

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH – STILLWATER, MN

THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 2026

Annual Meeting and Chili Feed!

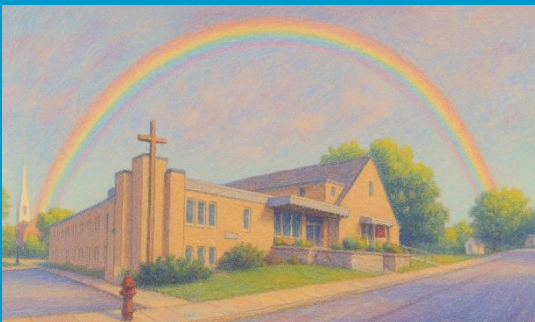
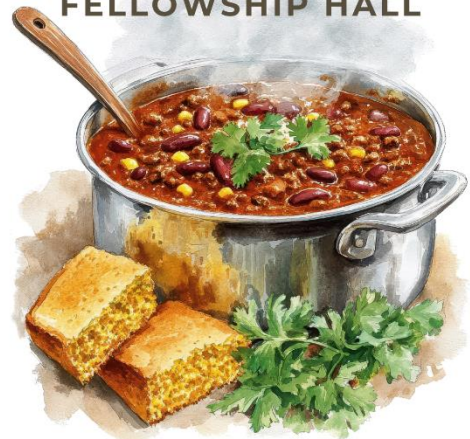
ST. PAUL
LUTHERAN
OF STILLWATER, MN
ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026
10:00 AM | AFTER WORSHIP



AFTER THE ANNUAL MEETING!

Chili FEED

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST
FELLOWSHIP HALL



Sharing God's Love for Over 150 Years!

St. Paul Lutheran Church

609 South 5th Street

Stillwater, MN 55082

Phone: 651-439-5970

Website: www.stpaulc.org

Facebook: facebook.com/stpaulstillwater

Message from Pastor Nathan

Ash Wednesday arrives early this year on February 18. This liturgy comes to us months into the winter season when the world outside appears to be barren and dead. Last summer's growth is long gone, and we have yet to see signs of new growth.

"You are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19) We will speak these words to one another while marking each other's foreheads with the dust of last year's palm branches. Those dead and barren ashes, however, will be mixed with a sweet-scented oil (the same oil we use for baptisms) so that you will leave worship smelling good!

We know that we are creatures of dust from the earliest story of our spiritual ancestors in the Bible, the story of Adam and Eve. The ancients believed that we were not fully alive until we took our first breath. For those of you who have experienced the birth of a child first-hand, you know how magical and miraculous it is when the baby, coming out of the womb looking gray and lifeless, suddenly takes its first breath and cries out. And how in mere seconds that feel like an eternity, the baby turns pink and beautiful and fully alive!

We know from this story in Genesis 2:7 that it is not our own efforts that awaken us to life. It is rather God's breath that awakens us to life. Only when God's breath enters into us are we fully awakened to life. As the story goes, God first forms our lifeless body "from the dust of the ground" and then God breathes into our nostrils "the breath of life." It is in that moment we miraculously become "a living being." Ash Wednesday is about the power of life in the midst of death. "All of us go down to the dust," proclaims one of the canticles in our worship book, "yet even at the grave we make our song." (ELW hymn 223) The great mystery is that our finite and limited lives are held in the infinite and eternal love of God.

We can be upset and chafe at the fact that our days on earth are numbered. But the gift of Ash Wednesday (particularly in the gospel reading)

is a reminder of the freedom of living one day at a time. We have this freedom to live within our limits because we are held in God's eternal and abiding love. Though this love is hidden from our eyes, it is manifested in our heart's deepest desire: to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves.

We recently marked Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. King wrote of this freedom of other-love in the final chapter of his last book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* King writes: "From time immemorial people have lived by the principle that 'self-preservation is the first law of life.' But this is a false assumption. I would say that other-preservation is the first law of life. It is the first law of life precisely because we cannot preserve self without being concerned about preserving other selves. The universe is so structured that things go awry if we are not diligent in our cultivation of the other-regarding dimension. 'I' cannot reach fulfillment with out 'thou.'"

As we prepare for Ash Wednesday and Lent, may God's love and purposes enfold and guide you as together we love one another and the world God has made.

New Adult Forum!

By Heart: Conversations with Martin Luther's Small Catechism Begins March 8th. Luther had a way with words and an eye toward instruction as he wrote the Small Catechism. Many of us had to learn (and memorize!) some of his sayings, but do we actually remember what they mean? Beginning on Sunday, March 8, all are welcome to join Pastor Nathan in the Lounge at 10:30 AM as we learn and talk about Luther's powerful, succinct sayings that are the foundation of our Lutheran faith. This time together is for both long-time members and those newly exploring membership. A richly illustrated book is included! We will meet for three Sundays in March, two in April and two in May. Let us know by February 15th if you'd like to participate. (You can use your Welcome to Worship card or contact the church office directly.)

Children, Youth, and Family

Join us for Toddler Tuesday on Tuesday, February 10th and 24th from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM! It's a fun-filled morning designed just for toddlers, featuring engaging activities, interactive play, and opportunities for little ones to explore and socialize.

Sunday Shine! February 15th!

Join us on the third Sunday in February, following worship, for a fun and welcoming intergenerational activity! This is a great opportunity for all ages to gather, connect, and enjoy time together. There will be something for everyone, and yes, treats will be provided, because fellowship is always better with snacks.



Youth Group!

Youth Group meets on Wednesday, February 18th, from 7:45 PM (or right after service) to 8:30 PM in the Youth Room for students in grades 7th to 12th. Join us after Ash Wednesday worship to hang out, connect, and experience a labyrinth meditation—a meaningful, hands-on way to reflect and pray together.

Snacks. Friends. Big Ideas

All 7th to 12th graders are invited to Wednesday nights during Lent from 7:30 PM to 8:15 PM as we explore The Work of Imagination—faith, creativity, and what God might be calling us to see differently. The dates are February 25th, March 4th (Jenny's Birthday), 11th, 25th, and April 1st.



Bake Potato Bar with all the toppings!

Join us for a spud-tacular Potato Bar before our Ash Wednesday service! Come anytime between 5:30 PM and 6:30 PM on February 18th to enjoy a build-your-own potato dinner (free will offering). While you're here, take time to visit our prayer stations and prepare your heart for worship before the service begins. All are welcome!



Magic Show at SPLC!

Get ready for a morning filled with laughter, amazement, and moments that will make you say, "Wait... how did that happen?!" Join us on Saturday, February 28th, at 10:00 AM at SPLC for an exciting Magic Show that promises fun, surprises, and plenty of smiles. This interactive performance is designed for all ages, making it the perfect event for children, parents, grandparents, and anyone who still believes a little magic makes life more fun. Expect jaw-dropping tricks, lots of audience participation, and giggles echoing through the room. Bring your family, invite a friend, and come enjoy a magical morning together.



Prayer List

Congregants: Ardyce S., Barb D., Nancy T., Dan B., Al M., Ron K., Judith K., Alida P., Pastor Laurel, Steve P., Mark C., and Abri B.

Family and Friends: Soto B., Mein B., Gavin, Kurt S., Amy, William J., Karmen P., Jerry, Dick, Mary A., Troy A., Sophia M., Marv D., The Family of family of David and Carol S., Connor D., John O., Dan J., Mary A., Renae S., Mike S., Ann B., Katie P., Gary R., Jerry S., Sophia F., Sonja H., Kellye, Dave, Lucy, Keith, & Josh, Becky O., Mike, Jenny, Lisa, Kristen B., Mary Jo D., Rick & Jean, Patti & Family, Randy & Laura, Muggs, Carolyn, Paul, Kevin, Kara, Allison J., Evy, Dave, Georgia, Russel B., Bonnie M., Connie, Mary A., Bonnie S., Leo H., Jane S., Laura C., Lisa, Steph D., Brian D., Tyson D., Teegan D., Lexen, Danny, Harry E., Diane L., Jenny O., Lyle J, Jim G., Rick W., Karen W., Carol L., Jeff E., Mike M., and Jeffrey T.

In Loving Memory: Darrel H., Patty Thomsen, James Flynn, Marshall Ray Reams, Jacquilyn Pierre, Dorie Nelson, Lois Haase, Marlene Ritzer, Holly Halvorson, Mark Walker, Richard Markgraf, Sister Eileen Trinity, Judy Becker, Jerry Sharon, Judy (Ek) Anderson, Jeremy Green, and Paul Baker.

Valley Outreach



Important Update: New Appointment Scheduling Software! As of January 5, 2026, appointments are now scheduled through a different platform. Appointments already scheduled in January will not change. What's staying the same: One in person shopping visit per month and food pickups during client service hours with no appointment needed. What you need to do: Create a PantrySoft account. If you have questions or need help, please email info@valleyoutreachmn.org or call them at 651-430-2739.

The Food Shelf provides non-perishable items (canned and boxed foods) in addition to fresh produce, deli items, milk, eggs, margarine, frozen meats and other perishable products as available. Clients are able to "shop" for their food, selecting the items that are most appropriate for their needs. Clients may visit the Food Shelf one time each calendar month. Seniors (65 and older) may visit the Food Shelf two times each calendar month.

Valley Outreach is in need of volunteers to help in the StyleXchange on the store floor and with clothing sorting. If you can help please contact them at the above email address.

QR Code for Giving

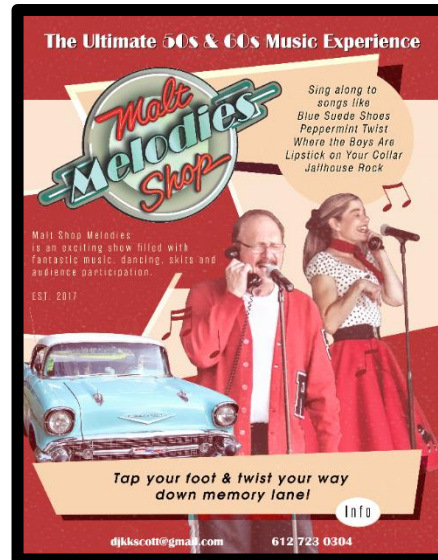
St. Paul Lutheran Church's QR Code for Giving QR codes are everywhere these days, and SPLC



has one too! Our giving QR code makes it simple to support any ministry or project. Once you scan it, just follow these quick steps: Choose your gift amount. Use the dropdown menu to select where you'd like your offering to go. Current Offering, Music Ministry, 4th Street Exterior Repair, and many more funds are available. It's a quick and easy way to give with purpose!

Save the Date! Malt Shop Melodies

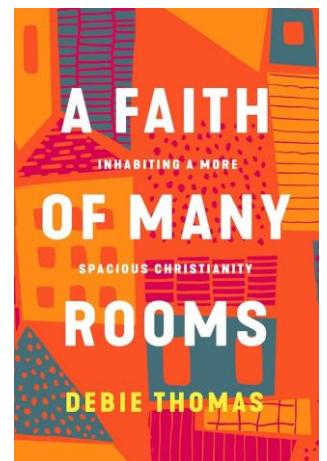
Take a step back in time and get ready for a sweet time of music and memories! Join us for Malt Shop Melodies, a nostalgic event filled with toe-tapping tunes, smiles, and good company on Wednesday, April 29th in Fellowship Hall. Additional Details Forthcoming - Be sure to watch the bulletins and newsletters beginning at the end of February for



more event information. This special event is proudly sponsored by the Senior Committee. Mark your calendars now, it's going to be a real treat!

New Zoom Book Discussion

A Faith of Many Rooms Book Discussion begins March 4th - Many have left the Christian faith because it feels too small, too confining. But what if the faith we inhabit is roomier than we thought? How might we grow in our own faith while also feeling better about encouraging others who desire a roomier faith? Join Pastor Nathan by Zoom on Wednesdays at 5:00 PM by Zoom beginning March 4th as we discuss the book, "A Faith of Many Rooms: Inhabiting a More Spacious Christianity" by Debie Thomas. A sought-after speaker on Scripture and faith, Thomas' recent book has gotten a lot of attention from a wide variety of Christians. Please indicate your interest on your Welcome to Worship card, or contact the church office or Pastor Nathan directly. You can purchase the hard-cover book through the church for \$25 or order on your own from many book retailers. Space is limited; please sign-up by February 15th.



Simpson Housing Services



New Donation and Volunteer Platform. Simpson Housing Services is moving its volunteer and donor databases to Giveffect. This platform will help them better integrate donations, volunteers, events and communication systems in one place, while also streamlining your experience as a valued supporter.

They know that any change can bring questions, or uncertainty, but are committed to learning alongside you and are confident it will be a positive, more user-friendly change!

They also have an individual volunteer sign up video tutorial and a meal group sign up video tutorial for you to watch. There is also a video on the progress of the new shelter. You can watch these videos on their website at simpsonhousing.org, and can sign up to be a volunteer there too. They are also in need of people to bring meals to the new shelter. If you can help, please go to their website for more information.

Open House Update - Nearly 500 people joined the community celebration and open house at Simpson Community Shelter and Apartments on January 10th!

Leadership in the Valley Update

I'm still really enjoying my time with Leadership in the Valley and learning a lot. December's Education Day was my favorite so far! We discussed AI, visited local schools (I went to Lake Elmo Elementary),



heard from a panel of Stillwater High School students, and wrapped up with a session on team leadership. It was a great day!

In January, our theme was Health and Wellness. We learned about being a resilient leader, enjoyed a dance break, and visited a wellness fair featuring local organizations. The afternoon wrapped up with an overview and exclusive tour of Lakeview Hospital and it was very cool! February's theme is Creating Equity in our Community and I'm looking forward to that!

Senior Section

March 55+ Worship

The March service will be on Sunday, March 1st at 11:00 AM. The menu includes: Mandy's Chicken and Dumplings and dessert. Please sign-up in the Gathering Area by Sunday, February 22nd, if you will be staying for the meal. **Remember - Limited Bus service is available for Stillwater and Oak Park Heights. Please contact Bob Michaelis if you are interested in riding the bus.**

Free Afternoon Movie at SPLC!

Join us on Wednesday, February 11th, at 1:00 PM for a free movie, sponsored by the Senior Committee. Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend and enjoy the show! We will be showing "The Trip to Bountiful", starring: Cicely Tyson, Blair Underwood and Keke Palmer. Set in post WWII, Carrie, unable to drive begs her son to take her to visit her childhood home in Bountiful, Texas. When he refuses, Carrie makes an escape to the bus station, where she meets Thelma, a young woman with whom she shares her secrets and memories. As always, there will be popcorn and snacks!

Large Print Bibles

The Senior Committee has two large-print Bibles available for you to borrow. Contact Bob Michaelis at 651-278-0072.

55+ SPLC Senior Members

Foot Care In Your Home

55+ SPLC Senior Members Foot Care: A Foot Care RN will tend to your toenails or other foot-related care in the comfort and privacy of your home. You can also visit an office location in Bayport if you prefer. The cost is \$15 per appointment. Pick up an information packet in the Gathering Area or contact Jenny Powell.


Puzzle Room Reminder!

The Puzzle Room (upper level, across from the restrooms) is stocked with puzzles. Stop by during office hours or on Sunday morning to check it out and take some home to work on. Feel free to share a puzzle with someone who can't get out, and we gladly accept gently used puzzle donations. Sponsored by the Senior Committee, but open to everyone. Come join the fun!

St. Paul Lutheran Church Calendar

As of 1/29/2026

February 2026

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|--|--|--------|---|
| 1 9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Annual Meeting 11:00 AM Chili Feed! | 2 1:00 PM Women's Reading Club | 3 | 4 12:00 PM Staff Meeting | 5 9:00 AM Quilters 3:00 PM Mission Outreach Meeting 7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall | 6 | 7 10:00 AM Yarnsters |
| 8 9:00 AM Service 11:00 AM 55+ Worship | 9 10:00 AM Sr. Committee 5:15 PM CYF Committee Meeting | 10 10:00 AM Toddler Tuesdays! 3:00 PM Memorials & Grants Meeting 5:30 PM Financial Operations Meeting | 11 10:00 AM Worship at Oak Park Sr. Living 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 2:30 PM Zoom Executive Committee Meeting 1:00 PM Movie Matinee 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal | 12 9:00 AM Quilters 4:30 PM Fellowship Meeting 7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall | 13 | 14 |
| 15 9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Sunday Shine | 16 | 17 6:30 PM Church Council Meeting | 18 11:00 AM Worship at Boutwells 11:30 AM Ash Wednesday Service 12:00 PM Lenten Soup Luncheon 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 5:30 PM Baked Potato Bar Dinner 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service 7:45 Youth Group | 19 9:00 AM Quilters 7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall | 20 | 21 |
| 22 9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Coffee & Tea Time | 23 | 24 10:00 AM Toddler Tuesdays! 1:30 PM Sarah Bible Study | 25 11:30 AM Lenten Service 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 2 7:00 PM Holden Evening Prayer 7:30 PM (CYF) Snacks. Friends. Big Ideas! | 26 9:00 AM Quilters 7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall | 27 | 28 10:00 AM Magic Show!  |

St. Paul Lutheran Church - 609 S. 5th Street, Stillwater, MN 55082 (651) 439-5970

Office Hours - Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM - Email: spkc@stpaulc.org - Website: www.stpaulc.org