



The Messenger

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL (WELS), GREEN BAY

December, 2023

When the Time Comes

— Pastor Ben Enstad

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son...

—Galatians 4:4a

My wife and I were just commenting on how fast time flies between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's the same 4 weeks it has always been, but life is so different for us now compared to when we were our children's ages. When children ask how long until Christmas for the tenth time, you might finally answer, "It will be Christmas when it's Christmas!" Or, "When the time comes, you'll know. We won't let you miss it."

Besides a couple of miraculous exceptions in the Old Testament (Joshua 10:12-14; 2 Kings 20:8-11), time has been moving on as it always has. It is perspective that changes how we view that time. Parents see four weeks until Christmas as crunch time to do all the things needed before Christmas comes. Children see the four weeks as an unnecessarily drawn out time between holidays.

Now think of God's Old Testament people waiting for the Savior to come! It seemed to them like an awfully long time, maybe even an empty promise. Consider their context when the set time had fully come. The pagan Roman government ruled over them. A non-Jew Edomite sat on David's throne in Jerusalem. The religious elite were more interested in praise from people and exter-

nal righteousness than in helping the people expectantly wait for the arrival of the Messiah.

What they couldn't see was God's plan working just the way he wanted. God worked all of history so that all things were just right when he sent his Son into the world. Greek was the common language throughout the Roman Empire. The period in which Jesus lived historians often call the *Pax Romana*, meaning that it was a time of great peace in the empire. The Romans had also built many roads throughout their empire so they could quickly move their armies. All these things would make it easier for God's Word to spread. The time was just right, everything was ready according to the plan God had put into effect with that first gospel promise.

Sometimes things seem to be going too fast, and other times too slow. As you and your families prepare for Christmas, remember that *When The Time Comes* for God to act according to his plan, he does! As you rush to get all the things done for Christmas you think you need to do, remember only one thing is needed. As your children get more and more impatient for Christmas to come, remember to draw their minds and hearts to the one thing needed. Take time to remember

But when the time had fully come,
GOD SENT HIS SON
born of a woman, born under law

Galatians 4:4



that Christmas is all about God sending his Son to be our Savior. And he did this when the set time had fully come. No sooner. No later.

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Family Preparations for Christmas

“Family Preparations for Christmas”

Midweek Advent Worship

You’ve been thinking about all the preparations that need to happen to make your family Christmas celebrations sparkle: gifts, decorations, food, activities, cleaning, clothes... — A long list.

Does that list include a little quiet time to help your soul sparkle? Does it include spiritual preparation for the celebration of our Savior’s birth for you and your family?

Make midweek Advent worship part of your family preparation for Christmas. Come and spend time in this season of preparation looking at a family — unlikely parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, and their baby boy, John — who were living examples of preparing for the Savior.

Midweek Advent Worship is on Wednesdays during Advent with services at both 3:45 and 6:30 p.m. Our “Family Preparations for Christmas” theme will explore these ideas:

December 6: Prayer Is Answered—son & SON — Luke 1:5-17

December 13: Don’t Doubt the Power of God — Luke 1:18-25

December 20: Faith Reveals Itself in Praise — Luke 1:57-79

Make Wednesdays easier for your family to worship by attending Advent Suppers, too. — No cooking for you! Convenient meals are held in the fellowship hall between services. Serving starts at 4:30 p.m., and goes until about 6:15.



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December 3 — First Sunday of Advent: He Is Coming to Save Us

December 10 — Second Sunday of Advent: Prepare to Meet Him

December 17 — Third Sunday of Advent: He Brings Perfect Joy

December 24 — Fourth Sunday of Advent: Just As God Promised



Please note these schedule changes: The way the calendar works this year, the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve are the same day — Sunday, December 24. In light of this, we plan to have only one service on Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. Bible Hour takes a Christmas break on December 24 and 31.

Christmas Eve Candlelight services are scheduled on December 24, at 2:30, 4:30., and 6:30 p.m.

“Everyone Outreach Christmas”

This fall’s outreach seminar, “Everyone Outreach,” asked participants to think of creative ways to bring people to Jesus and challenged them to carry out “I will...” goals (How are we doing on those goals, by the way?).

Even if you didn’t attend the seminars in September, though, outreach can be a wonderful goal for your Christmas celebrations. You can be like the angel, who said, “I bring you good news of great joy...” (This year’s Christmas worship theme, as you see from the graphic at the right.). You can be like the shepherds, who “spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.” Following are suggestions for us all to make this an “Everyone Outreach Christmas”

- Invite a friend to Christmas worship or Bible study with you. People are usually more open to attending church events at holiday times like Christmas.
- Grab a handful of the business card-sized reminders of our Christmas

service times. Hand the cards to people in stores or on the street. They are a non-threatening way to “invite”.

- Include a paragraph about the gospel in your Christmas card or family letter and share the gift of Jesus with your friends. Or encourage others to open the Bible and read the Christmas story for themselves. Maybe they will keep reading.
- Send a monetary gift or gift cards to a struggling individual or family. Your kindness may open a door to further conversations about your faith and why your heart is open to helping others because of how God has blessed you through Jesus.
- Deliver Christmas cookies to a neighbor with a gospel message attached.
- Visit a shut-in for a holiday chat.
- Tell a co-worker what you really mean when you say, “Merry Christmas!”
- Invite a stranger to Christmas dinner.
- Instead of rushing home to

open presents, take a few minutes to talk to visitors at our Christmas services.

- Help our congregation do more outreach by giving a special gift to church or to a mission project in honor of God’s gift to you.
- Do an end-of-the-year evaluation of your budget and your ministry support. Your support helps everyone do outreach.
- Teach your children to give to others by having them share unused toys or clothes with children in need.
- Plan your ongoing support for the “Built on the Rock” building project.

You’ll think of more ways to have an **“Everyone Outreach Christmas!”**



The Messenger

School News

— Principal Stephen Miller



During the 2023-2024 school year our FVL theme is 'Forever Faithful' with an emphasis on God's Faithfulness: "The LORD is faithful to all his promises."

During the second quarter we have emphasized God's faithfulness through grace.

On November 21, we held "Camp Readaway". Our students, big and small, had time to share their love of reading with each other. Our 6-8 grade students created a "camp" complete with tents in the gymnasium. We had both older students reading to younger students and younger students reading to older students!

While our students have already enjoyed many opportunities to sing in our church services, Advent and Christmas

present more times for them to share their gifts with the congregation. Upcoming singing dates include Advent Services on December 6 (3:45 and 6:30 p.m.) and our Children's Christmas services on December 16 (2:00 and 4:00 p.m.). We look forward to hearing them share the vocal gifts God has given them and pray that he continues to bless us with opportunities to praise him through our music.

December is also the beginning of our enrollment process here

at St. Paul Lutheran School. If you know of school-aged children who are not currently receiving the benefit of a Christian Education, please have those families reach out to me, at stephen.miller@stpaulgreenbay.com. I would love the opportunity to give a tour or speak with them further about what St. Paul can do for their families. Space is limited, so if they may have any interest, it would be good to reach out as soon as possible.



"Camp Readaway" photos

LWMS News

LWMS stands for **L**utheran **W**omen's **M**issionary **S**ociety. "LWMS is women dedicated to serving Jesus by increasing awareness of, interest in, and support of the mission outreach of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)".

St. Paul is a member of the LWMS Paperland Circuit. The LWMS Paperland Circuit is currently comprised of 33 WELS congregations located from Oshkosh to the tip of Door County. The St. Paul Ladies Aid pays the yearly LWMS membership (THANK YOU!!!) for our congregation. ALL confirmed women (yes, including the young teens) of our congregation are automatically

members of LWMS because our congregation is a member of LWMS. Learn more about LWMS at LWMS.org and/or just ask me, I love talking about LWMS. I have been serving as your LWMS Reporter since 2011. The role of Reporter is to connect congregations with LWMS and LWMS with congregations. It is a blessing to serve!

SAVE THE DATES:

- LWMS Paperland Circuit 2024 Spring Rally, April 20, at St. Paul, Winneconne. Immanuel, Town of Clayton will co-host.
- LWMS 2024 61st Annual

LWMS Convention, June 27-30, 2024

Hosted by Minnekota Circuit in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

- LWMS Paperland Circuit 2024 Fall Rally, October 12, at St. Matthew, Appleton. Eternal Love, Appleton will co-host.

May GOD continue to bless the efforts of our Missionaries and LWMS.

Lisa Koenig
LWMS Reporter
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Bay Area Life Center Christmas Campaign: This Christmas, the Bay Area Life Center is providing Kwik Trip and Wal-Mart gift cards to their guests in need. Donations are requested to help them purchase cards. Please use one of the BALC envelopes available in the narthex to direct your gift.

Ladies Aid in December is our annual Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 5, starting at 11:00 a.m. All ladies of the congregation are welcome. If you don't have a Secret Pal and would like to participate, just bring a wrapped gift to exchange.

Fellowship Breakfast: Everyone is invited to the monthly Fellowship Breakfast, held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Village Grille on Hoffman Road in Allouez (801 Hoffman Rd.). Please join us on December 12, 8:30 a.m. Please email Dennis or Liz Oberer at doberer@new.rr.com with questions.

Holiday Schedule

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Midweek Advent Worship: Family Preparations for Christmas.....Wednesdays, 3:45 & 6:30 p.m.
(See page 3 for details.)

St. Paul School Christmas Service.....Saturday, December 16, 2:00 & 4:00 p.m.
What a Story!

Christmas Eve Candlelight.....Sunday, December 24, 2:30, 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.
Good News of Great Joy: A Savior Has Been Born

Christmas Day Festival Worship.....Monday, December 25, 9:00 a.m.
Good News of Great Joy: God Became Man

New Year's Eve Communion Worship.....Sunday, December 31, 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Concerts

The Seminary Chorus, a 70-voice men's choir composed of students at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, will present its annual Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 10, at 3:00 and 7:00 p.m. in the campus auditorium. Featured will be traditional and contemporary anthems for choir and hymns and carols for the audience. There are no advanced ticket sales; a free will offering is appreciated. The seminary is located 11831 N. Seminary Dr. in Mequon. Find more information on Facebook and at wisluthsem.org.

The Fox Valley Lutheran High School Choirs invite you to attend their annual Christmas concert on Sunday, December 17, 4:00 p.m. The concert is free, and all are invited to join with the choirs as we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus! The concert will livestream on the FVL YouTube channel--check fvlhs.org for the link.

Luther Preparatory School presents its Christmas concerts on Sunday, December 17, 3:00 p.m., and on Thursday, December 21, 10:00 a.m. These concerts in praise of our Savior's birth are also livestreamed at lps.wels.net/apps/pages/lpsconcertsstream

Martin Luther College's Christmas Concert is presented Saturday, December 2, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 3, at 4:00 p.m. in the MLC Chapel of the Christ. The combined choirs of Martin Luther College, the Wind Symphony, and the Hosanna Ringers invite you to open the Advent season with this joyous campus tradition. The concerts can be seen online at livestream.com/mlc-streams.





St. Paul Lutheran Church exists to celebrate our freedom from sin, death, and hell through Jesus Christ; to nurture our church family with God's Word for lives of service to Him; and joyfully to share the good news of salvation with the world around us.

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL (WELS)

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Athens of America

from the WELS Missions Blogs

*Written by Rev. Joshua Koelpin,
home missionary at the new start
mission in Boston, MA*



My wife and I were walking in the Boston Logan Airport after returning from a trip, and on the wall there was a timeline of many Boston and greater-Boston area inventions. There was a picture of the first disposable blade razor put out by Gillette, a picture of the first microwave oven, a picture of Mark Zuckerberg in his Harvard dorm room inventing Facebook, and those are just a few of many others. Why do you think the city of Boston chose that exhibit to go on the wall of their airport? I wasn't sitting in on the meetings that decided it, but I would guess it is because Boston is proud of their many inventions. They want you to know, before you even step out of the airport, that Boston is a city of great minds, inventions, and innovation.

What does this have to do with starting a church in Boston? That's a good question. I think there are several facts about our mission that do make it innovative or different than other settings. For one, WELS has never had a church in Boston. Secondly, seventy-five percent of the people who gathered in our house for Bible study last week don't own a car. Finally, my wife and I live in the most densely populated city in all New England. Maybe that makes this mission start "innovative." But the more I thought about it, and the more time you'd spend here, you'd realize that we really aren't that innovative.

What does your normal day look like? This question is asked all the time, and for good reason; people want to know what it is like starting a mission church in a big city. Again, in so many ways, it isn't all that inventive. My wife and I find different ways to get involved in the community and meet people, we spend time with people over food, and we grow with them in our love for our community and Savior. We study the Word, we pray for each other, and the Holy Spirit continually uses that Word to work faith in people's hearts one by one. Do we have to be innovative with how we meet people? Sure. Will we have to be innovative with finding space to have worship when we are ready for that? Probably! But our tools for doing church planting are the same tools that have always been used for church planting – the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I'm not sure the first word you would use to describe our small mission church at this time is innovative or inventive. Yes, we have creative people and come up with new ways to reach the community, but our foundation is rooted in the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17). Thanks be to God for this opportunity to share the gospel to the many people of Boston! All involved on starting the church in Boston ask for your continued prayers as we continue to love God and love our neighbor in this great city.

A note from Peter: *There is a St. Paul connection to this article by way of our Youth Mission Trips to Grace Lutheran in Falls Church, Virginia. Katelyn Vollmer was the 3rd and 4th grade teacher at Grace, and she met Josh Koelpin when he served his vicar year there (I can tell you a story about that...). They married in early June of 2023, but they were still hanging around Virginia to help with Bible Camp—just before they moved to Boston to start mission work. I have shared teaching duties for Summer Bible Camp classes with both Katelyn and Josh — though not at the same time. If you've been on a Mission Trip to Falls Church, you may be able to find other Grace members in the photo above, which was taken at Josh's ordination and commissioning in Boston this past summer (I see you peeking out, Pastor Wattles!).*

December 2023

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 8:00 AM – Communion Service 9:15 AM – Bible Hour 10:30 AM – Communion Service Grades 1 & 2 sing 11:45 AM – Sunday Catechism Christmas Cookie and Candy Fest | 4 6:30 PM – Communion Service | 5 11:00 AM – Ladies Aid Christmas Party 6:30 PM – Outreach Committee Meeting 6:30 PM – ESL Class | 6 6:00 AM – Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 AM – Women’s Bible Study 3:45 PM – Midweek Advent Worship Grades 1-8 sing 4:30-6:15 PM – Advent Supper 6:30 PM – Midweek Advent Worship Grades 1-8 sing 7:30 PM – Church Choir Rehearsal | 7 9:00 AM – Bible Study 10:30 AM – Building Meeting 6:30 PM – ESL Class | 8 4:00-5:00 PM – Food Pantry Distribution | 9 |
| 10 8:00 AM – Service Junior Choir sings 9:15 AM – Bible Hour 10:30 AM – Communion Service 11:45 AM – Sunday Catechism | 11 5:30 PM – PTO Meeting 6:30 PM – Service | 12 8:30 AM – Fellowship Breakfast 5:30 PM – Tech Committee 6:00 PM – Board of Stewardship 6:30 PM – ESL Class 6:30 PM – Board of Christian Education 7:00 PM – Board of Member Care | 13 6:00 AM – Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 AM – Women’s Bible Study 3:45 PM – Midweek Advent Worship 4:30-6:15 PM – Advent Supper 6:30 PM – Midweek Advent Worship 7:30 PM – Church Choir Rehearsal | 14 9:00 AM – Bible Study 10:30 AM – Building Meeting 6:30 PM – ESL Class | 15 | 16 2:00 and 4:00 PM – St. Paul Lutheran School Children’s Christmas Service |
| 17 8:00 AM – Communion Service 9:15 AM – Bible Hour 10:30 AM – Communion Service 11:45 AM – Sunday Catechism | 18 6:30 PM – Communion Service | 19 6:30 PM – Church Council 6:30 PM – ESL Class | 20 6:00 AM – Breakfast Bible Study 9:00 AM – Women’s Bible Study 3:45 PM – Midweek Advent Worship 4:30-6:15 PM – Advent Supper 6:30 PM – Midweek Advent Worship 7:30 PM – Church Choir Rehearsal | 21 Christmas Break begins. — No school through January 3 9:00 AM – Bible Study 10:30 AM – Building Meeting 6:30 PM – ESL Class | 22 | 23 |
| 24 9:00 AM – Service 2:30, 4:30 & 6:30 PM – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service | 25 9:00 AM – Christmas Day Festival Worship | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 8:00 AM – Communion Service 10:30 AM – Communion Service 6:30 PM – New Year’s Eve Worship | | | | | | |