

Address:

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Website:

stpaulsbremen.org
facebook.com/stpaulsbremen

Church Office Hours:

M,W,Th, F 8:30 – 11:30 am

Sunday Schedule:

Worship: 8 & 10:30 am
Sunday School & Adult
Bible Class: 9:15 am
Unity Sunday: 9:30 am with
Sunday School following

Pastors:

Rev. Roger Rohde
Office Hours:
M & Th 8:30 – 11:30
1-574-209-0306 (H)

Rev. Neil Wonnacott
Office Hours:
W & F 8:30 – 11:30
1-574-301-9291 (H)

As I come upon the Christmas season this year, my mind has been focused on Christmases past and how their observance has changed through the years. When I was a little boy we had our children's Christmas Eve service and then went home to open presents. Once married with small children we opened gifts following Christmas Day services, but before the presents were opened the children put on a Christmas play or musical orchestrated by Jeri. When the children got older we vacationed at French Lick and celebrated Christmas around the fireplace with Scripture Readings, guitar music, and words of reflection. Today our family Christmas is celebrated at one of the children's homes where gifts are exchanged and the grandchildren sing some songs they learned written by Jeri.

Pondering all this has brought both joy and sadness to my heart. Seeing traditions change is not always easy. Yet, I am filled with gratitude to know that while traditions observing Christmas change the message of Christmas remains the same: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have life everlasting" (John 3:16).

The importance of keeping the message of Christmas central to our Christmas traditions is pointed out through a painting created by the British painter, Benjamin Haydon (1786-1846). The painting to which I refer displayed the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Benjamin had made the animal so big in the painting that Jesus virtually went unnoticed.

As we have all seen our traditions celebrating Christmas change, what is important to remember and focus on is the One Who came from heaven to earth to give us the gift of everlasting life in heaven. May we all make sure that our traditions don't take the focus off of Christ, but that in our traditions Christ always remains the focus of Christmas.



Lessons in Stewardship: Stewardship of God's Word

When we think of stewardship we normally think of money, the church offering, and the church budget. Yet, stewardship is about far more than these things. In this article I would like us to think about the stewardship of God's Word. We are led to reflect on this aspect of stewardship at this time of year when we consider these words of the Christmas story found in the Gospel of Luke: "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (2:19). Mary heard the shepherds tell her of the message the angels delivered to them while they were watching their sheep. She took that message to heart and carried it with her to Jesus' death and resurrection. The message was that Jesus is the appointed one sent by God the Father to lay down His life for the sins of all mankind. The word she heard from the shepherds was to be her comfort at the foot of the cross, at Jesus' tomb, and upon her own death.

To be a steward of God's Word means that we are faithful in hearing, reading, and studying it. Jesus said, "If you continue in My Word, you are My disciples indeed" (John 8:31). Beside hearing and studying God's Word, we are to be stewards of God's Word by putting it into practice in our daily lives. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice..., and they follow Me" (John 10:27). Finally, a faithful steward of God's Word shares that Word with others. Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach (declare) the good news to all people" (Mark 16:15).

I have heard it said that you do not have to go to church to be a Christian. Yet, it is quite obvious as God speaks about the stewardship of His Word that people who are Christians hear the Word, live the Word, and share the Word.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY EPISTLE IS DECEMBER 20TH!!! Epistle articles, comments, ideas may be deposited in the epistle box in the Narthex mail slots or better yet e-mailed to Deb Burcham at dburcham@stpaulsbremen.org. I appreciate all of your articles, ideas and comments!

Operating budget fund balance as of November 21, 2018 - \$50,700 LCEF gym loan balance as of October 18, 2018 - \$0
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Mark your calendar!

The next Scrip Order date is Sunday, December 2nd. We have a holiday gift guide, available to all, in the Bethany Room. Our Scrip inventory is also available for purchasing, throughout the week in the school/church offices, from 8:00-11:30 am, daily. The profits from this program are currently supporting our youth and chaperones who are registered to attend the 2019 LCMS National Youth Gathering in Minnesota. We appreciate your support of this program and our youth!

Thank you to all who have contributed to our **box top collection!** We have collected over 4,000 box tops this year which equates to over \$400 for our school! Please continue to drop these off in our box top collection tin in the school and thank you!

Free Chili Supper on December 1st at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall. We encourage you to invite a friend to dinner and then to the Blackwood Quartet Concert at 7pm. This is a Thrivent sponsored meal, hosted by Parish Fellowship. Let us come together for a time of fellowship and fun!

Midweek Advent Meal and Service on December 5th. The meal is sponsored by the Parish Fellowship Board. The menu consists of baked pastas, garlic bread, salad and cookies. This is a Thrivent sponsored meal. Parish Fellowship will be supplying the drinks and dinnerware. Let us come together and feast on good food and the Word of God.

Congregational Christmas Caroling, Sunday, December 9th at 4:00pm. You are invited to come and make a joyful noise unto the Lord and to the shut-ins of our church and community. We will meet in the Bethany room at 4:00pm to break up into groups and then go out and sing. At 6:00pm we will return to the church for dinner and fellowship. Please bring a dessert to share at the meal. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Come and share the Good News of Christmas!

Midweek Advent Meal and Service on December 12th. The meal is sponsored by the Public Relations Board. The menu consists of chili, cornbread and cookies. This is a Thrivent sponsored meal. Parish Fellowship will be supplying the drinks and dinnerware. Let us come together and feast on good food and the Word of God.

Children's Christmas Service is <u>December 19th</u> at 7pm. Christmas Eve – Sunday, <u>December 24th</u> at 7pm Christmas Day – Monday, <u>December 25th</u> at 9am

St. Paul's will be collecting peanut butter (16 to 16.3 oz jars) for the Bremen Bags (a Project HELP program) during December. Please place your donations on the table at the back of the Narthex. Monetary donations may be placed in the offering plate in an envelope marked Peanut Butter. Each Friday during the school year, volunteers from Bremen Bags deliver a bag of non-perishable food items to be sent home with a qualifying student. There is no cost to be in this program. Sponsored by St. Paul's Board of Stewardship.

Pastor Wonnacott will be on vacation December 26th through January 6th.

Board Briefs:

Christian Education:

Reminder!! Our Sunday School gives \$75.00 each month to a mission!!

December Mission of the Month: Bethesda Lutheran Communities

Headquartered in Watertown, Wis., Bethesda is a national Christian organization, providing homes and other services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1904. Bethesda strives to become a central point of connection that unites people who have disabilities with communities and provides essential resources to help them live their lives to the fullest through more than 300 programs across the country.

For more information, go to <http://www.bethesdalca.org>.

Thursday morning Women's Bible Study has changed their study time to accommodate more people! They will be meeting on Thursday mornings from 9:30 - 11:00 am starting October 25th. All ladies are invited to attend.

Church Office: Membership changes

Baptized: 11-18-2018

Henry Eric Sarber

Robert William Schmidt

Parish Fellowship:

Euchre Party is Friday, December 7^t, from 7-9:00pm in the Bethany Room. Anyone 16 and older can join us for fun and fellowship, and please bring a snack to share. Please bring cards and a card table if possible. Beverages will be provided. Come and bring a friend!

Altar Guild: December attendant is Dorothy Sahlhoff.

Altar Flowers in December:

2
9 Larry & Beth Enders/Wonnacott
16
23
30

The Altar Flower Chart for the 2018 Liturgical Year is hanging in the Narthex (North side), just outside the altar guild room door. Please look it over and sign up for flowers.

Bible Study Opportunity!

BE LIFTED UP !

James 4:10 – “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up”

Every two weeks, a group of men from St. Paul’s meet for breakfast and Bible study at Bremen Community Hospital in the cafeteria conference room. The study comments, conversation and fellowship make this a great way to start a day by feeding our physical and spiritual hungers.....we study God’s word and obtain the “lift” to start our day!

Come, join us and bring a friend along. We start at 6:30 AM and finish at 7:30 AM. If you have questions, see Dave Burcham or Pastor Rohde. Here are dates for 2018: Dec 5, 19

The **Ladies Encouragement Group** wants you! All women of the congregation are welcome to join us for Bible study in the Jerusalem Room on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month at 7:00 pm. Not sure about starting something new? Join us for our Christmas gathering on December 16 at 6 pm for fun, fellowship and faithful service at 4360 3rd Road! Bring an ornament to exchange and a snack to share (if you wish). Call Joanna at 248-0549 for directions or more information.



SCHOOL NEWS AND NOTES

School Office phone: 546-2790

e-mail: schools@stpaulsbremen.org

DECEMBER 2018

Our SCHOOL THEME for the 2018-2019 school year is Real. Present. God. It is based on Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble..... ." We give thanks to God for His continuing grace!

CHAPEL OFFERINGS: Offerings from our Chapel services go to support the various ministries listed below (as well as the Tuition Aid Fund):

Nov./Dec.	Rev. Micah Wildauer: Togo
Jan./Feb.	Seminarian Support
March	Camp Lutherhaven
April	Jamielynn Tinkey: Dominican Republic
May	Worship Anew (formerly "Worship for Shut-ins")

BASKETBALL: This month our Basketball teams get very busy.

Dec. 8	HERE 7/8 Basketball Tournament (times to be announced)
Dec. 11	HERE vs. Trinity, Elkhart at 4:30 & 5:30 PM (2 games)
Dec. 13	HERE vs. Immanuel, Valpo at 5:30 & 6:30 PM (2 games)
Dec. 17	HERE vs. MCAC Wildcats at 4:30 & 5:30 PM (2 games)
Dec. 20	AWAY vs. Resurrection Lutheran (So. Bend) at 4:30 PM

WE COULD USE YOUR HELP: We want to offer our CHRISTIAN education to more students. The best way to get information about our school out to the community is by you talking to others, or by you forwarding names to us so that we can send information to them. Please pray for our school, its faculty and staff, and the students and families we serve. Your help is greatly appreciated!

BE A VOLUNTEER THIS YEAR! We welcome all helpers, even one-time helpers. We can use your assistance with a variety of tasks. If you would like to help please contact a teacher or the school office. We thank God for all of our VOLUNTEERS. You are highly appreciated!

THE TUITION AID FUND seeks your contributions to help those who desire a Christian Education for their children but who need a little help to meet the costs. Your generosity will greatly benefit the cause of Christian Education for both members and non-members.

NOTE: Contact the church or school office if you have questions concerning scheduling the use of any of the facilities

***Please check the Church Calendar for other school events.

December Devotion: “He Hears The Feeble Cry!”

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. Isaiah 65:24-25

There is a distinct tonal quality in each voice. Friends call on the phone, and after only a word or two we recognize the speaker on the other end of the line. As blind Isaac identified Jacob, the younger of his twin sons, by his voice, so we know the familiar sound of a family member speaking with us.

Our recognition of voices, however, is very limited, especially when compared with the staggering ability of God. His ears detect the feeblest cry. The multitude of voices that rise up to Him never overtax the switchboard of either His omniscience or His grace.

It is not the pleasing tone of voice or the persuasive petition that causes God to listen. He hears the repentant sigh of the sinner, the sobs of the hurt spirit, the whisper of the soul in need, and the groan of the one in pain.

God hears even before the words are formed in the larynx and on the lips. He understands when the first impulse of faith in Jesus Christ, prompted by the Spirit, comes into being. And when His children gratefully respond to His goodness, the echo of their praise delights His heart.

PRAYER: My faith is so shallow! Teach me, Lord, to pray.
Amen.