

News & Notes



**St. Paul Lutheran Church
5201 Galitz Street
Skokie, IL 60077-2737
(847)673-5030
www.stpaulskokie.org
office@stpaulskokie.org
The Rev. Matt Conrad, Pastor**

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From the Pastor's Desk

Christmas Presence

Luke 2:8 *And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:8 ESV)*

Christmas is right around the corner, and we all have so many things on our plates right now. Once Thanksgiving hits, we kick everything into high gear and start scrambling to get everything accomplished. Christmas dinners to plan, family visits or vacations to coordinate, gifts to purchase – if we made a “to-do” list for now until Christmas, some of us might not ever want to get out of bed in the morning!

But in the midst of all this “Christmas-Craziness” we somehow place upon ourselves, there’s something else happening in our life and in the lives of many in the community. Everyone is thinking about giving. Everyone is thinking about helping their neighbor. Christian or not, there’s something about this time of year that gets everyone to think a little beyond themselves and make a difference in the community.

One of the ways St Paul has been “giving back” is through our community clothing closet. This all started last year as we became the distribution center for coats collected to Niles Township and the Village of Skokie. Those in need were sent to St Paul to receive warm winter clothing. And that got us thinking if we could do more than just winter coats.

Since the end of September (when we first “opened” the clothing closet) we have served over 100 people, mainly children, providing new socks and underwear and a few outfits for school. Our volunteers are incredibly touched by the people we serve, and they have shared with me some of the most wonderful stories. Here are just a few highlights:

One mom needed help finding clothes for two children. She’s a foster parent and was temporarily caring for two sisters. She was very appreciative of St Paul because the care she provides for others comes at her expense. St Paul has been able to come alongside those already providing help to others in the community.

A young man needed a jacket and suit for a job interview, as well as some other clothes. His teacher met him and helped him pick appropriate items for the interview. The teachers who have the most contact with our community kids have a resource to help their students get the help that they need.

One little boy was so excited for his new coat. While the clothes were put into a bag as the mom finished the rest of the shopping, the little boy couldn’t help but sneak the coat out of the bag and wear it. Clients leave feeling encouraged and loved. In fact, our volunteers have numerous stories of people leaving praising God and sharing the most heartfelt thanks with our helpers.

Many of us are preparing to celebrate Christmas with our families. Our celebration centers around a very special gift given to mankind in the birth of a Savior. This gift, wrapped in swaddling cloths and placed in a manger. That first Christmas wasn’t so much about a present, but a presence, God Himself – Immanuel – God With Us.

And now, through our clothing closet ministry, we are able to share the presence of God with many in the community who are struggling to make ends meet. Our volunteers are able to share the light of Christ in their words as they lift up our clients, in their prayers if the opportunity to pray comes along, and in their

invitations and witness when those opportunities present themselves.

Christmas has never been about gifts – at least not the ones you and I exchange. It's always been about God's gift to us in Jesus Christ. Our gifts, our giving, our giving back, has always been a joyful response to what we've been given. The clothing closet allows us to do this in a new and unique way. I am thankful for the way God works through our volunteers to share His presence.

Many people are thinking about giving right now. Many are buying presents. As we prepare our hearts to celebrate that perfect Christmas gift, let's not forget the PRESENCE given that first Christmas. God came down to us on Christmas, and His presence among us was a blessing. Since we have been so blessed, let's be a blessing to others. Let's share His presence this holiday. May God continue to work in and through you to reach hearts and change lives. Merry Christmas!

Rev Matt Conrad

Pastor Conrad

PS – should you wish to sign up as a volunteer, or if you would like to coordinate a donation, or if you have any other thoughts or questions, we have a special email address for the clothing closet: closet@stpaulskokie.org. Consider spending some time folding clothes, tidying the room, or working with a client to find clothes. This is a perfect opportunity to invite an unchurched friend or family member to walk alongside you here at St Paul.



CHURCH NEWS

CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES: Your 2015 envelopes and calendars from John Haben are now available for pickup in the south cloakroom. If you did not have envelopes in 2014, please call the church office to be assigned an envelope number for 2015 and look for your boxed set the following Sunday. If you are interested in setting up an automatic payment from your bank to St. Paul, we can help you do that as well. We still need to assign a contributor number so that a statement can be prepared for tax filing. Office number is 847.673.5030. Attached to your envelope box this year is a form asking that you share or confirm your email address(es) if you would. We look forward to becoming 'paper-light' by communicating by email when possible, as well as have another, more timely, vehicle by which to share church news. There are pens on the table and a box for you to deposit your completed form. As you consider your giving in 2015, please remember that the load is light when carried by many. We are blessed to have dedicated church workers, a beautiful sanctuary that we must preserve, and most important, a mission field all around us. Please consider giving as you are able. If you have a question about your contribution envelopes, you may call Sue Carey at 847.436.8497. *Sue Carey*



YOU CAN HELP children and adults in our community keep warm this winter. Please place your new or gently used coats, gloves, mittens, hats and scarves in the designated box in the back of church. Everything collected will go to our Community Clothing Closet for needy families.

THE CARING COMMITTEE of Fairview School in Skokie is sponsoring a fundraiser to benefit our Clothing Closet. Have dinner at Chili's, 5435 W. Touhy Avenue in Skokie and 15% of your check will come back to the Closet. A flyer is included with this *News & Notes*, plus you can pick up more on the back table of church. The voucher is good November 28—January 4. Enjoy a dinner (or dinners!) out while helping people in need.

RIDE-SHARING PROGRAM: As a Christian community here at St. Paul, we strive to make a difference every day in the lives of our members and the community at large. Having said that, we would like to know if you or someone you know needs a ride to any of our church services/events/Bible studies. Church services during the winter months are held at 8:00 and 10:30 am. We would like you to join us as often as possible. If you would like to join one of our many small group Bible studies and need a ride, we can also provide that transportation.

If you are able to give a ride to someone needing transportation to our church services/events/ Bible studies, please let me know and I will connect you with a person needing a ride.

Please call: Penny Luytgaarden, 847-679-8487



Church cleaning & decorating: December 14	After 10:30 service
Mid-Week Advent Services: December 3, 10 & 17	7:00 pm
German Christmas service: December 7	2:30 pm
Christmas Eve services: Family Christmas Eve service	4:00 pm
Traditional Christmas Eve service	7:00 pm
Candlelight Communion service	11:00 pm
Christmas Day service	10:00 am

GERMAN CHRISTMAS SERVICE: Come join us this Sunday, December 7, at 2:30 pm for our annual German Christmas service. Invite your German-speaking family, friends, and neighbors to join us for this joyous service. After the service, join us in Detzer Hall for fellowship with stollen and coffee.



CHRISTMAS IS COMING! You may order poinsettia plants to beautify our altar at Christmas. Forms are available on the back table. The price is \$10. Please put your order, along with your check or cash, in the offering plant, or mail it to the church office by December 15th. If you are not able to get to church to pick up a form, just send a note and a check to Vicky in the church office and she will order one for you. Plants may be picked up after the 10 am service on Christmas morning. Those plants left will be distributed to our homebound members.

MISSION INDIA UPDATE

One of the big steps we took this past year was to support international mission work through Mission India. This was an increase in the amount of money allocated to our mission “tithe” – an extra \$4500. With this amount of money we are supporting a church planter, an adult literacy group, and a children’s Bible club (VBS). In fact, the portion of the money we have for the children’s Bible club has been matched through another donor at Mission India.

These coming months I’ll have information about each of these ministries. I have bios for our missionaries and we’ll receive updates on their ministries as well. Included in the packet is information about the areas in which they serve and the people groups they are reaching.

At Christmastime we think about helping others beyond ourselves. I’d encourage everyone to seriously consider donating to Mission India. Even a small donation goes a long way as lives are changed in Christ. India is home to over 400 million people who have never heard the name of Jesus. As we partner with Mission India, we can make an eternal difference in the life of another.

For more information about the ministries of Mission India, check out their webpage at www.misionindia.org There you will also find a link to financially support this organization.

We are blessed to be a blessing. Give the gift of Christ this Christmas.

OFFICIAL ACTS

Subtraction: 11/21 Barbara Wolowicki - by transfer

Funerals: 11/16 Myrtle Myszka
11/29 Frieda Wirtz

ATTENDANCE

	<u>8:00 am</u>	<u>10:30 am</u>
November 2	27	86
November 9	26	73
November 16	23	64
November 23	30	75
November 30	29	89



Thanksgiving - 48

THE FOLLOWING MEMORIALS WERE RECEIVED IN THE CHURCH OFFICE:

In memory of Janice Young

Susan & Steven Wente
Arnold & Elaine Jacobs

Donald & Caroline Gross
Marjorie Schaser

In memory of Beulah Lewandowski

Mr. & Mrs. Ted Lewandowski

In memory of Myrtle Myszka

Stan & Joanie McKinney
Bud & Evie Grosse
Bob & Sue Carey



In memory of Frieda Wirtz

Joanne Pearson
Tom & Dianne Williams

In celebration of Marie Kamp's 101st birthday

Bob & Sue Carey
Rick & Vicky Schiewe

ST. PAUL GIVING & DEBT

Fiscal Year – June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014
Month Ending – October 31, 2014

Member Contributions + Loose Offerings

Needed total per 2013/2014 budget	\$ 237,000
Needed giving each month	19,750
Giving received this month	14,342
Giving needed so far this year	98,750
Actual giving so far this year	88,421
Variance to need – surplus/(deficit)	(10,329)

<u>Remaining Debts & Pay Down Progress</u>		<u>Pay Down This Month</u> **
Mortgage (parsonage) @ 5.75%	\$ 72,659	\$ (175)
Line of bank credit (LOC) @ 5%	22,981	\$ ()
Bonds 50K @ 6%, 15K @ 6-1/2%	65,000	
Loan from Foundation Fund @ 0% *	25,000	
Loan from Schaefer Bequest @ 0% *	<u>25,000</u>	
Totals	\$210,638	\$ (175)

* Pay back promised when borrowed

** Members: To help pay down our debts, please use the Building Fund envelopes in your packet, or use a plain envelope. When using either envelope type, please mark the envelope and your check: Debt Reduction Only.

December Birthdays

12/01 Marie Kamps
12/01 Lilli Taraschewsky
12/02 Sam Sammartino
12/02 Heidi Uritz
12/03 Debbie Muench
12/03 Scott Schiewe
12/06 Alvin Vogt
12/10 Maria Sammartino
12/11 Elaine Breidenbach
12/11 Renate Harris
12/12 Judy Trettin
12/13 Kristin Bigalke
12/13 Donald Dassow
12/13 Paula Hebble
12/13 Jacquelynn Suhajda
12/14 Devin Bloden
12/14 Derek Hilliard
12/15 Christopher Kolas
12/16 Nancy Stephans
12/17 Helen Weber
12/19 Jason Feehan
12/19 Elizabeth Sorensen
12/20 Madison Koniarski
12/23 Johannes Koerm
12/24 Beth Peña
12/25 Dean Giuntoli
12/26 Adam Plant
12/26 Susan Smith
12/27 William Plath, Jr.
12/29 William Luksha
12/29 Nicholas Nikitas
12/29 Robert Peterson
12/30 Cheryl Gucwa
12/31 Angela Nikitas



December Anniversaries

- 12/01 Peter and Marian Seibert
- 12/04 Paul and Sharon Kolodzik
- 12/06 John and Kimberly Creely
- 12/11 William and Carol Peterson
- 12/23 Chad & Janelle Ness





For
unto
you is
born this
day in the
city of David
a saviour, which
is Christ the Lord.

Luke
2:11