

Worship Notes for Visitors & Members

Welcome to worship - Welcome to all, and especially to our visitors, we are glad you are here today, and hope that you will worship with us again soon and often. Please fill out an attendance card and place it in the offering plate. These will aid our record-keeping. Thank you. Large print bulletins are available from an usher in the narthex. *"It is good to worship the Lord together, and to come into his presence with thanksgiving."* Psalm 95

Welcome children - Jesus said "Let the children come to me." Children are welcome and encouraged to worship here at St. Paul. We rejoice that they are among us; however, if you need it, our nursery is available at all services and you can hear the service on audio. An usher will guide you.

St. Paul welcomes all to the Communion Table. Christ is the Host and the Meal. Come, taste, and see that the Lord is good. Grape juice is available for those who prefer it rather than wine. Children and those choosing not to receive Holy Communion are invited to come forward to receive a blessing.

There are **restrooms** located in the basement of this building and on the ground floor of the hallway leading to our fellowship hall and on each floor of the educational building.

PARTICIPANTS

MINISTERS

PASTOR

ORGANIST

CHOIR DIRECTOR

ASSISTING MINISTER

5:30 p.m.

9:00 a.m.

LECTOR

5:30 p.m.

9:00 a.m.

FELLOWSHIP VOLUNTEERS

5:30 p.m.

9:00 a.m.

HEAD USHER

USHERS & GREETERS

5:30 p.m.

9:00 am.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH LEADERS

LITTLES' WORSHIP CENTER LEADERS

ALTAR CARE

The People of God
Rev. John Shipman
Marvis McNeil
Marty Cantleberry
Dawn Grzeskowiak
Scott Parkham
Sue Keyes
Scott Parkham
Patti Byce and Myra Gapske
Carla Steinke
Roy Wekwert
John and Linda Snyder
Kathy Burton, Richard Miller
Jesse and Jessica O'Neil
Jesse and Jessica O'Neil
Nena Shipman, Kathy Burton
Joanne Huggler and Rita Chase
Patti Byce and Laurie Stafford

We thank all participants for enriching our worship service.

St. Paul Lutheran Church Worship Service

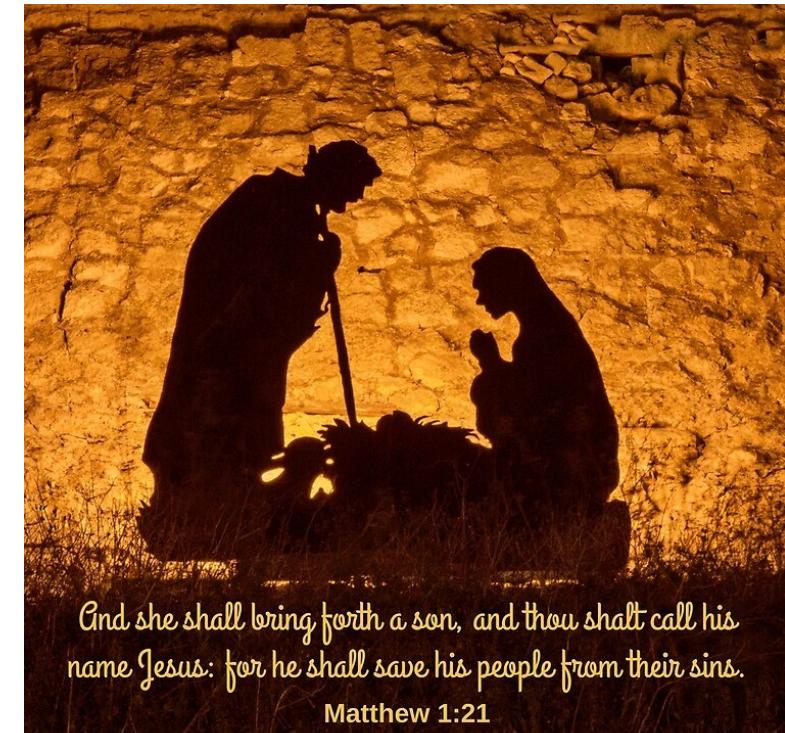
celebrates and shares God's love and compassion
727 S. 2nd, Alpena, MI 49707

Phone 989-356-1658

www.stpaul.org

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

Monthly Ministry Highlight:
*Outside Agencies that
Use our Building*



And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

**December 20, 2025 - 5:30 p.m.
December 21, 2025 - 9:00 a.m.**

The **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services** will be at 3:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24th. Holy Communion will be served at all services. **Please join us for our Christmas Day Worship** on December 25th at 9:00 a.m. There will be a Unity Service on December 28th at 9:00 a.m. Please note: that will be the only service that weekend. So, plan now to join us.

The December Service Activity is Sanborn Elementary School. Please see the December newsletter or check our webpage for items needed. You may leave your donated items on the altar. Thank you.

All are invited to our January Video Educational Experience on Wednesday, January 7th at 6:00 p.m. We will be watching "Unsung Hero" and a meal will be provided with discussion throughout.

The **Epiphany Dessert** event will be January 10, 2026 after the Saturday service. We need volunteers to make desserts and/or host a table. Please contact Doreen if interested, at 989-916-9172. Sign-up sheets are posted.

Come Learn About the SPECAL Methodology for Dementia Care on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, starting at 5:30 p.m. - Multi Purpose Room. We are blessed to have two certified SPECAL Practitioners, Annie Hepburn and BJ Sander, right here at the Alpena Senior Center. They are eager to share the SPECAL Methodology with us. Pizza will be provided, so come hungry and ready to discover practical ways to bring comfort, understanding, and calm to those living with dementia. Invite your friends. Everyone is welcome.

The Forget Me Nots (Women 70 and older) will not meet on the first Tuesday in January. Instead, we are going to the play "The God Committee" on Sunday, January 18th at 2:00 p.m. If you have not signed up yet, please call Ann Hardesty at (989-590-2055), as she will be getting the tickets soon.

We will be packing food for the Feeding Kids Ministry on Monday, January 19 at the old Sunset School, 1421 Hobbs Dr. Call Sherry McDonald if you are willing to help or have any questions at 989-356-9600.

Save the Date! Our next **Women's Retreat** will be on Friday, January 23rd at 6:00 p.m. The event will take place at 1921 Long Rapids Road and there is no cost associated with this event. The theme is "Being a Woman and having Faith, Hope and Love in a Digital Age. The next **Dynamic Duo Couples Retreat** will be Friday, February 13th at 6:00 p.m. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend!

WEEK AT A GLANCE: DECEMBER 21—28, 2025	
<u>SUN.</u>	Scout Breakfast—8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.; Worship/HC—9:00 a.m.; Fellowship—10:00 a.m.; Contemporary Service/Children's Church/C.I.A. - 10:30 a.m.; The Adventure Club Christmas Caroling – 5:00 p.m.
<u>MON.</u>	Line Dancing – 2:00 p.m.; E.T.A. – 5:30 p.m.; Monday Night Activity—6:00 p.m.
<u>TUES.</u>	Cub Scouts – 5:30 p.m.; Scouting America – 6:30 p.m.
<u>WED.</u>	Christmas Eve Worship Services – 3:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m., and 8:00 p.m.
<u>THURS.</u>	Merry Christmas!; Worship Service – 9:00 a.m.
<u>SAT.</u>	No Worship Service tonight – Join us tomorrow for the Unity Service Hymn Sing at 9:00 a.m.
<u>SUN.</u>	Unity Service – 9:00 a.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church celebrates and shares God's love and compassion.

WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS:

Billie Jo Foster – health issues	Tim Moggie – surgery
Darlene Ackerman – health issues	Joel Foster – health issues
Lianna Krutlin – health issues	Nancy Yahne –surgery
Mark Byce – health issues	Greg Dziesinski- health issues
Katelyn Sims – health issues	Malary Smith –unspecified
Laura – health issues	Cody Franklin –leukemia
Karen Wallace–unspecified need	Phyllis Robb-unspecified need
Carol Kuhl – health issues	Margaret Lucian – health issues
Ric Schmidt – recovery from surgery	Ann Martin – medical issues
Marlis Roznowski–health issues	John Wegmeyer- health issues
	Mollie Skiba – fell/recovery

(Prayer is the best medicine and we are prepared to pray indefinitely for folks. Would you help the church office keep our list current? Unless we know otherwise, our normal practice is to remove names after a month. Thank you.)

We remember our prayer partners in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod: Trinity Lutheran Church, Midland, Rev. Jeffrey Gramza.

We pray for the Dynamic Ministries here at St. Paul Lutheran Church. This week we specifically pray for the Forget-Me-Nots.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Wednesday 12/10	46
Saturday 12/13 5:30 p.m.	41
Sunday 12/14 9:00 a.m.	52
10:30 a.m.	<u>43</u>
Total	182

END OF OCTOBER

Income	22,053.05
Expenses	<u>37,441.89</u>
Difference	(15,388.84)

YEAR TO DATE

309,959.06
<u>332,109.93</u>
(22,150.87)

THE FLOWERS IN THE CHANCEL (foot of the cross) are given to the glory of God.

Scouting America Troop 92 invites you to a Breakfast Fundraiser at St. Paul Lutheran Church on Sunday, December 21st from 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Free Will Offering. All you can eat plus take-out option. If you have any questions please contact Scoutmaster Steve Donajkowski at 989-255-6521.

The Adventure Club will go Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 21st at 5:00 p.m. Please join us at the church as we head out to share God's love with our voices in the community.

If you would like to serve as an usher, acolyte, or cross-bearer for one of the Christmas Eve services, please sign up today on the sheet in the Narthex. Thank you!

Please Note-The church office will close on Christmas Eve and remain closed until Monday, January 5th.

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2025 - 5:30 p.m.

December 21, 2025 - 9:00 a.m.

Congregational responses are printed in bold.

Welcome! Celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries and a time to welcome our guests. We ask that you fill out the communion card and place it in the offering plate.

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Please Stand)

CONFESSON AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,

we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN "Blessed Be the God of Israel"

(Red) #250

GREETING

Pastor: The free gift of grace in Jesus Christ, the reconciling love of God, and the life and peace of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: And also with you.

KYRIE (*Sung at the 9:00 a.m. service*)

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

SERMON NOTES

Send us with your promises, O God,
and lead us forth in joy with shouts
of thanks-giving. Alleluia.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray: God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN

“Joy to the World”

(Red) #267

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

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HYMN OF PRAISE (*Sung at the 9:00 a.m. service*)

Refrain
Assisting minister

This is the feast of victory for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.

1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us

free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and

strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.

2 Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the

hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and

might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain
has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Pastor: We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Light all four candles.

(Please be seated)

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

¹⁰ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹² But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. ¹³ Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also?' ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (Read Responsively)

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE

"Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise"

C Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -
one what God has done. Let all who seek the
Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise . . . (*concluding*) we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord

EUCCHARISTIC BLESSING

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us:

**People: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

(Please be seated)

HOLY COMMUNION

All are welcome at the Lord's Table. Christ is both the host and the meal. Come, taste and see that the Lord is good. Those not receiving Communion are invited forward for a blessing. There is grape juice for those who prefer it.

"Lamb of God"

Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us the scorn of our neighbours; our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself.

Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.

Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7 (Sunday 9:00 a.m.)

¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(Please Stand)
Gospel Acclamation

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Glory to You, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling

to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’²² All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:²³ ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’, which means, ‘God is with us.’²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of Our Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Children's Message

“Jesus Loves Me”
 Jesus loves me this I know
 For the Bible tells me so
 Little ones to Him belong
 They are weak but He is strong
 Yes Jesus loves me. Yes Jesus loves me
 Yes Jesus loves me the Bible tells me so

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(Please be seated)

SERMON

“What Dreams May Come”

Pastor John Shipman

(Please stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

(Red) #242

Confession of Faith: The Nicene Creed

People: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH God of grace,
hear our prayer.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

(Please stand)

(Sung at the 9:00 a.m. service.)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

5 144a

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.