

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

St. Paul's Lutheran Church1700 Carridale Street SW Decatur AL 35601

256.353.8759 www.StPaulsDec.com

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God Romans 12:2

Friends in Christ,

It's a new year! And with it, new opportunities! Though 2024 went way too fast in my opinion, with the arrival of 2025 there is the chance to do some of what was perhaps left out from last year.

People make new year's resolutions in an effort to better themselves. Individuals commit to a new exercise routine, a new diet, a new time management system, a new Bible study program, and so on. And while these are all good of course, what we as Christians should do along with such endeavors is ask the Lord in prayer to renew our hearts and minds.

Recently, St. Paul's Vestry selected for our 2025 congregational verse Psalm 51:10, which says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." And the theme for the year is, "Renew our hearts, O Lord." Whatever we plan to do in 2025, we need the renewal of God for our lives by His Word and Holy Spirit.

Without the Lord continually renewing us, and then leading and guiding us, we will either not prosper in our plans, or our efforts will not benefit us in a manner that pleases the Lord. What we need is new life! And new life that lasts!

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter 12, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).

We are transformed by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ our Savior. When we were Baptized, or when we first heard and believed the Good News of the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, we were born again by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 12:3). Then, having new life from God in Christ, we grow in the Lord and bear good fruit, for Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches (John 15:5). Instantly, we are made new creations in Christ, by faith (2 Corinthians 5:17). But the process, or "journey," of following our Lord is less than easy and requires much turning from old, sinful ways, that the Lord God might renew our hearts and minds again and again.

Recently in my Adult Confirmation Class, I taught the lesson called "Our Spiritual Heartbeat." In our workbook, the following quote from Martin Luther is given, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ commanded, 'Repent,' he willed that the whole life of the believer be one of repentance." Unlike some of our area neighbor churches, as Lutheran Christians we believe, teach, and confess that repentance and faith are daily at the center of who we are, and how we live, as followers of Jesus Christ. Repentance definitely is not a one-time thing. Like the two thumps of our physical heart with each heartbeat, repentance and faith are the two characteristics of the Christian life that should be observed and experience for a believer every day.

There is no way to live in the newness of life that Christ our Savior brings without repentance and faith each day. Therefore, I truly believe that our congregational verse and theme are not only fundamentally important for us as active believers, but the spiritual renewal

desperately needed in our nation (especially among the younger generations) must also be based in repentance and faith.

So may our gracious God renew not only our own hearts, but the lives of all those around us. And let us daily pray, not simply for ourselves, but for the renewal of all God's children for whom Christ died.

Being renewed each day in Christ,

Pastor Aaron Kretzschmar

epiphary

January 2025

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

> Holy Communion January 5 and 19

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

Epiphany January 6

Installation of Officers January 5

FaithLinks Dinners begin January 15

Middle School Winter Retreat January 17-19

> Stewardship Sunday January 26

Jumpin' Jammie Jamboree 3-4:30pm January 26



Theme for 2025: 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."





St. Paul's Family,

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. - Lamentations 3:22:23

It's 2025! When did that happen? 2024 passed by so quickly. Just last month we had our annual Children's Christmas Program, SCUBA Christmas, which allowed our children and youth to tell the Christmas Story through the Bible Points they learned in June at SCUBA VBS! We had a total of 29 children participate this year, many from Kidz, Tweenz, and Teenz (KTT). They all did such an amazing job with singing and speaking!

With the new year, many of us are setting new intentions and goals for our lives. To help get us into God's Word, or keep us in His Word, daily we will continue to have our Bible Reading Challenge. We kick off 2025 with verses talking about New Beginnings which is a great thing to be reminded as we begin this new year! I hope you can join us in this Bible Reading Challenge where every month there will be a new theme and set of verses that make opening our Bible daily so easy!

God's Blessings, Skylar Smith, DCE

> High School Youth selling beignets to fundraise for the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering!



January 11th | 6:30pm Fashionably Late Christmas Party To receive information and reminders text "@yaanchor" to 81010

Resumes Wednesday, January 15th



FaithLink Activities happening every Wednesday: Dinner - 5:30pm - Fellowship Room Children's Activities - 6:15pm - ARC/Gym Nursery - 6:15pm - Rm 101 Bible Study - 6:15pm - Rm 317





January - New Beginnings

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: Isaiah 43:19 Day 2: Lamentations 3:22-23 Day 3: 2 Corinthians 5:17 Day 4: Revelation 21:5 Day 5: Ezekiel 36:26 Day 6: Philippians 3:13-14 Day 7: Romans 6:4 Day 8: Psalm 40:3 Day 9: Jeremiah 31:31 Day 10: Titus 3:5 Day 11: Psalm 96:1 Day 12: Ephesians 4:23-24 Day 13: Colossians 3:10 Day 14: Isaiah 65:17 Day 15: 2 Peter 3:13 Day 16: Isaiah 42:9

Day 17: John 13:34 Day 18: Psalm 98:1 Day 19: Isaiah 48:6 Day 20: Galatians 6:15 Day 21: Isaiah 62:2 Day 22: Matthew 9:16-17 Day 23: Hebrews 12:24 Day 24: Revelation 2:17 Day 25: Mark 2:21-22 Day 26: Revelation 3:12 Day 27: Job 42:10 Day 28: Psalm 147:3 Day 29: 1 Samuel 10:6 Day 30: 2 Samuel 12:20 Day 31: Ruth 1:16-17

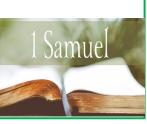
You can pick up a monthly bookmark at church, like our Church Facebook page to get the daily reading (and be sure to Like and Share the reading for the day so that your friends can see them too!), or text "@stpaulsbrc" to 81010 to get text message reminders.



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!

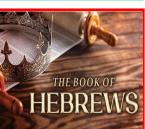
Wednesday Morning **Bible Study**

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!



Adult Bible Study Sunday Morning 9:30am and Wednesday at 6pm in Room 317

Join us for an interesting and lively discussion.





Daniel Bible Study Saturday January 18 at 11:00am



Adult Bible Study

Nurturing Your Faith: **Patient Urgency**

When we share Jesus with others, we're eagerurgent even to speak the

Good News. However, we do understand the need for patience in how others receive the Gospel in their lives. In this video enhanced Lutheran Hour Ministries Bible study, held on Sundays at 9:45 AM in the Fellowship Room, we will learn via Mark's Gospel about a map, a means, and a model for having healthy spiritual conversations with others.







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



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

For more information contact Pete Alvis at 256.616.1774.



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.

For more information contact MaryKay Hodges.





St. Paul's Legacy Endowment Fund

provides the opportunity to make commitments and plans that may not be **ENDOWMENT** possible through our annual budget.

Examples of programs and projects to be supported include:

SPLC Preschool:

FUND

- · Community outreach and social ministries;
- Music and youth programs;
- Global ministries

Thrivent Charitable staff is available to work with you and your attorney, financial advisor and accountant to facilitate a charitable gift that benefits our endowment fund, fits your financial situation and provides you with maximum tax benefits. Phone: 800-365-4172

Email:thriventcharitable@thrivent.com. or online: thriventcharitable.com

Why Give? All gifts, whatever the size, help grow the mission.





"The Interlinear Bible" is from the books donated from the Hornish Family Library in honor of Beth to the glory of God. It contains the Old Testament in Hebrew with English words above the the Hebrew

words and an English translation on the side. This is true also for the New Testament in Greek. This Bible is helpful for those who wish to research topics and words found in the Bible in the original languages. English translations aren't always accurate as they attempt to make the Bible more understandable by translating into a more familiar way of speaking.

The original words also often offer a richness of meaning that is not in the English. For example, in Hebrews we read in English, "Run the race set before you." In the Greek it reads, "Run the agony [of life] set before you."

St Paul's Enchanted Forest Tree





Children's Christmas program 2024



The Pound Thank you to all who participated





Thank you very much

Thank you so much to everyone for the cards, gifts, prayers, and warm wishes at Christmas. I greatly

appreciate you thinking of me and my family. Thank you again, and God's blessings always in Christ our Savior born Bethlehem.

In Him.

Pastor Kretzschmar

January 2025 + denotes Holy Communion celebrated during Worship

Church Nursery 8:00am - Noon on Sundays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
29 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship		31 Office Closed 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise	1 Campus Closed	2 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	3	4 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service
5 Installation of church officers both services 8:00am Nursery open 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live† 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship†		7 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise	8 8:45am Preschool (W-Th) 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (W-F) 4:00pm KTT Chapel No FaithLinks dinner 6:00pm Bible study 6:00pm Handbells 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:30pm Praise Band	9 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	10	11 7:30am Men's Bible study 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service 9:00am Deco takedown 6:30pm Young Adults' Fashionably Late Christmas Party
12 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship	13 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (M-F)	14 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise 9:30am Staff meeting Board 7:00pm Vestry	15 Newsletter deadline 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 5:30pm FaithLinks Dinner 6:00pm Bible study / Handbells 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:30pm Praise Band	16 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	17	18 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service 11:00am Daniel study
19 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live† 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship†	7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F)	21 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise 8:45am Preschool (T-Th) 9:30am Staff meeting 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (T-F) 6:00pm Preschool Board 7:00pm Fellowship Board	22 7-9am PS Dads and Donuts 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 5:30pm FaithLinks Dinner 6:00pm Bible study / Handbells 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:30pm Praise Band	23 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	24	25 7:30am Men's Bible study 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service
26 Stewardship Sunday 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship 3:00pm Jumpin' Jammie Jamboree	27 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (M-F)	28 8:30am 9:30&11am Exercise 9:30am Staff meeting 6:30pm Elders meeting	29 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 5:30pm FaithLinks Dinner 6:00pm Bible study / Handbells 6:15pm Adult Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:30pm Praise Band	30 8:30am 9:30&11AM Exercise 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	31	1 8:30am Set up for CrossLife service



		-
Jan 1	Mike Widmar	J
Jan 2	Michele Braswell	Jä
Jan 2	Dakota Carlson	Jä
Jan 2	Tommy Livingston	J
Jan 2	Jordan Miller	J
Jan 2	Carol Morgan	Ja
Jan 3	Joan McRae	J
Jan 4	Julia Herda	J
Jan 4	Vi Pitts	J
Jan 11	Rebecca Mitchell	J
Jan 11	Christina Schmelter	J
Jan 12	Kent Locker	J

Jan 13 Nancy Jones Jan 17 Erin Kretzschmar Jan 18 Lanny Yocom Jan 19 John Smith Jan 20 **Billie Seagle** Jan 21 Mary Nelson lan 21 Heather Cevallos Nathan Miller lan 23 lan 24 Nettie Goehler lan 26 John Covington Ian 27 Walt Hartley **Buddy Jones** lan 27 Sonja Herfurth lan 27 Ella Jordan-Holmes Jan 27 lan 29 T.J. Parrotta Mollye Hellebrand lan 29 lan 30 Bryant Carlson





- Jacob & Heather Cevallos Jan 3
- Jan 15 Tim & Sonja Herfurth
- Jan 16 Josh & Ariel Holway-Jones
- Jan 16 James & Denise Thrasher
- Jan 19 Mike & Joan McRae

God's Blessings on your Special Day!



Epiphany: the 'Other' Christmas

Epiphany is Christmas 2.0. Its conspicuous place following the nativity narrative in Matthew's Gospel presents it as the "other Christmas," the "Christmas of the Gentiles." At the first Christmas we find a swaddled baby in a manger visited by shepherds from the fields summoned by angels. In the "other Christmas," we find a toddler at His mother's feet in a house visited by Magi, Wise Men from the East guided by a star. The first Christmas was announced to Israel, the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham; the second Christmas was for the world, the nations, the Gentiles, the fulfillment of God's promise to Adam.

"Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising," God said (Isaiah 60:3).

Simeon declared that the child Jesus had come as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32 ESV), and Jesus commanded his disciples to "make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19 ESV) But what that meant did not sink in for a while, even after Pentecost.

It was after an angel told the Gentile centurion Cornelius to send for Peter that Peter said, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34-35 ESV)

And while Peter was still speaking to Cornelius and the crowd that there, "the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles." (Acts 10:44-45 ESV)

Later the apostle Paul provided a full-throated affirmation of the gospel being meant for the gentiles when he said, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. [...] There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:8-9, 28 ESV)

And John was given the ultimate vision of shared heavenly glory: "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Rev. 7:9-10 ESV)

https://witness.lcms.org/2022/epiphany-the-other-christmas/





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.



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.

	Serv	ing the Lord in	n Worship this	Month at St. P	aul's
		January 5	January 12	January 19	January 26
Elders	8:15am	Mike Johnson	Bill Darwin	Mitchell Whiteside	Bill Darwin
Ushers	8:15am	Graham Peebles Michael Kimmett Mathew Kimmett Mike Ater	Jim Disher Ken Hamilton Micky Whiteside Mike Widmar	Bob Seibert Rick Daniel Tim Nave Oliver Nave	Owen Blaske Jack Blaske Mike Johnson Jeff Pittman
Acolytes	8:15am	Ben	Oliver	Ben	Oliver
A/V Techs	8:15am	Rich Maschke	Bob Sullivant	Rich Maschke	Bob Sullivant
Readers	8:15am	Jeff Pittman	Pam Meadows	Mitchell Whiteside	Gary Nagy
Sanctuary Fl	owers	Open	Open	Open	Linda Hyde
Altar Guild f	or January: Ste	phanie Holway, Helga Daniel	Counters for January:	Becky Ballentine, Rebecca Mitc	hell
Elders	10:45am	Gary Nagy	Tim Herfurth	Gary Nagy	Tim Herfurth
Host families CL setup 8:3	s 10:45am 30am Saturday	Morgan family Rich Maschke	Atkins family Men's Bible study	Ballentine family Rich Maschke	Burrell family Men's Bible study
A/V Techs	10:45am	Rick & Carol Morgan	James Gilchrist	Tim Herfurth	Mike Ringers

2025 Officers

Pres/Vestry Chair: Craig Baker Secretary: Joseph Woodbury Treasurer: Leesa Pittman Financial Secretary: Sue Bosco Elders Co-chairs: Bill Darwin / Gary Nagy Education: Judy Nagy Christian/ Fellowship: June Asher Trustees: Rich Maschke

2025 Elders

Bill Darwin Gary Nagy John Campbell Tim Herfurth Mike Johnson Mitchell Whiteside



(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

<u>ATTENDANCE</u>

2024 Year-to-Date Average AttendanceIn-church attendees126Facebook sign-ins12



Current Loan Balance: \$204,463 Endowment Fund Balance: \$15,441

Financial Plan Activity thru November 30, 2024

YTD FirstFruits Giving:		
YTD Total Expenses:		
Plan Activity thru Sept		

\$425,546 PLAN: \$426,250 - <u>\$457,813</u> PLAN: 462,579 -<u>\$</u> 32,267 more expenses than income



St. Paul's Benevolence Fund

December is a great time to give to St. Paul's Benevolence

Fund. Currently the account has no funds, but if the Holy Spirit puts on your heart to give, monies will be used periodically to help members, or families and individuals connect to St. Paul's, with rent, their mortgage payment, utilities, medication, etc. on an occasional basis. Use of the funds are always approved by St. Paul's Board of Fellowship, before being distributed. And please feel free to talk to me for more information about St. Paul's Benevolence Fund.

Blessings always in Jesus,

Pastor

LWML	
Mite Box	
Collection	W & LWML
Sunday, January 5	
or anytime to the Church Office	

Based on the Biblical account of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1–4), the Mite Box is intended for regular contributions of "mites" — offerings above and beyond the support given to congregations and the LCMS. Mite Box contributions amount to millions of dollars that fund district and national mission grants and implement the LWML program.





Jumpin' Jammie Jamboree Sunday, January 26 from 3-4:30pm



St Paul's Lutheran Preschool

































January is for Winter Α

January is sponsored by the number $\underline{6}$, the color blue, and rectangle. This month the children will learn about winter, cold, snow, taking care of their body, police and doctors. We will learn about letters Ss, Jj and Uu. Our Bible stories and study will be The Wise Men Find Jesus, Boy Jesus Studies the Temple and Jesus' in Baptism.



new session of Soccer Shots will begin Tuesday, January 7th.

Preschool resumes Wednesday, January 8th.





Karate will return

Wednesday, January 15th.

January 20th is Extended Care only. No Preschool.



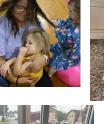


Dads and Donuts on

Wednesday, January 22nd 7:00-9:00am.

St Paul's members: please stop by anytime!

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













Afterschool St. Paul's

Thank you to everyone who supported our Swamp John's Fundraiser. It means a lot to be one of your ministries.

Your kindness does not go unnoticed!



Special Thanks to Pam Bolding of Neighborhood Christian Center for bringing a snack and a mobile store for the members to choose gifts and wrap for their parents. This is an annual event that the members look forward to, that's free of charge!











KTT will be Closed on these dates Dec 23-Jan 7th-Christmas Break Jan 20th-Martin Luther King Day

Charlotte Bradley, Director, KTT Inc (256) 666-8601

For more info and pictures of activities, please visit https://www.facebook.com/KidzTweenzTeenzInc/

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

www.StPaulsDec.com www.Facebook.com/StPaulsDec



