

***“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”***

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Rev. Dr. James L. Brauer, a former professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, writes: “Every family is shaped by the holidays it keeps together. Each society is identified in part by its common celebrations. So the church has a calendar that revolves around Jesus Christ. By its observance faith is shaped and nourished.” In the Old Testament, we read how God gave the Children of Israel very specific feasts and celebrations. God’s instructions were more than just “these are things you should do” generalities. Rather, God gave specific instructions on times, dates, and details as to how each feast or celebration was to be observed.

The Old Testament feasts and celebrations – Passover, the Feast of Firstfruits, the Day of Atonement and others – no longer apply to God’s people, and nowhere in the New Testament will we find a set of instructions similar to those given to the Jews. But in the early centuries of the Christian Church, followers of Christ adopted a common set of observances which were eventually formalized into what we now call the Christian Church Year.

As Brauer comments: “For Christians the pivot is obvious: all of life hinges on Jesus Christ.” We begin (this year on Sunday, November 27) with the season of Advent, a time in which we remember the centuries-old longing and expectation of the coming of the Messiah that was foretold by God’s prophets. On December 25 we celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, and in following weeks we recall His early years (the visitation by the Magi, His baptism, His temptation in the wilderness, His transfiguration and the beginning of His ministry).

Next we move to the season of Lent, a penitential time where we prepare for Jesus’ passion and death on the cross. During Holy Week we mark Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem ... the institution of the Lord’s Supper on Maundy Thursday ... His death on the cross on Good Friday ... and finally (and most gloriously), the resurrection of Jesus on Easter morning! Forty days after Easter we celebrate Christ’s ascension into heaven, and ten days later we mark the day of Pentecost, the day when the Christian Church began its spread to all nations and all peoples. Finally we begin the Season after Pentecost, where we focus on the spreading of the Gospel to all nations and the growth of the Christian Church in all of the earth, making eternal life possible for all believers – believers including you and me.

And then ... completing the cycle and beginning it all over again ... we return to the season of Advent.

While the Church marks the beginning of a new liturgical year, we find that many religious celebrations have been preempted by secular holidays that push Jesus to the background or even – more often than not – ignore Him completely. Already our stores and malls are awash in images of Santa and Rudolph and Frosty, but you’ll have to look long and hard to find any images of the Christ Child. By next March we’ll see Peter Cottontail and plenty of chocolate eggs and marshmallow Peeps, but the cross and the resurrection will be largely out of sight and out of mind.

Am I saying that we Christians can’t enjoy the secular aspects of Christmas and Easter? Of course not. But always remember that the Church year exists for a purpose: to repeatedly remind you what God has done for your salvation. No matter what the world may tell us, our calendar *does* – and *always will* – revolve around Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

Pastor Terry O’Brien

# Looking ahead ...

**Gobble for Gabby on November 6!** On Sunday, November 6, St. Paul will once again hold a special fundraising meal for the family of our young friend and fellow St. Paul member Gabby Bingaman. As many of you know, Gabby has suffered from severe breathing/lung problems since the first months of her life, and she has an unfortunate record of frequent hospitalizations. Although Gabby's parents, Tom and Tara, are blessed with excellent health insurance coverage, Gabby's hospitalizations produce substantial extra expenses for meals, travel, lost work, etc. So at the suggestion of the St. Paul Elders and Church Council, St. Paul will again hold this special meal and accept free-will donations to help defray expenses when they occur.

All donations collected will be put into a special account established last year that the Bingamans will access when those extra expenses occur during any of Gabby's future hospitalizations. Although we certainly pray that Gabby will stay healthy and remain out of the hospital, the Council agrees that now is the time to prepare for those expenses if and when they occur. That's why we are asking for the help – and the Christian generosity – of all St. Paul members.



Here are the details:

- *Gobble for Gabby* will feature a full Thanksgiving-type meal: turkey, potatoes and gravy, dressing, cranberry sauce, vegetables, rolls and dessert.
- *Gobble for Gabby* will be held in the Church basement immediately following the Divine Worship Service on Sunday, November 6.
- Many volunteers will be needed to prepare and serve this special meal, and a sign-up sheet has been posted in the Narthex. Volunteers are needed to:
  - \* Roast a turkey (which will be provided by the Church)
  - \* Prepare potatoes, gravy, dressing, vegetables and dessert
  - \* Help set up, serve and clean up following the meal

The Christian Church has a long and storied history of helping members when they are in need, and that history of help and support has faithfully been continued throughout the history of St. Paul Lutheran Church. Please consider how you can help with this special meal and this special fundraiser – and please be sure to join us for what promises to be a fun and memorable event: *Gobble for Gabby*.

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## Be sure to mark your calendars

**Thanksgiving Eve Service** – Nov. 23 (7:00 p.m.)

**Advent Midweek Services** – Nov. 30 and Dec. 7, 14 and 21 (7:00 p.m., followed by fellowship hour)

**Service of Lessons and Carols** – Sunday, Dec. 4 (during the Divine Service, followed by potluck)

**Caroling and Christmas Party**– Sunday, Dec. 11 (4:00 p.m. caroling, followed by party at 6:00 p.m.)

**Children's Christmas Service** – Sunday, Dec. 18

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services** – Saturday, Dec. 24 (services at 7:00 and 11:30 p.m.)

**Christmas Day Service** – Sunday, Dec. 25 (10:15 a.m.)

**New Year's Eve Service** – Saturday, Dec. 31 (7:00 p.m.)



# ***Congratulations***

... to all members of St. Paul Lutheran Church who are celebrating birthdays or wedding anniversaries during the month of November. Please send any additions or corrections to Barb Turner in the Church Office.



## **November Birthdays**

- |    |                     |    |                   |
|----|---------------------|----|-------------------|
| 3  | Joe Marcin          | 16 | Joyce Farr        |
| 4  | Michael Chamberlain | 17 | Crystal Neal      |
| 4  | Adam Cross          | 20 | Rev. Roger Eden   |
| 5  | Audrie Merrifield   | 21 | Tara Bingaman     |
| 7  | Bill Farr           | 21 | Nathan Schloz     |
| 10 | Danielle Lees-Lyons | 22 | Robert Merrifield |
| 11 | Randy Ashcraft      | 23 | Jack Clark        |
| 13 | Margaret Rowley     | 28 | Debbie Amling     |
| 14 | Jordan Clark        | 28 | AJ Smith          |
| 16 | Ron Ambrose         | 30 | Carolyn Eden      |

## **November Anniversaries**

- |    |   |    |  |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1  | Joe and Cindy Schmitz (25 <sup>th</sup> )     | 18 | Wayne and Joann Miller (39 <sup>th</sup> )   |
| 3  | Roger and Irma Waddington (65 <sup>th</sup> ) | 27 | Lyle and Wanda Mansfield (57 <sup>th</sup> ) |
| 12 | Lee and Chris Eilers (35 <sup>th</sup> )      | 29 | Tom and Lana Cross (36 <sup>th</sup> )       |



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## **Serving Our Lord in His House during November**

**Communion Assistant:** Lee Eilers

**Elder on Duty:** Jason Simac

**Altar Guild:** Sonna Livesay, Joann Miller

**Ushers:**

Adam Cross, Head Usher

Nov. 6: Rich Amling, Jerry Stone

Nov. 13: Dave Allen, John Livesay

Nov. 20: Mark Miller, Wayne Miller

Nov. 23: Rob Amling, Rick Wilcox

Nov. 27: Todd Bockewitz, Larry Durbin

Nov. 30: Wally Bingaman, Jason Simac

**Acolytes:**

Nov. 6: Gabby Bingaman

Nov. 13: Josh Simac

Nov. 20: Christa Bingaman

Nov. 27: Gabby Bingaman

**Greeters:**

Nov. 6: Darrell and Tera Stremming

Nov. 13: Carol and Judy Schramm

Nov. 20: Bob and Betty Grotts

Nov. 27: Rob and Debbie Amling

# November 2011

| Sun  | Mon  | Tue                                  | Wed   | Thu                                      | Fri       | Sat       |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|-----------|-----------|
|  |  | <i>1</i><br><b>6:30 Bible Class</b>  | <i>2</i><br><b>9:00 Bible Class<br/>5:30 Bell Choir<br/>Rehearsal<br/>6:30 Choir<br/>Rehearsal</b>  | <i>3</i>                                 | <i>4</i>  | <i>5</i>  |
| <i>6</i><br><b>10:15 Divine<br/>Service<br/>11:30 “Gobble<br/>for Gabby”<br/>pot-luck dinner</b>           | <i>7</i>   | <i>8</i>                             | <i>9</i><br><b>5:30 Bell Choir<br/>Rehearsal<br/>6:30 Choir<br/>Rehearsal</b>   | <i>10</i>                                | <i>11</i> | <i>12</i> |
|  | ←  |                                      | <b>Pastor O’Brien<br/>Vacation</b>  | →  |           |           |
| <i>13</i><br><b>9:00 SS/Bible<br/>Class<br/>10:15 Divine<br/>Service</b>                                   | <i>14</i><br><b>6:30 Elders<br/>Meeting<br/><br/>7:30 Church<br/>Council</b> | <i>15</i><br><b>6:30 Bible Class</b> | <i>16</i><br><b>9:00 Bible Class<br/>5:30 Bell Choir<br/>Rehearsal<br/>6:30 Choir<br/>Rehearsal</b>   | <i>17</i>                                | <i>18</i> | <i>19</i> |
| <b>Pastor O’Brien<br/>Vacation</b>   |  |                                      |   |  |           |           |
| <i>20</i><br><b>9:00 SS/Bible<br/>Class<br/>10:15 Divine<br/>Service<br/>11:30 Junior<br/>Confirmation</b> | <i>21</i>  | <i>22</i><br><b>6:30 Bible Class</b> | <i>23</i><br><b>9:00 Bible Class<br/><br/>7:00<br/>Thanksgiving<br/>Eve<br/>Service</b>   | <i>24</i><br><b>Thanksgiving<br/>Day</b> | <i>25</i> | <i>26</i> |
|  |  |                                      |   |  |           |           |
| <i>27</i><br><b>9:00 SS/Bible<br/>Class<br/>10:15 Divine<br/>Service<br/>11:30 Junior<br/>Confirmation</b> | <i>28</i>  | <i>29</i><br><b>6:30 Bible Class</b> | <i>30</i><br><b>9:00 Bible Class<br/>5:00 Bell Choir<br/>Rehearsal<br/>6:00 Choir<br/>Rehearsal<br/>7:00 Advent<br/>Midweek<br/>Service</b> |  |           |           |

# The Top 20 Reasons Why People Don't Go To Ballgames

So baseball season is finally over. Fans of the team that won the World Series are still celebrating, and fans of all other teams are waiting for next year. Statistically speaking, many Americans never even get close to a ballpark, even though three (Cardinals, Cubs and White Sox) are within easy driving distance. Here are some Recently overheard reasons why more people *don't* attend.

1. I'm too tired to go to the ballgame.
2. The day of the ballgame is the only day I have to myself.
3. They are all hypocrites at the ballgame. All they want at the stadium is your money.
4. I wish the ballgame would be shorter so I could get home sooner.
5. I don't need to actually go there – I can think about the ballgame from home.
6. The stadium seating is really uncomfortable.
7. They play the organ too much.
8. It's too expensive. Why spend money to make me feel bad?
9. The umpires are mean and nasty people who try to impose *their* versions of the rules on everyone else.
10. It's always played the same way. Why don't they make up new rules every week so that it would interest more people?
11. There's too much jargon. I think ballgames should be immediately approachable to people who are new to our culture.
12. Ballgames are too exclusive – not everyone can play. If you feel called to be a player, you should be allowed to play.
13. The umpire always looks so impersonal wearing that uniform. Couldn't he wear something more casual and welcoming?
14. My parents took me to too many ballgames when I was young.
15. They should allow female pitchers.
16. It's hard to explain a ballgame to someone who has never been there, so I don't invite people to come with me.
17. All that meaningless, up-and-down ritual: singing that boring “National Anthem” while staring at a flag, or standing up and singing during the seventh inning.
18. The players make too much money for just a few hours of easy work.
19. Why does someone have to lose? I believe that if the players play by the rules and they play hard, then they should be rewarded for their hard work – regardless of the score.
20. I'll go next week.

Sound familiar? Matthew 11:15: “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*”