

***“One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.”***

Psalm 145:4

It's no secret that we have been making an effort to restart a Sunday School program at St. Paul. You have seen it mentioned in the bulletin and announced at the beginning of services. You will continue to hear more about it in coming months.

It's also no secret that we have a preponderance of older members in our congregation and relatively few children. Our daughter and son-in-law attend a large LCMS church in Collinsville, and on any given Sunday they have between 100 to 150 children at their Sunday School Classes. It takes a large number of volunteers and a sizable financial commitment from the congregation to support a Sunday School program of that size. Our numbers here are obviously much smaller, and our support – both in terms of finances and volunteers – is proportionately less. But even in a congregation like St. Paul Pana where we have only a small number of potential Sunday School students, the reasons for having Sunday School classes are every bit as important and vital.

For most of the history of the Christian Church, children were taught about Jesus first and foremost in the home – taught by their parents. When Martin Luther first published his *Small Catechism* in May of 1529, it was intended to be used by parents and not necessarily by pastors. Now I am most certainly not saying that our parents and grandparents are not teaching their children and grandchildren about Jesus today. But the fact of the matter is that one hour of Sunday School on Sunday mornings, prior to the Divine Service, can and should be a measureless blessing to children as they grow and mature in their Christian faith.

Concordia Seminary President Dr. Dale Meyer recently posed this question: “If our generation does not teach Jesus Christ to the next generation, do you think they’ll learn it from strangers?” In response to that question, one St. Paul member answered: “Most likely our children will not learn about Jesus Christ on the football field, the soccer field, the volleyball court, the math class, the grocery store, etc.” Unless our children learn about Jesus in a Christian day school – and the closest Lutheran school is 36 miles from Pana – they will not (and legally cannot) learn anything about Jesus in school.

So where can our children learn about Jesus? Obviously, in the home. Obviously, at Church. And obviously, at Sunday School.

As our children grow and near their teenage years, we as parents, grandparents – and I as your Pastor – encourage those young people to begin Confirmation Class in order to become Communicant members of St. Paul Lutheran Church. But speaking from my still limited experience as a Seminary Student, Vicar and Pastor, I can't emphasize too strongly how important it is for Confirmation students to begin their classes with a firm and solid background of education and knowledge about Jesus. The formative years – at home, at Church *and* at Sunday School – are vitally important.

I would like to personally thank our current Sunday School teachers – Chris Bishop, Georgette Merrifield and Carol Schramm – for volunteering their time to teach our children and youth on Sunday mornings. I would like to personally thank those parents and grandparents who make sure that our children are being reared in and taught the Christian faith. And I would both encourage and thank all St. Paul members for your prayers that these and even more children may be brought to know Jesus. As King David proclaimed in Psalm 145: *“I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.”*

In Christ,

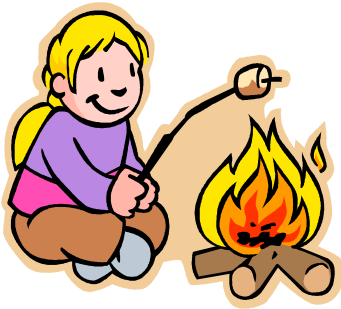
Pastor Terry O'Brien

# Looking ahead ...



**Calling all volunteers – male and female, young and old – for the St. Paul Fall clean-up day on Saturday, October 8.** The primary planned activities include 1) giving our pews and woodwork their twice-yearly cleaning, and 2) turning the old “youth room” into a conference room. We’ll begin at 9:00 a.m. and the more volunteers we have, the faster it will go. Please join us!

**The next St. Paul Voters Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 11, at 7:00 p.m. in the Church basement.** Agenda items will include election of officers for 2012 ... approval of the St. Paul budget for 2012 ... and discussion about emergency repairs for some of the Church stained glass windows that are perilously close to collapse. All voters – and St. Paul members age 18 and older who would like to become voting members – are encouraged to attend.



**The annual St. Paul Church Wiener Roast will be held on Sunday, October 16,** beginning at 4:00 p.m. The festivities will be held at the Parsonage, but in the event of bad weather will be moved to the Church basement. Hot dogs, buns, condiments and everything you need to make s’mores will be provided, and we’re asking attendees to bring a dish (hot, cold or dessert) to share. Also, please bring lawn chairs for cozying up to the fire. The St. Paul Wiener Roast is for all St. Paul members ... your families ... and your friends ... so bring your family members and friends with you for a good time and some great fellowship!

**The new St. Paul Lutheran Church license plate frames will be available beginning at the Church Wiener Roast on Sunday, October 16.** The price is just **\$5 per frame – with free installation** on your car or truck provided by our volunteers! Many of us have license plate frames on our cars advertising car dealerships, schools, sports teams or vacation spots, but now you can proudly display the name of our Church for everyone to see. These license plate frames will also be available following Church on Sundays in later weeks.



**The annual joint Reformation Service** sponsored by St. Paul and five other Central Illinois congregations will be held at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Nokomis at 3:00 p.m. on **Sunday, October 30.** This always stirring service features a mass choir including many St. Paul members, to be directed by St. Paul Choir Director Irma Waddington.

# Congratulations

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



## October Birthdays

1	Rick Wilcox	20	Chris Bishop
2	Jeannie Karbach	21	Andrea Chamberlain
3	Dick Amling	22	Skylar Hicks
4	Lynn Bishop	25	Dan Lees
4	Mark Craig	27	Andrew Ambrose
5	Sally Requarth	27	Mackenzie Eilers
10	Myrna Oller	27	Janet West
12	Carol Wilcox	30	Nancy Amling
14	Jennifer Schloz	30	Rich Amling
19	Audrey Durbin	30	Tara Livesay
20	Barb Amling	31	Kathy Kindred

## October Anniversaries

5	Gene and Patty Craig (48 <sup>th</sup> )	27	Rob and Debbie Amling (32 <sup>nd</sup> )
9	Darrell and Marilyn Halbrook (40 <sup>th</sup> )	29	Rick and Andrea Chamberlain (34 <sup>th</sup> )
21	Tom and Tara Bingaman (16 <sup>th</sup> )		



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## Serving Our Lord in His House during October

**Communion Assistant:** Dr. Joe Marcin

**Elder on Duty:** Buck Miller

**Altar Guild:** Nancy Ashcraft, Carol Wilcox

**Acolytes:**

Oct. 2: Josh Simac

Oct. 9: Gabby Bingaman

Oct. 16: Christa Bingaman

Oct. 23: Gabby Bingaman

Oct. 30: Christa Bingaman

Josh Simac (Crucifer)

**Ushers:**

Adam Cross, Head Usher

Oct. 2: Vern Benson, Wally Bingaman

Oct. 9: Tom Bingaman, Darrell Stremming

Oct. 16: Jeff Bockewitz, Bill Merrifield

Oct. 23: Michael Chamberlain, Tim Karbach

Oct. 30: Bob Grotts, Rob Merrifield

**Greeters:**

Oct. 2: Rich and Barb Amling

Oct. 9: Wayne and Joann Miller

Oct. 16: Dick and MJ McGee

Oct. 23: LouAnn Horsley, Diane Hildebrand

Oct. 30: John and Sonna Livesay

# October 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<i>1</i>
<b>2</b> 9:00 SS/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service 11:30 Junior Confirmation	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 6:30 Bible Class	<b>5</b> 9:00 Bible Class 5:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 9:00 Fall Church Clean-Up Day
<b>9</b> 9:00 SS/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service 11:30 Junior Confirmation	<b>10</b> 6:30 Elders Meeting  7:30 Church Council	<b>11</b> 7:00 Voters Meeting	<b>12</b> 9:00 Bible Class 5:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9:00 SS/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service 11:30 Junior Confirmation 4:00 Wiener Roast	<b>17</b> 7:00 Planning Meeting for 2012 St. Paul calendar	<b>18</b> 6:30 Bible Class	<b>19</b> 9:00 Bible Class 5:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 9:00 SS/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service 11:30 Junior Confirmation	<b>24</b> 7:00 Ladies Guild	<b>25</b>  ← Fall Pastor's Conference →	<b>26</b> 5:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 9:00 SS/Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service 11:30 Junior Confirmation 3:00 Joint Reformation Service	<b>31</b>					

## Pastor, Why Do We Celebrate the Lord's Supper Every Sunday?

A few days ago one of our St. Paul members asked me some questions about our practice of celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper every Sunday. Even those who have been lifelong Lutherans remember the days when the Lord's Supper was celebrated far less frequently ... perhaps twice a month or even once a month.

We have strong evidence that celebrating the Lord's Supper was an every Sunday occurrence in the very earliest years of the Christian Church. In Acts chapter 2, St. Luke wrote this description of Christian worship in the first weeks following Christ's ascension into heaven: "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*" *The Didache*, a document that was most probably written and used while Peter, Paul and many of the apostles were still alive, includes this statement: "On the Lord's Day of the Lord come together, break bread, and hold the Eucharist, after confessing your transgressions." Even in times of severe oppression, Christians frequently and regularly celebrated the Lord's Supper, especially on "the Lord's Day" – Sunday.

By the time of the Reformation, the meaning and teachings about the Lord's Supper had become greatly corrupted in many respects, but Luther and his fellow reformers staunchly defended the practice of every Sunday Communion. With a firm understanding and belief that Christ's true body and blood are present in, with and under the consecrated bread and wine, Lutheran Churches in Germany originally continued to celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday. But during those first years of the reformation, other reformers argued that the bread and wine are merely symbolic or representative of Christ's body and blood, and they purposefully deemphasized the importance of receiving Communion. Some church bodies began having Communion only once a month or even once a year because they misunderstood its importance, and unfortunately there are still many church bodies that still hold to those wrong teachings and wrong practice.

In Lutheran churches it also became common for the Lord's Supper to be celebrated less frequently. Some St. Paul members will remember when Communion was held only once a month, and when I was growing up my home church in Springfield followed the common practice of twice-a-month Communion (usually on the first and third Sundays). In recent decades it has become more common for Lutherans to hold Communion every Sunday, although the majority of LCMS churches may still be on a less-frequent basis. It's no secret that I am a strong proponent of every-Sunday Communion, and I am thankful that this practice was adopted at St. Paul long before I became your pastor.

Today there are still two arguments voiced about celebrating the Lord's Supper every Sunday:

1. Some argue that frequent Communion makes the Sacrament too "common" – that people will take it for granted. For some people this may be true. But remember *why* we receive Christ's body and blood: for the forgiveness of sins. Can we be forgiven too often? We know and confess that we sin frequently – not a day goes by that we do not commit sin against God's holy Law – so is there any reason why we would not want to receive Christ's forgiveness as often as possible?
2. Others argue that the practice of every-Sunday Communion becomes legalistic, making you feel that you *have* to receive the Lord's Supper every time it is celebrated. It's something like the classic herd instinct – if everyone else is doing it, that I have to do it, too. But we must remember that even though our Lord gives us His body and blood in the Lord's Supper, He never tells us how often we should receive it. In fact, St. Paul encourages Christians to examine themselves before partaking of the Lord's Supper. I highly encourage each of you to silently pray the "Before Communing" prayer (inside front cover of the Hymnal) prior to approaching the Altar each Sunday. If you for any reason feel that you should not receive Communion on any occasion, then no one will think any less of you if you remain seated in your pew. And, of course, I am always available to discuss this with you personally.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wieting, in a highly recommended book entitled *The Blessings of Weekly Communion*, concludes that forgiveness is the heart of the Lord's Supper, for "where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation. These treasures come from the flesh of Christ. Where He is present to serve His people, the treasures abound."