Perhaps you have seen the following quotation in an email or letter. But it is worth repeating. What if people gave the same excuses for missing a baseball or basketball game as they gave for missing church? It might sound something like this:

Why I stopped going to ball games:

1. Whenever I go to a game, they want my money.
2. The other fans don't greet or care about me.
3. The seats are too hard.
4. Coach never visits me.
5. The referee makes calls I don't agree with.
6. Some of the games go into overtime and make me late for dinner.
7. The band plays songs I don't know.
8. I have other things to do at game time.
9. My parents took me to too many games when I was growing up.
10. I know more than the coaches do anyway.
11. I can be just as good a fan at the lake.
12. I won't take my kids to a game either. They must choose for themselves which teams to follow.

Summer affords opportunities for many different activities…family vacations, family reunions, sporting activities on the water and off, the list is long. Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy God’s creation and take a little R & R. None of us should feel guilty about enjoying these blessings from our Creator; until they come at the expense of the Creator.

I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go the house of the LORD.” David wrote. This time is the highlight of our week. It’s important time with our Savior and fellow believers who share our faith.

Here is an awesome fact about the last five months at St. Paul’s: as of the end of May our weekly worship attendance average has increased to 387 from 373 last year! Let’s not allow summer to get in the way of the progress God has graciously blessed us with in worship. There are plenty of opportunities to worship weekly here at St. Paul’s and even as you travel. At St. Paul’s we worship Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. and Monday evenings at 6:30 p.m. If you will be gone on vacation find a local WELS or ELS church on the internet at http://welslocator.locatorsearch.com/

Here’s my challenge for my family and yours: be in worship, whether in town or out of town. Tell the t-ball coach you’ll be there after church. Tell your loved ones you’ll meet them there after you worship (scratch that, bring your loved ones too!) Make specific plans to find a place of worship on the Sunday of your vacation. I bet 387 could quite easily look like 400 or 450 by the end of summer. God’s richest blessings to you as you enjoy the beautiful gifts of summer.

SEE YOU IN THE FALL?
by Pastor Douglas

I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go the house of the LORD” Psalm 122:1
What do you think of when you here the word “stewardship?” Do you automatically think money, dollars and cents? A lot of folks, unfortunately, do.

In medieval times, a steward was initially a servant who supervised both the lord’s estate and his household. The dictionary defines a steward as “a person who manages another’s property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another or others.” And when you think about it, that is what we do everyday.

We come into this world with nothing, and we take nothing with us when we go. In between, we get stuff, buy stuff, grow stuff, earn stuff, use stuff, lose stuff, but in the end, it isn’t really OURS. It all belongs to God – He made it, and we get to use it for as long as He sees fit. So stewardship is how we manage EVERYTHING – not just our dollars and cents, but also our time, and our talents and skills, everything we have, every day of our lives.

So maybe we need to update our terminology to reflect this fresh perspective!

Perhaps instead of “stewardship,” we could think of it as “blessings management.” Our “Stewardship Committee” is now the “Blessings Management Team.” Our annual “Stewardship Drive” is a “Blessings Management Update.” Being a good “steward” is now measured by how well we “manage the many blessings we receive each and every day.”

Management also implies action. It is difficult to be a good manager just sitting on the side lines. A good manager needs to be actively involved in every aspect under his care.

So take some time now, later today, or sometime this week, to stop and examine all the blessings that you have been entrusted with under God’s care. And be sure to say “Thanks” to the One who gave them all to you!

Michael Anderson
“Director of Blessings Management”

St. Paul’s will be hosting a float in this year’s Wisconsin Rapids Cranberry Blossom Parade. This will be a wonderful opportunity to reach out to our community and share with them all the exciting things happening at St. Paul’s. The parade is being held on Sunday June 26, starting at 12:30.

We are looking for donations of bulk candy items. Please bring to the church office no later than Wednesday June 22. We will be constructing the float on Saturday June 25. If you are interested in helping construct the float and/or want to ride/walk in the parade, please contact Shelly Antoniewicz at 715-424-0505.

Stampworks Summer Fun Day!

by Jean Olari

Come and experience the 1st Annual Super Summer Stamping Fun Day with St. Paul’s Stampworks on Tuesday, July 26th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the dining room. Bring your favorite coffee mug and join us in the morning for coffee and cinnamon rolls. Feel free to stay all day or just stop in for a 1/2 hour to help out the Stampworks group with several projects. If you can work with a scissors, glue stick, tape, or colored pencils, we could use your help! All supplies will be provided.

Stampworks mission is to create and send hand-crafted cards containing words of encouragement and support for members of the congregation. Visit us during our Summer Fun Day to find out more or, if you have any questions, please contact Jean Olari at 715-887-2127 or e-mail Jeanstamps@gmail.com.

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Building a Parade Float

by Mike Anderson

NO WORSHIP SERVICE ON MONDAY, JULY 4
Daily Growing in God’s Word
by Garth Perry

I know I should read the Bible more, but where should I start? What can I do to make reading the Bible interesting for me? How does the Bible apply to my life today? Those are all questions that you may have asked yourself. The amazing thing about God’s Word is that you learn something new each time you read. No matter how many times you read a chapter, there is always more that you can glean from it. Martin Luther put it a great way when he said, “First I shake the whole Apple tree, that the ripest might fall. Then I climb the tree and shake each limb, and then each branch and then each twig, and then I look under each leaf.” Reading the Bible is a lifelong discipline. It takes time and effort, but the rewards are better than you can imagine.

One note I want to make is that there is a difference between reading your Bible and studying your Bible. Bible study is a more in-depth study of a section of the Bible. In Bible study, we read and reread and find an application to our lives. There is also a difference between personal and corporate Bible study. Corporate Bible study, that is “group” Bible study, is a time that we share together as Christians either in church or in small groups outside of church.

Personal Bible study takes a different approach. This is our alone time with God. In the next several issues of our newsletter, I am going to share some methods for personal Bible study.

The first method of Bible study is called the devotional method of Bible study. There are four steps to this approach:

1) Pray for insight on how to practice God’s Word in your life.
2) Meditate on the verse(s) you have chosen to study.
3) Write out a way to practice these verses in your everyday life.
4) Memorize a key verse from your study.

The important point to note with this method is personal practice. The Bible clearly tells us the importance of “practicing” the Word in our lives. Matthew 7:24 says “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

The questions at the beginning of the article centered on how the Bible applies to me and where can I start. I pray that through the methods you read in these articles, you will find a place to start that works best for you. I can guarantee this - once you get started and make it part of your routine just like you do with eating breakfast in the morning, it will become like second nature to you. Since I mentioned food, I will leave you with this thought. God’s Word is sweeter than honey. Look it up in a concordance and check it out in your Bible. I have included a sample filled-out form. Blank forms will be available in the welcome center on the informational booth.

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY FORM

Date: June 15th  
Passage: Romans 6:1-14

1. PRAYER ☑ (check when done)

2. MEDITATION Dead to Sin - Alive in Christ
   Lesson (Truths to Believe)
   - In my baptism I am connected with Christ’ death and burial. (v3,4)
   - Christ’s death and resurrection empower me to lead a new life in righteousness. (v5-7)
   - Connected with Christ in his death - I’m dead to sin, but alive in Christ! (v. 8-11)
   - New Life is mine by God’s grace - my grateful response will show itself in righteousness (v. 12-14)

   Sin to Confess/Attitude to Change
   Lord, Forgive me for feeling as though I do not have to change. Forgive me for the attitude of “I am who I am”. By grace you have given me a new life. Through your power lead to me to serve you in thanks.

3. APPLICATION
   My “who cares” attitude toward my sinful use of my tongue to hurt others, take the Lord’s name in vain is not who I am. I have a new life in Christ. I will think before I speak and speak as though I am talking to Jesus.

4. MEMORIZATION
   I am “dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (v.11)
Help Stuff the Bus

St. Paul’s will serve as a Stuff the Bus drop off site this summer. We will be collecting school supplies for local, needy children through early August. Items needed include backpacks, binders, markers, calculators, pink erasers, highlighters, notebooks, folders, loose-leaf paper, colored pencils, pencils, pens, glue sticks. (They do not need crayons, glue or scissors.) All donations will be taken to the Stuff the School Bus event on August 11, 2011 during Lunch By The River at Veteran’s Memorial Park. You can bring your donations to the church office.

Stuff the Desk will be held August 19, 2011, from 7:00am – 6:00pm at Lincoln High School. It is open to children and youth in grades K through 12th grade enrolled in South Wood County public and parochial schools. Any family who is in financial need qualifies. Families need to simply attend Stuff the Desk, bring a canned food item (to be donated to local food pantries) and fill out an application.

Stuff the Desk is also looking for volunteers to distribute fliers, sort donations and help distribute the school supplies to needy children during the Stuff the Desk event. To volunteer, call United Way at 715-423-0211.

Summer Time!

By Jon Engelbrecht

The last class has been taught, the students have left for the summer, and all that is left in the building is the sound of crickets and the carpet cleaner. But, what does a teacher do for the rest of the summer when there are no students at school? Some people honestly think that we have a three month vacation with nothing to do. But that is far from the truth.

During the school year, an average teacher is going to put in 50 to 60 hours a week. That would include time spent at school teaching and time after school grading papers. If a teacher has any outside responsibilities like coaching or being the athletic director, that number will be a little bit higher.

Now, most teachers will not hesitate to admit that the summer hours are relaxed compared to the school year. The beginning of the summer is a time to clean up the classroom or prepare it for carpet cleaning. This is probably the best time for a teacher to take a vacation since he/she can’t get into the classroom to work.

Block planning or lesson planning will be taken home to be worked on instead of sitting in the classroom to finish it. This will continue through July. When August comes around, teachers are busy printing and copying materials needed for the upcoming school year. The effort to put into place as many resources as possible will make the daily work during the school year easier. Plus, there is not as high a demand during the summer for the copy machine compared to the rest of the year.

One of the last things a teacher does during the summer is to take some workshops or classes to continue his/her education. Things are always changing in technology and teaching methods. While standard teaching methods will always work, it is good to put some new and different tools in the teacher’s tool belt.

Don’t get me wrong, summer is a time for teachers to enjoy and relax. But, there is enjoyment and a relaxing pace for preparing for the next school year at the same time.

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June 23-26
National Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society Convention in Milwaukee, WI

July 19-22
National Conference on Worship, Music & the Arts in St. Peter, MN

July 25-29
61st Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Watertown, WI
Have You Taken Control of Your Health Today?

Life Line Screening will be at St. Paul’s Ev. Lutheran Church on Monday, August 8, 2011 offering five safe, painless, non-invasive preventive health screenings that are typically not a part of a routine physical. This event is also being sponsored by Aspirus.

Be more proactive about your health and live longer for yourself, your family, and your community. Life Line Screening will perform screenings for:

1) carotid artery blockage (stroke)
2) atrial fibrillation
3) abdominal aortic aneurysm
4) peripheral arterial disease
5) osteoporosis (bone loss)

These screenings are recommended for anyone 50 and older, or 40 and over with cardiovascular risk factors. They are non-invasive, painless, and take 60-90 minutes to complete. The results, which are mailed directly to you, will help you and your doctor protect your health.

Stroke, Vascular and Heart Rhythm Package range from $129 to $159. Call 1-888-653-6441 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners to schedule your appointment.

Helping the Lord’s Work in Zambia

This “Appreciation letter” was received by the LWMS WI River Valley Circuit from Zambia. This spring they shipped a box to the Lutheran Church & Development Program, Lutheran Church of Central Africa, Chelston, Lusaka, Zambia containing ten purple denim bib aprons, ten duffel bags and 36 small soaps (to make the box heavier).

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are here to appreciate the gift you have given us as home based care givers. We would like to thank you very much for this gesture. We thank the Almighty God for such a help, as home based care it will help us go a long way. We hope you will continue to help us and other caregivers as well.

Thank you very much. May our Lord bless you.

Sincerely,

Martin Maimba - West Chelston H.B.C., Christine Dalaa – Chonawe H.B.C., Margaret Maamba – Lunda H.B.C.

For the fifty care givers at Zambia, the circuit made fifty aprons and fifty duffel bags. They also have many, many, many more rolls of bandages to ship as well as leftover denim fabric and a few spools of thread. The left over fabric can be used by the wives of native pastors to do “tailoring” to help support their families. If anyone would like to “sponsor a box to Zambia” please send a check of any $ amount, payable to LWMS WI River Valley Circuit, to our WI River Valley Circuit Treasury Secretary, Dorothy Sparby, 1002 11th Street, Mosinee, WI 54455.

Mark Your Calendars
Vacation Bible School
July 31 – August 4
Visit Biblical Turkey

Pastor James Humann, retired WELS pastor, and part-time teacher at Evergreen Lutheran High School in Des Moines, WA, invites you to join him and fellow WELS members on a twelve day tour to "Biblical Turkey: In the Footsteps of St. Paul." The tour leaves April 4, 2012.

Turkey is often called, "The Other Holy Land," because, except for Israel, more Biblical sites are found there than anywhere else in the Middle East. The apostle Paul was born in Turkey. The seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation are all in modern day Turkey. Paul's missionary journeys took him several times through what is now called Turkey. Paul spent three and a half years in Ephesus, which is in Turkey.

If you like the Biblical, if you like the unusual, if you like traveling to Biblical places with members and a pastor of your own faith, then this tour may be of interest to you. For a colorful brochure describing the daily itinerary, tour conditions and cost, please e-mail Pastor Humann at JHumann383@aol.com or call 253-839-9055.

In the Mailbag

Several years ago, educational opportunities sent me to Illinois and it is now clear that God’s plan for me is to remain here.

St. Paul’s has played an important role in my life that the written (or spoken word for that matter) cannot properly convey. To the wonderful teachers, ministers, and support staff past and present I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the spiritual and academic education you gave me. The Christian education I received was and is the foundation for who I am today and I would not be where I am without it. The memories I have of my years as a student will always hold a special place in my heart.

I will continue to keep the congregation of St. Paul’s in my prayers and I humbly ask the congregation to keep me in theirs.

May God continue to bless you all,

Jason Meyer

Jason has transferred his membership to Christ the King Lutheran Church in Palatine, Illinois.

KEEP FAITH BURNING

by Helen Kroening

Don’t let the flame of your faith flicker out, keep it burning, alive, strong and true.

Sustain it each day with God’s Holy Word, entreat our dear Lord to help you.

Nurture your faith every day of your life, defend it with diligent care, Willingly listen to what God commands, and talk to the Father in prayer.

When faith is not nourished with God’s precious Word, there’s many a soul may be lost. Foolish neglect can cause faith to grow cold, as many have learned to their cost.

The “Faith of our Fathers” still lives on today, accept it and make it your own. Eagerly follow the footsteps of Christ ‘til someday He takes you on home.
In the Mailbag

To all,

Thank you so much for the beautiful card you sent on the occasion of our 55th wedding anniversary. Oh my, how the years fly by!

Helen, thank you for the lovely poem. You all do a great job. Keep up the good work. It means a lot.

Sincerely,
Martin and Margaret Jackson

Special Gifts & Memorials

Gifts given through 6/05/11.

Current
- In memory of Jessica Dempze Dupuis given by John & Dawn Higgins
- In memory of Richard Kane given by Paul R. Kane and Jill & Laura Kane
- In memory of June Miller given by David & Robin Koeshall, Jim & Jeanne Jackson, and Barb Manz

Mortgage
- In memory of Lorraine Janz given by Ron & Georgene Provost
- In memory of Jack Fluno’s brother, Rex, given by David & Judy Kauffman
- In honor of their 45th wedding anniversary given by Larry & Karen Ubinger
- In memory of Pastor Baur’s father, Ralph Baur, given by Helen Kroening

Missions
- In memory of Pastor Baur’s father, Ralph Baur, given by Larry & Karen Ubinger and Marilyn Link

Music Ministry
- In gratitude for our music ministry given by the family of Harley Davis

St. Paul’s School
- In memory of June Miller given by Vernon & Betty Meyer
- In memory of Terry’s parents, Sandy’s father, and in honor of Adreanna Kniprath’s confirmation and graduation given by Terry & Sandy Krause for School Debt

A-V Fund
- In memory of June Miller given by Larry & Veronica Klish

Debt Reduction
- In memory of Nadine Janke-Geertgens given by Mike & Judy Anderson

Pastor Teacher Assistance Fund
- In memory of Nadine Geertgens and June Miller given by Edna Haferman

Outdoor Sign Fund
- In memory of Jack Fluno’s brother, Rex, given by Donna Stensberg
- In memory of Nadine Janke-Geertgens given by Bill & Elaine Wittrock
- In memory of June Miller given by Bill & Elaine Wittrock, Dave & Carol Brown, Ken, Burt, Lucille, & Donna Stensberg, Wally & Joan Johnson
- In memory of their fathers on Father’s Day given by Ron & Georgene Provost

Treasurer's Corner

We have just finished another year of sharing God’s Word with children through our Preschool, Lutheran Elementary School, Kids Connection and confirmation classes. This also means a close to our fiscal year at the end of June. We ended May $27,000 behind in our financial obligations, the bulk of this being pledges to synod and Northland. At the voters’ meeting on June 20 at 7:30 p.m., one of the topics to be discussed is how we will handle mission payments and budget shortfalls in the future. Please plan to attend the meeting and give your input.
Vacation Bible School
Sunday, July 31st – Thursday, August 4th

Sunday at noon: Picnic.
1pm – 3pm VBS kickoff.

Monday – Thursday
5pm – 6pm Picnic
6pm – 8pm VBS

All kids, all teens and all adults, even without kids are invited to attend St. Paul’s VBS Picnic and Bible classes all week long. Register online at www.stpaulswr.org.