



The Spirit of St. Paul's

www.stpaulslutheran.ca

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

Let's cover the "mitten tree" with useful "decorations"



The annual collection of mittens, toque and scarves has begun. Please help fill all the "branches" and perhaps also put some "under the tree." In early January everything will be taken to the YWCA who will distribute it as needed to various helping agencies in the city.

NEW THIS YEAR: Ladies of St. Paul's LWML who organize the mitten tree are hoping to collect men's

work socks on the tree as well. In the new year they are planning a "Warm Feet for the Street" project involving filling the socks with a variety of items needed by those who are homeless. More details to come but we can begin gathering socks now.



Serving our Saviour – between Sundays



Jim and Heather Lynchuk and Keith Wallace were helping out at Friendship Inn on November 9.

Reminders

- Please remember that, because we have a number of members with allergies to nuts, any foods brought to church events should be nut-free.

- Also, several have allergies to fragrances. Please consider them when choosing toiletries and whether or not to wear perfumes.

- LWMLC mites and offerings are collected the first Sunday of each month.

Caring Ministry Coordinators
for December - Verla Schmirler

Classifieds

Something to sell or give away?
Need something? Services to offer to fellow members? Try The Spirit Classifieds first. No cost. Leave your ads at the church office or give them to the editor.



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Please help us update our *Book of Remembrances*

If you have opened the Book of Remembrances in the narthex, you will have noticed that it was last updated for St. Paul's 90th anniversary. That was some time ago...in 1997.

We are working on an update to display along side the current book and, while we will find much information in church records, it would be very helpful to have input from as many as possible.

We would also like to include information in the book on items given to the congregation that were not memorial gifts and some details on how we have spent estate money received by St. Paul's including who received scholarships from our scholarship fund which is part of the Potratz Estate.

Would each of you please jot down an items you can think of with as much detail as you know and turn it in to the church office or give it to Marion Hollinger who is working on this update?

No doubt there will be duplications between such lists and there will also be gaps in some of the information but it will help us not to miss things as we search through the records.

Right: A gift to St. Paul's from and hand carved by Rev. Mark Dressler.



Looking forward to grand music

The voters have approved the purchase of a Yamaha Grand Piano from St. John's Music in Saskatoon. The piano is being shipped from Vancouver (unassembled) to Saskatoon, where it will be assembled and delivered to St. Paul's mid-December. The existing piano will be moved to the basement where it will be used for many future functions. The congregation looks forward to the wonderful sounds of music that will fill our church.



Stewardship

Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, is teaching those who follow Him that worrying about the necessities of life is idolatry: worshipping a false god. This is because worry and anxiety show what we care about. Our anxiety reveals what we love and to what we're devoted. It reveals what we trust in.

This is why our Lord begins this section with an overarching principle: "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

But you say: "I must eat and drink. I must have clothing to wear and have a home in which to dwell." Yes, all these things you need. And Jesus says that your Father in heaven will ensure that you have them. He demonstrates this with a simple argument.

Your Father in heaven feeds the birds of the air, who neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns. He clothes the lilies of the field, who neither toil nor spin but are arrayed more luxuriously than Solomon in all his glory. If, then, your Father in heaven feeds the birds and clothes the lilies, how will He not also feed and clothe you when you are worth more than they are?

For you know that you are worth more than them. You are worth infinitely more. You are worth the price of the eternal Son of God. Did the Son of God come down from heaven and become a lily? Did he descend and take on the form of a bird? No!

He came down from heaven and became a man: flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. He is one of us, our brother. And what did He do

when He became flesh to dwell among us? He gave His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death, that you might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom forever.

God became man in Christ Jesus. He lived the life we failed to live, and He died the death we deserve because of it. He was raised again on the third day to overcome sin and death ... for us. He was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification. So, if your Father in heaven has given His Son to die for us in order that we might live with Him eternally, how will He

not also give us all things to support this body and life?

To be anxious about the necessities of life, to devote yourself to food and clothing, to care about this and find security in it, is to serve another god. It is to deny that you will live forever because Jesus, the Son of God is risen from the dead, lives and reigns for all eternity. It is to believe that God – who created you, redeemed you by the death and resurrection of His Son, and sanctifies you by His Spirit – will not keep His promises of sustaining you in this life.

Jesus says this: Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness. God's kingdom is His rule among us. His rule among us comes when our Father in heaven gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity. This is what we ask God to do for us in the prayer Jesus taught us.

Your Father in heaven knows what you need – food and clothing, house and home, etc.—and He promises to give

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At our meeting on November 17 the voters present adopted the congregation's budget for 2020. This is the plan for boards and the congregation to set out our mission and programs for the next year with God's blessings and guidance. Based on expected results for 2019 at about a \$5,000 to \$6,000 surplus, the voters approved a budget of \$283,960 which is an increase of almost \$15,000 over our 2019 budget.

Included in our budget is a plan to start putting some money away each year going forward to address some anticipated significant repair and replacement items to our church building, equipment and furnishings.

Another new item in the budget is paying for our share of the LCC synodical convention which is coming up in 2021. Previously we budgeted for our share of the costs of district and synodical conventions, each held every three years. Synod has now adopted a new strategy to help congregations budget for a single synodical convention every four years so the total cost does not have to be paid in a single year when the convention is held. Our assessment for the 2021 convention in this budget is \$3,600.

One of our larger expenditures next year will be our Missions commitment at \$33,000. Unfortunately, we were not able to increase our Missions contribution over 2019 however it still represents about 11.5% of our overall budget.

As the message above states, our Father in Heaven knows what we need – and He promises to give it to us – along with His grace and mercy in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Evangelism/Public Relations

Predestination and the eternal providence of our God

As part of my daily devotions from the book *Treasury of Daily Prayer* I came across this writing from *Christian Visitation Articles 1592, Article IV*. Even though predestination has been explained to me in various Bible studies, for some reason I still found it a difficult word to grasp in the light that God want's all people to be saved. Reading this Article gave me a renewed understanding on the subject of predestination and I thought it worthwhile sharing.

Christian Visitation Articles 1592, Article IV

[Here is the] pure and true doctrine of our churches concerning [predestination and the eternal providence of God]:

- I. Christ has died for all people and, as the Lamb of God, has borne the sins of the whole world.
- II. God created no one for condemnation but wants all people to be saved, and to come to the knowledge

of the truth. Therefore He commands all to hear His Son Christ in the Gospel. By the Gospel He promises the power and working of the Holy Spirit for conversion and salvation.

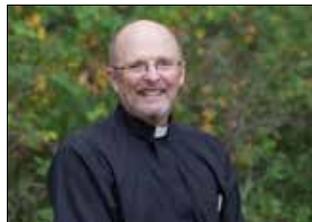
- III. Many people are condemned by their own guilt who are either unwilling to hear the Gospel of Christ or later fall from grace. This happens either by error against the foundation of grace or sins against conscience.
- IV. All sinners who repent are received into grace, and no one is excluded, even though his sins were as scarlet. For God's mercy is much greater than the sins of all the world, and God has compassion on all His works.

*Christmas blessings to all
from Clara Zirk & the Board of Evangelism
Dianne Gilbert, Steven Loewen,
Lisa Bracewell & Sherry Gore*

PRAY FOR A FUIURE PASTOR



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Ken Stadnick
Fourth Year Student

Thank you for your prayers and financial support of Concordia Lutheran Seminary in its mission to *form servants for Jesus' sake*.

Stewardship, continued

it to you. Chief of the things you need is His grace and mercy in His Son, Jesus Christ. So, seek after that. Those who seek will find. And all the necessities of life, our Lord says, will be added to you.

*Blessings this Christmas season as we celebrate the
birth of our Lord.
Board of Stewardship*



Catch the new podcast*

– Speaking of JESUS

Lutheran Hour speaker Dr. Michael Zeigler and Jessica Bordeleau invite you to join them in having real conversations with real people about life, Jesus, and what He means to them.

The weekly dialogue centred around Christ and His relevance is a dialogue between a variety of Christians from different walks of life, different stages of life, and different family backgrounds.

Less than one in ten people have a conversation about God, faith, and spirituality once a month, and 70% of self-identified Christians are reluctant to have a spiritual conversation with anyone—even other Christians. Lutheran Hour Ministries aims to inspire you to have more spiritual discussion in your home, digitally, and all throughout your community. This is an opportunity to get more and more individuals to speak of Jesus, so that they may come to know Him personally.

*Podcasts are an easy way to listen to your favourite Lutheran Hour Ministries programs and resources when it's most convenient for you. Podcasts are audio files you can download automatically, free of charge, to your computer or portable devices.



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If you meet someone today who is too weary to give you a smile, leave them one of yours. Be an encourager for someone today.

Lord help me discern which hard knocks of my life are really opportunities.

Alma Kern

As your newsletter editor I have been trying to incorporate items about or by someone in the congregation that helps us learn more about them than we do as we chat on Sunday mornings or at other events. Some people have an interesting hobby. Others have had experiences many of us haven't. Rhonda Billard likes to travel and shares some of her experiences in this issue. If you have suggestions for future issues of *The Spirit*, please let me know. Marion

I LOVE TO TRAVEL

Ever since I was a kid, I have wanted to be able to travel. Such is the power of television that when I was a teenager, I believed that I could and would travel to California in a VW microbus or an old converted school bus to be able to fulfill my longing to go somewhere. Anywhere other than dreary old Saskatoon.

I travelled a bit in my late teens and early twenties and discovered that I wasn't as adventurous as I had hoped. For many years I was somewhat reluctant to travel to non-English-speaking countries, intimidated by the idea that I would not be able to communicate. I have little talent for learning languages unfortunately. But it only took a trip to southern Spain with my family and my sister Sherry [Gore] a few years ago to overcome that fear.

Southern Spain was having an extraordinary weather event while we were there. It hadn't rained in many months and people were praying for rain. Well, from the day we arrived and for the next several days they had near record amounts of rainfall. It was amazing and the residents were amazed. The dry riverbeds filled with water and overflowed banks, it became dangerous to walk along the very steep roadways, roads washed out and there were small landslides in the hills. It was what everyone in town was talking about. Not very many people in rural Spain speak much English, so while we realized the rain was a godsend, we couldn't understand any of the comments people were making.

The other extraordinary event that occurred was that our luggage did not accompany us to Spain. Some of it went to Brussels and arrived back in Saskatoon about one month later; some of it arrived the second last day of our vacation. Most of us only had our carry-on bags, which if packed properly could get a person through a couple of days, but we were travelling with teenagers who were notorious for not listening to their mother's advice. This was stressful. It meant shopping for a change of clothes for almost all of us and doing

laundry more frequently. Washing machines in Spain are relatively easy to use but the Spanish rely on their normally warm sunny weather to dry their laundry. It was raining for us. The house we rented had a portable propane heater, which we were forced to rely on to not only keep us warm but to also to dry our clothes.

Because we had rented a house, we had to acquire some groceries to keep the troops fed. This required visiting the local shops to gather what we thought we might need and a trip into the nearby city to find a grocery store and a mall to purchase clothes. It forced all of us to be more observant as we tried to figure out how transactions were accomplished and, after a couple of days it wasn't so intimidating.

We had been in the town, Almarchar, for a few days and were the only foreigners in town. I'm sure everyone had noticed us, and I suspect many were curious.

There is local church, which was built in the 17th century with big wooden doors and a rather dark interior. Sherry and I decided to attend the Christmas morning service. As we were sitting through the Spanish and Latin both of us realized we knew where we were in the service. I was frantically imagining the hymnal trying to remember all the words to the creed. (I can tell you one thing—our hymns are more musical.) People were very polite but I'm certain we looked somewhat out of place. But there was also an 'aha' moment for a few of the residents as it occurred to them that Sherry and I are sisters.

After that, it seemed to me, people were just a little bit friendlier. They would approach us and chat away, even though I think they realized we couldn't understand them. But gestures and smiles can communicate more than one realizes sometimes. The last evening we were there was New Year's Eve. There was a party in the square in front of the church. There was food to purchase and a stage with a DJ supplying music; people danced. Everyone was encouraged to buy a glass of wine to toast the new year and a second glass with a skewer holding 12 grapes. The tradition is that the grapes represent the 12 months of the year. As the clock strikes midnight, and in this case, it was the bells of the church that rang out the time, one is to eat a grape at each dong of the bell. You are supposed to eat your grapes as the bell strikes so that you will have good luck for the rest of the new year. And then you toast with your wine. (The grapes grown around Almarchar are muskatel grapes that make a sweet wine.)

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Love to travel, continued

People shake hands and give big hugs. Sherry and I were inundated with hugs from the women in the village who had noticed us at church and were our neighbours. It was a wonderful experience and a great way to end what had been a somewhat trying vacation. But I was no longer intimidated by language barriers; they are not impediments to travel any longer. We manage, sometimes better than at other times but, for the most part, fairly successfully.

I am fortunate that I can travel and enjoy doing it. I look forward to all the various locations and somewhat

enjoy playing tour guide. I have also lived elsewhere a couple of times in my adult life.

We chose to live in Saskatoon years ago when our children were small because my family were all here. I love coming home. I'm proud to be from Saskatoon; it doesn't seem dreary anymore. It's been a wonderful place to raise my children and I am very thankful that I am close to my extended family. But I will always love to travel and hope to do so for as long as I am able, even hauling Sherry along occasionally.

*Written while on the road,
Rhonda Billard*

Pastor's Corner

December first is the beginning of the season of Advent. The word "Advent" is from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming." During Advent we prepare for, and focus on, the coming of Christ at Christmas, the coming of Christ in the Word and Sacraments today, and the second coming of Christ when He will return to judge the living and the dead. So, we focus on the past, the present, and the future.

During Advent we focus on the *past* by celebrating the moment in history when God fulfilled His promise of sending us a Saviour. In Jesus, God took on our flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. This is what we celebrate each year on December 25. Some people use Advent calendars to help them prepare and anticipate Christmas. As a kid I enjoyed the calendars that had a little door to open each day with a chocolate hiding behind. With each tasty chocolate treat I knew Christmas was one day closer. Each door announced exactly how much longer until the big day arrived.

During Advent we focus on the *present* by remembering that Jesus continues to come to us today through His precious Word and Sacraments. We remember that the salvation Jesus won for the world through His life, death, and resurrection is given to us as we hear God's Word, receive forgiveness and life through the washing waters

of our Baptism, and receive His life-giving and faith-strengthening true body and blood through the Sacrament of the Altar. God has given us these concrete "means of grace" to give us His gift of salvation and to assure us that He continues to come to us today and is present in our lives now.

During Advent we focus on the *future* of Jesus coming on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead. This is different than our focusing on the past and present because we don't know when our Lord will return. God has not revealed to us the exact day or hour of His return, but warns us to be prepared and encourages us to walk in the light of the Lord in these latter days. He assures us that love, peace, light, and life are coming with Him on the Last Day.

God came to us by becoming one of us in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. He lived a sinless life and offered it on the cross to win for us forgiveness. He rose victoriously over death on Easter and gives us the gift of everlasting life. He gives us that victory and salvation by coming to us today in His Word and Sacraments. He will come again to usher in the new heavens and new earth and our salvation will be fulfilled.

God's blessings this Advent and Christmas season as we remember and celebrate that He has come, He continues to come, and He will come.

Pastor Keith

