

Epistle

January 2025

Monthly Newsletter of Saint Paul's Lutheran Church

19 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Walkersville, MD 21793

301-845-4600, www.saintpaulslutheranchurch.org

January Birthdays

Daniel Carroll	January 2
Tag Lutz	January 4
Katie Walker	January 13
Drew McLane	January 16
Bennett Chesnik	January 17
Kayla Plowman	January 17
Helen Lynch	January 20
Ed Chaney	January 20
Ella Ramacciotti	January 21
Donna Warner	January 25
Robb Port	January 29

Town Hall/Annual Congregational Meeting

As we look ahead at our January Calendar, your Council Leadership wanted to highlight a couple of events for January.

As is always the case, January brings our annual Congregational meeting, which will be held in person immediately following Worship on January 26th at 10:00am.

We have our annual budget to review and vote on, as well as a Constitution Amendment, future renovation/repair projects and our new council members.

Because we have had such success over the last few years with our Town Hall meetings, we will have one prior to our last Annual Meeting on January 19th immediately following Worship. We will allow for a 30-40 min Town Hall Q & A for the purpose of asking any budget, Constitution or renovation/repair questions. The Town Hall meeting will **NOT** include any voting, just questions. This will help to expedite the process during the voting at the Annual Meeting.

We will look forward to seeing you in person and online for these two important dates!

Mark your calendars!!
1/19/25 Town Hall
1/26/25 Annual Meeting



Pastor's Peace

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” Romans 15:13

As we welcome the new year, we find ourselves at the intersection of reflection and anticipation. The calendar page turns, and with it comes a fresh opportunity to consider the blessings and challenges of the past, as well as the promise and possibility of the year ahead. We remember the new year is not simply a moment of personal resolve, but an opportunity to reflect on God's faithfulness and our call to live in the grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We have journeyed through Advent and Christmas reveling in the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love of the Christ child found in the manger. The joy of Christ's incarnation, the Word made flesh, fills our hearts with gratitude and peace. As we step into this new year, we are reminded that the same Christ who was born in Bethlehem is with us each day, guiding our steps and strengthening our faith. The turning of the calendar offers a fresh opportunity to center our hearts on the joy found in Christ; joy that is unshakable, enduring, and rooted in God's promises.

The Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 3:13-14, “But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” This passage reminds us that the new year is an opportunity to press on in our journey of faith. It's a time to remember our ultimate hope is not in our achievements or challenges of this life, but in the eternal promises of God. As we enter 2025, we take time to reflect on our faith, family, and community. In Christ, every new beginning is an invitation to grow deeper in relationship with God and one another. This year, let us resolve not just to improve ourselves but to serve others, to live out our calling as disciples, and to be lights in the world, empowered by the Holy Spirit and sustained by God's Word.

In the life of a Christian, joy is not about the absence of hardship but about the presence of Christ in the midst of it. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 15:13, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Joy flows from hope, and our hope is in the eternal promises of God, promises that cannot be taken away by the challenges of life. As we begin 2025, we are reminded that the joy we experience is not based on our own strength or circumstances, but on the unchanging truth Christ has come to save us, to walk with us, and to fill our hearts with His peace.

Whether you are setting personal goals or seeking direction for your family or congregation, remember each step you take in this new year is covered by God's grace. God has promised never to leave us nor forsake us, and His mercy is new every morning. May this truth give us the courage to move forward with joy, hope, and confidence.

We are comforted in knowing Christ walks with us through every trial, blessing, and moment of growth. May this year be one of deepened faith, bold witness, and a closer walk with the One who makes all things new. Let us carry with us the joy of knowing God is with us, His promises are true, and His love for us is everlasting. May the joy of the Lord be our strength in this new year and always.

Susan and I are grateful for your generosity and wish you a healthy and happy New Year!

Should you have any questions or concerns, I am glad to speak with you at any time.

Peace Pastor Phil
Email: pastor@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org
Cell phone: 202-497-0584

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD” – Proverbs 19:17

Year Round Stocking Stuffer Project

For years St. Paul's has taken on the stocking stuffer project benefitting The Glade Valley Toy Shoppe at Christmas time. Every year the list grows and the number of stockings needed gets higher.

Kay Wachter's plan to help St. Paul's be ready for Christmas 2025 is now in effect! ***The Year Round Stocking Stuffer Project is back and needs your help!*** Each month the items of need will be announced and published in the weekly bulletins and emails

There is a box wrapped with Christmas paper in the overflow area where you can drop off your donations each month. You always have the option for a financial donation as well. Please see Kay for more details.

JANUARY

Playing Cards
(Regular)

Game Cards
(Go Fish, Old Maid, hearts, etc.)

Craft Kits
(Dollar Tree has some)

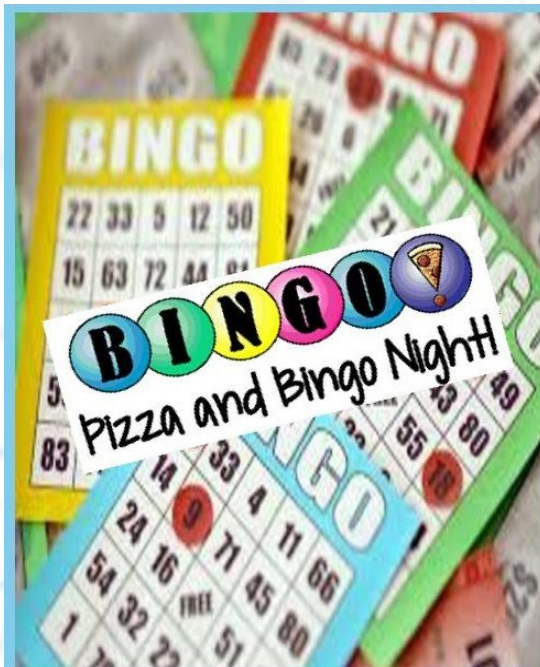
Year Round Stocking Stuffer Project



“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”

—Hellen Keller

Fellowship, food and Fun!



Friday, January 10th
5:30pm-8:00pm
Parish hall

PIZZA | FUN | PRIZES

Please contact Kay Wachter or call or email the Parish office to RSVP by Monday, January 6th

301-845-4600

officeadministrator@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org

(Starting in February 2025 we will have Bingo night every third Friday of the month! Keep an eye out in the weekly emails and bulletins for details!)

BE WARM, BE KIND

“New Year, new Me?”

By Lauren McCloskey

January- It's always the same thing. “New Year New Me”. Let's reflect about all the things that we do not like about ourselves and say we are going to completely transform our lives in the new year. How often do we say these things just to call it quits in February? I know every year I make the same resolution only to be disappointed in myself at the end of the year. Statistics show that only 9% of American's keep their New Year's Resolutions. 23% of American's stop the first week of January, where 46% stop by the end of the month.

Why do we do this to ourselves every year? Why do we start off the year with *not* liking ourselves? I understand the importance of resolutions of quitting smoking or eating healthier; however, you don't need the New Year to make that change for yourself. You make that change when you are self-aware that something needs to change for the better.

We concentrate of reshaping our own lives and how we will better ourselves; but how about we try to shift our mind frame slightly. Instead of thinking about how we can reshape our lives and how we can better ourselves, let's substitute the word '*us*' for '*others*'. This New Year let's make a new kind of resolution. Not the kind where we bring ourselves down, but we lift others up. How can I help others in my community? How can I help those in my church? How can I help those in my own household? This resolution does not have to be drastic or publicized. It can be subtle, simple, humble. These acts can be helping at a soup kitchen, participating in charity events, or even being a part of church council. It could also mean taking time out of your schedule to read a book to your children/grandchildren, write a note to a friend that you have not talked to in a while or even just giving a simple compliment to someone on their outfit in church.

This year let's focus on the good that we all have inside of ourselves and let that out for everyone to see. We are Christians. The basis of our faith is to love. We love ourselves and other because God loves us. Take time this month to pause and think of how you can make an impact on others' lives and put love first. If we concentrate this year on that, I think we are going to have a very happy new year.

*“Keep on loving one another
as brothers and sisters.”*

—Hebrews 13:1

A New Year, Same God!



As we usher in 2025, we can't help but feel grateful and reflect on everything that has happened in the past year; the good and the not so good. Take a moment and count the blessings that have stacked up in the in the past 12 months. They make us hopeful for what's to come. 12 Chronicles 15:7 reads: "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." God doesn't adapt to the times. The Word doesn't change! It's a new year, but it's the same God! Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

A brief look back at 2024





Council Corner

A note of reflection and appreciation from Patty-

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in this congregation for trusting me to be your Council President. Everyone in this congregation are all good friends, which has made being your Council President a joy. I have learned so much from my fellow council members, along with Pastor Phil and Shelia Kahler the VP.

Initially, I was reticent about taking this position and didn't want to take on the responsibility. Then Bishop Gohl came to give a sermon at St. Paul's, and listening to his words, I knew that God was calling me to this role.

Joining the council these last five years has allowed me to truly become a member here at St. Paul's. I would recommend it to anyone who wishes to be a part of something that really makes a difference in our church and our community, even making decisions on memorial funds for our world.

I would also like to encourage you, if you are not called to be on the council at this time, to let a council member in the church know your opinion on things that are happening or what you would like to happen in our church, so that the Council votes are for everyone in the congregation. We are all willing to listen and have a discussion.

We encourage you to share some thoughts for the future of St. Paul's and what you would like to happen in our church. How do we want our Sunday services, does everyone like how we have services, or are there any other suggestions? Do we want to welcome everyone to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, in welcoming all I believe we also welcome new ideas, new traditions, and in doing so, a newer and larger St. Paul's to expand outreach to the community and the world.

I would like to conclude my term with a prayer:

Dear Lord,

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, keep us all focused-on love and service to our neighbors. Thank you for all of creation. Help us all to learn from creation and Jesus through the Bible stories, so we can live lives that work for justice for those who need it most. Keep us on guard staying in prayer and ready for your return. Amen

Patty Rimel, Council President





ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Would you like to schedule a date to sponsor Altar flowers? Please contact Patty Rimel through the Parish Office if you would like to arrange a date along with your dedication. You may also use the forms on the bulletin board at the side entrance.
- **REMINDER:** The prayer list will start over after January 1st, so if there is anyone you wish to remain on the 2025 list, please email or call the office. Thank you.
- Want to know more about what's going on in the Lutheran Church? Check out ELCA.org. You can find the latest news and events, ELCA blogs that keep up with the latest news from ministries, tons of Resources and you can learn more about the ELCA presiding Bishop Eaton.

Upcoming Events

January 19th

Town Hall Meeting 10:00am

January 26th

Annual Congregational Meeting 10:00am

Super Bowl Can Drive

Now through February 9th, bring in soup cans for the food bank.

Can we beat our score from last year?

YOU ARE HEREBY CHALLENGED!!

