

# St. Paul's Epistle

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

CELEBRATING  
**125**  
YEARS

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

## The Gospel of The Grace of God *Acts 20:24*

Friends in Christ,

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

So what's new? What is new with you (as they say)? Well, if you're reading this January newsletter article as it first comes out at the end of December, you may be thinking of new clothing, accessories, gadgets and gizmos you received at Christmas. You may be thinking of the new credit card statement soon to come out, following Christmas spending. Or, if you are reading this right now in the month of

January, you may be thinking of all the possibilities of 2024. You may be thinking about and reflecting on 2023, considering what you would like to be different in this brand new year. You may be reflecting on the blessings of the last year, or the challenges you faced. You may be thinking of what lies ahead over the next twelve months, praying for God's mercy, blessings, help, healing, strength, wisdom, and guidance.

At whatever point you are reading this, you surely are aware that there are a lot of new things ahead of us in 2024. And to start with, at St. Paul's we have a new verse and theme for the year. In Acts 20:24, St. Paul's writes, *"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."* This will be our theme verse for the year. And yes, I indeed found it while doing a search of 20:24 verses. It fits, I thought that the reference would be easy to remember! So our theme for the year then will be, "Spreading the Gospel of God's grace."

What's not going to be new for 2024 is that, at St. Paul's, we will continue to celebrate 125 years of God's grace in this congregation. Following the big celebration on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, leadership desires to sustain the emphasis on God's blessings, rejoicing in the Lord's goodness and faithfulness at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Decatur. So expect to see and hear more about this.

What *is* new is God's grace and mercy in our lives. Yes, as those Baptized in Christ, who trust in our Savior, His grace has been there all along. But we also read in Lamentations chapter 3, *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."*

Our theme for 2024, "Spreading the Gospel of God's Grace" means that we, as a congregation, a body of believers, are to be about sharing the message of the grace of God in Christ. In fact, we are to be all about, actually in the business of, spreading, sharing, telling (and yes, even reminding) those around us about the good news of God's grace in Jesus.

We tell people: There is a God! And, amazingly, He loves us! While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). God demonstrated His great love, His mercy, His faithfulness, by sending His Son to die for our sins. Therefore, the Lord does not hold our sins against us, but as we look in faith to Jesus, His mercy is new every day.

In view of God's favor now, and as those who incredibly have new life for eternity, we are not to consider our own earthly lives as precious, but we are to view the everlasting life we have in Christ as what it truly is. Priceless treasure! And we are called to *"testify to the gospel of the grace of God."* So may God bless us as together we press forward in this *"ministry [we] received from our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Acts 20:24).

In the grace of God,

*Pastor Aaron Kretschmar*

## January 2024

**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 7 & 21

**Staffed Nursery 8am until noon**

### Bible Study

**Adult Bible Study**  
**Book of Romans**  
Sundays 9:30am

**Pastor's Bible Study** 9:45am

### Bible Study

Wednesdays 10:30

**Book of Exodus Bible Study**  
Wednesdays 6:15pm

### Looking Ahead

**Epiphany**  
January 6

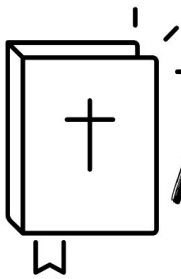
**Installation of Officers**  
January 7

**FaithLinks dinners begin**  
January 10

**Stewardship Sunday**  
January 28

**Theme for 2024:**  
**"Spreading the Gospel  
of God's Grace"**

Verse for 2024: *"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."* (Acts 20:24)



# Notes from Miss Skylar



St. Paul's Family,

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! - 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV*

It's 2024! 2023 passed by way too quickly. Just last month we had our annual Children's Christmas Program, Stellar Christmas, which allowed our children to tell the Christmas Story through the Bible Points they learned in June at Stellar VBS! We had a total of 32 children participate this year and they did such a wonderful 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 the word, or keep us in the Word, daily we will continue to have our Bible Reading Challenge. We kick off 2024 with verses focusing on how we are a New Creation in Christ which is so fitting for a new year! I hope you can join us on 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!

SOUTHERN DISTRICT  
JUNIOR HIGH  
2024 GATHERING

Teach  
Us to  
Pray

JANUARY 12-14, 2024

**Enduring Faith**

January Sunday School Lessons

- 1/7 - An Angel Announces: Jesus' Birth Foretold
- 1/14 - Silence Before a Son: John is Born
- 1/21 - The Temple Testimonies: Jesus' Birth & Presentation
- 1/28 - His Father's House: Boy Jesus in the Temple

**Bible Reading Challenge**

January - New Creation in Christ

Join our 2024 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: 2 Corinthians 5:17	Day 17: Isaiah 65:17-25
Day 2: Galatians 2:20	Day 18: Isaiah 64:8
Day 3: Isaiah 43:18-19	Day 19: Ephesians 4:24
Day 4: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21	Day 20: Romans 8:1
Day 5: Colossians 3:9-10	Day 21: Colossians 3:1
Day 6: Ephesians 2:10	Day 22: Colossians 2:12
Day 7: 2 Peter 1:4	Day 23: Colossians 2:13
Day 8: Ezekiel 11:19-20	Day 24: Colossians 3:2
Day 9: Ephesians 4:22-24	Day 25: Romans 6:1-23
Day 10: 2 Corinthians 3:18	Day 26: Philippians 2:5
Day 11: Titus 3:5	Day 27: Romans 12:1-2
Day 12: Galatians 6:15	Day 28: 1 Peter 1:23
Day 13: 1 Peter 3:18-22	Day 29: Colossians 2:6
Day 14: Romans 6:3-4	Day 30: 2 Corinthians 5:21
Day 15: Isaiah 65:17	Day 31: John 3:3
Day 16: Ezekiel 36:25-27	

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.

**THE ANCHOR**

St. Paul's Young Adults

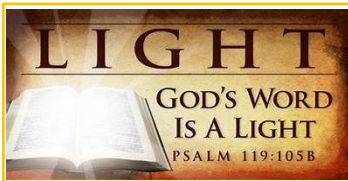
Saturday, January 27th | 6:30pm

To receive information and reminders  
text "@yaanchor" to 81010

**FAITHLINKS**

FAITHLINK ACTIVITIES HAPPENING EVERY WEDNESDAY:

- DINNER - 5:30PM - FELLOWSHIP ROOM
- CONFIRMATION CLASS - 6:15PM - YAC
- CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES - 6:15PM - ARC/GYM
- YOUTH GROUP - 6:15PM - HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH ROOM
- NURSERY - 6:15PM - RM 101
- BIBLE STUDY - 6:15PM - RM 317



Here are several studies along with our 2023 Bible Reading Challenge on page 2 to help us be in His Word and in His light!

### Wednesday Morning Bible Study

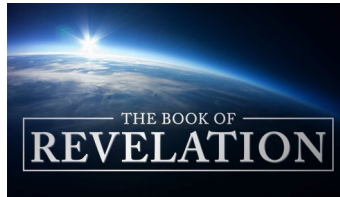
10:30-11:30 am in Room 316

Hope to see you there! If you have any questions, please contact Skylar!



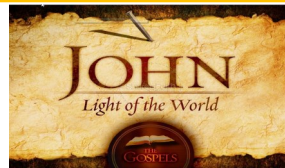
### WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY BEGINS A STUDY OF BOOK OF REVELATION

On Wednesday, January 3, from 6-7 pm, in Room 317 (office wing) we will begin discussing the Book of Revelation. Although seen as being frightening, John's Revelation was written to comfort and assure Christians that, while the world is horrible and cruel (especially to Christians) indeed, believers triumph at the end of this life by living forever in the beauty and peace and joy of heaven. Our class is led by member Mike Widmar and will be using a study prepared by another member, Gary Nagy (Pastor Emeritus), who is also a member of the class.



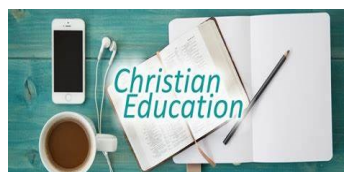
### Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study: God With Us—A Study on the Gospel of John

We all believe in something. We all put our faith in what we trust will sustain us and help us move ahead. For some of us, that might be a relationship or a job. For others, it could be an education, a financial portfolio, or a political platform. But the disciple John, in his Gospel, invites us to put our belief in something much more secure. As he states, "These things [in my Gospel] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). Join us Sunday mornings starting at 9:45 AM in the Fellowship Room as we study the Gospel of John.



### Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study 9:30am in room 317

Join us for an interesting and lively discussion.



**Adult Confirmation Class**  
Wednesdays at 8pm  
In-person and by Zoom  
Talk to Pastor for more info

### LWML Mite Box Collection

Sunday, January 7  
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.



### You're Invited to FAITHLINKS!

Wednesdays Dinner at 5:30pm beginning Jan 10.

Classes start at 6pm



St Paul's Quilters meet in Room 317 each Wednesday at 10am. Join us! For more information contact Pete Alvis.



### 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



Meet us in Room 316 every Thursday at 11am. Bring a friend!



The Flower Calendar for 2024 is up in the breezeway. Sign up early for your special day!

# January 2024

† denotes Holy Communion celebrated during Worship Church Nursery 8:00am - Noon on Sundays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
31 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live 9:30am No Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship	1 campus closed	2 office closed 7:00am PS Ext Care (Tu-F) 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class	3 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Bible study 6:00pm Handbells 6:15pm Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:15pm Praise Band 8:00pm Adult Confirmation	4 8:45am Preschool (Th-only) 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (Th-Fri only)	5	6
7 <b>Epiphany Sunday</b> Installation of church officers - both services 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live† 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship† 5:00pm HS Youth Night	8 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)	9 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 9:30am Staff meeting 3:45pm Confirmation 6:00pm Education meeting 7:00pm Vestry meeting	10 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 5:30pm FaithLinks dinner 6:00pm Bible study 6:00pm Handbells 6:15pm Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:15pm Praise Band 8:00pm Adult Confirmation	11 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	12 Fri-Sun Southern District Middle School Youth Retreat	13 2:00pm KTT "Be U" event
14 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship	15 <b>Newsletter deadline</b> 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (Tu-F)	16 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 9:30am Staff meeting 3:45pm Confirmation 6:00pm Preschool Board meeting 7:30pm Fellowship board meeting	17 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 5:30pm FaithLinks dinner 6:00pm Bible study 6:00pm Handbells 6:15pm Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:15pm Praise Band 8:00pm Adult Confirmation	18 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	19	20
21 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live† 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship† 5:00pm HS Youth Night	22 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (M-F)	23 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 9:30am Staff meeting 3:45pm Confirmation 6:30pm Elders meeting	24 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 5:30pm FaithLinks dinner 6:00pm Bible study 6:00pm Handbells 6:15pm Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:15pm Praise Band 8:00pm Adult Confirmation	25 PS Dads and Donuts 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	26	27 6:30pm Young Adult Event
28 <b>Stewardship Sunday</b> 8:15am Traditional Worship & Facebook Live 9:30am Sunday School 10:00am Radio 98.5FM Worship 10:45am CrossLife Worship	29 7:00am PS Ext Care (M-F) 8:45am Preschool (M-Th) 2:30pm KTT Afterschool (M-F)	30 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 9:30am Staff meeting 3:45pm Confirmation	31 10:00am Quilters 10:30am Bible Study 4:00pm KTT Chapel 5:30pm FaithLinks dinner 6:00pm Bible study 6:00pm Handbells 6:15pm Confirmation 7:00pm Choir 7:15pm Praise Band 8:00pm Adult Confirmation	1 8:30 9:30 & 11am Exercise Class 10:30am PS Chapel 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	2	3



Jan 13 Nancy Jones  
Jan 17 Erin Kretzschmar  
Jan 18 Lanny Yocom  
Jan 19 John Smith  
Jan 20 Billie Seagle  
Jan 21 Mary Nelson  
Jan 21 Heather Cevallos  
Jan 22 Trevor Southers  
Jan 23 Nathan Miller  
Jan 24 Nettie Goehler  
Jan 26 John Covington  
Jan 27 Walt Hartley  
Jan 27 Buddy Jones  
Jan 27 Sonja Herfurth  
Jan 27 Ella Jordan-Holmes  
Jan 29 T.J. Parrotta

Jan 29 Mollye Hellebrand  
Jan 30 Bryant Carlson



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

*God's Blessings*

on your

*Special Day!*

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

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

	January 7	January 14	January 21	January 28
<b>Elders</b> 8:15am	Joseph Woodbury	Bill Darwin	Mitchell Whiteside	Mike Johnson
<b>Ushers</b> 8:15am	Graham Peebles James Thrasher Michael Kimmett Matthew Kimmett	Jim Disher Ken Hamilton Mickey Whiteside Mike Widmar	Rick Daniel Jack Blaske Tim Nave Oliver Nave	Mike Ater Bob Seibert Mike Johnson
<b>Acolytes</b> 8:15am	Owen	Katelyn	Emma	Owen
<b>A/V Techs</b> 8:15am	Rich Maschke	Bob Sullivant	Rich Maschke	Bob Sullivant
<b>Readers</b> 8:15am	Jeff Pittman	open	Nancy Neuendorf	Luke Frasher
<b>Sanctuary Flowers</b>	Open	Peebles	Hyde	Neuendorf
Altar Guild for January: Stephanie Holway and Helga Daniel		Counters for January: Becky Ballentine and Rebecca Mitchell		
<b>Elders</b> 10:45am	Gary Nagy	Tim Herfurth	Gary Nagy	Roy Weiland
<b>Host families</b> 10:45am	Ballentine family	Burrell family	Herfurth family	McRae family
<b>A/V Techs</b> 10:45am	Carol and Rick Morgan	James Gilchrist	Tim Herfurth	Mike Ringers



## CHURCH LIBRARY

While St. Paul's Lutheran Decatur is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (of which we are a member) is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

On the desk in the library are books and a newspaper article about the history of the Synod. Come in and check out that history!



## 2023 Year-to-Date Average Attendance

In-church attendees 127  
Facebook sign-ins 13

**Current Loan Balance: \$222,476**

## Financial Plan Activity thru November 30, 2023

YTD FirstFruits Giving: \$ 438,313 **PLAN: \$412,500**  
YTD Total Expenses: - \$ 430,243 **PLAN: \$450,131**  
**Plan Activity thru Nov \$ 8,071**

## THANKS TO ALL for faithful giving

in-person and online. Those giving by mail are GREATLY ENCOURAGED to give online.

**Sending checks in the mail is the least safe way to donate.**

Currently, 35% of our Givers give safely online; to join them,

- go to the [website](#),
- download the Mobile app,
- snap the QR code, or
- contact the Church Office for a paper authorization form.

**Online Giving is greatly encouraged!**



**VANCO**



Secure Giving at [www.StPaulsDec.com](http://www.StPaulsDec.com)



Vanco Mobile app on [Google Play](#) or in the [App Store](#)

## 2024 Board of Elders

Bill Darwin  
Gary Nagy  
Roy Weiland  
Mitchell Whiteside  
Joe Woodbury  
Tim Herfurth  
Mike Johnson  
TBD



December 17  
Pastor Kretzschmar baptized  
Lexi Rae Michelfelder  
Daughter of Sam and Zana Michelfelder



Thank you everyone for the Christmas cards, gifts, warm wishes, and prayers. Your kindness and thoughtfulness means so much. God's blessings to you always in Christ our Savior born in Bethlehem.

In Jesus,

*The Kretzschmars*

Help support fundraising for "The Cross of North Alabama." Go to the website and buy a brick and leave a legacy. These will be placed around the base of the cross. They are available in 4 X 8 for \$150 or 8 X 8 for \$400. The landscaping phase is now in progress. What a blessing it has already been to many. Thanks to all who support this symbol of God's love!!

IN MEMORY  
DONNA G. SMITH  
1950 - 2020

# Installation of Officers 7 January 2024 at both services

## List of Officers for St. Paul's Lutheran Church 2024

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



### UPDATE ON SAFETY AND SECURITY TEAM

The Elders, Ushers, Safety and Security Team, and the 15+ members who volunteered to respond to a medical emergency during church will meet in January 2024 to review our response. We are consulting the Decatur Fire and Police Departments, Our Pre-School and KTT, our Sunday School Staff and our church staff. The date has not yet been chosen.

After that meeting, the Safety and Security Booklet will be presented to the Vestry for final approval. Then members will receive the Booklet and response plans will be discussed after several church services.



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



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



## 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/>



Joy to the world! The Lord is come.  
Let earth receive her King.  
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room  
And heav'n and nature sing  
And heav'n and nature sing  
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

# Children's Christmas Program 2023 "Shine Jesus Light!"







# St Paul's Lutheran Preschool 2023-2024



This Month is all about Winter.

January is sponsored by the number **6** and the color **Blue**.

This month the children will learn about winter and animals. The shape of the month is rectangle and letters Xx, Aa, Mm and Nn. **Our Bible stories and study will be The Wise Men Find Jesus, Boy Jesus Studies in the Temple, Jesus' Baptism and Jesus Heals the Ten Lepers.**

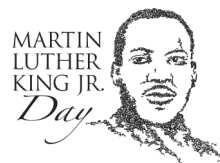


**BIG THANKS** to LaToya and all the teachers for a successful Christmas program.

Also thanks to those who helped set up and serve and to parents for donations.

**Spring semester starts January 4.**

**January 15 No Preschool. Extended care only.**



For more info and pictures of activities, please visit [www.facebook.com/StPaulsDec.Preschool](https://www.facebook.com/StPaulsDec.Preschool)



# Afterschool Care

## December Happenings

Some of December happenings included the Christmas Play, Parent Gift and Wrapping Party and pics with Santa. We ended it with a bang. Some children are not pictured because of absence.



## Merry Christmas

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

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

CELEBRATING

125  
YEARS

October 8, 2023

St. Paul's Exodus: Part II

*And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Ezra 3:11*

The ground breaking ceremony for St. Paul's new location on Carridale Street took place on 13 August 1967. It was the culmination of several years of planning and discussions. Things went smoothly with the construction that followed. In less than a year, the congregation was able to conduct a dedication service for the new church on 19 May 1968. The building cost \$150,000 with an additional \$50,000 to purchase the land, to provide furnishing for the new building, and to pave the parking lot. In total, the process for St. Paul's to commit to moving and building a new church took over six years.

Keep in mind, the new church facility, while larger than the old church on Sherman Street, it was a lot smaller than the current church complex. Still, it was a significant improvement, the new church had offices and rooms that could be used for classes and meetings. The new sanctuary included a choir loft. Dear to the hearts of the members of the congregation, the new church included a bell tower where the beloved bell was moved and mounted safely. Various stories in the *Decatur Daily* indicate that St. Paul's bell had a reputation that made it something of a local celebrity. Justly proud of their new church, the congregation invited the Decatur community to an open house on 24 November 1968.

St. Paul's, along with Decatur, continued to grow. In 1970, the population of Decatur was 38,000. By 1990, the city had grown to almost 49,000. During the late 1980s, the congregation of St. Paul's realized that it needed to expand its facilities if it wanted to provide Christian education for the congregation and the community. In January 1988, the congregation passed a resolution authorizing the creation of an expansion committee to develop a plan for an educational facility.

The building expansion committee consisted of Bill Miller as chair, along with members Gail Pisani, Carol Alldredge, Jim Forthman, Duron Crider, and Esther Wilkening. The plan they formulated called for a new fellowship hall, a new kitchen, new restrooms, a church parlor, ten additional classrooms, church offices, and a covered drive. The voters meeting of the congregation on 16 October 1988 approved the committee's plan. Construction commenced soon after and on 11 June 1989, a dedication service for the new building was held.

St. Paul's growth continued both in terms of numbers of members and in the scope of its mission. The congregation was committed to expand its outreach to the local community educationally, socially, and spiritually. Another building expansion committee was established in 1998. Its chair was Pastor David Lewis. Other members were Rhonda Reece, Bill Miller, Tommy Livingston, Doug Kurz, Pam Meadows, Carol Morgan, and Bill Jordan. The committee's first meeting took place on 5 March 1998. It was immediately decided that a member of the LWML or the Ladies' Auxiliary needed to be added to the committee. In subsequent meetings, the committee decided that a Christian Life Center was what was needed. The Fellowship Hall would be relocated and, four new classrooms would be added along with the library, the lobby area, and a new kitchen. All the new facilities were built according to the specifications required for schools. Pastor Lewis and the congregation wanted to keep open the option of creating a K-6 grade school for the children of the congregation and the community. A gym was included in the expansion which included two locker rooms along with the classrooms currently housing the Preschool and the Sunday school. The parlor would also be remodeled. The gym is now known as the ARC (Activity and Recreation Center).

Over the years much wonderful community outreach by St. Paul's has occurred and continues including the Boys and Girls Club, the KTT, youth recreation, and after school and summer programs. St. Paul's has steadily contributed to the local community and beyond. Its efforts have been a rich blessing for both the receivers and the givers. We current members are the heirs and custodians of that legacy.

*Beth Hornish and Ron Fritze*



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[www.StPaulsDec.com](http://www.StPaulsDec.com)  
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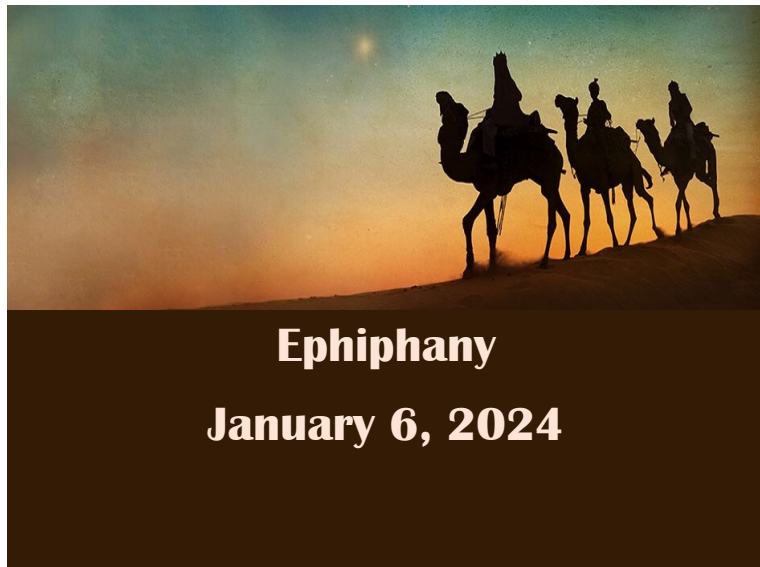
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## Ephiphany

## January 6, 2024