



December 2023

NEWSLETTER



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ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.stpaulplankinton.com
605-942-7364

Elders Justin Everson
Curt Guindon
Mike Tuschen

President Justin Everson

LWML President ... Marlene Johnson

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.trinitywhitelake.com
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605-249-2333

Elders David Bogenhagen
Dan Guericke
Scott Meier

President Dean Suelflow

LWML Presidents Diana Kieffer
Hope Circle
Brianna Bogenhagen
Ruth Circle



St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran Church are members of the South Dakota District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Joint Divine Worship Service Schedule for December

- Sunday, December 3, 2023 — 5 p.m. at St. Paul's
- Sunday, December 10, 2023 — 5 p.m. at Trinity
- Sunday, December 17, 2023 — 5 p.m. at St. Paul's
- Sunday, December 24, 2023 — 3:30 p.m. at Trinity
- Sunday, December 25, 2023 — 11:30 a.m. at St. Paul's

Christian Education

Joint Bible Study – No Bible Class in December.

Joint Confirmation Class — Dec. 3 at St. Paul's, 3:45 p.m. No class the rest of December.

Joint Children's Christmas Eve Practices — same location as the Joint Divine Service, 3:45 p.m. December 3, 10, and 17.

Trinity Release-Time — Wednesdays, 2:15–3:15 p.m. No class December 20 nor 27.

Joint Voters Meeting – December 10, 2023, 6 p.m. at Trinity

Lutheran Women's Missionary League

Trinity Hope Circle – December 4, 2023, 2 p.m.

Trinity Ruth Circle – December 6, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

St. Paul's Dorcas Circle – December 9, 2023, 12 noon at SP.

Serving the Lord's Church in DECEMBER

TRINITY

Elder Scott Meier

Ushers Ben Bogenhagen
Ron Steffen

Acolyte Taelyn Clark

Altar Barb Gilbertz

ST. PAUL'S

Elder Mike Tuschen

Ushers Lennis Titze
Howard Weischedel

Acolyte Jacey Kemp

Altar Deb Haak

Scripture Readings

Dec. 3 Isaiah 64:1–9; 1 Corinthians 1:3–9; Mark 11: 1–10

Dec. 10 Isaiah 40:1–11; 2 Peter 3:8–14; Mark 1:1–8

Dec. 17 Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11; 1 Thes. 5:16–24; John 1:6–8, 19–28

Dec. 31 Isaiah 61:10–62:3; Galatians 4:4–7; John 2:22–40

The **January 2024 newsletter** will be available on/after December 31, 2023. Articles are due Tuesday, December 26, 2023.

Please send newsletter/bulletin items to Nancy Bogenhagen at trinitywlsd@gmail.com. **Weekly bulletin deadline is Thursday noon.** Please email me if you prefer your newsletter emailed to you. Thank you!






Many Christians have considered challenging themselves to read through the Bible in one year. Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is offering you that very opportunity! The Gospel Outreach Committee has created a monthly reading plan to guide you.



2023 DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					01 Lamentations 5 Psalm 147 Galatians 5:1-15	02 Ezekiel 1 Psalm 148 Galatians 5:16-26
03 Ezekiel 2-3 Psalm 149 Galatians 6	04 Ezekiel 4-5 Psalm 150 Ephesians 1	05 Ezekiel 6-7 Isaiah 40 Ephesians 2	06 Ezekiel 8-9 Isaiah 41 Ephesians 3	07 Ezekiel 10-11 Isaiah 42 Ephesians 4:1-16	08 Ezekiel 12-13 Isaiah 43 Ephesians 4:17-32	09 Ezekiel 14-15 Isaiah 44 Ephesians 5:1-20
10 Ezekiel 16 Isaiah 45 Ephesians 5:21-33	11 Ezekiel 17 Isaiah 46 Ephesians 6	12 Ezekiel 18 Isaiah 47 Philippians 1:1-11	13 Ezekiel 19 Isaiah 48 Philippians 1:12-30	14 Ezekiel 20 Isaiah 49 Philippians 2:1-11	15 Ezekiel 21-22 Isaiah 50 Philippians 2:12-30	16 Ezekiel 23 Isaiah 51 Philippians 3
17 Ezekiel 24 Isaiah 52 Philippians 4	18 Ezekiel 25-26 Isaiah 53 Colossians 1:1-23	19 Ezekiel 27-28 Isaiah 54 Colos. 1:24-2:19	20 Ezekiel 29-30 Isaiah 55 Colos. 2:20-3:17	21 Ezekiel 31-32 Isaiah 56 Colos. 3:18-4:18	22 Ezekiel 33 Isaiah 57 Luke 1:1-25	23 Ezekiel 34 Isaiah 58 Luke 1:26-56
24 Ezekiel 35-36 Isaiah 59 Luke 1:57-80	25 Ezekiel 37 Isaiah 60 Luke 2:1-20	26 Ezekiel 38-39 Isaiah 61 Luke 2:21-52	27 Ezekiel 40-41 Isaiah 62 Luke 3:1-20	28 Ezekiel 42-43 Isaiah 63 Luke 3:21-38	29 Ezekiel 44-45 Isaiah 64 Luke 4:1-30	30 Ezekiel 46-47 Isaiah 65 Luke 4:31-44
31 Ezekiel 48 Isaiah 66 Luke 5:1-26						

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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger"
(Luke 2: 10-12).

DON'T JUST COME TO CHURCH ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Eve is the one day of the year when the church is very full. The fact that many people come on Christmas Eve is wonderful, but at the same time the fact that the church is very full only one day of the year is quite sad. **Where are many Christians the rest of the year?** For sure, they are not at church hearing God's Word and receiving the Lord's Supper. The Lord mourns this. When Jesus healed ten lepers only one returned to Him and gave thanks. The Lord complained, *Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?* The other nine quickly forgot the Lord. Sadly, many Christians flagrantly violate the Third Commandment ("we should not despise preaching and His Word, but gladly hear and learn it") and think nothing of it. They pay no attention to the Gospel which Jesus paid for with His life. Many people claim to be Christian, yet they do not go to church to listen to God's Word and receive His Supper. This is hypocrisy. These are name-only Christians.

How can a Christian be salt and light in the world when he himself neglects God's Word and Sacraments? What does your example teach those people around you? What is it teaching your children? How can a person say that he is a Christian, but he refuses to listen to God's Word and be taught by God? How will your faith persevere when you are neglecting the Gospel which preserves and nourishes faith?

Now, when I speak of Christians neglecting church, I am not speaking of those Christians who have to miss church because of occasional illness or are shut-ins or whose work demands that they have to work some Sundays or there's an emergency. They want nothing more than to be at church, but health or work may prevent them at times. I am writing about those Christians who have become lazy and lukewarm. They are able to come to church, but they love other things more than Christ. Such Christians are in danger of their faith being extinguished and they being cast into outer darkness. If a person refuses to be with Christ in the Gospel here and now, then they will not be with Christ in glory.

If you are a Christian who has become lazy and is neglecting God's Word and Sacrament, then repent. You should feel guilty. Confess your sin of loving the world more than God's Word and be absolved. If your conscience does weigh heavy, then call me and we will do confession and absolution so that you may hear God's absolution and your conscience may have peace and rest. Christ also died for this sin and He forgives all sin in the Gospel.

God also wants Christians to be in church so that we can comfort each other and build one another up. If a Christian neglects to gather around God's Word, then they are neglecting this comfort and failing to love their fellow Christian. Hebrews 10, *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, **not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.***

The prophet Isaiah writes of people from all nations encouraging one another to go up to the mountain of the Lord to be taught by God. The mountain of the Lord is wherever God's Word is. The mountain of the Lord, as the Prophet Daniel writes, covers all the earth. This is so because the Gospel has gone out into all the world. Isaiah 2, *and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

I encourage and bid all of you to come to the mountain of the Lord to hear His voice, be blessed by Him, and to respond to His grace with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. Gather around Him Who took up flesh and lived, suffered, and died for you. Your Lord is happy to dwell in your midst with the gift of forgiveness and salvation. He is here to deliver and comfort you. The Lord is near you because His Word is here. Isaiah 55, *Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man His thoughts; let Him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

A blessed Advent and Christmas!

Pastor Jens Jenson



MAIN STREET LIVING DECEMBER 2023

All programs are interpreted and closed-captioned for the hearing impaired. For more information visit: www.mainstreetliving.com

Broadcast on KDLT (NBC) channels 5.1 / 46.1

December 3, 2023

10 a.m. "Stable Boy" A manger scene comes to life and tells the story of the first Christmas.

10:30 a.m. Rev. Christopher McCarthy, pastor at First and Emmanuel Lutheran Churches in Wall and Creighton, presents a message titled "O That You Would Rend the Heavens!" This sermon is based on Mark 13:24–37.

December 10, 2023

10 a.m. "Red Boots for Christmas" A shoemaker learns the true meaning of Christmas.

10:30 a.m. Rev. David Lindenberg, pastor at Peace Lutheran Church in Rapid City, presents a message titled "Lead Us to Repentance." This sermon is based on Isaiah 40:1–11

December 17, 2023

10 a.m. "Christmas Is" The shepherd in a Christmas play learns the importance of Christmas.

10:30 a.m. Rev. Dennis Mercer, pastor at Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church in Black Hawk, presents a message titled "Jesus Christ, the Fulfillment of All Our Hopes." This sermon is based on Matthew 11:1–6.

December 24, 2023

10 a.m. "Christmas on Main Street" The Christmas message at a mission brings a grandson and his grandfather together.

10:30 a.m. Rev. Matthew Harrison, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, presents a Christmas message.

December 31, 2023

10 a.m. "Burden Made Light" The housekeeper helps a family through the struggle of an increasingly sick child.

10:30 a.m. Rev. Greg Lehr, pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, presents a message titled "The Waves of Life." This sermon is based on Romans 8:31b–39.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

December 24, 2023, 3:30 p.m. at Trinity

*Coming down from heav'n above,
Jesus came to us in love.
God Himself became a child,
Mary's Baby, sweet and mild.*

The children of Trinity White Lake and St. Paul's Plankinton have Good News to Tell! Join them for worship on Christmas Eve!

December 25, 2023, 11:30 a.m. at St. Paul's

STAY IN TOUCH

Pastor Jens Jenson

Vacancy Pastor

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www.trinitywhitelake.com

Links for the bulletin, printed service, and for the YouTube recording are updated weekly under the Services tab!

Email

trinitywlsd@gmail.com

- Submit newsletter and bulletin articles.
- Update a prayer request.
- Request a digital copy of the newsletter.

Social Media

facebook.com/trinitywhitelake

Recordings of Divine Services

Available on the YouTube channel,
Trinity White Lake.

LOVE EXPLAINED

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:9–11 NIV).

It is beginning to look a lot like Christmas, the most joyous season of the year! Soon we will again celebrate the best gift ever given — the gift of God’s love in His Son, Christ Jesus! As we eagerly await the birth of the Christ Child, our days are filled with preparation. We decorate our Christmas trees and our homes; shop for gifts; send Christmas cards; bake the family-favorite cookies; attend Advent services and program practices; entertain guests; plus a dozen other things!

Growing tired and weary from the stress and busyness of the season may cause us to be less than loving. At those times our attention is often focused on getting everything done just perfectly rather than on the Christ Child, whose birth is the real reason for celebration. Could it be that we are more concerned about children and grandchildren thinking less of us if everything is not up to par, **rather than making sure our words and actions reflect God’s great love in Jesus?** Are we making ourselves rather than the Babe-in-the-manger the center of the season? Are we giving in to frustration as we begin to think “I will be glad when it is January,” instead of savoring the wonders of Christmas as we rest on Christ the King?

God’s love for us is so awesome! We are so unworthy of this gift of the baby Jesus! As stated in the Scripture, God did not send this wonderful gift from heaven because we loved Him. Our sinfulness disappoints Him greatly. Each day we fail to fulfill His expectations and instead follow the ways of the world and our sinful human nature. How often we succumb to the temptations Satan sets before us. **Yet God loves us so much that He sent His only Son to be born a human being and suffer the horrific agony and ultimate crucifixion so that we might once again be His children! We cannot possibly imagine such unfathomable love!**

When we keep **Christ as the focus of all our Christmas preparations**, the joy of the season will fill our hearts and will enable us to keep things in perspective. **Daily prayer, thanking God** for this wonderful gift of love, and **asking Him to send His Holy Spirit** to help us respond by loving one another and keeping our mind from getting caught up in the secular celebration of the “holiday” season. By focusing on Christ, we can strive to keep Christ in Christmas!

As we once again prepare for this joyous event, may any effort or inconvenience seem trite compared to the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. Decorating our homes and Christmas trees with lights, angels, stars, and candles reminds us of Jesus, the Light of

the world being born on that first Christmas. The angels sang “Gloria,” and the Magi followed the star and brought sweet-smelling gifts to the Babe-in-the-manger. The shiny tree ornaments reflect the light, just as we are to reflect God’s love to everyone. The Advent wreath and the manger scene in a prominent place remind us to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ Child.

Sending Christmas cards with a Christian message is an excellent opportunity to share the Good News. Say a prayer for the person or family as each card is addressed. While shopping, we may consider presenting the clerk or waitress with a *Mustard Seed* or tract inviting them to our church’s Christmas services. We should remember to SMILE and to be polite as we weave through the crowds and are perhaps tempted to become impatient with an inept clerk.

Presenting gifts to those special people in our lives is symbolic of that greatest gift, Baby Jesus. Christmas shopping is not meant to “break the bank” or to buy the favor of our children or grandchildren. **The gift will soon be forgotten, but the love of Jesus that we demonstrate in our living and in our giving will be remembered always.**

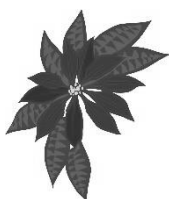
Rather than fretting over every dust ball, let us make some cookies, even if they are the ready-to-bake kind, and take a plate to a person who lonely is or a shut-in. Making the visit will warm our heart, as well as the heart of the person visited.

There are many ways the love of God in Christ Jesus can be shared. Because God has opened our hearts to His great love for us, the love from Jesus brings joy and peace to our souls, as it becomes the motivation in our Christmas preparation.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You wholeheartedly for Your abounding love for us in sending Your only Son to save us from our sin. We are so undeserving. We plead with You to fill our hearts with Your love so that we can truly love others. Left to ourselves, we can only demonstrate a self-seeking love. Grant us joy and peace that only You can provide as we prepare for the birth of Jesus, our precious Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Love Explained, written by Pat Biar, Nederland, Texas
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Your Giving Matters!

*Many thanks to everyone who contributed to
Trinity’s Flower Fund!*



December 2023



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3  First Sunday in Advent Events at St. Paul's 3:45 p.m. Confirmation/SS 5 p.m. Joint Divine Service 6 p.m. Soup/Salad Supper	4	5 2 p.m.  TR Hope Circle	6 2:15 p.m. TR Release-Time 5:30 p.m.  Decorate TR & TR Ruth Circle	7	8	9
10  Second Sunday in Advent Events at Trinity 3:45 p.m. Children's Practice 5 p.m. Joint Divine Service 6 p.m. Joint Voters Meeting	11	12	13 2:15 p.m. TR Release-Time	14	15	16
17  Third Sunday in Advent Events at St. Paul's 3:45 p.m. Children's Practice 5 p.m. Joint Divine Service	18	19	20	21	22	23
24  Fourth Sunday in Advent 3:30 p.m. Joint Children's Christmas Eve Service at Trinity	25 11:30 a.m. Joint Divine Christmas Day Service at St. Paul's	26	27	28	29	30
31  Events at St. Paul's 5 p.m. Joint Divine Service	<p><i>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11).</i></p>					