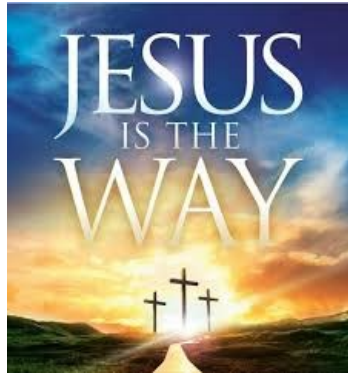


St. Paul's Epistle

"St. Paul's Lutheran Church glorifies God by connecting people to Jesus through teaching, serving, caring, and telling!"

St. Paul's Lutheran Church 1700 Carridale Street SW Decatur AL 35601 256.353.8759 www.StPaulsDec.com



Friends in Christ,

In the month of May, as we continue in the church year calendar in the season of Easter, we recognize that in the beginning God created man to live in paradise, in perfect fellowship with Him. By our sin, though, we fractured the fellowship between God and mankind, and we were expelled from the paradise of Eden. The result is that, since the Fall, we have been missing the goodness that God created for us to enjoy. That has left us longing for something we were designed to have but now are missing.

In his book *Confessions*, St. Augustine once described that longing by saying that "our hearts are restless." Seeking to regain what was lost, we keep trying to make a way back to paradise. Eastern religions and some Christians try, by meditation or mysticism, to ascend to the divine realm in their minds. More commonly, we try building towers of good works, so to speak, thinking that by them we can make our way to heaven.

No matter how hard we try, though, those efforts are in vain. What separates us from God and His glory is our sin, and nothing we do can free us of that sin. No attempts at self-enlightenment can erase what we in fact have done and said and thought. No good works can cancel them out. The answer does not lie within, and is not something we can work out. As long we rely on our own efforts to reach God, we remain excluded from paradise. As long as we try to make our own peace, our hearts remain restless.

No, we definitely cannot work our way up to God, but in Christ, God came down to us. He came down from heaven to earth in His incarnation, as the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. He willingly made His home with us in this sin-stricken world so that we can one day be at home with Him in Paradise.

And to open the doors to Paradise for us, He let the doors of heaven be slammed shut on Him as He was forsaken in our place on the cross. There He bore in His body all our sins, and as the just judgment for those sins. By passing through that judgment in our place, by His death and resurrection, Christ opened to us the way of everlasting life.

In fact, not only has He *made* a way for us. He Himself *is* the way. Jesus Christ is the way to Paradise. All those who have Christ have the doors of heaven thrown wide open for them. And those doors will not be closed.

That's why you don't have to worry about trying to find a way to reach paradise. The other religions of this world all try to tell you what you have to do to make your way to paradise. But the Christian Gospel is entirely different. Christianity is a "down to earth" religion in that it gives you the good news of God coming down to earth so that you don't have to try to climb up to Him. He comes to you and freely gives to you Himself and all that is His, so that in Him, Paradise is yours, and your heart can be at rest.

When Augustine described mankind's longing by saying that "our hearts are restless," he also pointed to where the rest that we need can be found. He said to the Lord, "You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You." In Christ, we do have rest for our souls. And in Him, the paradise that we lost by our sin is ours by God's grace.

We rest in the peace of Christ now, in the comfort of the Gospel and in the Lord's Supper as a foretaste of the feast to come. One day we will be with Christ in the Paradise of heaven as we rest from our labors. And ultimately, we will experience the fullness of Paradise when Christ comes again in glory to make all things new—making a new heaven and new earth where God and mankind will live together in Paradise in perfect fellowship. It will be very good! And it will be that way forever!

In Christ our Risen Savior,

Pastor Aaron Kretzschmar

May 2025

8:15am Traditional Worship
In-Church & YouTube
9:30am Sunday School all ages
10:00am WZDK 98.5 FM Radio
10:45am CrossLife in the ARC

Holy Communion
May 4 and 18

Staffed Nursery 8am until noon

Sunday Bible Studies

Adult Bible Study

Sundays 9:30am

Pastor's Bible Study 9:45am

Weekday Bible Studies

Wednesday 10:30am

Wednesdays 6:00pm

Looking Ahead

Voters Meeting

Sunday, April 27 at 9:30am

Last FaithLinks Dinner

Wednesday, April 30

Mother's Day

May 11

Preschool Graduation

Thursday, May 15 at 6:30pm

High School Senior Recognition

Sunday May 18 both services

Last Day of Preschool, May 22

Last Day of KTT, May 23

Memorial Day

Office Closed Friday, May 23

KTT & Preschool Summer

Programs begin June 2

2025

Theme:

Renew our Hearts, O Lord.

Theme Verse: Psalm 51:10

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."



NOTES FROM Miss Skylar



St. Paul's Family,

...when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

- Titus 3:4-6

Even though Easter Day has passed the Easter celebration never ends because the gift we received from Jesus defeating death and rising again is eternal. We should stand firmly in this gift that was given to us and like the apostle Paul we should go out and proclaim it to everyone so they too can stand firm in the gift.

Ways you can stand firm is by joining us in our Bible Reading Challenge which provides daily Bible readings, the theme for May is Judge Not.

We are also looking forward to Vacation Bible School happening June 23-27. This is a great time for us to proclaim the Gospel to so many children and we need your help in doing so. You can volunteer throughout the week, provide the needed donations, and simply pray that the children we get to serve hear and receive the wonderful news that Jesus loves them so much He died on the cross to take away all of their sins and defeated death and came back to life three days later on Easter!

God's Blessings,
Skylar Smith, DCE

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR RECOGNITION

Join us Sunday, May 18th, at both services as we celebrate our High School Seniors graduating this year! Please submit pictures of your graduating senior to Skylar for a special presentation to be shown at both services! If you have any questions, contact Skylar or Heather Asher.

Congratulate our 2025 Graduates!

TY ASHER

BRYCE CARROLL

MOLLYE HELLEBRAND

MAGGIE NICHOLSON

PARKER SMITH



ENDURING FAITH May Sunday School Lessons

5/4 - A King Forever: David

5/11 - A Divided Kingdom: Jeroboam & Rehoboam

5/18 - Comfort in Activity: Jeremiah

5/25 - All Together in the Gym

Bible Reading Challenge

May - Judge Not

Join our 2025 Bible Reading Challenge! These daily readings look at verses that focus on a different theme every month. These verses may only take a few seconds to read, but we encourage you to read them multiple times throughout the day and spend time in prayer with God over the verses. We also encourage you, if you have the time, to READ MORE! These verses are a starting point!

Day 1: Matthew 7:1-2

Day 2: Luke 6:37

Day 3: James 4:11-12

Day 4: Romans 14:1

Day 5: Romans 2:1-3

Day 6: Matthew 7:3-5

Day 7: John 7:24

Day 8: Romans 14:4

Day 9: 1 Corinthians 4:5

Day 10: 1 Corinthians 5:12

Day 11: Matthew 7:12

Day 12: Romans 2:11-16

Day 13: Romans 14:10-13

Day 14: Galatians 6:1

Day 15: Titus 3:2

Day 16: Ephesians 4:29

Day 17: Proverbs 31:9

Day 18: James 2:12-13

Day 19: Colossians 3:12-13

Day 20: James 1:26

Day 21: 1 Peter 2:1

Day 22: Proverbs 24:23-25

Day 23: 2 Corinthians 5:10

Day 24: Romans 12:16-18

Day 25: 1 Timothy 5:21

Day 26: Philippians 2:3

Day 27: Proverbs 19:17

Day 28: Proverbs 21:13

Day 29: Proverbs 22:2

Day 30: Proverbs 28:21

Day 31: 1 Samuel 16:7

You can pick up a monthly bookmark at church, like our Church Facebook page to get the daily reading (and be sure to Like and Share the reading for the day so that your friends can see them too!), or to receive daily text reminders talk to Skylar to get signed up!

You're Invited!

St. Paul's 2025 VBS

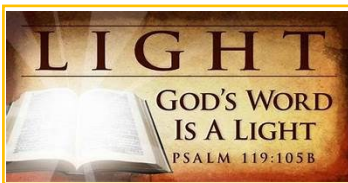
1700 Carridale St SW Decatur, AL 35601

June 23rd - 27th | 9-12pm



Scan to register today!

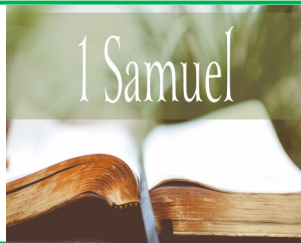




Here are several studies along with our 2024 Bible Reading Challenge on page 2 to help us be in His Word and in His light!

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Wednesday mornings we are reading 1 Samuel! We hope you can join us at 10:30am in Room 318! Talk to Skylar if you have any questions!

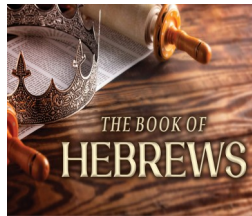


The Gospel of Matthew

Wednesday evening in Room 315 Now studying the Gospel of Matthew. Join us at 6pm.

Adult Bible Study Sunday Morning 9:30am in Room 317

Join us for an interesting and lively discussion.



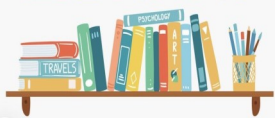
Men's Bible Study Saturday May 10 and 24 at 7:30am

Men will set up for church after class.

Daniel Bible Study Saturday, 11:00am May TBD



Welcome to the LIBRARY



St. Paul's thanks the Hornish family for the over 200 books donated to the church library from the Hornish Family Library to the Glory of God in memory of Beth Hornish.

Until now these books were together in one section of the library. Beginning in June, they will be moved to the different divisions of the library such as: Bible studies, Lutheranism, Devotions, etc.



FM 98.5 WZDK

Hear St. Paul's Worship Service on the radio every Sunday at 10am Also hear great hymns of the church Sunday Mornings

Talk to James Henderson for more information!



Adult Confirmation Class Wednesdays at 6:15pm In-person and by Zoom Talk to Pastor for more information

God's Quilt of comfort: Wrapping up in the Psalms

By: Diane J Grebing LWML

St. Paul's Lutheran Church in room 317

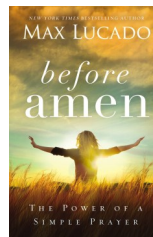
6:30 p.m. Social

7:00 p.m.

Bible Study

May 8, 2025

May 22, 2025



Adult Bible Study

New Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study – Before Amen: The Power of Simple Prayer

Max Lucado's Before Amen video enhanced study is for anyone desiring an improved prayer life. In the sessions, he reveals his struggles with prayer and his discovery that having a conversation with

God is for everyone, not just for the pious few. Through the use of a simple, easy-to-remember, pocket-sized prayer that he distilled from the prayers in the Bible, he shows us how everyone can build a prayer life that is stronger, better and deeper. Connecting with Him each day can mean all the difference in your life and how you experience God.



MEMORIAL DAY 2025 Monday, May 26, 2025

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|--|--|----------------------------|---|
| 27 8:15am Traditional Worship & YouTube Live 9:30am Sunday School 9:30am Voters meeting 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship | 28 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (M-F) | 29 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise 9:30am Staff meeting | 30 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 5:30pm Last FaithLinks Dinner 6:00pm Bible study 6:00 Handbells 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:30pm Praise Band | 1 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry | 2 | 3 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service |
| 4 8:15am Traditional Worship & YouTube Live† 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship† 12:00pm VBS Volunteer Meeting | 5 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 10:00am LWML Meeting (mingle 9:30-10:00) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (M-F) | 6 PS Moms and muffins 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise | 7 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 6:00pm Bible study 6:00 Handbells 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:30pm Praise Band | 8 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00pm Women's Bible study | 9 Bldg use | 10 Bldg use 7:30am Men's Bible study 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service |
| 11 Mother's Day 8:00am Nursery open 8:15am Traditional Worship & YouTube Live 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship | 12 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (M-F) | 13 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise 6:00pm Education Bd 7:00pm Vestry | 14 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 6:00pm Bible study 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:30pm Praise Band | 15 <i>Newsletter deadline</i> 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Preschool Graduation | 16 | 17 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service |
| 18 HS Graduates Recognition - both services 8:15am Traditional Worship & YouTube Live† 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship† | 19 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (M-F) | 20 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise 9:30am Staff meeting 6:00pm Preschool Board 7:00pm Fellowship Board | 21 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 6:00pm Bible study 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:30pm Praise Band | 22 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise PS Fun day/last day of school 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00pm Women's Bible study | 23 Church Office Closed | 24 7:30am Men's Bible study 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service |
| 25 8:15am Traditional Worship & YouTube Live 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship | 26 Memorial Day | 27 7:00am PS Ext Care (Tu-F) 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise 9:30am Staff meeting 5:30pm Elders meeting | 28 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 6:00pm Bible study 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:30pm Praise Band | 29 8:30 9:30&11am Exercise 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry | 30 | 31 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service |



May 1 Michael Holway
May 1 Georgette Becerra
May 2 Dawn Owczarzak
May 5 Patty Paradise Pace
May 7 Mackenzie Rowland
May 8 Tom Pfaff
May 9 Nancy Fortune
May 9 Marion Klingeberger
May 12 Jason Duffey
May 12 Jake Morgan
May 13 Brennam Kruger
May 14 Helga Daniel
May 15 Carol Dubbs
May 15 Jasmine Franco

May 16 Linda Hyde
May 17 Celia Faller
May 18 Meredith Michelfelder
May 18 Carol Mueller
May 20 Steven Linley
May 20 Diane Pitts
May 21 Naomi Rodgers
May 23 Roberta Graham
May 23 Ryan Reece
May 23 Cooper Lawrence
May 25 Bob Sullivant
May 25 Grant Morgan
May 26 Sophia Smitherman
May 27 Fiona McNa
May 27 Peggy Pfaff
May 31 Ty Asher
May 31 Doug Hamilton



May 5 Ronnie & Faye Atkins
May 10 Kris & Laura Frasher Tuttle
May 11 Lanny & Mary Yocom
May 14 Gary & Katherine Plunkett
May 16 Jimmy & Mitzi Reed
May 20 Steve & Babette O'Shea
May 22 Ron & Margo Switzer
May 23 John & Bonnie Mann
May 29 Pastor & Erin Kretzschmar
May 29 Jake & Daniela Morgan

God's Blessings on your Special Day!

How To Reuse
Plastic Bags
And Make Sleep
Mats For Homeless



How to reuse plastic bags

and make sleep mats for the homeless.

Donate your plastic bags from grocery stores, Target, Walmart etc. We are going to turn them into "plarn" (plastic yarn) and crochet/weave them into sleeping mats for the people that are homeless. It takes about 700 bags to make a single mat. So bring in your bags and put in the waiting containers in the lobby and Narthex. If anyone wants more information about this project contact Sue Bosco at her home # 256-350-5876.



Handbell Choir rehearsal
Wednesdays at 6:00pm
in the choir loft.



Choir rehearsal
Wednesdays at 7:00pm
in the choir loft.
New members welcome!
For more info contact
Mary Morgan



The Flower Calendar
is up in the breezeway.
Sign up early for your
special day!



**Stretch
and
Flex
Classes
Pilates
Fusion
Classes**

All classes are Tuesday and
Thursday mornings.

Stretch and Flex classes are at
8:30 in the gym and 11:00 in
the YAC. This class combines
many areas of fitness and is
adaptable to many fitness
levels. We work around a
chair and finish sitting using
small weights and resistance
bands.

Pilates Fusion meets in the
gym at 9:30. This class
combines cardio, resistance
training and Pilates.
For more information please
call Chonita at 256-303-0098.

**Wednesday
Night
Dinners
5:30pm**



**\$80
Weekly
Space is limited**

Summer Camp
Kidz, Tweenz, & Teenz, Inc.

Fun, Educational, & Creative
Outdoor and Indoor Activities
For Kidz K-8th Grade!

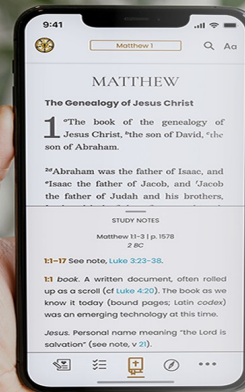
**Cooking, Music, Drama, STEAM, Girl's
Circle, Field Trips, AND MORE!**

June 2nd - July 25th  Monday - Friday
7am - 530pm  St. Paul's Lutheran Church
1700 Carridale St. SW

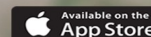
\$30 registration fee

For more information call (256) 426-7734

**INTRODUCING
The Lutheran
Study Bible
App**



Get started at
\$9.99/year or \$2.99/month



**Your Favorite Study Bible
Now Fits in Your Pocket**

Serving the Lord in Worship this Month at St. Paul's

| | May 4 | May 11 | May 18 | May 25 |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Elders 8:15am | Mike Johnson | John Campbell | MickyWhiteside | Bill Darwin |
| Ushers 8:15am | Jim Disher Ken Hamilton Micky Whiteside Mike Widmar | Bob Seibert Rick Daniel Tim Nave Oliver Nave | Owen Blaske Jack Blaske Mike Johnson Jeff Pittman | Graham Peebles Michael Kimmitt Matthew Kimmitt Mike Ater |
| Acolytes 8:15am | Oliver | Ben | Oliver | Ben |
| AV Techs 8:15am | Rich Maschke | Bob Sullivant | Rich Maschke | Bob Sullivant |
| Readers 8:15am | Jeff Pittman | Mitchell Whiteside | Pam Meadows | Gary Nagy |
| Sanctuary Flowers | Penny Peebles | Linda Hyde | Open | Open |

Altar Guild for May: Belinda Campbell and Pete Alvis **Counters for May: Rebecca Mitchell and Becky Ballentine**

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Elders 10:45am | Tim Herfurth | Gary Nagy | Tim Herfurth | Gary Nagy |
| Host families 10:45am CL setup 8:30am Saturday | McRae family Rich Maschke | Atkins family Men's Bible study | Morgan family Rich Maschke | Ballentine family Men's Bible study |
| AV Techs 10:45am | Rick and Carol Morgan | James Gilchrist | Mike Ringers | Tim Herfurth |



St Paul's Quilters
meet in Room 317
each Wednesday at 10am.
Join us!

For more information contact Pete Alvis at 256.616.1774.



Save your pull
tabs



Come and Knit or crochet with us!
Work on your own project or special church projects. We have patterns and yarn galore!
Meet us in the Parlor every Thursday at 11am.



Outreach Project

Thank you to everyone who contributes and prays for the visitors to our Blessing Box!
Please help to keep the Blessing Box stocked by placing non-perishable items in the Blessing Box or in the collection box under the Portico at the Sanctuary entrance.
We are blessing our neighbors - one can at a time!



We received this thanks in March from someone who benefits from our Blessing Box Ministry. It is reported that in the last 5 years there has been a 65% increase in the use of the Blessing Box. We have been putting out along with the food a devotion called, "Food for Your Soul in 2 Minutes." The topic changes every couple of days. People are invited to attend church as well.



2025 Year-to-Date Average Attendance
In-church attendees 119
Livestream sign-ins 18



Current Loan Balance: \$198,501
Endowment Fund Balance: \$14,938

Financial Plan Activity thru February 28, 2025

YTD FirstFruits Giving: **\$ 104,427** **PLAN: \$120,000**
YTD Total Expenses: **- \$ 119,562** **PLAN: \$136,147**
Plan Activity thru Feb - \$ 15,135 more expenses than income

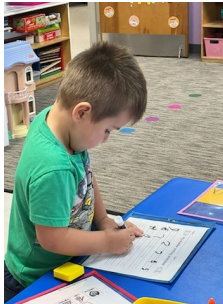
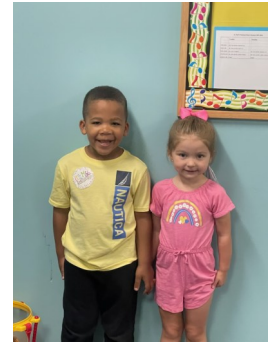


Thanks to all members who donate to the Blessing Box Ministry.

2025 EASTER EGG HUNT



St Paul's Lutheran Preschool 2024—2025



Outdoor Fun



May is for May Flowers

May is sponsored by the number 10, the color black, and we will review shapes. This month the children will learn about graduation, Mother's Day, and gardening. We will review our letters. Our Bible stories and study will be Jesus' Ascension, Peter and John Heal a Crippled Man, The Lost Sheep, and Jesus Calms the Storm.

We will have Muffins with Mom on Tuesday, May 6th 7:00-9:30.



Preschool Graduation will be Thursday, May 15th at 6:00.



We will have Fun Day the last day of Core Preschool, Thursday, May 22nd.



In observance of Memorial Day, we will be closed Monday, May 26th.

The week of May 27th-30th will be Extended Care only.



Summer Preschool will begin Monday, June 2nd.

For more info and pictures of activities, please visit www.facebook.com/StPaulsDec.Preschool

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
1700 Carridale St SW
Decatur AL 35601

www.StPaulsDec.com

[www.Facebook.com/StPaulsDec](https://www.facebook.com/StPaulsDec)





Don't miss an important call from St Paul's

The calls you receive are from
(855) 248-7295

Please add this number to your
Contacts and label it "St Paul's Calls."



Please let the Church Office know if you would like to receive our 1Call announcements and are currently not signed up.
ChurchOffice@StPaulsDec.com

