



The Cornerstone

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church
Saginaw, Michigan

Volume 35

December, 2011/January, 2012

Service Information	page 1
Midweek Advent Services	page 1
Christmas Day and New Year's Day Services	page 1
This is a Time for Joy!	page 2
2012 Offering Envelopes	page 2
Church Council Meeting	page 3
Financial Report for October, 2011	page 3
Walking Together Offering	page 3
Christmas for Kids	page 3
Church Decorating	page 3
Gifts for Those in Need	page 4
Christmas Concert	page 4
Sunday School Christmas Service Practice	page 4
SPL Christmas Chapel	page 4
Women Serving Christ	page 4
Michigan Lutheran Seminary Concert	page 4
Christmas Gift for Faculty and Staff	page 5
SPL Vacation/Office Hours	page 5
2012 Church Campout Reservations	page 5
Installation of Officers	page 5
Taking Down the Decorations	page 6
OWLS	page 6
Mark Your Calendars!	page 6
January Parent/Teacher Group	page 6
In the Presence of the Aged	page 6
Another Mission Moment	page 7

www.stpls.org

SERVICE INFORMATION

December 4th - Advent 2 – *Jesus Comes With Redemption for His Own*
Readings: Malachi 4:1-6, Romans 15:4-13, Luke 21:25-36

December 11th - Advent 3 – *Jesus Comes to Strengthen Feeble Hearts*
Readings: Isaiah 35:1-6, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Matthew 11:2-10

December 18th - Advent 4 – *Behold a Branch is Growing*
Special order of service – (10:30 a.m. - Sunday School Service)

Saturday, December 24th – *Christmas Eve Service* 4:00 & 7:00 p.m. (IC/CC)

December 25th – *Christmas Day Special Service* 9:30 a.m. (IC)

Saturday, December 31st – *New Year's Eve Service* (IC)

January 1st - *New Year's Day* 9:30 a.m. (IC)

Readings: Numbers 6:22-27, Romans 1:1-7, Luke 2:21

January 8th - *Epiphany Sunday*

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:2-12, Matthew 2:1-12

January 15th - Epiphany 2 – *Baptism of Our Lord Jesus*

Readings: Isaiah 42:1-14, Acts 10:34-48, Matthew 3:13-17

January 22nd - Epiphany 3 – *Jesus Keeps Us Hopeful and Joyful During Our Struggles*

Readings: Exodus 15:22-27, Romans 12:6-16a, John 2:1-11

January 29th – Epiphany 4 – *Body and Soul, God Cares for Us All Through His Son*

Readings: 2 Kings 5:1-15a, Romans 12:16b-21, Matthew 8:1-13

The pastors, faculty and staff of St. Paul's wish each of you a blessed Christmas. May the Good News of a Savior born for you fill your heart with joy now and throughout the New Year!

MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICES

Our Wednesday midweek Advent services (November 30th and December 7th and 14th at 3:30 and 6:30 p.m.) will have as the theme, “*God's Advent Angels Have a Message.*” Our guest preachers for the services are Tutor Joel McKenney, Tutor Justin Dauck and Dean David Koehler.

CHRISTMAS DAY AND NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICES

This year, both Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on a Sunday. The Board of Elders has decided that there will be one service only on those two Sundays, beginning at **9:30 a.m.** The Lord's Supper (IC) will be celebrated in both services.

THIS IS A TIME FOR JOY!

Whether it was the first Christmas or the 2,011th celebration of that event, JOY was and is in the air!

It should be!

The miraculous birth that took place in crowded Bethlehem forever brought LIGHT and JOY to the dark and dreary hearts of sinners. HE CAME! That is: **Immanuel – “God with us.”**

The birth of Jesus brought light from heaven, light that ignited the skies that evening. And the sweetest song accompanied that sight. Listen: *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”* Luke 2:14 The angels’ joyful hymn underlined their Gospel preaching: *“For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”* Luke 2:11

In that manger in Bethlehem we have God’s gift of grace for the redemption of mankind, Christ Jesus. Around that manger-bed all history revolves. The birth of Jesus is the culmination of a divine plan of mercy conceived in all eternity.

All the superficial perversions and appendages surrounding the Christmas festival ... all the commercialism, the feasting and merry-making, the selfishness and extravagance ... *cannot dim the eternal significance of the coming of God’s own Son into the flesh for mankind’s salvation.* In spite of all the diversion and superficialities of the Christmas season, there are still numberless adoring hearts that bow down before the manger and see in the Christ child the declaration of a divine purpose for all our human living. He is the SOLUTION for all our human problems ... the ANSWER to all the anxious questioning of the human soul ... the PLEDGE OF PARDON for all our sins ... the ASSURANCE OF PEACE with the aggrieved God ... and the KEY TO THE VERY GATES OF MANSIONS OF BLISS IN HEAVEN.

It is a time for JOY!

May such joy in his birth always be found in our hearts, on our lips, and throughout our lives. We go to Bethlehem!

Once again my heart rejoices As I hear Far and near Sweetest angel voices. “Christ is born!” their choirs are singing Till the air Ev’rywhere Now with joy is ringing.

2012 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Our Stewardship Committee will meet on Wednesday, November 30th, following the 6:30 p.m. Advent service to set out the 2012 offering boxes alphabetically. They will be available for you to pick up beginning Sunday, December 4th, in the church basement. **Please be sure to pick up the envelopes for each of your family members.** ***If you are unable to go down the steps, please ask a Deacon to get your envelopes for you. ***

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Our Church Council met on Tuesday, November 8th. The following membership changes took place: Transfer in: Pastor Justin Dauck from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Algoma, Wisconsin; Profession of Faith: Michael Bunker; Transfer out: Jeffrey, Barbara and Jennifer Neuburger to Trinity Lutheran Church, Saline, Michigan.

Pastor Brassow and Jim Finkbeiner traveled Nov. 15th-16th to deliver the donations of the Michigan District to the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Food Bank.

The upcoming Church Council meetings are: Tuesday, December 6th and Tuesday, January 10th, both at 8:00 p.m. The Annual Voters’ Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 15th.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR OCTOBER, 2011

St. Paul’s Ministry Synodical Ministry PIF

BUDGET
ACTUAL*

YEAR-TO-DATE OFFERINGS

BUDGET
ACTUAL
YTD

90%

91%

89%

*October had five Sundays

WALKING TOGETHER OFFERING

There will be a special Walking Together brochure in the December 4th bulletin. Part of the brochure is a small envelope that can be taken off and used any time in December for an additional offering for Synodical Ministry to help us get to the amount we had established as our offerings for Synod in 2011.

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS

This special opportunity to share the Christmas Gospel with children age 4 through 4th grade will be held at church Saturday, Dec. 3rd from 9:30-11:30 a.m. If you can help, or need more information, please call the office (799-3271.)

CHURCH DECORATING

Saturday, December 3rd, is the date to help decorate the church sanctuary for the Christmas season. There are two separate times helpers are needed that day. At 9:00 a.m., the two large Christmas trees will be set up in the chancel, and the lights will be put on the trees. At 1:00 p.m., the decorating of the trees and other areas in the church will begin. **The gentlemen in the congregation are needed at both times – especially if they do not mind climbing the tall ladders!**

GIFTS FOR THOSE IN NEED

It has been the custom at St. Paul's for many of our members to give a gift of money during the month of December for those who might be in need. The monies are distributed by our pastors to members of our church family (or to others). Both the names of the givers and the recipients are kept anonymous.

Should you desire to give such a gift of love, place your gift in an envelope, label it *ALMONIES*, and give it to one of the pastors. The monies will then be distributed just before Christmas.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The Saginaw Valley Lutheran Chorale invites us to their Christmas Concert, "Of Heaven and Earth," on Sunday, December 4th at 4:00 p.m. in the MLS Chapel. A freewill offering will be taken.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS SERVICE PRACTICE

The schedule for the Sunday School Christmas Service practice is: *Sunday, December 11th, 1:00-2:00 p.m. at the Parish Center* and *Saturday, December 17th, 10:00-11:00 a.m. at church.*

SPL CHRISTMAS CHAPEL

All members and friends are invited to attend the special Christmas Chapel at our school on Tuesday, December 13th, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Students from St. Paul's Lutheran School will be presenting special Christmas music in song with their voices and in special instrumental groups.

WOMEN SERVING CHRIST

All ladies of St. Paul's are invited to our annual Christmas party on *Tuesday, December 13th* for a fun evening of Christian fellowship, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Please bring a dozen cookies, a dollar gift to share, and Christmas Stocking money for the Lutheran Church of Cameroon. On *Tuesday, January 17th*, our guest speaker will be our member, Saginaw Township Chief of Police, Donald Pussehl. All members are encouraged to attend this informative meeting.

MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY CONCERT

The Christmas concert at Michigan Lutheran Seminary is Friday, December 17th at 7:00 p.m. in the MLS gymnasium. Some of the students will present pre-concert music, beginning at approximately 6:00 p.m. Plan now to attend!

CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

Dear Friends:

As we prepare our hearts and our homes for the Christmas season, we begin to think about gifts for those whom we love and respect. No doubt many of us will also want to remember the called and salaried personnel of our congregation.

Following the custom that was begun many years ago at St. Paul's, you are now given the opportunity to remember our church staff by means of the enclosed green envelope. Gifts received in this manner are distributed among our called workers (pastors and parish school teachers) and our salaried workers (secretaries and custodians).

You may bring your gift envelope to the church and place it in an offering plate or bring it or mail it to our office at the school. Please do so no later than Sunday, December 18th.

Merry Christmas!
The Board of Elders

In order to avoid any misunderstanding or confusion, please note that such gifts do not qualify as a tax deductible contribution. Therefore, there is no need to write your offering number on your gift envelope.

SPL VACATION/OFFICE HOURS

Christmas vacation for the students of our elementary school will begin after they are dismissed from class at 11:45 a.m. on Tuesday, December 20th. Classes resume at 8:15 a.m. on Wednesday, January 4th, 2012. The school and church office will be closed Dec. 26th and Jan. 2nd. During the rest of the school vacation, the office hours are weekdays from **9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.**

2012 CHURCH CAMPOUT RESERVATIONS

Next summer's campout will be held June 23-26, 2012, at Rifle River. You can make reservations for the campout beginning December 23rd (6 months prior to the first day of the campout.) Plan now to attend with your family and enjoy some wonderful Christian fellowship in the great outdoors!

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Sunday, January 8th, 2012, is the date that has been set for the *installation* of our *newly-elected officers*. Those being installed should meet in the church basement no later than 10:15 a.m. for instructions. All newly-elected officers are expected to be present. If for some reason you are unable to attend that morning, please notify the pastors as soon as possible (799-3271).

TAKING DOWN THE DECORATIONS

Please come to church at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, January 9th to help the Deacons take down the decorations and the Christmas trees. For more information, please call the church office (799-3271).

OWLS

The next meeting for the OWLS is Friday, January 13th, at 1:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Following the potluck dinner, Pastor Brassow will speak to us about the experiences which he and the MLS students had while teaching Vacation Bible School in Korea last summer. Those attending are asked to bring a dish to pass and their own table service. Guests are always welcomed!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The ANNUAL VOTERS' MEETING will take place on Sunday, January 15th, 2012, at 2:00 p.m. at the Parish Center. All men of voting age (18 years old on up) should plan to attend.

JANUARY PARENT/TEACHER GROUP

The January P.T.G. meeting will be held on Monday, January 16th, starting at 7:00 p.m. in the cafeteria. We will be finalizing plans for the "Winter Picnic." Come and learn more about our school, have some good fellowship, and take the opportunity to visit your child's classroom. The rooms open at 6:30 p.m.

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE AGED

With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation. Psalm 91:16
We thank our God for the 20 members of our congregation who will attain *ninety or more years on their birthdays in 2012:*

Gladys Baumann	3/07/1916	Evarene Neuman	12/24/1922
Frances Cereske	3/24/1921	Margaret Niederstadt	11/08/1911
Adeline Fahnenstiel	8/08/1915	Elisabeth Riffert	7/23/1918
Doris Gibbons	10/09/1920	George Schmidt	3/20/1922
Malinda Jarzabkowski	12/02/1921	Mary Schultz	7/13/1921
Betty Klemm	9/10/1922	Catherine Spyker	12/9/1922
Louise Krieger	6/21/1920	Gilbert Spyker	8/21/1918
Marie Mahler	10/11/1917	William Starke	7/14/1920
Jean Meyer	5/28/1922	Mabel Toepel	5/11/1916
Frederick Mueller	10/08/1917	Theresia Walbert	6/06/1920

We also have 52 members who will turn 80-89 years old this year. In the Lord's name we salute you! To the Lord's tender care we entrust you!

ANOTHER MISSION MOMENT

When he wrote to the Christians in Galatia, the Apostle Paul urged: *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."* (Gal. 6:10) Our St. Paul's **Benevolence Fund** affords each of us with such an opportunity. The fund is replenished by the four extra envelopes that appear at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The offerings received are, in turn, used to support a number of worthy causes.

The majority of our Benevolence Fund supports programs that allow others to be reached with the Word. In addition to sharing "the one thing needful," the Christian Life Resources of Flint & Saginaw (Pregnancy Counseling Centers) (15%) offer other needed things to women in crisis. Michigan Lutheran Seminary students benefit from the Benevolence money that flows into the MLS Foundation (15%) where it is applied to student-related projects and scholarships for those beginning training as WELS pastors and teachers. WELS Christian Aid & Relief (formerly the Committee on Relief) (10%) responds to calamities here at home and abroad. Wherever possible, this aid is distributed through WELS pastors or missionaries, so that it might become a bridge to the Gospel. The Central Africa Medical Mission (10%) has already been serving as a 'Gospel Bridge' for the past fifty years. Our Michigan District Mission Congregations in Cadillac and Roscommon each receive 10% of the Benevolence Fund offerings.

The Michigan District Institutional Chaplaincy (5%) brings the comfort of Word to those housed in jails and prisons. Partners In Apache Learning (5%) invites children from the reservation to receive a Christ-centered education. The Cristo Palabra de Vida (5%) is an exploratory congregation reaching out to the Hispanic community in Detroit. Calvary Academy (5%) in Florida welcomes troubled teens into a caring but structured environment where they can live, and learn, and heal.

The East Side Soup Kitchen (5%) in Saginaw provides hot meals for some of Saginaw's poor and/or homeless. Our Benevolence Fund helps to supply the food stuffs that are especially needed during these difficult times. The last 5% is for the poor/needy/homeless in our community and is given out directly by our congregation.

Then too, the pocket change we drop into the "Needy Neighbors" fund in the church basement enables our pastors to directly assist those within our own congregation who are in need of financial assistance for very basic provisions.

As you prepare to fill your next **Benevolence Fund** envelope, look upon it as another *"opportunity ... to do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."*