friends who once sent monthly support for the orphans and have now transferred their support to our teachers.

Finally, we asked about the possibility of drilling freshwater wells in Haiti like they do in Africa. Sue said that she is working with Rotary in Lake Worth who is interested in helping drill a well. The catch is that she needs a Rotary member in the area that is willing to coordinate with the Rotary here to get this done. Finding a Rotary member in Haiti is not easy but I am working on it. There have been wells drilled in Haiti but not too many in the Jeremie District that she knows of. Please look for more info on this as we hear of Sue's progress with Rotary.

We know that this is a lot of info and we apologize for its length but we wanted everyone to know that we are still very much wanting to continue to support our brothers and sisters in Haiti. Please pray for Pastor Isaac, Sue, all those who support the Haitian Lutheran Mission Project and the people of Haiti. If you feel moved to help with a monetary gift, you may put it in an envelope marked "Haiti Missions" and we will see that it gets to them. As always, if you have any questions, please see any member of the Mission Committee : Terry Miller, Janet Miller or Marilyn Gumz.

***"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".....Matt 28:19***

**Board Briefs:**

**Christian Education:**

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

**Train up a Child...**

There has been some interest expressed in beginning a group for parents of younger children. There was an initial meeting held in November with some ideas presented. There will be another meeting during the Sunday School hour from 9:15-10:15 am on February 18<sup>th</sup> in the Gymnasium addition. The purpose of the group would be to help one another in their role as Christian parents in meeting the challenges of today’s society. The Christian Board of Education has identified the book “30 Ways in 30 Days to Strengthen Your Family” by Rebecca Hagelin that the group may want to use for the basis of discussion. The book includes strategies for raising children of character. It emphasizes that parents have the most influence on their child. If there would be enough interest with parents of elementary and parents of infants through preschool, two groups could be considered. We have a book called, Faithfully Parenting Preschoolers, that could be used for parents of that age group.

The purpose of this meeting will be to make some decisions on how the group will work such as how often they will meet, when, in homes or at church, and the need for child care. If you have any questions about this meeting or if you are unable to attend and are interested in being included in this group, contact someone from the CBE. Members are Jason Russell, Barb Middaugh, Wendy Coxey, Lois Nielsen, and Jeanette Rettinger.

**Lay Ministry: Caring Concern - The Fourth Commandment: (God’s Representatives)**

This is a matter of caring concern for your child, or the young child that you are responsible for, age 13 or younger. The Board of Lay Ministry asks that if your child needs to leave the sanctuary during the worship service, you as a parent or responsible adult will need to escort them to and from the sanctuary. The exception is the children dismissed for Children’s Church. (3 years old to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) They are escorted to Children’s Church by an adult and they are returned to the sanctuary by a member of the Board of Lay Ministry. In the Fourth Commandment, ‘What does this mean’ Luther’s last phrase is, “love and cherish them”. Any questions you may have please contact a member of the Board of Lay Ministry.

**The Fourth Commandment – Honor your father and your mother.**

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

**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.

**Stewardship:** One of the charitable options on the red and white offering envelope is the Lutheran Child and Family Services. The mission: In response to God’s love and grace in Jesus Christ, Lutheran Child and Family Services serves human needs with the support of the church and community by providing programs of compassionate care and counsel.

**Altar Guild: January attendant is Kay Miller.**

Altar Flowers in January:

7  
14  
21  
28

The Altar Flower Chart for the 2018 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.

# SCHOOL NEWS AND NOTES

School Office phone: 546-2790

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

January 2018

Our theme for the 2017-2018 school year is It's Still All About Jesus, based on Hebrew 13:8 (ESV): "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." We give thanks to God for His unchanging grace toward us all!

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.

BASKETBALL: There are still a number of basketball games coming up, both home and away. Check the church calendar for the upcoming games.

ALSO, St. Paul's is sponsoring two tournaments in our gym. The first one is on Saturday, January 13, for 7th & 8th grade teams. The second one is on Saturday, February 17, for 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams.

FYI: Mrs. Middaugh will be filling in as our Kindergarten teacher for the rest of this year when Mrs. VanSoest goes on maternity leave.

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. 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: **"Discipline Brings Blessings!"**

*Hebrews 12:11 "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace."*

Discipline is not a pleasant word, raising thoughts of discomfort, often of punishment. As God's dear children we cannot miss its meaning. "The Lord disciplines those He loves" (Proverbs 3:12), says the holy writer, pointing even to God's redeeming love in Jesus. Discipline is training. Often it tests our submission to the divine will, tries our patience and piety, even our faith in the Savior, who has promised to sustain us.

We remember how God's servant Job was chastened -- and Saint Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) and the Christians at Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11). From them we learn that if we do not feel the discomfort of discipline, we can derive no profit from it. If it were not painful at the moment, it could not result in blessings later.

But there is a "later." Discipline is like a tree. It requires time and cultivation to produce the ripened fruit of peace and righteousness. It always contains the fruitful seed of future joys. It is the spring pruning of our vines that, in God's judgment, is needed to make us fruitful. May we wait patiently in discipline for the later blessings! They will surely come.

PRAYER: Lord, discipline me in Your love, but enable me always to see its purpose so that I may draw closer to my Savior. Amen.