



St. Paul's EPISTLE

January 2017 edition

Make Room for Jesus

By Pastor James Mumm

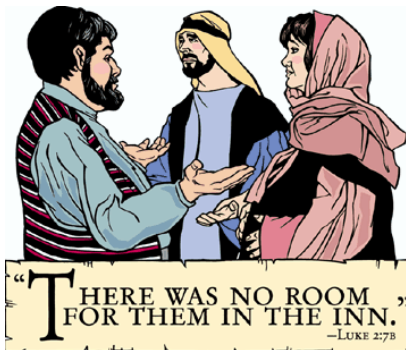
It is difficult to understand why there was no room for Mary and Joseph and the Baby Jesus in an inn in Bethlehem. It is difficult to understand why Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, was born in a stable.

It is even more difficult to understand why many people, even members of Christian churches, have no room in their hearts, homes and lives for Jesus Christ. Many of these people know about Jesus, but refuse to welcome Him into their hearts, homes and lives by their refusal to read and hear His Word and worship Him at their church and in their houses.

Are we making room for Jesus and welcoming Him into our hearts, homes and lives?

Jesus is knocking at our heart's door. With love, the Savior is saying to us, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me."

- Revelation 3:20.



Please hear God's Word and worship Him at church and in your homes, and please bring your children and other precious people to worship Him with you!



Christmas Eve Service at 6:30 p.m.
Christmas Day Service at 9:30 a.m.

New Year's Services
Dec. 31 at 6:30 p.m. & Jan. 1 at 9:30 a.m.

God's House. Your Home.

- What Do You Want for Christmas? pg 2
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**Sunday worship
at 8:00 & 10:30am**

www.stpaulswr.org

What Do You Want for Christmas?

By Pastor James Mumm

I'm sure that you and your family members want something other than "My Two Front Teeth" for Christmas and for the New Year. The "Want List" for many people may include a new car, a nicer house, a happier family situation, better health, the newest and biggest flat-screen television, the latest ipad or iphone, a relaxing vacation, a more satisfying and higher paying job, and in general, a happy and enjoyable earthly life.



“What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”

- Matthew 16:26

These wants for earthly happiness are something we all want to a greater or lesser degree. The LORD our God also wants us to be a happy people. We should ask Him to bless us with good things while we live on earth and thank Him when we receive them.

We must be careful, however, that these temporal things are not the most important things in our earthly life. They can give us some happiness for a while, but they cannot give us true and lasting happiness and contentment. Slowly or rapidly these earthly things wear out and die even as we human beings fade and die.

Far above these earthly treasures and pleasures should be our desire to know, believe in, and serve the LORD, the one, true and only God. It is only when we are right with God that we have true and lasting peace, happiness, hope and love. It is only by means of Holy Baptism, the reading and hearing of the Word of God, and the receiving of the Holy Supper of Jesus' Body and Blood that children and adults are given true faith in the LORD God as our loving, forgiving and saving Father, Savior, and Comforter. It is only by means of God's inspired Word, the Holy Bible, that we are given to know and trust in the true God and His forgiving and saving love in Jesus Christ.

As we and our children are baptized and faithfully hear and read God's Word, God the Holy Spirit offers us and empowers us to sincerely repent of our sins; to sincerely trust in God the Father as our loving Creator and Preserver; and to sincerely trust in Jesus Christ as our loving Savior from sin, death and everlasting damnation in hell. It is only when we have true and sincere faith in the LORD God that we are also empowered to reject wickedness and false teachings and to live a truly God-pleasing life.

Jesus Christ tells us that the hearing of His Word is the most important activity in our earthly life. Martha trusted in and loved Jesus, but she had her priorities out of order. Jesus said to Martha and says to us, "You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her (Luke 10:41)."

Continued on pg. 3

What do you want for Christmas? continued from pg. 2

Mary had chosen to sit at the feet of Jesus and to listen to His Word. The time she spent and we wisely spend hearing and reading God's Word is the best use of our God-given time on earth. Jesus tells us, "Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it (Luke 11:28)."

Consider wisely what we want for Christmas and the New Year. May we first and foremost want faith in the one true God and the love, forgiveness and everlasting salvation which Jesus Christ earned for us. In addition to the saving faith, may we also want God's power to believe and live according to His Word. When the LORD God gives us these spiritual blessings, He will also give us the earthly blessings which are truly good for us. Jesus our Savior tells us, "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans (unbelievers) run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33)."

So, what do we want for Christmas and the New Year for ourselves, our family members, our friends and neighbors? Let us pray to God the Holy Spirit that He gives us the wisdom to want what will truly bless us on earth and then forever in heaven! And when we receive the true and saving faith in Jesus and the power to live a God-pleasing life, may we do everything we can to share these spiritual gifts with our family members, relatives, friends, and neighbors!

TRUTHS OF GOD TO PONDER

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." - 1 Timothy 6:6-10

They Are Among Us

No, we are not talking about angels or aliens. We're talking about individuals who care about others. If you want to do more as a Christian caregiver, consider Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministers bring distinctively Christian care to those in need. They use both words and deeds to express Christ's care for others – listening and comforting, calling on the training they have received and employing the tools of faith. If this job description fits your personal goals for ministry, find out more about Stephen Ministry. A training class is starting soon. You can pick up applications in the office or download one from our website. Contact Mike Grosskruetz (715-569-3809 or mgrosskruetz@tds.net) or Susie Dempze (715-424-1324 or jscanby@wctc.net) for more information.



Coming in January

Adult Co-ed
Volleyball
Sundays
2:00-5:00pm
Begins Jan. 8



St. Paul's School News

Preschool News – by Mrs. Hannah Mueller

We have been busy preparing for Christmas! This month we've been busy making beautiful creations to decorate our room and learn at the same time. This month we focused on small, medium, and large, writing, identifying, and counting our numbers, and drawing and painting. We've continued working on our letters A through L. We've also been busy getting ready for the children's Christmas Service in which our 4K students will participate with the rest of St. Paul's Lutheran School.

We will be having our class party on Friday, December 23rd. A note went home with details. Please check the class newsletter this week for more information!

May God bless you and your family as we celebrate our Savior's birth!



Preschoolers act out the nativity.

Kindergarten News – by Mrs. Trisha Engelbrecht

We have really been looking at the stars in kindergarten this month, but in many ways. The class has been revealing the areas they shine in more readily. Some are gifted physically and have quickly learned our new gym class skills of throwing. Some understand the ever challenging rules of the English language. Just this week I threw the curve ball at them that when t and h get together they make a whole new sound. Some will be number crunchers; they recognize the patterns and order God has instilled in our world. And yet others have superior social skills and can readily make lemonade from life's lemons.

We have also looked at the stars and other celestial bodies in our universe. We learned that the sun is our closest star. As we looked at our fellow planets (we even included the dwarf planet Pluto, we had empathy for the little guy) we marveled at God's wisdom in His placement of Earth. It is the Goldilocks planet: not too hot and not too cold (even though some of you might argue that not too cold part right about now).

Finally, we learned about the famous star; you know, the one that shone when baby Jesus was born. We were able to learn about it in our classroom and then share it with you in our Christmas program. Matthew 2:10 says, "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed." May you experience the same joy this Christmas season.

1st-2nd Grade News – by Mrs. Karen Obsuszt

It is hard to believe it is already mid-December. We had a great opportunity as a class to sponsor an 8-yr-old girl from the giving tree. What a great response from the families of the first and second graders. We talked about God sending his Son to die on the cross. His free gift doesn't cost us anything and we can give to others and spread the good news about our Savior to others.

We have been hard at work learning about the different parts of speech. In their "free time", they have really liked working on the Mad Lib stories. This is where you need to put in different parts of speech to make up a funny story. Then during their snack time they have been sharing their story to the class. The 1st graders are even starting to understand what verbs, adjectives, and nouns are. I have seen so much growth in the past few months.

The students have been working extremely hard at the School Christmas Service, *What Child is This?* We are very excited to share the message of Jesus' salvation with so many people.

3rd - 4th Grade News – by Mr. Jon Engelbrecht

It has been an exciting month. We have started the multiplication math facts in 3rd Grade Math. We have tackled the times 0s, 1s, 10s, and 7s. We are now able to simply multiply Packer touchdowns to figure out the score. Multiplication and division have started in 4th Grade Math. We are now working on two digit multiplication and basic division without remainders. Our focus has change a little in science class. We have moved on from the human body, and we are now studying work and how to use simple machines to help us do that work. It is truly a wonder how God uses simple laws of physics to make our work easier. As we look forward to Christmas, we would like to wish everyone a “Merry Christmas” and a “Happy New Year”. We thank God for all the blessings we find in the manger. We also look forward to the many “New” blessings we will find in the upcoming year.

5th-6th Grade News – by Mr. John Quint

Special thanks go to all who donated to the Soles for Jesus shoe drive that just ended. Over 370 pairs of shoes were collected! We also received cash donations totaling \$300. Please feel free to drop off shoes to Mr. Quint's room (108) if you still have some. Thank you for your generous support of this project! * *
* Christmas preparations are well underway. We look forward to sharing the Christmas story with the congregation again this year during the annual Children's Christmas Service. Instead of exchanging gifts amongst ourselves, we are participating in the Giving Tree project. We have collected over \$100 to buy gifts for a needy child in our community. We will have our annual class Christmas party on December 23rd, with an abundance of fun, games, and white elephant gifts. Stop in and see our tree and our Packer Christmas village!

7th-8th Grade News – by Mr. Randy Pahl

Well, folks, may we be the first to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year. As we have journeyed from NO-vem-BURR right into Decem-BURR, we can definitely say to you, “Welcome to life in Wisconsin!” As we sit down to share our monthly thoughts with you, we find the temperatures well below normal for this time of year. However, in our classroom we are experiencing above normal activities as you will discover below.

It's official; we are full-swing into the basketball portion of our sports program. At the YMCA level, we have both boys and girls participating in games every Tuesday evening. Our “Lutheran Varsity League” has also tipped-off with our first games having been played at home as well as at Our Savior's of Wausau. Be sure to look forward to more action in 2017 as we will be hosting two more games, one on Friday, January 6th and the other to wrap up our Christian Education week on Friday, February 3rd. If you get a chance, come out and support our Panther teams.

December finds a very busy time in our classroom as well. Christ Light has found us beginning to look at how we can plan for our future lives as Christians in a sin-darkened world. Multiplying polynomials in algebra and discovering how many mpg our parents' vehicle can achieve on the way to grandma's house has kept us intrigued in math. In history, we “reconstructed” the 13th -15th Amendments, and science found us climbing on a variety of telescope mounts to see the stars (not in Hollywood) even better!

As 2016 draws to a close, we give thanks to God almighty that he gave up His one and only Son that we might be saved! May this joy keep your hearts focused on Him this Advent season as we prepare not only for His first coming, but for when He returns again to take us to be with Him and all the saints in our heavenly home. Merry Christmas everyone and a most blessed New Year!



Resolve to Keep Your Marriage Strong

There are three upcoming marriage retreats to help you grow closer to your spouse and improve your marriage. Also coming in February, you can participate in an online Bible study on enriching your marriage. Here's a schedule of events. For more information visit wels.net and tap on Serving You, then Adult Discipleship.



Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.
- 1 Peter 4:8

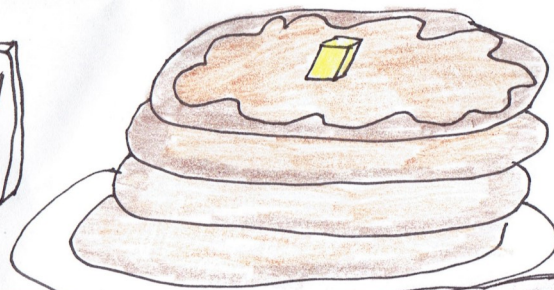
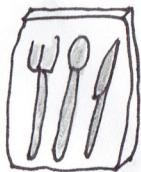
- Jan. 27-29 ~ Richer Marriage Retreat in Chaska, MN
- Feb. 1-22 ~ Enriching Marriage Online Bible Study
- Feb. 10-12 ~ Healthy Marriage Retreat in Green Lake, WI
- Mar. 17 ~ Healthy Marriage Retreat in Zion, IL



Pioneer's Pancake Brunch!!!

Date: January 8, 2017
 Time: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
 Cost: Free will Offering
 Menu: Potato & Wheat Pancakes
 - French Toast
 Sausages
 Apple Sauce
 Pie
 Coffee and Milk

2017



A New Copy Machine

We recently took delivery on a new-to-us copy machine. The machine was mostly paid for from proceeds from the Willing Workers Bake & Craft Sale. Plus, each month the Senior Friendship Group takes a freewill offering, and they donated their accumulated funds to this purchase. Also the Hospitality Committee receives gifts from the families for whom they serve funeral meals, and the group donated some of their funds. We also received a couple of donations from individual members. Our last copy machine was purchased as a used model over six years ago. It had made over 3.5 million copies and was showing its age with poor copy quality and increasing maintenance issues. The upgrade will also save us \$1,500 per year on the maintenance contract, since it is a newer model. The newer copier is greatly appreciated by the staff and office volunteers. Thank you to everyone who helped us make this upgrade.

Thank You, Lord, For Our Church Family

The pastors, teachers, office secretaries, music coordinator/teacher, kitchen and janitor staff at our church, school, childcare and preschool, wish all of our members a Christ-centered and God-blessed Christmas and New Year.

We sincerely appreciate all of the members of St. Paul's Congregation who willingly and joyfully serve the LORD our God and our congregation with their time and talents as volunteers to help at our worship services with musical accompaniment, in the choirs, as duets and soloists, altar caregivers, ushering, and bulletin folding, offering counting, and record keeping. We sincerely appreciate the Christians who are Stephen Ministers and Shut-in Visitors and assist at our childcare, preschool, Kindergarten and Grade School, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Bible Classes, Lutheran Pioneers, Teen Fellowship, kitchen and dining area helpers, and maintainers of our buildings and grounds. Your Christian love and service is a true blessing from God to our Christian church and school.

Special Gifts and Memorials

Through December 11, 2016

Current Ministry

- In memory of Lyle Lange given by Donna Stensberg

Mortgage

- In memory of Helen Kroening given by Uniroyal Global Engineered Products, Inc. (The employer of Helen's son, Karl), Ron & Georgene Provost, Mike & Marilyn Foley, Nona Henke, Robert Stake, Rick & Sue Trautschold, Jack & Pat Fluno, Donald & Jeanne Weis, and other family & friends

Cheerful Givers

- In memory of Helen Kroening given by Jim & Jeanne Jackson and Betty Prebbanow

New Copy Machine

- In memory of Helen Kroening given by Sue Bobrowski

Counting Our Blessings

- New member, Janet Heister
- The baptism of Alaric James Haight
- A new copy machine
- 57 Giving Tree gifts shared with the community
- 370 shoes collected for Soles for Jesus



Spring and Summer
Mission Opportunities
visit kingdomworkers.com



St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church
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Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-2402

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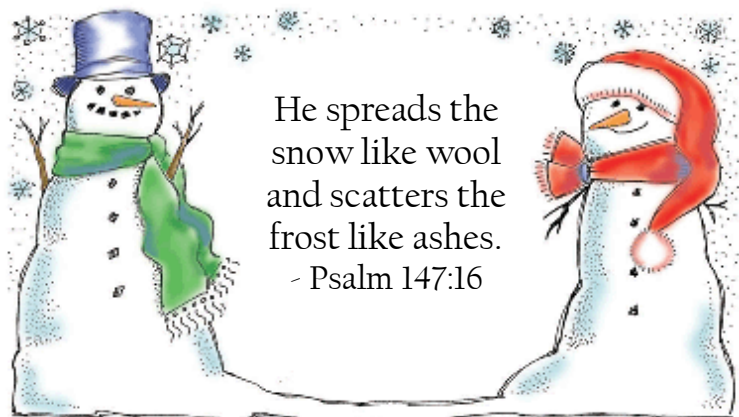
Phone: 715-421-3634
E-mail: churchoffice@stpaulswr.org
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Upcoming Events

Quarterly Voters' Meeting
Monday, Jan. 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Pioneer Pancake Brunch
Sunday, Jan. 8 ~ 9:00-1:00

Sanctity of Life Sunday
Sunday, Jan. 22



Pastor Martin Baur · 715-421-1424 · Pastor James Mumm · 608-780-7106