

December, 2015

The Epistle—Monthly Newsletter

St. Paul Lutheran Church

106 Maple Street

Reading, OH 45215-4811



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Eyes Wide Open

Many Christmases ago when my brother and sister and I were young, we went on a special shopping trip with my mother. By the end of the day, the car was filled with presents for family and friends.

On the way home, we stopped at a stoplight under the freeway. There, under the bridge, stood an older man with a sign.

As he approached the car, my mother rolled down the window and reached for her purse.

My siblings and I urged my mom to drive ahead, protesting, “No, mama! Please! You don’t know that man!”

The man paused.

The light turned green.

My mother looked at the man apologetically.

He looked back at her with kind, weathered eyes, and smiled softly. And we drove away.

To this day, my mother remembers the man’s eyes.

I remember what she told us as we drove away: “I do know him. That was Jesus.”

The difference between my mother and us children that afternoon was that she knew for whom to look. She saw our Lord not only in that gentleman, but in the children in our neighborhood, in the cashier at the grocery store, in her coworkers. She expected to meet Jesus often, and her eyes were wide open, always on the lookout to see him.

In this season of Advent, we are not only preparing ourselves for the baby Jesus or imagining ourselves at the manger. Advent means “arrival, approach, coming.” During Advent, the Holy Spirit is preparing us to see Christ coming to us here and now, and opening our eyes to how God’s future is already breaking into our midst so that we may live this season of Advent—and all of our lives—with eyes wide open.

In Christ,

Pastor Emily

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## **Capital Campaign and 2016 Stewardship Pledge Cards**

The realization of our current financial situation provides us with an opportunity to reflect on our giving patterns and to prayerfully consider how God might be calling us to give of our time, talents, and financial resources in order to support the mission which God has entrusted to us. A Capital Campaign is underway to address our current financial issues: special pledges designated to the Capital Campaign will be used to pay our back-taxes and outstanding bills to vendors.

If you have not yet submitted your Stewardship 2016 Commitment Card, there is still time! In response to God's call to this mission and out of thanksgiving for God's faithful provision and the generosity which God has abundantly poured out on us and our congregation, please consider what you/your household can commit for your regular giving in 2016 as well as toward the Capital Campaign. Stewardship Cards and envelopes are located in the narthex. Please place them in the offering plate during worship or mail them to St. Paul in the next few weeks so that we might have all cards submitted before the end of December.

If you were unable to attend the follow-up meeting that was held on November 19th, or if you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Geiger, Treasurer, at [treasurer@stpaulreading.org](mailto:treasurer@stpaulreading.org), or Nancy Erbeck, President, at [nerbeck@gmail.com](mailto:nerbeck@gmail.com). If you would like a copy of the letter that was mailed out to those who were unable to attend the meeting, please notify Pastor Emily or email her at [stpaul-pastor@gmail.com](mailto:stpaul-pastor@gmail.com).

## **Dorcas Circle**



Since we were unable to meet in November, the ladies will meet two times in December—on December 2nd and 16th—from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. We have a good start on quilts for 2016 and hope that the weather cooperates so that we will be able to meet regularly throughout the winter! ~*Elinor Schieman*

## **Operation Christmas Child**

There were a total of 73 Shoe Boxes collected for Operation Christmas Child. Everyone who contributed did a wonderful job! Because of your generosity, somewhere in the world 73 children will get to know JESUS. Thanks everybody!

—Kathy Hirt and the Social Concerns Committee

## **Faith and Film: *God's Not Dead***

On Friday, December 11, beginning at 7:00 pm, all are invited to share in watching the movie, *God's Not Dead*, rated PG. Following the viewing, Nick Pirmann will lead discussion of how this movie connects with our lives and faith.

*Synopsis:* After he refuses to disavow his faith, a devout Christian student (Shane Harper) must prove the existence of God or else his college philosophy professor (Kevin Sorbo) will fail him.



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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION UPCOMING  
EVENTS

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Several due dates are close at hand: December 6 - chicken noodle soup donations, and December 13-Valley Interfaith Family Christmas gifts. The gift tags are available on the giving tree. Please, when you take one of the ornaments, sign the sheet and note which item you have selected. Gifts must be wrapped and the ornament tags must be securely attached to the packages when returned. Thank you for helping.

We're finalizing plans for the December 20th service project during the intergenerational education hour. We would like to deliver cookies and a card with a Christmas bookmark to the members of St. Paul who are currently homebound. Details will follow in a later bulletin. If you are interested in baking some cookies or delivering one of the Christmas greetings, please sign the sheet posted in the narthex.

In January we will be making Valentines for the residents of Mt. View Terrace in Reading. We welcome all who want to participate in this service project the third Sunday of January during the education hour starting at 9:00 am in the Fellowship Hall.

Finally, remember to sign up for the Bible study based on Max Lucado's Before Amen. The sign-up sheet is posted in the narthex.

~Christian Education Committee

**Our 3rd annual Live Nativity Comes To St. Paul!**

The Live Nativity will come to St. Paul Lutheran Church on Saturday, December 12th, from 2:00-4:00 pm! There will be live animals as well as hot chocolate and cookies.



We will tell the Christmas Story and sing carols. Set-up for the event begins at noon if you would like to help before community members arrive. If you or your children are interested in serving as an actor in the nativity (no speaking roles), or if you would like to bake cookies to serve at the event, then please sign up on the sign-up sheet in the narthex.

**Please remember in prayer all the brave young men and women serving in harms way to keep us safe.**

We remember especially:

- Paul Cordes** (grandson of Elinor Schieman)
- Jared Forst** (grandson of Jim and Loretta)
- John Garbrecht** (nephew of Carolyn Koehl)
- Beau Glenn** (son-in-law to Karen Koehl)
- Kylie Hahn** (granddaughter of Don and Gretta)
- Donald Hosea**
- Kyle Murdoch** (friend of Holly Ford)
- Jobeth Ramirez** (friend of Karen Koehl)
- Joey Ramirez** (friend of Karen Koehl)



- Joshua Rodriguez** (friend of Karen Koehl)
- Mack Thompson** (grandson of Freda and Bus

Faulkner)

**Mylan Watkins** (friend of the Ford family)

## December Ministry Schedule

### *Assisting Minister*

6 Nancy Erbeck  
13 Leandra Hawkins  
20 Doug Lohmeier  
24 Terry McDowell  
27 Taylor Beckering

### *Reader*

Kathy Hirt  
Britt Hedges  
Terri DeAngelis  
Joyce McDowell  
Sherry Bronner

### *Acolyte*

Leandra Hawkins  
Grant Lohmeier  
Olivia Lohmeier  
Maggie McDowell  
Cole Isaacs

*Greeters:* Shirley and Ron Harbaugh

### *Altar Guild*

Linen: Shirley Harbaugh  
Set Up: Janet King  
Clean Up: Shirley Harbaugh

*Bulletin Folders:* Penny Huber and Jean Winkle

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*We are appreciative of all the parishioners of St. Paul for Melanie's Memorial Service. I'm afraid if I attempted to name specific individuals, I'd miss some names so I'd like to just say "thanks" to all involved. The service was beautiful and the lunch was great too.*

*Please accept our unconditional donation to St. Paul. If it's possible to help another family as done for the Haydens, that would be wonderful. God bless all.*

*~Steve Hayden and the family of Melanie Hayden*



## REMINDER ABOUT WAYS TO EARN FREE MONEY FOR ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

There are two special programs available which we would like to bring to your attention because they allow us to earn free money for our congregation! They are free to participate in, but in order to start earning the free monetary rewards for St. Paul Lutheran, you must make sure that you are registered for these programs.



### Kroger Plus Card

Kroger will donate up to \$5,000,000 to community organizations where members have registered their Kroger Plus Card. If you register your Kroger Plus Card, every time that you shop at Kroger and swipe your Kroger Plus Card, you will earn Kroger Community Rewards for St. Paul and Kroger will donate money to St. Paul Lutheran Church!

You must be registered to participate! To do so, enter the URL web address below into your browser or follow the link below:

<https://www.kroger.com/topic/kroger-community-rewards-3>

At this website, you will be prompted to create a Plus Card account. Use the number on the back of your Plus Card to register.

You must designate St. Paul Lutheran Church as the community organization that will receive the donation rewards. This is very important to be sure that monies are designated to our church!

Use the information below to ensure that you have completed the correct designation:

Organization Name: St. Paul Lutheran Church (ELCA)

Organization Number: 81585

You can always use your alternate ID to look up your card when you are in a store; the alternate ID is your phone number with your area code.

### Amazon Smile

Like the Kroger Plus Card, you can also earn rewards from AmazonSmile for St. Paul when you shop at smile.amazon.com and designate St. Paul Lutheran Church as the beneficiary organization. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

The church can also earn \$3 for every person whom you refer to the program, up to \$15.



You shop. Amazon gives.

In order to designate St. Paul Lutheran as the charitable organization of your choice, go to <http://smile.amazon.com/gp/charity/refer/l/A1M0SMPD7US4P7>. Use your current username and password to sign in or create an account if you don't already have one. Enter "St. Paul Lutheran Church 106 Maple St" to pull up our congregation. Please note that the system prepopulates "Wyoming" as our mailing address, which is correct according to the postal mapping system.

Please be sure to take advantage of these programs, especially if you frequently shop at Kroger or on Amazon!

Sincerely, Dennis King-Financial Secretary

## Counting Down through Advent: Fill in the Ark!

During Advent this year, the Christian Education Committee is inviting us to join in a giving calendar. *Heifer International* has a four week program called **Fill the Ark**.

*Heifer International* provides dozens of different species of animals to people in need around the world. *Heifer* projects are designed to the soil, water and air, *Heifer* project healthy habitat for both animals and that it helps to “pass on the gift” of bor in need. This chain of life reaches thousands of families, as animals continue to grow and multiply. Like the ark was about hope for Noah and his family, and Advent is a season in which we wait for Christ with hopeful expectation, *Heifer* animals provide hope for families in need by providing food and income.



protect the environment. By improving partners create a more productive, humans. *Heifer* also asks each family their animal’s offspring to another neigh-

Families with children at St. Paul will receive a **Fill in the Ark** Advent calendar and cardboard ark bank. The calendar is divided into four weeks. Each day has a different emphasis and lesson. After reading each day’s emphasis, there is a question to answer to determine how to contribute to the ark bank.

therefore, teach-different animals in *Heifer’s* pro-advent calendar attention to our all of God’s to share with God has first such, it con-



Each day, es us about that are used grams. This also draws our call to care for creatures and others what given to us. As nects our daily

lives with the practices of stewardship and of waiting for Christ to come again.

Families without young children are invited to participate by adding quarters to the collection tower located in the narthex.

Please return filled arks the week after Christmas; St. Paul will send the total to *Heifer International*.

~Christian Education Committee

## Update on the Search for an Administrative Assistant

The Executive Committee has been working diligently to find the ideal candidate for the administrative assistant position here at St. Paul. In addition to defining the administrative assistant's job description and responsibilities, the committee has completed a handbook of policies and procedures for employees in anticipation of the beginning of the new administrative assistant's tenure so that he or she can support this congregation's mission.



A total of 67 individuals applied for the position. We have reviewed all of the resumes and narrowed the list down to six names. We are going to conduct an initial phone interview with each of these individuals in the next two weeks. Qualified individuals who advance past the phone interviews will be scheduled for in-person interviews on December 4th, 8th, and 10th.

We will continue to update the congregation as the process continues. We are hopeful that one of these candidates will be our new administrative assistant!

Should you have any questions regarding this process, please contact one of the Executive Committee members:

Nancy Erbeck: President

Joyce McDowell: Vice President

Diana Hawkins: Secretary

Chris Geiger: Treasurer

Pastor Emily Beckering

~ The Executive Committee



### *Hanging of the Greens Party*

*Sunday, December 6, following worship*

Pizza Luncheon.

If you plan on attending, please sign up on the sign-up sheet in the narthex so that we can order enough pizza for all!

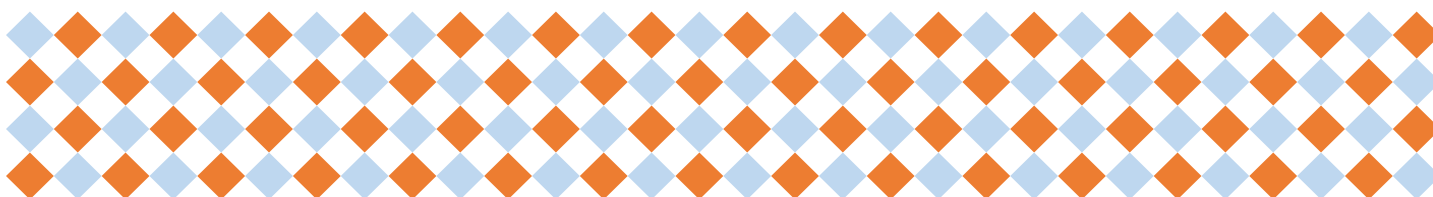


We pray for those near and far with ongoing health concerns who are unable to come to church every week:

**Ann Christiansen, Pat Edwards, Bus Faulkner, Mary Jane Flege, Ken Garber, Pat Hollis, Carol Leonard, Marge Malin, Jack Moorhouse, Jean Nolte, Heather Segar, and Edna Willet.**



**The Giving Tree** is in the narthex, under which we gather items for Valley Interfaith which are needed by local families, but are not available with Food Stamps. The item for the month of December is **bar soap**. Thank you for your generosity.



The new sign-up sheets for Greeters and Readers are now posted on the sign-up board in the narthex for the 2016 year. If you feel called to serve in these capacities, then please be sure to sign up!



### Tender Mercies

St. Paul will be hosting another bingo on Sunday, December 13th, at 2 pm. We can use any and all volunteers who are able to help, and we appreciate all donated items.

If you would like to help with this bingo, please contact me at – [houdinicat@cinci.rr.com](mailto:houdinicat@cinci.rr.com) OR [rose.calhoun@orcinternational.com](mailto:rose.calhoun@orcinternational.com), or by calling 513-236-5385 (cell), 513-251-2417 (home).

Again, thanks for all of your generous donations and help. This would not be possible without your help. You are great! ~ Marie Calhoun

## December Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1 Edna Willet
- 3 Larry Huber
- 7 Jenny Kerlin
- 8 Freda Faulkner  
Nate & Aimee Daley
- 10 Don Hahn
- 13 Amy Flege  
Olivia Lohmeier  
Trent & Jenny Liffick
- 14 Rachel Dean
- 16 Ruth Lohmeier
- 17 Heather Segar
- 18 Robert Portmann, Jr.
- 19 Louise Barry
- 21 Barbara Moorhouse  
Debra Roell
- 23 Chelsea King
- 27 Jean Nolte  
Eric & Susan Bardes
- 30 Jason Hirt
- 31 Rhonda Kreiner



## WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

### Prayer Chain:

Call Penny Huber at (513-931-6420).

Thank you Penny for handling this very important ministry to the congregation. Please take this list home to pray for those listed: We pray for **Berkeley** (great grandson of the Curless'), **Bill and family** (Co-worker of Faith Pirrmann), **Cameron** (great grandson of Rita Edwards), **Jerri Bagley** (friend of Kathy Hirt), **Jimmy Bertheaud** (friend of Portmann's), **Sylvia Choi** (friend of Holly Ford), **Amberly Derby** (friend of Molly McDowell), **Jeremy Doan** (Jean Winkle's grandson), **Jerry Doan** (Jean Winkle's son in law), **David Faulkner** (Bus and Frieda's son), **Larry Faulkner** (Bus and Freda's son), **Pat Ford** (mother of Jeff Ford), **Debbie Heinz** (cousin of the Portmann's), **Dick Hibbeler** (Elinor Schieman's brother), **Clara Hoffman** (Cindy Mayhugh's mother), **Matt Huber**, (Penny Huber's son), **Linda Kohl** (friend of the Seickmann's), **Charlotte Langefeld**, **Doug Myers' Family** (friend of the Portmann's), **David Oaks** (son in law of Bus Faulkner), **Anne Ohr** (cousin of Barb Moorhouse), **Craig Olsen** (friend of Sieckman's), **Barry Prince**, **James Savory** (Jean Winkle's Great Grandson), **Pauline Schauer** (cousin of Cindy Seickmann), **Michael Schmitt** (Jean Winkle's son in law), **Allan Sieckman**, **Kim Sieckman**, **Jason Simpson** (Grand-nephew of Bus and Freda Faulkner), **Speedy Sizemore** (friend of Marie Calhoun), **Dot Smith** (friend of Marilyn Portmann), **Melissa Smith** (friend of Holly Ford), **Scott Songer** (friend of Jean Winkle), **Britney Jean Teems** (Jean Winkle's granddaughter), and **Anna Louise Witker** (Carolyn Koehl's mother).

### Pastoral Emergencies

Please call Pastor Emily at 513-760-5884. Call Penny Huber at 931-6420 for prayer requests.

**THE EPISTLE December, 2015**

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
A Congregation of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**106 Maple Street**

**Reading, Ohio 45215-4811**

**Phone: 513/821-0987**

**stpaulpastor@gmail.com      www.stpaulreading.org**

9:00 a.m. Intergenerational Sunday School (All ages, September-May)

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Reverend Emily Beckering, Pastor  
Barry L. Prince, Director of Music  
Janet King, Sacristan  
Dennis King, Financial Secretary  
David Hill, Drama Director

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|                                   | <b>Church Council</b> | <b>Term</b>      |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>President</b>                  | <b>Nancy Erbeck</b>   | <b>2015-2017</b> |
| <b>V.P. &amp; Education</b>       | <b>Joyce McDowell</b> | <b>2015-2016</b> |
| <b>Secretary &amp; Evangelism</b> | <b>Diana Hawkins</b>  | <b>2015-2017</b> |
| <b>Treasurer &amp; Finance</b>    | <b>Chris Geiger</b>   | <b>2015-2016</b> |
| <b>Stewardship</b>                | <b>Jim Forst</b>      | <b>2015-2017</b> |
| <b>Social Concerns</b>            | <b>Penny Huber</b>    | <b>2015-2017</b> |
| <b>Property</b>                   | <b>Dennis King</b>    | <b>2015-2016</b> |
| <b>Worship</b>                    | <b>Janet King</b>     | <b>2015-2016</b> |