

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH – STILLWATER, MN

THE MESSENGER

MAY 2026

Celebrate



PENTECOST SUNDAY

MAY 24, 2026

Wear RED to Worship!

Bring a RED PLANT to be used in our planters by the green space or on the patio!



High School Graduation Quilts!

The quilters will be displaying their handmade quilts along the banisters near the office from Sunday, May 17th, through June 11th. These beautiful quilts have been lovingly created for our high school graduates.

If you have a 2026 high school graduate, you are invited to select a quilt in their honor. A sign-up sheet will be available. Please include the graduate's name, school, and graduation date so we can keep track of each quilt.



Quilts may be picked up at any time during this display period. As you browse, you might even spot fabrics you once donated, now transformed into something truly special. Take a moment to enjoy the creativity and care stitched into each one.

As the saying goes, many hands make light work! The quilters gather every Thursday at 9:00 AM and always welcome extra help. If you're interested in joining this meaningful ministry, they would love to have you!

Sharing God's Love for Over 150 Years!

St. Paul Lutheran Church

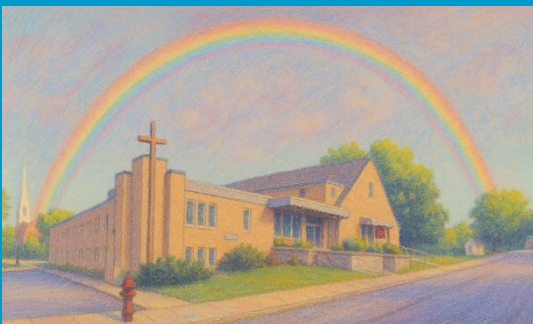
609 South 5th Street

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Facebook: facebook.com/stpaulstillwater



Message from Pastor Nathan

Green Pastures
by Pastor Nathan

"The sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice."
(John 10:4-5 NRSVue)

A few years ago, during the pandemic, I was out for a walk in my neighborhood, minding my own business, when a stranger, looking about four years old, yelled out to me from her yard: "Hello somebody!" It felt great to be greeted so warmly across the social divide. But what struck me the most was not the first word, "Hello!" (although that's pretty special coming from a four-year old to a complete stranger). What struck me the most was the second word, "somebody." *Somebody.* Hello *somebody.* Although I was a stranger, I was not a complete stranger to this four year old. I was recognized as a person. I was worthy of her attention. I was worthy of her greeting. I was somebody.

In the gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Easter this year (also known as "Good Shepherd" Sunday), Jesus likens himself to a shepherd who knows each sheep by name. It is clear that for Jesus, everybody is somebody. This image of a good shepherd recalls the famous story of the lost sheep from Luke 15:4-7). If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and loses just one, the flock is not complete until that last sheep is found. The good shepherd drops everything to search for one lost sheep. Every sheep is somebody.

Back in John 10:4-5, Jesus speaks these words after seeking out one such lost sheep. Previously, Jesus had come upon a man blind from birth. Jesus sees him on the side of the road at the edge of the city. He is probably a beggar and most certainly an outcast. In other words, a nobody. But Jesus, to whom every lost sheep is somebody, greets, listens to, and then heals the blind beggar.

The rest of story, however, is filled with controversy.

Jesus' healing of the blind beggar upsets the leaders of that city. He disrupts their sense of order. Beggars belong on the edge of the city beside of the road as invisible nobodies. They do not belong in the city, thinking they're somebody, testifying to a God who lifts up the lowly and exalts the humble. The healings of Jesus in the gospels almost always have an edge to them. They upset the "somebodies" and affirm the "nobodies." They trouble the privileged and favor the left behind. They cast down the mighty and lift up the lowly.

In a previous time, before farming's push to mechanization and automation and consolidation, rural communities like the ones I served previously were far more self-sufficient, more resilient to crisis, and more bound up in neighborliness and to each other's welfare. Wheat grown in nearby fields would be milled a few miles away in town. Fresh milk would be delivered to local creameries. Households were rich with trades, crafts, recipes, story-telling, memories, front porches, time for one another and neighborliness.

I believe this neighborliness can still exist. As we live into our new Vision and Values statement, I invite you to imagine our church as a green pasture, an outpost of neighborliness and community on a human-to-human, person-to-person scale. I invite you to imagine how our church could be a green pasture in both old and new ways to our community. And I invite you to imagine how it could be a place for the "nobodies" of our community who are somebodies in the grace of the Good Shepherd.

As our council President Shelley Jokinen said so beautifully at our recent congregational meeting, the church is people. Together we are the body of Christ. Our regular practice of nurturing fellowship here and reaching out to our neighbors is our primary mission. Here at St. Paul Lutheran, Jesus your Good Shepherd has given you green pastures in which to abide with one another and from which to feed others. Here the Good Shepherd counts whoever enters the door as *somebody.*

Children, Youth, and Family

Join us for Toddler Tuesday before the summer break on Tuesday, May 12th, 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. **Toddler Tuesdays will resume in the fall.**

Sunday Shine! May 17th! Surprise Topic this Month! Join us on the third Sunday in May, 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. **This summer, we will hold Sunday Shine out on the Patio (if the weather is nice)! Join us on June 21st and July 19th.**



Thank You!! A heartfelt thank you to everyone who volunteered and attended this year's Easter Breakfast in support of the youth service trip to Sioux Falls, South Dakota! Your time, energy, and generosity made the event a wonderful success.

A Special Thank You to Jeff Thomson for his generous donation of eggs for the egg bakes. We truly appreciate your support!

Senior Section

May & June 55+ Worship

The May service will be on Sunday, May 3rd at 11:00 AM. The menu includes Chef Luke's baked ham, cheesy potatoes, green beans, angel food cake with strawberries, and whipped cream. Please sign-up in the Gathering Area by Sunday, April 26th, if you will be staying for the meal. **The June service** will be on Sunday, June 7th at 11:00 AM. The menu includes: Chef Luke's Barbecue Meatballs, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, and Rhubarb dessert. Please sign-up in the Gathering Area by Sunday, May 31st, 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.**

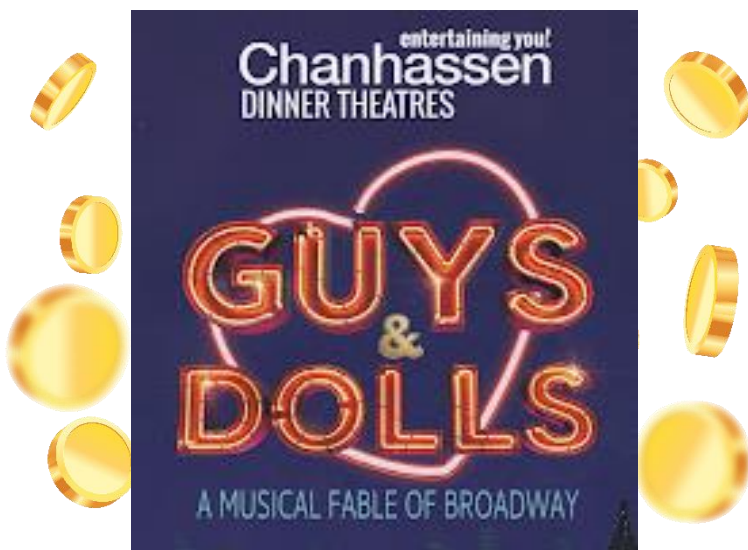
Large Print Bibles

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.

Chanhassen Dinner Theater!



Wednesday, May 13th – Guys and Dolls

Only 20 tickets are available. Cost is \$65 for members age 55+ (and one caregiver) and \$130 for those under 55 and guests. Sign up in the Gathering Area by Sunday, May 3. A waitlist will be available once tickets are filled. The price includes coach bus transportation, lunch, and the show. **The bus departs from the church parking lot at 9:45 AM - Please arrive by 9:30 AM.**

Pay using the provided envelopes, with checks made payable to St. Paul Lutheran (memo: Chanhassen). Submit to the church office or place in the offering plate.



At Valley Outreach (VO), their top priority is to make sure good food goes to people who need it. Their goal is always to put fresh, nourishing food directly into the hands of those in need, and when they aren't able to do that, use the strong sustainability practices in place to handle spoiled or expired food. Last fiscal year, we composted 44,588 pounds and gave 121,729 pounds to our farmer partners to feed their livestock. For comparison, we had 12,798 pounds of trash.

One other important sustainability partnership is their connection with Twin Cities Food Justice (TCFJ). They take food from VO that may otherwise be composted or given to farmers, but is still able to be distributed to food shelf clients. Last fiscal year, TCFJ redistributed 13,550 pounds of food from VO to other food shelves. That's even more pounds than their total trash for the last fiscal year, and their partnership with TCFJ began more than halfway through the fiscal year in June 2025 – just four months!

Twin Cities Food Justice (TCFJ), a Minneapolis-based nonprofit, works to reduce food waste and hunger across the Twin Cities. Since November 2015, TCFJ has grown into a vital link between surplus food sources and those who need it most. At the heart of TCFJ's work is their food rescue program – something VO does and supports, too! Their program involves coordinating weekly food rescues of fresh produce, breads, and other nutrient-rich foods from sources like co-ops, grocery stores, farmers markets, and now VO, that otherwise would go to waste. Volunteers collect, sort, and deliver these items to local hunger relief organizations, free of cost to both donor and recipient. By connecting these dots, TCFJ ensures that high-quality food nourishes families instead of being discarded.

How The Partnership Works

This partnership has already made a big difference. Valley Outreach closes on Wednesdays and weekends, with Wednesdays dedicated to restocking the food shelf. During that time, some perishable items may not last until their next open day. Instead of going to waste, TCFJ steps in to collect that food and deliver it to other hunger relief organizations within Second Harvest Heartland's Network. The process is simple: their team identifies food that may not last until their next open day, and TCFJ volunteers arrive promptly to pick it up. From there, they deliver it directly to community partners who can distribute it quickly on days VO is closed. This means produce that might have spoiled is instead shared with families in need—sometimes just a few hours later.

A Shared Mission

Valley Outreach is grateful for this collaboration and for the shared belief that everyone deserves access to good food. Together, VO and TCFJ are not only fighting hunger but also strengthening the community and caring for the environment. Every rescued meal tells a story: of neighbors looking out for one another, of volunteers, energy, and of organizations coming together to build a healthier, more sustainable future. This is what partnership looks like, and we're proud to be part of it.

Today!

You can be part of this impact. If this partnership inspires you, take action and help move this work forward. That good food reaches the people who need it most. Together, we can keep nourishing our community—one rescued meal at a time.

Have questions, or would like additional information, go to valleyoutreachmn.org.



Vision and Values Statement

The Vision and Values statement below was created over the course of two Church Council retreats held on December 13, 2025, and March 14, 2026. This statement is the culmination of over 40 one-on-one conversations between leaders, members, and friends of the congregation. In addition, Pastor Nathan had conversations with outside community members, and CYF Director Jenny shared her learnings from the Leadership in the Valley program conducted by the Chamber of Commerce. Finally, an online survey for members was open for two weeks in early November, and Pastor Justin Grimm of the Saint Paul Area Synod shared current demographic information for our ZIP code and led our first retreat.

This Vision and Values statement was recommended for adoption by the Church Council on March 17, 2026 and was adopted at a special congregational meeting on Sunday, April 19, 2026.

Our Vision

Love and serve God by walking with, caring for, and learning from our members, friends, and neighbors.

Our Values

Welcome. Generosity. Faithfulness.

Welcome: We affirm everyone's presence, whether they have been here their whole lives or are just getting settled. All of our gatherings and events have a "come as you are" feeling and welcome members, regular attendees, friends, neighbors, and visitors.

Generosity: We are eager to collaborate and partner with other churches and organizations, whether through acts of service or opening up our building to the community. From the "South Hill" of historic Stillwater, we have been caring for our neighbors, community, and God's people both near and far since first welcoming German immigrants over 150 years ago.

Faithfulness: Our Sunday morning gatherings for worship are at the heart of our life together. We open our doors to everyone, especially to those who appreciate inter-generational worship, a meaningful variety of music, solid preaching, and a weekly celebration of the communion meal.

Operation Christmas Child Update Thank You from Mission Outreach

Recently, Cheryl Renne received a heartfelt and handwritten thank-you note from The Western Wisconsin OCC Area Team addressed to SPLC, which we'd love to share with you.

Dear Cheryl and the church family of SPLC,

Because you brought your shoebox gifts to a drop-off location in Western, WI, we wanted to share the impact of your gifts of the Gospel with you.

Your shoebox gifts were part of God's harvest of 12,205,900 million shoeboxes in 2025 that will make their way to 100+ countries and be distributed by our capable ministry partners.

Zambia is one of the countries that received many of the 12,220 shoeboxes sent from our area. Zambia has a population of 19 million people, with 42% of those people under the age of 14 years old – shoebox age!

Another amazing testimony happening through your shoebox gifts is the engagement of UPG's (Unreached People Group) with a Gospel message. Since 2023, over 1,065 UPG's have been engaged with the Gospel through OCC.

You are being the hands of Jesus so that the local church can be the feet and take the Gospel out. What a beautiful picture of being the world church – a beautiful picture from God's view of His people working together to bring Him glory.

Thank you for your global impact for His Kingdom!

The Western Wisconsin Area Team

We pray that during this Lenten Season, you have had time to reflect on the love of our Heavenly Father and the sacrifice which Christ made for our salvation. We hope that you have had time to become better acquainted with other members of St. Paul Lutheran through our noon meal fellowship.

The Mission Outreach Committee would like to extend our thanks to everyone who helped on the setups, brought desserts, serving the food, and the cleanups. Thanks to Jan for picking up our soup at the Lowell Inn, and we couldn't do it without everyone pitching in.

This year, only during Lent, our mission was to support the Washington County Emergency Housing Service in Stillwater. Our committee would like to thank our congregation for your generous donations of food and clothing. Two deliveries were made with these items. With your generous monetary donations after our expenses, we could send them a check for \$853.55. We also got a \$250.00 grant from Thrivent to cover some of our expenses.



Members of our committee toured the Washington County Emergency Housing Service site. It is the new building located near the Washington County Courthouse in Stillwater. If you are interested in making a donation for their residents at this facility, you may deliver them on Wednesdays, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. If you have any further questions, please contact one of the Mission Outreach Committee members. Thank You!



Constitution Update

Now that we have adopted a Vision and Values Statement, the next step in our life together is to take a close look at our church's constitution and propose updates that support our vision and values. The Church Council will appoint a working group and invite anyone who is interested in serving to speak to Pastor Nathan or President Shelley Jokinen. The plan is to create a revised draft over the summer months and early fall, and to invite congregational feedback beginning in October. We are looking for a variety of people, including those with good attention to detail, who are knowledgeable of our history, and who care about aligning it with our vision and values.

Leadership in the Valley Update

I am still enjoying my time with Leadership in the Valley, and my last day will be May 13th, and I graduate on May 14th.

April's topic was Public Safety & Law Day. First, we heard from Judge Juanita C. Freeman (District



Judge, Washington County District Court). It was fun to learn about the Court system from her. We even talked a little about basketball on the way out. Next up was a Public Safety Panel, and we heard from the following: Brian Mueller (Police Chief), Tom Ballis (Fire Chief), Colonel Christina Bogojevic (Chief, MN State Patrol), and Jon Mueller (EMS Director).

Then we got an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of our local county Sheriff's Office and Emergency Response Center. We also got to tour the jail and even eat jail lunch, which was not my favorite part!

Then we heard about the Stillwater National Guard Armory and learned about Crisis Communication. The last part of the day was a guided and hands-on tour of the Stillwater Fire Station. I really enjoyed learning about the fire station, and Rob Peltier was working, and it was fun to see him! It was a great day of learning!

Synod Assembly-May 15th & 16th

This year our congregation is sending three voting members and an additional visitor to this year's assembly: Pam Seekel, Jenny Brelje, Mugs DeFore, and Pastor Laurel. This year's assembly's theme is



GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE
endures forever

Saint Paul Area Synod Assembly
May 15-16, 2026 | St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi

"God's Steadfast Love" and encompasses two days of inspiring worship, stimulating learning, and making decisions about governance, mission, and finances, as well as electing members of Synod Council or other committees. Most exciting, however, is that this year they will also elect our

next bishop! Voting members are not designated "representatives" of a congregation (like elected officials), but they are asked to take seriously the responsibility of voting with their conscience for the well-being of the synod.

75th Anniversary

Did you know that 2027 officially marks 75 years at our current location? We are grateful to the



faithfulness and foresight of previous generations who made sure we would have a presence here on the "South Hill" of Stillwater. Many

great ideas have been shared, and now is the time to get organized! There will no doubt be many individual tasks and one-time events, however, we will need a few individuals to help direct and facilitate a year's worth of events that promise to be meaningful, fun, and future-oriented!

Yarnsters!

The Yarnsters meet Saturday, May 2nd, at 10:00



AM in the Downstairs Conference Room. Knitters, crocheters, and yarn-lovers of all skill levels, especially beginners, are welcome. Come stitch and enjoy the fun! We will be taking a break for the summer, and this will

be our final gathering until the fall.

First Communion

Through God's great mercy and by our Lord's invitation, Olivia Ertle received her First Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 2nd, at the 7:00 PM service. We rejoice together in welcoming her to the Lord's table!



Hello, St. Paul Lutheran!



Michael Benson, SPLC Senior Accountant

Warm greetings to the members and friends of St. Paul Lutheran! I'd like to take a moment to introduce myself and share a little about who I am. I have spent most of my life in the east metro and am a proud graduate of Woodbury High School, Metro State University, and the University of St. Thomas. Over the past 30 years, I have built a career in accounting and finance, most recently serving as Controller at Impact Technology Group.

My wife and I will celebrate our 29th wedding anniversary this summer. She works as a research and development manager at Land O'Lakes. Together, we have two sons—our oldest is an electrician, and our youngest is a senior at the University of Minnesota studying mechanical engineering.

At home, we are kept busy by our two very spoiled dogs and cats. As a family, we enjoy traveling and exploring new places whenever we can. In my free time, I like to read and follow hockey, baseball, and soccer. You'll often find me at the soccer pitch each week, either refereeing or cheering on a game.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and look forward to supporting the work of St. Paul Lutheran.

Holy Baptism



By water and God's promises, Henry Wade and Carson John Urhammer received a new birth through the sacrament of Holy Baptism on Sunday, April 12th. Bringing them to baptism were their parents, Garrett and Jenna Urhammer. It was wonderful for so many of us to welcome them into the body of Christ!



St. Paul Lutheran Church Calendar

As of 4/30/2026

MAY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 10:00 AM Yarnsters
3 9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Coffee & Tea Time 10:15 AM By Heart: Luther's Small Catechism 11:00 AM 55+ Worship	4 10:00 AM Senior Committee 1:00 PM Women's Reading Club 7:30 PM Worship Committee-Zoom	5 12:00 PM Connect Center Meeting	6 1:00 PM In-Person Faith of Many Rooms 5:00 PM Zoom Faith of Many Rooms	7 9:00 AM Quilters 3:00 PM Mission Outreach Meeting 6:00 PM Cox-Cienik Wedding Rehearsal 7:00 PM AA Mtg. in Fellowship Hall	8 3:00 PM Cox-Cienik Wedding	9
10 9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Coffee & Tea Time 10:30 AM By Heart: Luther's Small Catechism	11 5:15 PM CYF Committee Meeting	12 10:00 AM Toddler Tuesdays! 3:00 PM Memorials & Grants Meeting 5:30 PM Financial Operations Meeting	13 10:00 AM 4 th Street Repair & Refresh Meeting 10:00 AM Worship at Oak Park Sr. Living 12:00 PM Staff Meeting	14 9:00 AM Quilters 4:30 PM Fellowship Meeting 7:00 PM AA Mtg. in Fellowship Hall	15 Synod Assembly 16	
17 9:00 AM Service 10:15 AM Sunday Shine	18	19 6:30 PM Church Council	20 11:00 AM Worship at Boutwells Newsletter Deadline	21 9:00 AM Quilters 5:30 PM Sytten de Mai 7:00 PM AA Mtg. in Fellowship Hall	22	23
24 9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Coffee & Tea Time	25 Memorial Day The Office is Closed Today	26 1:30 PM Sarah Bible Study	27	28 9:00 AM Quilters 7:00 PM AA Mtg. in Fellowship Hall	29	30
31 9:00 AM Service 10:00 AM Coffee & Tea Time 10:30 AM Adult Forum - Pastor Nathan's LSM Chaplaincy						

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