

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.

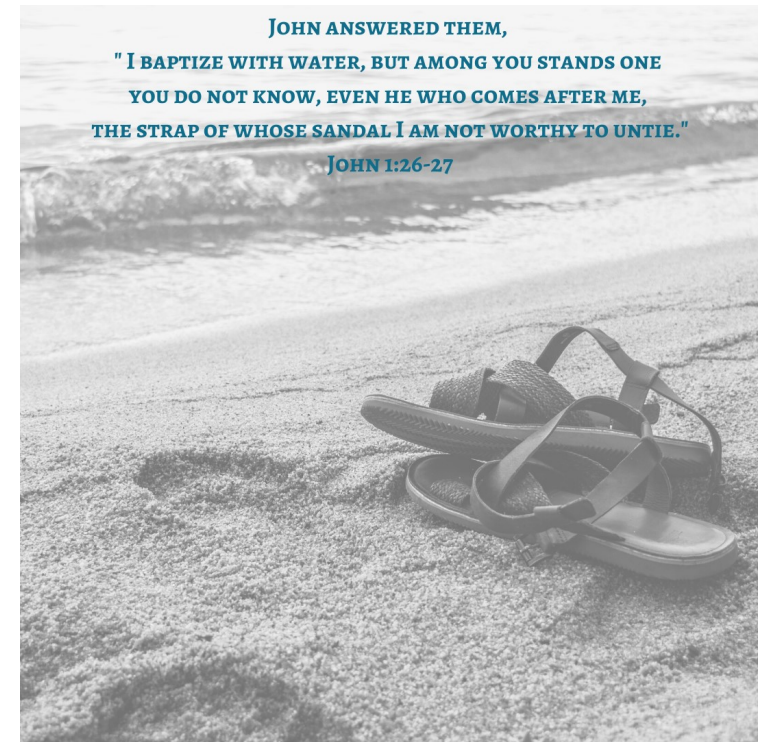
There are **restrooms** located in the basement of this building and on the ground floor of the hallway leading to our fellowship hall and on each floor of the educational building.

PARTICIPANTS

<u>MINISTERS</u>		The People of God
<u>PASTOR</u>		Rev. John Shipman
<u>ORGANIST</u>		Marvis McNeil
<u>CHOIR DIRECTOR</u>		Marty Cattleberry
<u>ASSISTING MINISTER</u>	5:30 p.m.	Carol Kindt
	9:00 a.m.	Barb Szczesniak
<u>LECTOR</u>	5:30 p.m.	Sue Keyes
	9:00 a.m.	Ann Hardesty
<u>FELLOWSHIP VOLUNTEERS</u>	5:30 p.m.	Patti Byce, Myra Gapske
	9:00 a.m.	Laurie Stafford
<u>USHERS & GREETERS</u>	5:30 p.m.	Patti Byce
	9:00 am.	Paul Kieliszewski
		Steve and Andrea Dutcher
<u>ACOLYTE</u>	5:30 p.m.	Evan Peterson
	9:00 a.m.	
<u>ALTAR CARE</u>		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



JOHN ANSWERED THEM,
" I BAPTIZE WITH WATER, BUT AMONG YOU STANDS ONE
YOU DO NOT KNOW, EVEN HE WHO COMES AFTER ME,
THE STRAP OF WHOSE SANDAL I AM NOT WORTHY TO UNTIE."
JOHN 1:26-27

December 16, 2023 - 5:30 p.m.
December 17, 2023 - 9:00 a.m.

If you would like to donate funds to go toward enhancing decorations for the sanctuary at Christmas as a memorial to loved ones or in honor of someone, forms are available for you to fill out in the Narthex and in the church office. The names of the memorials will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletins. **The deadline to take names and donations is today.**

We will be delivering Christmas Cards to the residents at Besser Senior Living on Tuesday, December 19th. Anyone who wants to join us, please meet at Besser Senior Living at 9:30 a.m.

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Services will be at 3:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 24th. Holy Communion will be served at all services. We will also have all of our regular services that week-end. Please join us for our Christmas Day Worship on December 25th at 9:00 a.m.

Please note: The Epiphany Dessert event will be January 6, 2024 after the Saturday service. We need volunteers to make desserts and/or host a table. Please contact Doreen if interested, at 989-916-9172.

Life Line Screening are doing health screenings at St. Paul Lutheran Church on Monday, December 18th. Please call 1-800-640-6307 to register or visit LLSA.SOCIAL/HC.

All are invited to our January Video Educational Experience on January 10th at 6:00 p.m. We will be watching “Breakthrough” and a meal will be provided with discussion throughout.

Save the date – Saturday, January 20th! The Stewardship Committee will again be hosting a PASTA NIGHT following the Saturday 5:30 p.m. service. Plan to come and enjoy good food, fellowship, and fun. A Chinese auction and 50/50 raffle will be part of the evening. If anyone would like to donate raffle items, please contact Dennis or Lori Dzieszinski at 989-464-7112 or 989-590-8568. This year we are requiring people to get a ticket. The tickets will have no cost, but will help with making sure we have enough food or not too much. Get your ticket from committee members or at the church office.

WEEK AT A GLANCE: DECEMBER 17–24, 2023	
<u>SUN.</u>	Sunday Worship/HC – 9:00; Fellowship – 10:00; Contemporary Service & Children’s Church – 10:30; The Adventure Club Christmas Caroling – 5:00 p.m.
<u>MON.</u>	Life Line Screenings; Line Dancing – 2:00 p.m.; E.T.A. – 5:00 p.m.; Girl Scouts – 6:00 p.m.
<u>TUES.</u>	Dinner on a Doorknob – 9:00 a.m.; Air Rifle Team – 5:30 p.m.; Cub Scouts – 5:30 p.m.; Boy Scouts – 6:30 p.m.
<u>WED.</u>	Breakfast Belles (at JJ’s) – 7:30 a.m.; Advent Soup & Service – 12:00 p.m.; Bible Study (Pastor John) – 1:00 & 5:30 p.m.; Book Study (Nena) – 5:30 p.m.; Choir – 6:00 p.m.
<u>THURS.</u>	3M Men’s Breakfast (JJ’s) – 7:00 a.m.; Chair Yoga – 3:00 p.m.; Air Rifle Team – 5:30 p.m.; Recovery Yoga – 5:30 p.m.
<u>FRI.</u>	Newsletter Assembly; Line Dancing – 11:00 a.m.; Alpena Line Dance Club – 5:00 p.m.
<u>SAT.</u>	Fellowship – 4:30 p.m.; Worship/HC – 5:30 p.m.
<u>SUN.</u>	Sunday Worship/HC – 9:00 a.m.; Fellowship – 10:00; Contemporary Service – 10:30 a.m.; Christmas Eve Services – 3:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m., and 8:00 p.m.

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

WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS: Bev Huard - unspecified need Tammy Stoutenburg-unspecified need
need Irma Becker - unspecified need Annette Wade – medical issues Art Hoffmeyer – heart issues
Doreen Britton – unspecified need Barbara Carlson –unspecified need John Wegmeyer – health issues
Marty & Liz Smith – home sells Phyllis Robb- unspecified need Dolores Libka – unspecified need
David Reeves – health issues Geri Hanson – unspecified need Eugene Brooks – health issues
Bodo Hanson – health issues Alisha Freese - illness Marian Dove – unspecified need
Karen Wallace – unspecified need Jake Shipman – accident Sutton Badder –unspecified need
Kevin Langerfield -recovery

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

We remember our prayer partners in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod: Bethany Lutheran Church, Kaleva, Rev. Zachary Nelson

We pray for the Dynamic Ministries here at St. Paul Lutheran Church. This week we specifically pray for our Line Dancers.

THE FLOWERS IN THE CHANCEL (foot of the cross) are given in memory of my dad, Dennis Johnson from his family.

<u>WORSHIP ATTENDANCE</u>			<u>END OF OCTOBER</u>		<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Wednesday (12/06)	12:25 p.m.	35	Income	25,620.92	266,579.91
Saturday (12/09)	5:30 p.m.	58	Expenses	<u>26,162.41</u>	<u>288,926.06</u>
Sunday (12/10)	9:00 a.m.	47	Difference	(541.49)	(22,346.15)
	10:30 a.m.	<u>42</u>			
Total		182			

The December Service Activity is Sanborn Elementary School. Items needed: Chapstick - plain non flavored, Gold Bond Healing Lotion, freezer gallon sized zip lock bags, 24 pack of small sized disposable water bottles. **Clothing** - girls underwear size 10 & 12, girls short sleeved shirts size 14/16, girls long sleeved shirts sized 14/16, boys underwear size 6, boys athletic pants sizes 6, 8, 10 & 12, Boys tennis shoes size 3 & 4. Please leave items on the altar. Thank you for your generosity.

The Wednesday Advent Services continue on December 20th from 12:00 – 1:00. We have a meal at noon followed by a short service at 12:25. Come and share this time of preparation for the Christ Child.

Pastor John is aware of people who are in need of help during the Christmas season. If you’re able to help meet the needs of those in our community, a contribution to the Good Samaritan Fund would be a wonderful and much appreciated way of sharing God’s compassion and love with others.

The Adventure Club will go Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 17th 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.

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD
The Third Sunday of Advent
December 16, 2023 - 5:30 p.m.
December 17, 2023 - 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)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God,
you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation’s bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. 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 “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn” (Red) #242

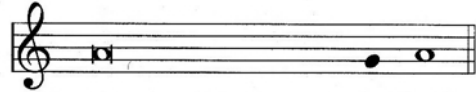
GREETING

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)

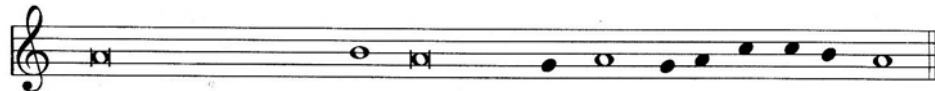
SERMON NOTES



A In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



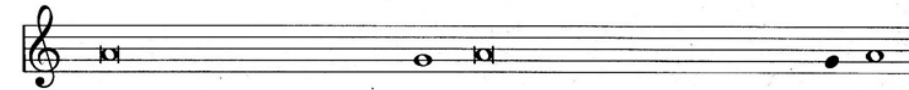
C Lord, have mer - cy.



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



C Lord, have mer - cy.



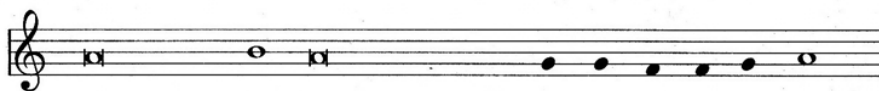
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the uni-ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



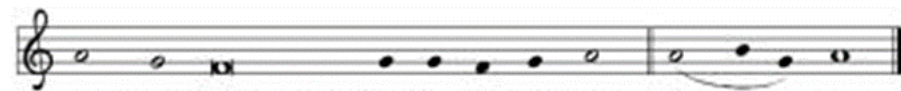
C Lord, have mer - cy.



A 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.

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.
Send us with your prom - is - es, O God,
and lead us forth in joy with shouts
of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray: Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN “Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers” (Red) #244

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 vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.
All
 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.
Refrain
 This is the feast of vic-to-ry 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.



Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Pastor: Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand. **Amen.**

Light three candles.

(Please be seated)

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my whole being shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland and as a bride adorns herself with her

(Pleased 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.

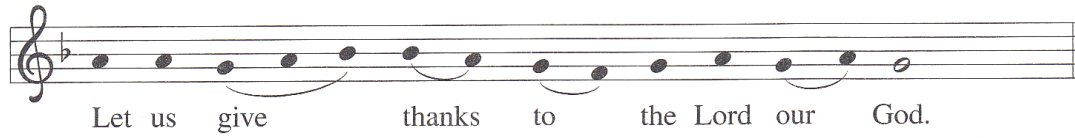
“Lamb of God”



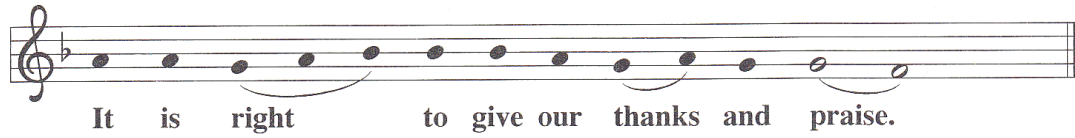
Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE

“Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise”



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dores you! My
San - to, san - to, san - to, mi cor - a - zon te a - do - ra! Mi



heart is glad to say the words: you are ho - ly, Lord.
cor - a - zon te sa - be de - cir: san - to e - res Se - ñor.

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.

jewels. ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 126 (Read Responsively)

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. **Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."** The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. **Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb.** May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. **Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (Sunday 9:00 a.m.)

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil. ²³ May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

(Please Stand)
Gospel Acclamation



The Holy Gospel according to St. John. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹ This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed and did not deny it, but he confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵ They asked him, "Why, then, are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶ John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷ the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal." ²⁸ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of Our Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Children's Message

"This Little Light of Mine"
This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine let it shine let it shine

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(Please be seated)

SERMON

"The Voice of One"

Pastor John Shipman

(Please stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

(Red) #815

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

Merciful God,
receive 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

