

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

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



Friends in Christ,

It's no surprise to find God "In the beginning" as we do in the first chapter of Genesis. After all, He's uncreated, infinite, and eternal. He always has been, and He always will be. He is without beginning and without end. If it were any other way, He wouldn't be God. Everything else, everything that is not God, whether visible or invisible, is part of His creation. For Moses says, "In the beginning God

created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). He made it out of nothing, spoke all creation into being by His word: "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).

Like Genesis, the Gospel of John starts before creation with the words "In the beginning" but offers this twist: "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). Prior to the creation, when there was nothing besides God, there was God's Word. St. John puts it like this: "The Word was with God" (John 1:1). The Word and God are here described as two distinct Persons. Personal pronouns, such as "He" and "Him" and "His," must be used for the Word. He's a divine Person. In short, "The Word was God" (John 1:2), uncreated, infinite, and eternal God.

Through this Word, there in the beginning with God, "all things were made" (John 1:3). He was the agent by whom God spoke the entire creation into being, "like a master workman," as it says in Proverbs 8:30. Light and life have their beginning and source in Him. The Word was there when the sun came into being, and snow and evergreen trees, and reindeer and Adam too. He was there "rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man" (Proverbs 8:31). And it was very good—all that He had made (Genesis 1:31).

Zoom through time, however, from "the beginning" to this day, and what you find is far different. There is darkness, thick darkness, and deep gloom over the whole world. The world in which we live doesn't naturally know God. It's spiritually ignorant and blind. It cannot recognize its Maker, even though His imprint is still evident in the beauty and complexity and order of creation.

With a single word, "darkness" (John 1:5), John describes creation's fall, sin, death, and hell. The word "darkness" captures the confusion and misunderstanding and futility around us and even in us. "Darkness" means that man can't find God, no matter how many times he bumps into the stuff God made. He's lost, disoriented, alienated, constantly inventing false gods and false worship to fill the void and the emptiness, serving the creation rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

If the creation were to be redeemed, saved, rescued from this darkness of sin and death, then God would have to make Himself known, point Himself out, reveal Himself to us. But how would He do this? God would come to the place where we are, descend to earth, enter His creation, so that we lost and condemned creatures might know Him and have communion with Him.

This is the great surprise and wondrous mystery of Christmas. God shows up in a place where we certainly don't expect to find Him: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). God the Word, who was there in the beginning and participated in the creation of all things, took on a human nature like yours. The Uncreated became a creature, the Infinite became limited and bound. The Word became flesh, Jesus Christ, true God and true man in One Person. What a surprise! Because man can no longer find the Creator, the Creator became man!

Truly, the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. He is the light of the world, the light that shines in our darkness, the light no darkness can overcome. Therefore, this Advent and Christmas season, let us praise, thank, and serve Him alone, our God and King!

In Christ the Word,

Pastor Aaron Kretzschmar

Please join us for Sunday Worship and Wednesday Midweek Worship at noon for our Advent and Christmas Worship Series (see pg 2).



December 2021

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 Dec 5, 19, 24, 25 Staffed Nursery 8am until noon

Bible Study

Isaiah Adult Bible Study Sundays 9:30am Pastor's Bible Study 9:45am

FaithLinks

Wednesday Dec 1,8,15
Fellowship Dinner—5:30pm
Christmas Program Practice
Confirmation
Youth Bible Study

Acts Adult Bible Study
Wednesdays 6:15pm

Preschool Sunday in CrossLife
December 5

LWML Ladies Christmas Party
December 5

High School Youth Night
December 5

Swamp John's High School Youth Fundraiser

December 9
Young Adults Cookie Drive

Now thru December 9

Churchwide Breakfast

Children's Christmas Program
December 12

Midweek Advent Worship

Wednesdays at 12 noon Dec 1, 8,15

Christmas Eve Worship

Friday, December 24 6:00pm Family Worship and Facebook Live 11:00pm Candlelight Worship

Christmas Day Worship

Saturday, December 25 10:00am

Sunday After Christmas
One Service
December 26
10:00 am in the Sanctuary



Advent Midweek Worship Series – When Heaven Met Earth: Advent Answers to Hard Questions about Jesus - 12 noon in the Sanctuary and Facebook Live

Wednesday, Dec 1 – The Birth of God: How and Why? (Luke 1:26–38)

Wednesday, Dec 8 – The Obedient Child: Did He Know He Was God? (Luke 2:41-52)

Wednesday, Dec 15 – The Man's Man: Why Would Jesus Ever Cry? (Luke 19:41–44)

Sunday Morning Advent and Christmas Eve Worship Series - God With Us - all services

Sunday, Nov 28 – God With Us Brings Hope Sunday, Dec 5 – God With Us Brings Love Sunday, Dec 12 – God With Us Brings Joy

Sunday, Dec 19 – God With Us Brings Peace Christmas Eve, Dec 24 – God With Us Is Jesus



notes from Skylar



St. Paul's Family,

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:21

We are entering a special time of our church year this month and that is the season of Advent. Advent is the time in the church year when we prepare our hearts for the hope-filled expectation of the coming of Jesus. It's about taking time to enjoy the journey instead of the rush to the destination. The specifics of how we prepare our hearts will look different from household to household and that's okay. The Advent season is a great time for families to celebrate "the reason for the season" — Jesus!

I have a challenge for you and your family, for the month of December, I want to encourage you to read the gospel of Luke; one chapter a day. If you begin on December 1st with chapter one you will finish the entire book of Luke on Christmas Eve, December 24th. During this reading you will start with the birth of Jesus and read all about His life through the eyes of Luke and finish by reading about His death and resurrection. This reading will be a wonderful reminder for you and your family during this season of Advent as we prepare for Jesus coming again.

God's Blessings,

Skylar Smith, DCE

New Sunday School Curriculum

We are starting a new Sunday School Curriculum, Enduring Faith by CPH, on January 9th! Enduring Faith is a three-year curriculum going through the Bible with the first year doing a survey of the entire Bible and years two and three exploring the Old and New Testament more in depth. Unit One, which we will begin in January, contains the familiar stories of Creation and Noah's Ark all the way through the story of David.

Although all ages will be learning about the same stories every week, each age group will be viewing the story in a different way. Early Childhood (Preschool to Kindergarten) will get to "Know" the story, discovering the account. Elementary (1st-5th grade) will "Grow" in their understanding of the stories as they explore more into their deeper meaning. And youth (middle school) will learn how to "Go" and take the knowledge of the story and be able to defend their faith in Jesus.



Sponsored by LWML

Church-wide Breakfast

Sunday, December 12 at 9:30am

Everyone Invited!



Children's Christmas Program Sunday, December 12 at 10:45am

Please join us as the children and youth tell the Good News of Jesus' birth!

If you have any questions about the program don't hesitate to contact Skylar.

High School Youth

Youth Night this month will be Sunday, December 5th at 5pm in the High School room! This is a time of fellowship and fun! Be sure to invite a friend!

High School Lock-In

Mark your calendars for Friday, December 17th! We are having a Lock-In at church for all High School Youth and their friends! More information coming soon! Contact Mrs. Heather Asher with any questions!



2022 LCMS Youth Gathering

Any youth in 8th to 12th grade are eligible to attend next Summer's Youth Gathering in Houston, TX! If you would like to go or have any questions, contact Mrs. Heather Asher or Skylar.

Swamp John's - Thursday, December 9

4:00 - 7:00pm at St. Paul's

Our High School Youth are hosting this Swamp John's Fundraiser so that Funds will go toward the High School Youth trip to



the LCMS Youth Gathering in July. Tickets are \$13 for a plate.

Contact Mrs. Heather Asher or the Church Office for more information.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
28 1st Sunday of Advent 8:15 AM Traditional Worship & Facebook Live 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45 AM CrossLife Worship	29 7:00 AM PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45 AM Preschool (M-Th) 2:30 PM KTT Afterschool (M-F)	30 8:30, 9:30, &11 AM Exercise Class 9:30 AM Staff meeting	1 10:00 AM Quilting 12:00 PM Worship & FBLive 4:00 PM KTT Chapel 5:30 PM FaithLinks Dinner 6:15 PM Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal 6:15 PM Confirmation, Bible Study 7:15 PM Praise Band	2 8:30, 9:30, & 11AM Exercise Class 10:00 AM PS Chapel 11:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00 PM staff lunch 7:00 PM Outreach Board-virtual	3	4
5 2nd Sunday of Advent 8:15 AM Traditional Worship & Facebook Live† 9:30 AM Sunday School and Christmas program rehearsal 10:00 AM Radio 98.5FM Worship† 10:45 AM CrossLife Worship† 10:45 AM Preschool Sunday 1:00 PM Ladies Christmas Party 5:00 PM HS Youth Night	6 7:00 AM PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45 AM Preschool (M-Th) 10:00 AM LWML Mtg (mingle 9:30-10:00) 2:30 PM KTT Afterschool (M-F)	7 8:30, 9:30, &11 AM Exercise Class 9:30 AM Staff meeting 10:45 AM Exercise class Christmas party	8 10:00 AM Quilting 12:00 PM Worship & FBLive 4:00 PM KTT Chapel 5:30 PM FaithLinks Dinner 6:15 PM Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal 6:15 PM Confirmation, Bible Study 6:15 PM Handbells 7:15 PM Adult Choir 7:15 PM Praise Band	9 8:30, 9:30, & 11AM Exercise Class 10:00 AM PS Chapel 11:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00 PM staff lunch Cookie Drive Donations Due 4PM Swamp John's Fundraiser until 7PM	10	11 10:00 AM Young Adults cookie delivery 10:00 AM Program Dress Reh until 12noon 2:00 PM KTT "BEU" event
12 3rd Sunday of Advent 8:15 AM Traditional Worship & Facebook Live 9:30 AM Christmas Breakfast 10:00 AM Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45 AM Christmas Program	13 7:00 AM PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45 AM Preschool (M-Th) 2:30 PM KTT Afterschool (M-F)	14 8:30, 9:30, &11 AM Exercise Class 9:30 AM Staff meeting 6:00 PM Education Team meeting 7:00 PM Vestry meeting	15 Newsletter deadline 10:00 AM Quilting 12:00 PM Worship & FBLive 4:00 PM KTT Chapel 5:30 PM FaithLinks Dinner 6:15 PM Confirmation, Bible Study 7:15 PM Praise Band	16 8:30, 9:30, & 11AM Exercise Class 11:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry 11:00 AM Preschool Christmas Program/ cookie reception	17 8:00 PM High School Youth Lock-in	18
19 4th Sunday of Advent 8:15 AM Traditional Worship & Facebook Live† 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Radio 98.5FM Worship† 10:45 AM CrossLife Worship†	20 7:00 AM PS Ext Care (M-Th)	21 9:30 AM Staff meeting	22 6:15 PM Handbells 7:15 PM Adult Choir 7:15 PM Praise Band	23 11:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00 PM staff lunch	24 6:00 PM Family Worship w/FB Live† 11:00PM Worship†	25 10:00 AM Worship†
26 10:00 AM One service: Traditional & Facebook Live 10:00 AM Radio 98.5FM Worship	27 7:00 AM PS Ext Care (M-F)	28 8:30, 9:30, &11 AM 9:30 AM Staff meeting	29 7:15 PM Praise Band	30 8:30, 9:30, & 11AM Exercise Class 11:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:00 PM staff lunch	31 office closed	1



	BIRTHDAYS	DEC 12
	DIKINDAIS	Dec 12
Dec 1	Vicki Anderson	Dec 13
Dec 3	Dwayne Whiteside	Dec 13
Dec 3	Dallas Southers	Dec 14
Dec 5	Jack Blaske	Dec 15
Dec 5	Andrea Koenig	Dec 17
Dec 6	Janice Welch	Dec 18
Dec 7	Jett Schmelter	Dec 19
Dec 7	Dylan Ferguson	Dec 19
Dec 8	Carol Carlson	Dec 20
Dec 8	Penny Peebles	Dec 20
Dec 8	Ron Fritze	Dec 20
Dec 9	Jacob Cevallos	Dec 20
Dec 10	Elizabeth Buzbee	Dec 20

Dec 11 Bruce Asher
Dec 12 Paul Goehler
Dec 12 Danny Smithermar
Dec 13 Ean Nicholson
Dec 13 Brian Braswell
Dec 14 Vanessa Byer
Dec 15 Larry Lechner
Dec 17 Hala Parker
Dec 18 Jeff Brown
Dec 19 June Asher
Dec 19 Jocelyn Mitchell
Dec 20 Kaye Hartley
Dec 20 Mike Bosco
Dec 20 Mark McMinn
Dec 20 John Nelson
Dec 20 Sadie Ringers

Dec 21 Aidan Carroll Dec 21 Jake Locker Dec 22 Brodie Winters Dec 23 Jim Forthman Dec 23 Ian Covington Dec 24 Maggie Nicholson Dec 25 Seth Santaliz Dec 25 Lana McCay Dec 28 Connor Baker Dec 28 Matthew Kimmett Dec 28 Rusty Nicholson Dec 29 Evelyn Ricks Dec 29 Joy McMinn Dec 30 Emily Santaliz Dec 31 Alison Gilchrist Dec 31 Gary Herda



Dec 4 Gary & Tonya Herda Dec 9 Chad & Rhonda Kruger Dec 9 Robert & Cindy Todd Dec 18 Buddy & Kellye Jones Dec 18 Tom & Peggy Pfaff Dec 19 David & Roberta Graham Dec 22 John & Nancy Fortune Dec 24 Dwayne & Nancy Whiteside Dec 28 Brad & Ashley Lawrence Dec 29 Ron & Bobbie Seibert God's Blessings

Special Day!



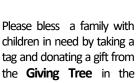
Sunday morning

9:30am Isaiah in Room 317 9:45am Pastor's class in the Fellowship Room

Wednesday evening

6:15pm Acts in Room 317





Instructions are posted by the Tree; please make plans to stop by and help out again this Christmas.

Lobby.

Gifts with tags are needed back by Dec 15 to the box in the Lobby. Thank You!



Ladies' **Christmas Party**

December 5 1:00 - 3:00 pm in the Fellowship Room All Ladies Invited!

Food Baskets prepared by our Lutheran Women's in Mission at St. Paul's will 4 also be given to our Giving Tree families.



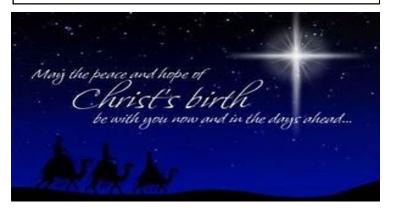
The shoppers would appreciate monetary donations to help purchase food items and may be put in the Livingstons' church mailbox. Shoppers are also needed; please contact Dee Livingston 256.355.8007 if you can help!



Young Adults Service Project need your donations!

We are excited to announce the 3rd annual Christmas Cookie Drive for our homebound, shut-in, and facility nurses **stations.** This year this event has a little bit

of a twist - we are doing baskets! All food donations need to be commercially sealed and individually packaged. Christmas cookie tins, sugar free items, fruit cups, Little Debbie snacks, peanut butter crackers, lotions and socks with grippers on the bottom are also appreciated. Please bring your donations to church by December 9. The Young Adults will be delivering baskets on Saturday, December 11. For more information, please contact Skylar or Anna Marie.



For Review and Comment before December 14

This Tuition Covenant was approved by the Voters Assembly on October 31, 2021 to take effect January 1, 2022. This is a Draft Proposal for members to review and make comment or ask questions to Pastor at PastorK@StPaulsDec.com or (256) 353-8759 ext 111 before the final wording is adopted by Vestry on December 14.

St. Paul's Preschool Tuition Covenant

"The LORD bless you and keep you" (Numbers 6:24)

Bless us with your participation at St. Paul's; we want to bless you!

General Covenant Agreement

Member (or joining) Preschool Families that attend Sunday School twice a month and Worship Services twice a month will be given a 25% percent discount on tuition at St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool. Member (or joining) Preschool Families will also receive priority enrollment.

Covenant Specifics

Please tell the Preschool office about your interest in participating in the tuition covenant.

Please speak with Pastor if interested in becoming a member of St. Paul's. Ten new member classes are required to join.

Please always sign attendance pads each week to record attendance in both Worship and Sunday School.

> As a congregation we are blessed in blessing you! Bless us by being part of our church family!



Current Loan Balance: \$258,236

Financial Plan Activity thru October 31, 2021 Goal YTD: \$410,000

YTD FirstFruits Giving: \$ 382,523 YTD Total Expenses:

387,920 5.397 *130*

PPP funds applied Plan Activity thru 3Q21

Thanks to all for faithful giving in-person, by mail, and online.

Online Giving is greatly encouraged!

Currently, 35% of our Givers give safely online; to join them, go to the website, download the app, or contact the Church Office for a paper app!

2021 Giving by Month Giving Goal: \$41,400 10-Month Average: \$38,640 \$37,874 \$33,110

Secure Giving on the website www.StPaulsDec.com



Serving the Lord in Worship this Month at St. Paul's						
		December 5	December 12	December 19	December 26 10:00am	
Elders	8:15am	Bob Sullivant	Craig Baker	John Mann	Jeff Pittman, James Gilchrist	
Ushers	8:15am	Rick Daniel Jack Blaske Tim Nave Kody Asher	Ron Neuendorf Joseph Woodbury Mike Ater Jeff Morgan	Graham Peebles James Thrasher Michael Kimmett Matthew Kimmett	Jim Disher Ken Hamilton Bob Seibert Mike Widmar	
Acolytes	8:15am	Grace and Katelyn	Matthew	Owen	Emma	
A/V Techs	8:15am	Rich Maschke	Bob Sullivant	Rich Maschke	Bob Sullivant	
Readers	8:15am	open	Rhonda Reece	Nancy Neuendorf	open	
Sanctuary F	lowers	Peebles	Don Olson	open Linda Hyde		
Altar Guild f	Altar Guild for Dec Sue Sullivant, Carol Henderson Counters for Dec Carol Morgan, Sue Bosco Thanks to all for serving with gladness!			all for serving with gladness!		
Elders	10:45am	Mike Widmar	Dave Burrell	Mike Ringers		
Host Familie	s 10:45am	Atkins family	Ballentine family	Burrell family	Herfurth family	
A/V Techs	10:45am	Tim Herfurth	James Gilchrist	Rick & Carol Morgan		

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

It's that time of year when we celebrate the birth of our savior, Jesus! Don't you enjoy Advent and the anticipation of Christmas? We at St. Paul's have the tradition on Christmas Eve of the 6pm Family Service and the 11pm Candlelight Services. We continue on Christmas morning with a 10am service of Celebration. There are all kinds of things trying to get our attention distracting us from focusing on "the reason for the season". Don't let that happen! Join us for our mid-day Wednesday Advent services on December 1st, 8th, & 15th as well as the Christmas services. If there is any help that you may need during this season, please call your Elder. He can help or get you the help you need.

At the October Voters Assembly meeting Pastor introduced his 2022 St. Paul's Revitalization Plan called "Breath of Life." It is a plan to bring new families to St. Paul's and to bring all of our current members back to onsite worship. It has several parts, including a discount on Preschool tuition for member families, intentional conversations with Preschool and KTT staff and leaders, and intentional marketing efforts emphasizing that Lutheranism is Biblecentered and Christ-focused. Another area the plan is focusing on is our members, encouraging them in their walk with Jesus, particularly our inactive and homebound members. The revitalization plan has the Elders and Pastor encouraging those members through in-home visits. This is where I ask for your help. If you have a heart for outreach or in -reach we can use your help in visiting those members. If this isn't a "gift" that you have but still want to be involved, please pray for the members that will be making the visits and those members being visited. If you want to help, give the Church Office or me (256-606-0379) a call to let us know. We appreciate your help and look forward to hearing from you!

Blessings,

Dave Burrell, Elder

Audio/Visual Help Wanted

Help is needed with running the sound at the 8:15am service. We will train you! Contact Bob Sullivant at 256-301-9026



Paulette Morgan November 12, 2021



Serving at Special Services

Dec 1: 12pm Jeff Pittman
Dec 8: 12pm John Mann
Dec 15: 12pm Craig Baker
Dec 24, 6pm: Dave Burrell
Dec 24, 11pm: Phillip Corlew,
James Gilchrist
Dec 25: 10am Craig Baker



Baptisms

November 10 Leonidas Xavier Cowley

November 13
Miles Dakota Moon & Blakely Adaline Moon

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Your purchase of a poinsettia can recognize a loved one and also help to decorate St. Paul's.

The cost for a poinsettia this year is \$10.00			
Quantity Ordered:			
Name:			
In Memory/or Honor of (Please Circle One)			

Please return to the Church Office mailbox along with payment to St. Paul's Lutheran Church by December 2.

St Paul's Preschool



We welcome Cora, Oliver, and Jasper to St. Paul's Preschool. They have all started school in November.



A huge thank you to everyone who volunteered to make our Preschool program and feast a success!! We had 150+ children, staff, family members, and St. Paul's members enjoy the

program and feast. It is such a blessing to have congregation members take time to help our ministry and spend time with our Preschool families.

Special thanks to: Cindy Todd Dee Livingston April Nave Ron Fritze

Jane Burrell Rhonda Reece Shari Jones Lanny Yocum If I left anyone out please let me know.







2021-2022 Open Registration

If you know someone who is interested in attending Preschool next year, please have them contact the Preschool Office at 256-353-1353.



Chef Curtis Visits St. Paul's Preschool

Thanks to Curtis Parker for taking a day to tell the children about being a chef and to make a special treat with each child. The children loved their time together.









Dates to Remember

December 5: PRESCHOOL SUNDAY in CrossLife

December 16: Christmas Program with cookie reception.

This is a great volunteer opportunity!

Call 256-353-1353 if you would like to be a part of it.

Dec 17- Jan. 3: Extended Care ONLY

December 24: CLOSED for CHRISTMAS

January 4: Preschool classes resume

Nancy Neuendorf, Director (256) 353-1353

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



Afterschool Care

Be U

Believer Educated Unique

Ashley Davis



Be U is a mentoring - centric organization striving to influence positive growth and change, fueled by a desire to combat bullying and empower youth. Be U will interact with KTT Inc 's youth monthly and organize special activities that will occasionally include parents along with their children.



Each month there will be a "Connect" topic.
November's topic was Thankfulness. Pictured below and to the left is Ashley getting acquainted with some of KTT's members. The day included dialogue, games, snacks and cash prizes.



Are you Ready for Some Football?







ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER



Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever.
Psalm 118:1









Meet Eric Luna, KTT Inc's member of the Month. Eric is a sixth grader who attends Austin Middle School. He enjoys playing basketball, horse back riding, soccer and playing video games. He is also a A/B Honor Roll student. His favorite food is enchiladas.

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

