



St. Paul Lutheran Church

The Church on the Highway

Loving others into the Love of Christ

March 2025 Edition

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A Message From Our Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Brian Hesse

Email: pastorhesse@splcwaco.com

Lent Is Here!

It was the first day in the office after a great Hawaiian vacation. The quilters were kind enough to share with me a piece of their "King Cake" in celebration of the Mardi Gras season typically celebrated during the Epiphany season. For the first time ever, I received the baby in my piece of the King Cake. Tradition states that I would be greeted with blessings of good luck and a prosperous year as well as getting to be king for a day. Most important, I now have the opportunity to host or provide the quilters group the King Cake next year. I hope the quilters don't let me forget to do it!

The baby in the king cake is a reminder of the baby Jesus. The baby who is the true king of kings hidden in human flesh for our salvation, this is the symbol of the baby hidden in the king cake. The epiphany celebration of Jesus coming into the world will end on Fat Tuesday the day before Ash Wednesday. As fun as it is to receive the baby in my piece of king cake, it is a reminder that this month begins the season of Lent.

Lent, the season we focus on Jesus being our savior from all sin. After some deliberation, we considered another 40-day focus similar to last year's *Red Letter Challenge*. Instead, this year our focus is squarely on Jesus, our Savior, our King, our Friend. **This year we will focus on a newly published series for Lent that "provides us with a perfect chance to explore the extraordinary attributes of our Savior, Servant, and Friend, Jesus. It is a time to marvel at the many blessings we received when he laid down his life for us on the cross and then rose victorious from the grave. Each service in this series dwells upon a different aspect of our greatest Friend and what each characteristic means to us as his followers and friends."**

In addition to what I believe will be a great series, we will be attempting a new offering of format as well. We will continue to offer both our 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. services. Our Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services will remain unchanged in format along with the new theme. Our morning services will continue to be held in the sanctuary as usual. The evening Wednesday mid-week services will held in the Albers Family Life Center. We will worship together, gathered around the tables with a supper meal and meaningful reflection upon Jesus our Friend, our Savior and our King.

If you choose to join us for an evening lent service gather in the Albers Family Life Center, bring a friend, bring your family and we will eat together. There will be no need to rush in order to feed your family. We hope to finish our worship service before your children's bedtime. We want to try this new format so everyone can experience the blessings of the Lent season and grow closer to Jesus.

In His Service
Pastor Hesse



Sunday Worship
8am & 10:30am

Online: www.splcwaco.com

Bible Class/Sunday School
9:15am

SAVIOR. SERVANT. FRIEND





A Message From Our Youth & Family Director

Josh McNamara, D.C.E.

Email: FamilyMinistry@splcwaco.com

"Rooted in Christ"

It's hard to believe that we are already in March. It feels like just a few days ago we were celebrating Christmas and celebrating the start of the new year. Whether we are ready for it or not, the Spring season is almost here. When I think of Spring I can't help but think of themes like: new life, growth and renewal. What sort of things do you think of when you begin to think of the season of Spring?

As long as we are on this side of heaven, we as Christians are constantly called to follow Jesus closer and to grow in our walk with Him. We hear different instances in scripture about what this looks like through the lens of things like seeds and roots. Some notable examples of this are in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23) and in places like Jeremiah 17:7-8. We are encouraged to deepen our roots with God, by trusting Him, by walking with Him daily and by listening to what He tells us in His Word.

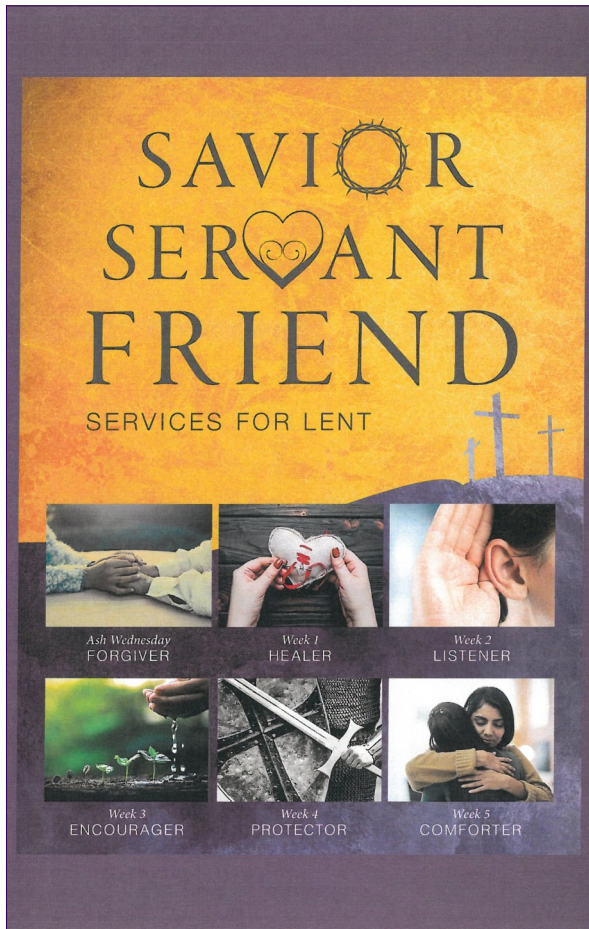
At different intervals in life we may find ourselves struggling with this. Perhaps it is because of some doubts or reservations that we have about our faith. Maybe in this current season of your life you find yourself busier than you have been in the past. Whatever the reason may be, it's unfortunately quite easy for us to get out of sync with our daily walk with Christ. In this age of instant emails, the constant bombardment of smartphone notifications from this app or another and with everything vying for our attention from our family members to the latest happenings in the 24-hour news cycle and everything in between.

This is when, like the one who trusts in the Lord from Jeremiah 17, we need to remember to keep the first things first in our lives. Why? So that we can deepen our roots and can experience more of what the Father has to offer us. The beautiful thing is that there isn't necessarily a "one-size-fits-all" approach to what this looks like and how to do it "well". For some people it can look like an early morning, perhaps even before the sun has risen, to seek God in the quiet place. To hear His still, small voice, reminding you that You are His and that nothing can separate you from His love. For others, this may look like listening to a devotional; perhaps as a podcast or maybe hearing the Word of God read via a Bible app. Listening to hymns and worship music can also be a great way to help recenter yourself when you start to feel stressed or overwhelmed with the day-to-day stresses of life.

Regardless of whether you like to spend time with God first thing in the morning, late at night, on your commute to school, work or anywhere else that you might need to be that day, the important thing is that we are constantly going back to Him, our source of rest, wisdom, spiritual renewal and even of life itself. Yes, we all stumble from time to time in this area of our lives. But what's important is that we continue to find ways to stay connected and rooted in Christ. As we near the Spring season I encourage you to begin to ask yourself: "How might God want me to continue growing my roots deeper with Him?"

As we begin to ask questions like these and continue to turn to God for guidance in our devotional life and in our prayers, He will show us the ways that we can continue to grow in our relationship with Him. And again, it's okay if how you grow in your relationship with God differs from that of others. God is meeting you right where you are, in this time and season of your life, so that you can learn to lean on Him more, to trust Him more and to seek Him more with each passing day.

May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, continue to guard our hearts and minds and may the Holy Spirit continue to embolden us not to conform to the patterns of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, through the redemptive work of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.



Lent provides us with a perfect chance to explore the extraordinary attributes of our Savior, Servant, and Friend, Jesus. It is a time to marvel at the many blessings we received when he laid down his life for us on the cross and then rose victorious from the grave. Each service in this series dwells upon a different aspect of our greatest Friend and what each characteristic means to us as his followers and friends.

March 5, Ash Wednesday • Forgiver

Jesus forgives us again and again, even though we do not deserve it.

11:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion in the Sanctuary
6:00 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion in the Sanctuary

March 12, Week 1 • Healer

Jesus heals us when we are wounded and weakened by sin.

- 11:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion in the Sanctuary (Senior Adults Monthly Fellowship Luncheon follows)
- 6:00 p.m. Worship & Fellowship Meal in the Albers Family Life Center

March 19, Week 2 • Listener

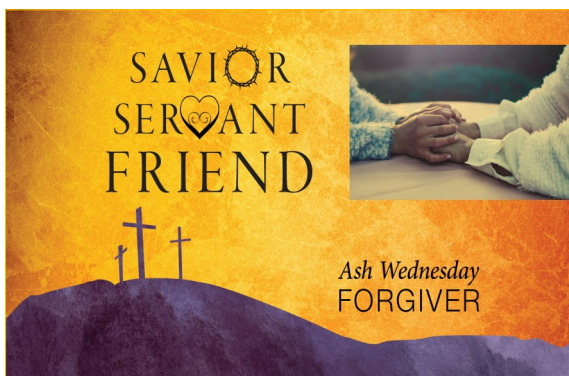
Jesus listens to us like no other and answers our questions and concerns.

- 11:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary
- 6:00 p.m. Worship & Fellowship Meal in the Albers Family Life Center

March 26, Week 3 • Encourager

Jesus encourages us in our faith to live our life for him.

- 11:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary
- 6:00 p.m. Worship & Fellowship Meal in the Albers Family Life Center



Join us for the Savior, Servant, Friend special service for Ash Wednesday, on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, as we begin the season of Lent contemplating that Jesus is our Forgiver. We remind ourselves that Jesus forgives us again and again by his cross, even though we do not deserve it.

**11:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
6:00 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
(both services will be held in the Sanctuary)**



This Lenten season we are going to try a new format for Wednesday evening worship.

Evening Worship will begin in the Albers Family Life Center at 6:00 p.m. The worship will include a meal, message, prayers, songs and fellowship. This new format will not affect the 11:00 a.m. worship services, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday; as these services will all be held in the Sanctuary.

March 12: Board of Fellowship
Nachos/Taco Salad

March 19: LWML
"Brupper" (breakfast for supper)

March 26: Adult Choir
Baked Potato Bar

Please Remember in Your Prayers:

- † We pray for continued healing for all those who have suffered physical problems in the last month, including: (a complete list is available through the church office). We pray the Lord lay His healing hand upon them.
- † We pray for those on hospice care, including: (a complete list is available through the church office). May the Lord provide them comfort and peace.
- † We pray for all who are undergoing cancer diagnosis/treatment, including: (a complete list is available through the church office). We pray the Lord keep His healing hand upon them.
- † We pray for all who struggle with ongoing health concerns, including: (a complete list is available through the church office). We pray the Lord keep His healing hand upon them.
- † We pray for all who are home-bound, including: (a complete list is available through the church office). We pray the Lord give them comfort and peace with their living situation.
- † We pray for all those in nursing care or assisted/independent living facilities, including: (a complete list is available through the church office). We pray the Lord will give them comfort and peace with their living situation.
- † We pray for those who have lost loved ones in the past month, including: (a complete list is available through the church office). May the Lord provide these families comfort and peace during their time of grief.
- † We pray for those serving in our Armed Forces (a complete list is available through the church office). We pray the Lord keep them safe in their stead as they defend our freedom and safety.

Prayer requests for illnesses, hospitalizations and recovery are listed for 4 weeks. If you wish to remain on the prayer list, please provide the office with an update by calling (254.799.3211) or send an email to: wecare@splcwaco.com. Without an update, we will remove that person from the prayer list hopeful that all is well. We are always willing to take new or renewed requests at any time.



TRI-CITIES MINISTRIES TOILETRIES COLLECTION

The St. Paul Beacon Committee is hosting a toiletries collection to benefit Tri-Cities Ministries on Sunday, March 30. They are collecting the following items: toothpaste, toothbrush, gallon-size Ziploc bags, deodorant, razor, small shaving cream, bar soap, shampoo/conditioner, combs, wash cloths, hand lotion, and small laundry detergent.

Donations can be left in the cradle outside the Albers Family Life Center.

If you have questions about this collection, please contact Beth Hassell.

If you would like to learn more about Tri-Cities Ministries or find out how you can get involved in this ministry, please schedule an appointment Ryan Simpson at 254.777.5229.

2nd Sunday snacks & fellowship



Make plans to join us for our **"Second Sunday Snacks & Fellowship"** starting right after first service (9:00 a.m.) and ending at 9:30 a.m. This will be served in the Albers Family Life Center.

We encourage ALL to come and enjoy a quick bite and fellowship with the church family.

Any questions can be directed to the Fellowship Committee.



Those who are scheduled to Serve at SPLC for March 2025

Listed by Initial and last name to protect their identity

ELDER OF THE MONTH:

T Harrington

ACOLYTES:

- 3/2 M Scmedthorst (8:00am)
W Hatfield (10:30am)
3/5 J Vicha(6:00pm, Ash Wed.)
3/9 B Petrich (8:00am)
C Gonzalez (10:30am)
3/16 K Gerik (8:00am)
E Tindle (10:30am)
3/23 D Sterriker (8:00am)
J Vicha (10:30am)
3/30 L Breton (10:00am - Friendship Sunday)

LAY READERS

- 3/2 B Strickland (8:00am)
T Elmore (10:30am)
3/9 K Rogers (8:00am)
D Bracciale (10:30am)
3/16 M Borchardt (8:00am)
M Weaver (10:30am)
3/23 J Lieb (8:00am)
D Galler (10:30am)
3/30 J Kersten (10:00am - Friendship Sunday)

USHERS FOR WORSHIP

- 8:00am Worship: Group 5
R Shelton, H Pick, H Strickland, L Springman, M Perry,
D Tynes, C Morgan
10:30am Worship: Group 6
D Reinke, R Randolph, S Reinke, D Galler, D Bood, T Randolph
6:00pm Ash Wednesday Worship: Group 1
J Lamar, C Morgan, B Gilcrest, Bi Dube, J Ehlers, M Borchardt,
C Hesse
6:00pm March 12 Lenten Worship: Group 2
T Harrington, B Kubitzka, R Bolen, C Tindle, N Gonzalez,
B Strickland
6:00pm March 19 Lenten Worship: Group 3
L Payne, E King, M Lynch, B Leftwich, D Schwarz, R Faulknor,
T Filer
6:00pm March 26 Lenten Worship: Group 4
K Koester, J Kersten, B Hand, B Kubitzka, G Hurta, D Prikryl

SUNDAY MORNING GREETERS:

- 3/2 A & S Lassetter (8:00am)
G Hurta (10:30am)
3/9 D & G Tynes (8:00am)
B Reinhardt (10:30am)
3/16 Bi Dube (8:00am)
L Graf (10:30am)
3/23 F & D Kubitzka (8:00am)
L Outlaw (10:30am)
3/30 M Dutschmann (10am - Friendship Sunday)

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS

- 3/2 K Kubitzka (9:00am)
J Petrich (10:15am)
3/9 J Petrich (9:00am)
J Uptmore (10:15am)
3/16 W Ehlers (9:00am)
C Borchardt (10:15am)
3/23 C Borchardt (9:00am)
J Uptmore (10:15am)
3/30 W Ehlers (9:00am)
K Kubitzka (10:00am)

A Nursery Ministry Interest Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 6. This meeting is for anyone who has benefitted from our nursery ministry; those currently serving in the nursery, anyone who has served in the nursery previously, or anyone who may be interested in serving the nursery. ***We love new ideas and partners, current, past and NEW!*** (Lunch will be provided). If you are interested in partnering with us in this ministry, please contact the Director of Youth & Family Ministry, Josh McNamara, in the church office.

ALTAR FLOWERS:

- 3/2 C & H Tindle
3/5 D & N Newman (Ash Wed.)
3/9 L & J Swiggum
3/12 **OPEN** (Lent)
3/16 D & T Albers
3/19 **OPEN** (Lent)
3/23 L & C Graf
3/26 **Open** (Lent)
3/30 G & J Haverkamp

There are still many openings throughout 2025.

If your family would like to place flowers on the altar in celebration of a special date or in memory of a loved one, please select an available date on the flower chart located in the Narthex. You may use the florist of your choice and have the flowers delivered to the church before noon on Friday, or before 10am for Wednesday services.

LWML @ SPLC

March Blessings! Our Spring Central Texas Zone Event is this month. This is not just for those who are a member of LWML, but for **ALL WOMEN**, Lutheran or not. I am especially excited about the speaker for this event. Susan Maluschka is a fellow Lutheran, fellow Texan and author. She has published two bible study books that I can't wait to read and study: *Watching Movies with Christian Eyes* and *Nameless Women of the Bible*.

If you would like to attend, please contact Jacqueline Uptmore (contact information is available in the church office) **by Monday, March 17.**

Please consider joining us for a lovely day with fellow Christian women, a great speaker and great food.



CENTRAL TEXAS LWML ZONE
INVITES **ALL** WOMEN TO THE
SPRING EVENT 2025

THEME: "Ordinary Gifts, Extraordinary God" "The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands. Psalm 138:8 ESV

Speaker: *Susan Maluschka, Christian Author, Blogger, & Speaker*

Where: *TRINITY Lutheran- Riesel*

When: *March 22, 2025*

Time: *Registration begins at 8:30 am*

Event begins at 9:30am Cost: \$10

In gathering: *Five Loaves, Two Fishes Food Bank of Riesel* Items needed:

peanut butter, canned corn, canned green beans and canned fruit.

A light breakfast will be served. Then a light lunch will be served following the meeting.

RSVP BY *Mon., March 17, 2025* to Debbie Rollins 254-749-0642 (call or text).

You may want to bring extra \$\$\$: *as Mrs. Maluschka will have copies of her books for sale.*

Also, Trinity has new Cookbooks for purchase at \$25 each. Proceeds go to Riesel Food Pantry.



Nominations for Church Officers

The St. Paul Nominating Committee has been formed for the Church elections to be held on Sunday, April 27, 2025. The following have been elected to the nominating committee (a list of all those serving on this committee is available in the church office). They will serve along with Pastor Hesse and Bill Dube.

The nominating committee will be seeking recommendations for the offices of:

- Chairman of the Congregation
- Treasurer
- Chair, Board of Youth Ministry
- Chair, Board of Stewardship
- Chair, Board of Outreach
- Four Elders

The nominating committee was introduced in both services on Sunday, February 9, 2025, and will accept recommendations from the congregation through Sunday, March 9, 2025. The slate of nominees will be introduced in both services on Sunday, April 13, with elections conducted in both services on Sunday, April 27, 2025. Additional information regarding the election day process will be provided in April. Please give prayerful consideration as to how you might use your talents in His service by serving the St. Paul family next year and please keep the nominating committee in your prayers.

ST. PAUL SENIOR ADULTS monthly fellowship luncheon will meet **on Wednesday, March 12, immediately following the 11:00 a.m. Lenten Worship Service (Holy Communion will be observed at the 11:00 a.m. service).** Everyone is invited to join us for this time of fellowship! **Desserts are appreciated for the luncheon, but not required.** If you have any questions, please call the church office (254.799.3211).

Bible Quiz

Complete this sentence which introduces a well-known Bible story: "The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of _____."

- A. flowers
- B. sheep
- C. rocks
- D. bones



Answer: D (See Ezekiel 37:1, 11V)



Please invite your family and friends to join us for worship and a time of celebration and fellowship with our church family!

On that Sunday morning, we will have Sunday School at 9:00 a.m. (this will include our 'Sunday School Rocks' Event) and ONE WORSHIP Service at 10:00 a.m.

Immediately following worship, everyone is invited to join us for a potluck lunch in the Albers Family Life Center. Please bring your favorite dish, salad, or dessert to share.

Classes for All Ages

Please join us for Sunday School and Bible Classes at 9:15 a.m.

Adult Bible Study (Albers Family Life Center)

Join us as we begin a new study: "Character Matters." This study is designed to begin conversations about the role of Christian character and what is ethical in the life of the Christian. Our goal is to be better equipped with what it means to be live our lives faithfully as God's people.

ASK PASTOR HESSE: Outside Pastor Hesse's office you will find a box to place any questions that you would like Pastor Hesse to answer during the Adult Bible Study class on Sunday mornings.

Men's Bible Class (classroom behind the Parish Hall)

This class is utilizing the study, *A Longer Look at the Lessons*. With this study, participants will delve deeper into each week's three Scripture readings based on the lectionary in Lutheran Service Book.

Ladies Bible Class (Conference Room)

This class is going through the study, *Significant - A Study of Women in Jesus' Genealogy: Six Ordinary Women, One Extraordinary God*, by Rachel Risner. How can we walk by faith in the face of uncertainty? Six women from the Bible faced their own uncertain times, and yet God used them to build His family. Learn from their stories alongside Rachel Risner as she teaches from the Bible how to be a woman of significance.

Simply Loved, Nursery - Fourth Grade Students (classroom)

Let's get back to the heart of what matters most! Simply help your kids love Jesus and each other. Every activity, song, and visual in *Simply Loved* is designed to help kids remember each lesson long after their children's ministry years. *Simply Loved* curriculum was created with the truth found in 1 John 4:7 in mind which says, 'Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.'

Catechesis Training, Fifth Grade (classroom)

Students in fifth grade meet for Catechesis Training on Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. with Deaconess Krahn in the Grades 5 classroom near the church library.

Resilient Minds, Sixth - Eighth Grade Students (classroom)

This class is utilizing the study, *Resilient Minds*. This is a Christ-centered study covering topics such as anxiety, emotions, Christian identity, and resiliency.

High School and College Students (Youth Room)

All high school and college students are invited to join in the Youth Room every Sunday for Bible Class! This will be a great time of study, building relationships, fellowship and fun! *Breakfast is usually served.*

Other Bible Study Opportunities:

College Student Evening Bible Study/Fellowship (LDLT - Lutherans Doing Life Together)

The LDLT group will resume their weekly Bible Study in the Spring. Please contact Karen Shelton or Pastor Hesse with any questions. **This group will NOT MEET on Monday, March 10 - Spring Break.**

Ladies Bible Study Group in the Conference Room

This group meets in the Conference Room on the First and Third Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. They are going through the study, *Golden Fruit: Living the Fruit of the Spirit Through the Best Times of Your Life*. This study will help Christian women put all of their various roles, characteristics, and emotions into perspective. Each session focuses on one fruit of the Spirit and considers how the lives and stories of nine biblical women convey that characteristic.

Youth Confirmation/Catechesis Training and Music (grades 5-8)

Grade 5 meets at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings for Catechesis Training with Dcs. Krahn in the Grade 5 classroom near the church library.

Grades 6-7 meets with Pastor Hesse in the Youth Room.

Grade 8 meets with DCE Josh McNamara in the Conference Room.

During the Lenten season, the Wednesday evening classes for grades 6-8 will begin at 7:15 p.m., following the 6:00 p.m. Lenten service in the Albers Family Life Center.

No Class for grades 6-8 on Wednesday, March 12 - enjoy your Spring Break

(Children/Youth Music is held on Wednesday evenings in the Music Room from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. to allow time for any student/family wishing to participate.)

There's a place for EVERYONE to be immersed in God's Word and fellowship with other Christians!

Children & Youth Activities

upcoming EVENTS

YOUTH MINISTRY EVENT(S):

- ◆ **Sunday, March 16th:** Weather-pending we will go to Pastor Hesse's new house to spend time in God's Word, to worship and to write scripture passages on the wooden beams of his house.
- ◆ **Sunday, March 16th** (*Back-Up Plan*): If the weather won't allow us to have the initial March Youth event at Pastor Hesse's house, then we will gather at St. Paul for a time of Bible study, worship, food, fellowship and games.
- ◆ **Sunday, March 23rd:** Next Faith Milestone Sunday for students in grades 1-3.
- ◆ **Sunday, March 23rd:** 3rd Pre-Gathering Bible study (at St. Paul): Our National Youth Gathering group will meet at St. Paul in the Family Life Center for our third Pre-Gathering Bible study, to enjoy food, fellowship and some games together. This event should last from 12pm-2pm.
- ◆ **June 8-11:** VBS - Registration and Volunteer Opportunities will be announced soon.
- ◆ **July 19-23:** National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, LA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY EVENT(S):

- ◆ **Sunday, March 30th** (5th Sunday) - Family Sunday School Event: Rock Garden: We will be re-doing the Rock Garden event for our next Family Sunday School event in the Albers Family Life Center during the 9:00 a.m. Bible Class hour.
- ◆ **June 8-11:** VBS - Registration and Volunteer Opportunities will be announced soon.

If you have any questions, please contact Director of Youth & Family Ministry, Josh McNamara, in the church office or see Angel Breton, Chair Children's Ministry; or Hannah Galler, Chair Youth Ministry.



Our 3rd Pre-Gathering Bible study event will be held at St. Paul on Sunday, March 23, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Food and beverages will be provided for our time there.

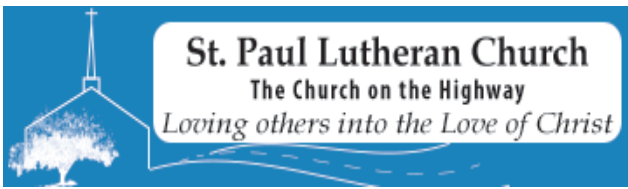
It is expected that all of our youth who are planning to go with us to New Orleans for the upcoming National Youth Gathering be in attendance for this Pre-Gathering Bible study event.

Sunday School ROCKS! March 30, 2025

"SUNDAY SCHOOL ROCKS EVENT"

All Adult and Children's Sunday School classes will meet in the Family Center during the Sunday School hour as a church family to paint prayer rocks to re-stock/update our outdoor rock garden.

A light breakfast will be served.



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