

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH – STILLWATER, MN

THE MESSENGER

JANUARY 2026

Annual Meeting!

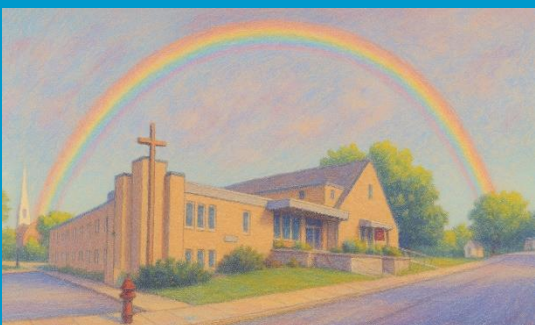
ST. PAUL
LUTHERAN
OF STILLWATER, MN
ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026
10:00 AM | AFTER WORSHIP



Is God Calling You?

The Nominating Committee met on Monday, December 22nd to begin discussing the open positions that will be available at our upcoming Annual Meeting on February 1, 2026. Beginning in 2026 and through 2027, SPLC has the excitement of marking 75 years at our current location of 4th & Walnut!. This will be an exciting time for the Church Council and Committee Chairs and members to be a part of this new project and what God has planned for us. What can you do? Perhaps have an interest in leading from our values and vision? Or maybe you have ideas about taking care of our building and grounds, or events for children, youth and their families? Pray about where you might want to serve. Let someone on the Nominating Committee hear your interests or answer any questions. You might also receive a phone call asking about where your time and talents might lie regarding Church Council, Church Chairs, or Committee Members. Nominating Committee members are Kevin Urhammer, Nancy Peltier, and Marguerite DeFore. Pastor Nathan, and President Shelley Jokinen are also working with and alongside this committee to offer their guidance and help.

Continued on page 3



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

For most Christians throughout time, Christmas has been a 12-day celebration. As I write this, we are a few days away from the 12th Day of Christmas, otherwise known as Epiphany on January 6. Epiphany is the climax of the Christmas story, the day the magi from the east humbly kneel before Jesus. Through their humble adoration, they point to Christ as the source of mercy for all people.

One of the few Epiphany-specific carols we still sing is "As with Gladness Men of Old." (ELW hymn 302). Here is the second stanza:

As with joyful steps they sped,
Savior, to thy lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet
ever seek thy mercy seat.

"One dollar and eighty seven cents." That is how O. Henry's classic story, *The Gift of the Magi*, begins. "One dollar and eighty seven cents. That was all. And sixty of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned. . . Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas."

There are days where it might feel like the treasury of God's mercy is in short supply. As if the Christ child is too humble, hidden and weak to melt the hearts of many. Yet trusting that even a small treasury of mercy can make a big difference is one of the marks of faith.

Della is held by such faith. Her husband too, Jim. Both of them rise up the day before Christmas to face the trials of life together—she with her one dollar and eighty seven cents, he with his job that pays too little. They desperately want to give each other a Christmas gift. But she with just her pocket change and he with a paycheck still days away, they have no idea how they will celebrate Christmas.

For we who have struggled, or intimately known the stories of parents and grandparents who

struggled, we know how much our survival depends upon the generosity of others. It's the professor who opens up his home on Christmas break to a college student who can't afford to travel home. It's the mayor of a small town who buys him a bus ticket home after his motorcycle breaks down. It's the friend who listens sympathetically to the couple struggling to find a house they can afford, with three kids 5 and under and a fourth on the way, and only days to move.

Della loves Jim more than anything else in the world. And Jim loves Della more than anything else in the world. Jim loves Della's long hair, "rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters." And Della loves Jim's decorum and inner pride, manifested by his only prized possession: his grandfather's pocket watch, even though it is barely attached to an old, fraying leather strap.

Eventually Jim finds the perfect gift: a beautiful set of combs that Della has been eyeing for weeks in the shop window, perfect for her hair. Della too finds the perfect gift: a platinum chain fob, simple and elegant, perfect for Jim's pocket watch. But how are they to pay for it? The money to their name is no more than a dry shrub in the desert, their tiny apartment but a parched place in the wilderness. What can they possibly hope for with Christmas only a day away?

Trusting in their small reserve of mercy, Della does the unthinkable: she cuts and sells all her hair, making just enough money buy Jim the platinum chain fob for his watch. Jim too does the unthinkable: he sells his treasured watch, making just enough money to buy Della a beautiful set of combs for her hair.

When they present to each other gifts on Christmas Eve, they see how foolish and useless are their gifts: combs for Della's hair that is now gone and a chain fob for a watch no longer in Jim's pocket. But in that moment, they discover they see how wise they are: They are each other's greatest gift, living in hope through their love and sacrifice for each other.

Friends in Christ, may the hope and humble wisdom of Epiphany inspire you to show mercy as God's people.

Continued: Is God Calling You?

The following positions need to be filled for our upcoming Annual Meeting on February 1, 2026:

- President
(1-year term will be appointed by the Church Council)
- Vice President/President Elect
(2-year term)
- Treasurer/Financial Operations Chair
(2-year term)
- Property & Grounds Chair
(1-year term will be appointed by the Church Council)
- Mission Outreach
(2-year term)
- Fellowship
(2-year term)
- Evangelism & Membership Chair
(2-year term)
- Children, Youth & Family
(1-year term will be appointed by the Church Council)
- Audit Committee
(The Constitution states this committee is made up of 3 people: each serving a different term; terms are 1, 2, or a 3-year term.)
- Nominating Committee:
(Up to 5 members serving up to a 2-year term.)

Offering Counter Training

Financial Operations requests that all counters attend a meeting on either Thursday, January 8th at 1:00 PM or Tuesday January 13th at 1:00 PM.

This training session will discuss procedures, forms used and policy. Updated procedure packets will be given out. This is for all weekly, subs and holiday counters. If you cannot attend, please let the office know and arrangements

will be made. We will meet in the lounge. Thank you for stepping up and for your willingness to take on this important task.



New and Updated Prayer List

Beginning early this year, we will be re-working our prayer list to better reflect immediate concerns while continuing to pray for as many people as possible.

Please take moment

and take a look at our current prayer list and note any names on your Welcome to Worship card that could be removed or that you wish to keep on the list.

We will do our best to keep as many names as possible, however, if a name is inadvertently taken off please let us know.

Thank you for your understanding.



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: Kurt S., Amy, William J., Karmen P., Darrel H., 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., Vince S., Jim G., Margie M., Rick W., Karen W., Carol L., Jeff E., Mike M., and Jeffrey T.

In Loving Memory: 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, Becky Dufresne, Jerry Sharon, Judy (Ek) Anderson, Jeremy Green, and Paul Baker.

Attention – Senior Surprises

During January and February, we take a short pause from delivering our monthly Senior Surprises, as winter weather can be unpredictable (and we prefer happy deliveries over icy adventures!). Our Senior Crafters and Senior Deliverers are already looking forward to creating and delivering surprises again in March.

Can you believe we are heading into our 6th year of this wonderful ministry serving our seniors age 70 and better? If you are over 70 and would like to be part of this ministry, please contact the church office at 651-439-5970, and we'll be happy to add you to our list.



A heartfelt thank you to the amazing folks who plan and create the monthly surprises: Lynn Lomen, Ann Kriesel, Adele Urhammer, Shelley Jokinen, Pam Seekel, Mary Kay Ness, and Marguerite DeFore. And many thanks to our dedicated deliverers who bring these smiles right to your door: Adele Urhammer, Bob Michaelis, Ann Kriesel, Carol Weber, Jenny Powell, Lynn Lomen, and Marguerite DeFore. If you see them, please extend your thanks for their ongoing service. We are grateful for this continued ministry!

Stillwater Winter Parking Rules

From November 1st, through April 1st, all vehicles parked on City streets must be parked on the side of the street that bears addresses that are odd and/or even according to the day. On odd-numbered days, vehicles must be parked on the odd side of the street. On even-numbered days, vehicles must be parked on the even side of the street. When parking on the street, please park accordingly.



Children, Youth, and Family



Join us for Toddler Tuesday on Tuesday, January 13th and 27th 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.

2026 Brainstorming!

Join us on Sunday, January 11th at 11:30 AM in the Youth Room for a conversation about what you would love to see in the year ahead! We'll be talking about ideas for Bible studies, events, youth group gatherings, and possible summer trips—and your input truly matters. This is a great chance to share ideas, dream a little, and help shape what's coming next. All are welcome, so come as you are and bring a friend! Your voice belongs at the table.



Top Golf, Woodbury!

Youth 8th to 12th grade are invited to join us for golf, food, and fellowship on January 19th at Top Golf in Woodbury. The cost will be \$20. The exact time is to be determined. More details to follow! Questions? Ask Jenny or let her know if you are interested! You can reach her at jenny@splc.org or text to 218-770-5754



Sunday Shine! January 18th

Join us on the third Sunday in January, 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.



4th Street Repair & Refresh Project Recap of 2025

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! What an amazing year it has been as SPLC came together to make our 4th Street Repair & Refresh Project a true success! This work was made possible through the dedication, creativity, and generosity of so many volunteers who stepped forward to create events our members genuinely enjoyed and supported, such as the SPLC Clothing Sale, Buy-a-Block, Bake-Off Event, Fill the Wheelbarrow, Waffle Bar, two Culver's Nights, and the Harvest & Holly Market. Each event reflected the heart of our congregation and the joy of working together toward a shared goal.

Through your enthusiastic participation in these events, along with several generous member donations, we were able to fully fund all 2025 expenses for the parking lot, temporary sign, and patio. Even more exciting, we also generated additional funds that will allow us in 2026 to prayerfully explore next steps for the patio space, consider a possible new sign, and look at ways to make the 4th Street face of our church even more inviting, welcoming, and up to date. Be sure to watch for more information as these plans begin to take shape.

The remarkably low cost of the patio and parking lot improvements would not have been possible without the countless hours of donated labor and expertise from John Raleigh and Jeff Thomsen. Their commitment saved the church significant expense and made a tremendous difference. *Thank you, John and Jeff, for your generosity and dedication!*

Members of the 4th Street Repair & Refresh Project Committee have shared how meaningful the sense of camaraderie and togetherness has been throughout this past year. This project has been about more than repairs—it has been about community, collaboration, and living out our faith together. We are truly grateful to each and every one of you who played a role (large or small) in making this year such a success.

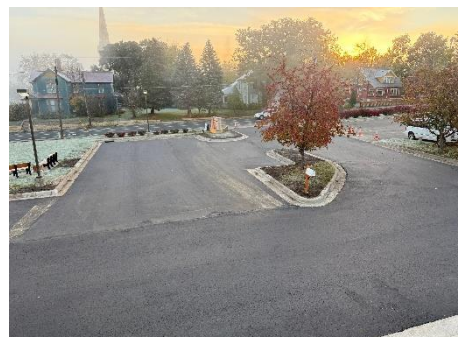
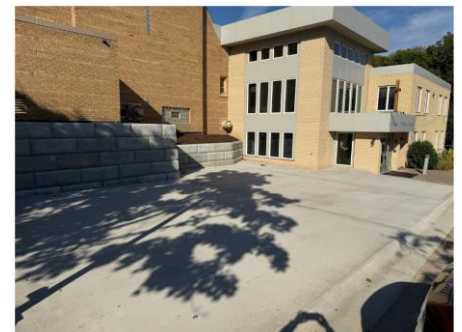
INCOME

Balance in Parking Lot Improvement Fund (2024)	\$25,787.20
2025 Member Giving	\$84,405.25
Member "Buy a Block"	\$8,729.00
SPLC Clothing Sale	\$108.00
Bake-Off Event	\$562.01
Fill the Wheelbarrow	\$220.74
Waffle Bar	\$824.00
Culver's Night - September 30 th	\$435.82
Culver's Night - October 28 th	\$408.16
Harvest & Holly Market Booth Rental & Income	\$3,043.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$124,523.18

EXPENSES

4th Street SPLC Temporary Sign	\$554.79
Block for Wall	\$11,468.00
Trailer Rental for an additional block	\$93.89
Brick & Batten Exterior Design	\$746.25
Concrete patio	\$19,563.00
Holly & Harvest Market	\$417.24
Parking Lot Pavement	\$45,424.64
Misc. Expenses*	\$1,857.69
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$80,125.50

*Such as yellow tape, mulch, grass seed, and supplies.



Puzzle Room Reminder!

Cooler weather makes it the perfect time to enjoy a puzzle! The Puzzle Room (upper level, across from the restrooms) is stocked with puzzles to work on or take home. Stop by during office hours (Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM) to puzzle at one of the tables. Bring a friend and enjoy some conversation and laughs. You're welcome to leave a puzzle in progress and return another day, or take one home to enjoy. 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!

Electronic Giving

Did you know you can also sign up for regular online giving? And that you can still keep your giving number and continue to use your envelopes for other giving opportunities? Simply scan the QR code in your bulletin or go to our website and click on the "Giving" button at the top of our home page. You can use either a credit/debit card or your bank account information. Our electronic giving is easy, secure and administered by Vanco, a reputable partner in empowering churches, schools, and community organizations by securely simplifying their giving, payment and financial management.

Different Journeys, One Faith

Membership: Different Journeys, One Faith. We all have different journeys when it comes to our



relationship and participation in a community of faith. But as Paul says in Ephesians, the Holy Spirit calls us to the hope of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" through which we seek to deepen our love for God, one another, and the world.

Are you seeking baptism for the first time? Or are you looking to affirm your baptism through a process of study, prayer and conversation? Or are you already baptized and

familiar with church life but want to make more connections through conversation with others? These are all different paths toward becoming a member of St. Paul's. Want to learn more? Join Pastor Nathan on Sunday, January 25th at 10:30 AM in the Lounge to explore ways you can become a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

Giving Envelopes

Please pick-up your giving envelopes in the Gathering Area. You will find them on the table across from the Sanctuary entrance in the Gathering Area. Thank you!



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!

Housing Challenges in Stillwater

Connect Center Update: Housing Challenges in Stillwater. Our partner and Executive Director of the Connect Center, Cindy Parsons, is familiar with the challenges of affordable rent in Stillwater. Perhaps you also have knowledge of this important issue? Join us next Sunday, January 11th at 10:30 in the Lounge as Cindy shares what she knows and as we discuss together how we can help address this crisis together.





Your Gifts are Kindness in Action

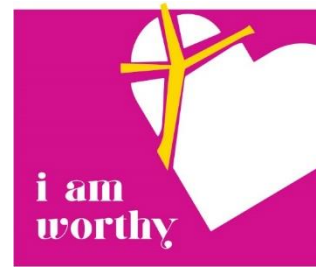
As Valley Outreach looks back on the past year, one thing is abundantly clear: the generosity of donors and volunteers has made an incredible difference.

Because of people like you, Valley Outreach has been able to provide food, clothing, and personalized assistance to more than 31,000 people in the community. That's 31,000 moments of relief, dignity, and hope. Each one made possible through your compassion.

Recently, they have heard growing concerns from community members about increased ICE enforcement activities in the Twin Cities. Moments like this can create real fear for many people. Fear that can keep people from accessing the essential services they need to care for themselves and their families. All are welcome here, and we strive to make it easy to access food because everyone's circumstances are unique.

At Valley Outreach, wants to be absolutely clear: They strive to be a safe, welcoming, and stable place for everyone. No matter what is happening around us, their commitment to inclusivity, dignity, and ease of access is always a priority. No personal information is required to receive food. We collect minimal data, but it is not required for anyone to receive support. Proxy pick-ups are welcome. If someone does not feel comfortable coming in person, they may send a trusted friend or family member to shop on their behalf. Deliveries are available within the Stillwater Area School District for individuals who cannot leave their homes.

Valley Outreach is in need of volunteers to help in StyleXchange on the store floor and with clothing sorting. Please go to their website at valleyoutreachmn.org for more information.



The WELCA Triennial Gathering will be July 16-19, 2026, in Des Moines, Iowa

The Website for more information and to register is: welcatg.org

A few things to know and consider:

- If you are a first-time attendee, there are scholarships available to pay the convention registration fee. Contact Becky Maier: jbmaier@hotmail.com.
- Early registration fee by January 5th is \$475. After that date, the cost is \$525.
- Included in the registration fee is a Friday morning breakfast for first-time attendees.
- Lunch each day is also included.
- Evening meal is on your own.
- The leaders of our Cluster usually plan things out a bit, and the group hangs together when out and about, if you want.

The Cluster will be arranging carpooling for those who wish to carpool and will also help with hotel reservations if you have questions and want a roommate to help with the cost. Hotel reservations and costs are your responsibility. If you have further questions, contact Judy Clausen or Jenny Powell.

The theme for the 2026 Triennial Gathering is "I am Worthy" focusing on Psalm 139:14 - "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." This proclamation reminds us of God's promise to always be with us, even during times of devastation and division. Repeating the phrase "I am worthy" helps us recognize the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives. This practice of self-affirmation creates opportunities for healing and repair within ourselves, the church, society, and the world. When we declare, "I am worthy," we align ourselves with God's promises. There is great power in our resolve.

Simpson Housing Services



You're invited to a Community Celebration for the Opening of Simpson's Community Shelter & Apartments in January 2026, the Simpson Community Shelter & Apartments will bring together shelter, supportive housing, and on-site programs and wellness services in one space built on dignity and connection. Take a self-guided tour, meet the Simpson staff, learn about their programs and explore ways to get involved at Simpson. Light refreshments will be served.

The event will be on Saturday, January 10th, at 2740 1st Ave. S., in Minneapolis. There will be a program and a press conference at 11:00 AM. The Open House and self-guided tour is happening from 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM. Open if you wish to attend, please RSVP on their website at simpsonhousing.org.



COOK & CONNECT

Cook & Connect – A New Meal Provider Program Launches January 12th! Simpson is introducing a fresh, inspiring way to volunteer in the kitchen. This new model was designed with two things in mind: keeping shelter guests at the center and strengthening the community that gathers around every meal. Gather your group (up to six people) for a volunteer experience that truly brings people together and serve a meal at Simpson's shelter. Cook & Connect makes it easy to prepare and serve chef-led meals while building community and offering dignity to shelter guests. Whether you're a workplace team, faith group, or group of friends, you'll enjoy a fun, organized, meaningful way to make a real impact. Sign up, show up, and share connections over a great meal. Your group will have a positive experience and walk away transformed.

Senior Section

February 55+ Worship

The February service will be on Sunday, February 8th at 11:00 AM; **this is the Second Sunday** due to the Annual Meeting on the first Sunday. The menu will be Pork Roast, Green Beans, Rice Pilaf, and Dessert. Please sign-up in the Gathering Area by Sunday, February 1st, 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, January 21st, 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 BLIND SIDE, starring Sandra Bullock, Tim McGraw, and Quinton Aaron. This 2009 movie is a biographical sports drama based on the true story of Michael Oher, a football linesman who overcame an impoverished upbringing to play in the National Football League. 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



St. Paul Lutheran Church Calendar

As of 1/6/2026

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:00 AM Service 11:00 AM 55+ Worship	10:00 AM Sr. Committee 1:00 PM Women's Reading Club 5:30 PM Nominating Committee Meeting	12:00 PM Connect Center Meeting 6:30 PM Worship Zoom Meeting	12:00 PM Staff Meeting 2:30 PM Zoom Executive Committee Meeting	9:00 AM Quilters 1:00 PM Counter's Training 3:00 PM Mission Outreach Meeting 4:30 PM Fellowship Meeting 7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Coffee & Tea Time 10:30 AM Adult Forum 11:30 AM CYF Brainstorming Meeting	5:15 PM CYF Committee Meeting	10:00 AM Toddler Tuesdays! 1:00 PM Counter's Training 3:00 PM Memorials & Grants Meeting 5:30 PM Financial Operations Meeting	10:00 AM Worship at Oak Park Sr. Living 12:00 PM Staff Meeting	9:00 AM Quilters 7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Sunday Shine	Time: TBD - Youth Top Golf Event	Newsletter Deadline 5:30 PM Nominating Committee Meeting 6:30 PM Church Council Meeting	11:00 AM Worship at Boutwells 12:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:00 PM Movie Matinee	9:00 AM Quilters 7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Coffee & Tea Time 10:30 AM Membership Info Meeting/Lounge		10:00 AM Toddler Tuesdays! 1:30 PM Sarah Bible Study	12:00 PM Staff Meeting	9:00 AM Quilters 7:00 PM AA Meeting in Fellowship Hall		

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