

THE SPECTRUM

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL-REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

**DECEMBER
2024**

Liturgies
8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School
9:15 a.m.

Confirmation
9:30 a.m.

Adult Forum
9:10 a.m.

Nursery
Kids with Attendant
9-11:45 a.m.

Livestream video via
SPR's FB page or look
in your e-mail on
Sunday mornings.

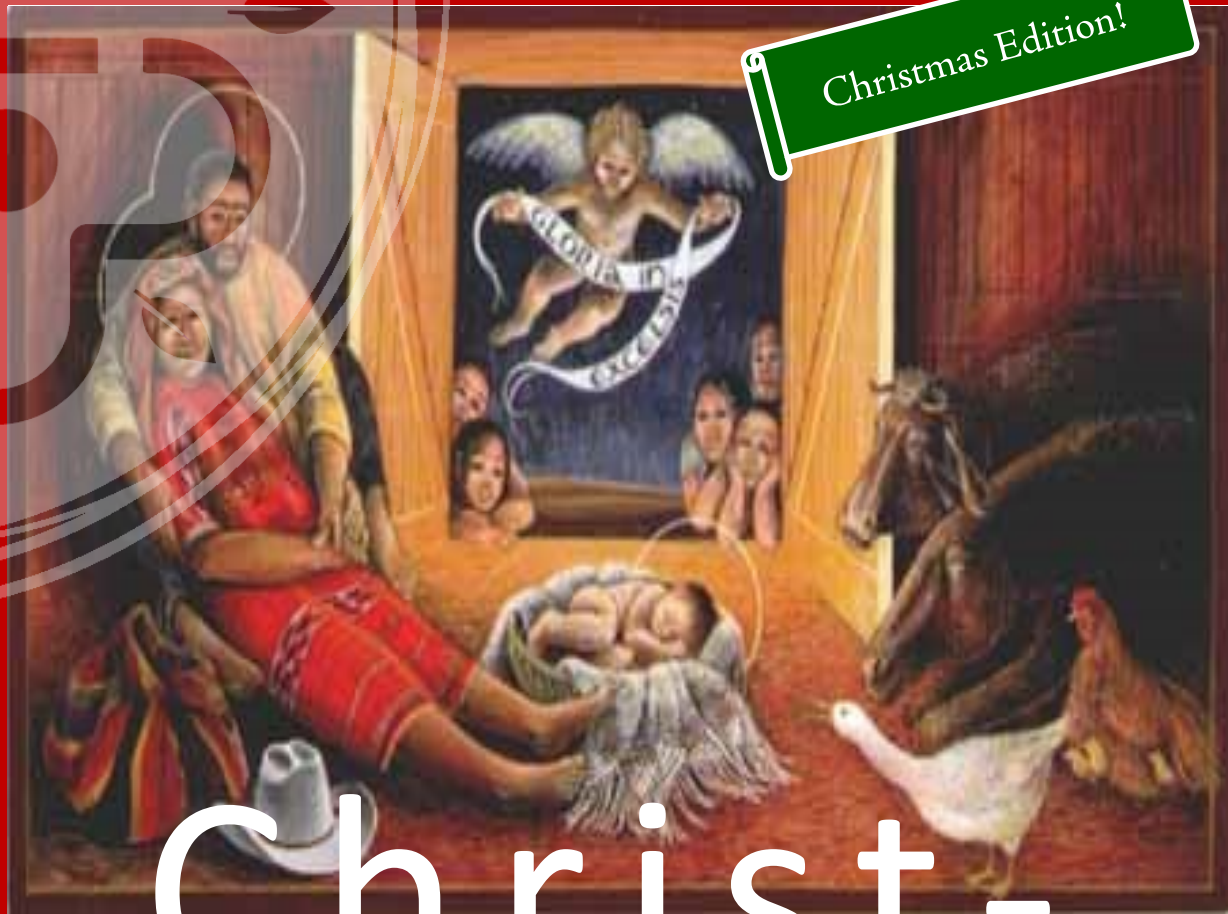
Visit us on the web!
www.stpaulref.org

St. Paul-Reformation is
a congregation of the
Evangelical
Lutheran Church in
America (ELCA).

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The Spectrum items, articles
and columns need to be to
the Parish Office by the 12th
of the month. The Spec-
trum goes to print on the
15th and this date is hard
and fast. Articles received
after the 12th may or may
not be included.

Christmas Edition!



christ-

at st. paul-reformation

Sunday, December 1, The First Sunday of Advent

🕯️ Return to two liturgies: 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 8, The Second Sunday of Advent

🕯️ Visit of St. Nicholas, 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 24, Christmas Eve

🕯️ 4:00 p.m. Instant Christmas Pageant

🕯️ 10:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Schola

Wednesday, December 25, Christmas Day

🕯️ 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Choir, Brass, and organ

Sunday, December 31, The First Sunday of Christmas

🕯️ One liturgy at 10:30 a.m.

Monday, January 6, The Epiphany

STARTING ON DECEMBER 1. SPR will again be hosting a Warming Hub in partnership with Ramsey County. This is the third year that we have partnered with the county to provide warmth and shelter for those without homes in Minnesota's cold winter months. In a twist, this year we will be hosting women and children, not just single women. Doubtless, this will change the dynamics—slightly—of how the Warming Hub functions, the messes that have to be cleaned up (read: it will probably be messy...which is the price of doing business...), and challenges with the way that little ones are functioning at daycare and school after a night sleeping on the church floor. Not ideal, true; but also much preferable to sleeping in a car or outside.

As we approach the birth of Jesus this Christmas, the point is that here—at SPR—there is “room in the inn.” And the circumstances of families keeping warm on the floor of the Lower Auditorium is not so different from the story that we hear from Luke of Mary and Joseph. Because we are so used to seeing them in sublime pastoral nativity art, it's sometimes necessary for a wake-up call as the circumstances at hand: a teenage mother giving birth out of wedlock, not knowing who the father is, and—essentially—homeless, seeking the benevolence of strangers who do the best they can, putting them with the animals because it was the best that could be done.

We know, of course, that Mary and Joseph were taken in, “guests” of whoever owned the house. The word “inn” is better understood as “guest room;” as in “the guest room of the house was already taken.” And, in our Lutheran understanding of things, it is perhaps fitting that the most important guest of all—Jesus—appears among the part of the house that is the least fitting: the attachment on to the main room where the animals would be locked in for safety and

warmth during the night.

Jesus Christ: guest.

Jesus Christ: born homeless.

Jesus Christ: not just then, but now.

Since last year's Warming Hub, SPR has welcomed several individuals into this worshipping community who have come to us through that effort. Often, these folk have complicated stories that—to be quite honest—are sometimes difficult to follow or don't quite make sense. But even so, just two months ago one of them gave me an offering envelope stuffed with \$100 in \$20's to be used “...in case any of the ladies from the shelter want to go to breakfast with you all at the Louisiana Café.” Thank you, as we put it aside and do our best to invite everyone to join us, reminding some—as necessary—that it is already paid for “by a generous giver.”

This is but just one example from the Warming Hub, and—weekly—this kind of hospitality happens in almost every ministry at SPR. From those who make and deliver meals to those who—this month—will go Christmas caroling; from one of our parents who faithfully plans Sunday School to musicians who sing; from those who make gifts of bees and goats to people they will never meet to those who sponsor school children that they will meet. In all of it—all of it! - God is revealing the promise of the incarnation: *I am with you.*

As you prepare to celebrate God's love this Christmas, I leave you with a poem by Robert Herrick:

*Christ, he requires still, wheresoe'er he comes
To feed or lodge, to have the best of rooms:
Give him the choice; grant him the nobler part
Of all the house: the best of all's the heart.*

There is room at the inn; welcome!

+Pr. Patrick Shebeck



*“...God is revealing
the promise of the
incarnation: I am
with you.”*

FROM THE CANTOR

One of the things I love about the Holy Spirit is how she works through the things we've planned and gives them a twist to make new meanings shine forth. This happens for me all the time in worship: I read our lectionary texts repeatedly, listening for themes and thinking about what hymns would help amplify those themes. Then, something unexpected happens during the week, or Pr. Patrick says something in his sermon that makes a line of text sparkle out at me in a way that makes me realize, "Oh, *that* was the message I needed to hear." I pray this happens for you, too, in the words of Scripture that are proclaimed and the poetry of hymns that we sing. One of these areas in which this has been poignant this year is the intersection of the election and this end-of-the-church-year emphasis on the reign of Christ. As November fades into Advent, we are in a mixed-up Kairos time, waiting for Christ to come again in glory and waiting for the birth of Jesus. We're looking forward and backward to the promises of God. The incarnation shows us who God is: not someone who comes in might, but who comes in weakness and vulnerability. Did you ever notice how a "helpless" baby is the one who knows how to get the attention of everyone in the room? It's a different strategy for power. The kingdom of God is an upside-down world – or rather it turns our upside-down thinking the right way up – like the Magnificat, the song of Mary that we will sing together on December 22. The mighty are cast down from their thrones and the lowly are lifted up. The hungry and filled and the rich are sent away empty. The Christ who comes comes to show us that mercy and service are the marks of God's kingdom.

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Born thy people to deliver,
born and child, and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
--Charles Wesley (1701-1788)



Musicians of all ages are invited to offer music for the prelude on Christmas Eve. Don't know what to play or sing? Let Sister Stacie know and she will find something for you!

Opportunities for music abound in December! (all at SPR unless otherwise noted)

Wednesday, December 4 at noon and Sunday, December 8 at 4 pm: Flauto Dolce Flute and Organ Duo Christmas Concert (freewill offering, \$20 suggested donation)

Saturday, December 14 at 1:30 p.m. National Lutheran Choir at St. Mary's Basilica (tickets required)

Saturday December 14 at time:
Elizabethan Syngers (tickets required)

Sister Stacie accompanies Exultate Chamber Choir, and their Christmas concerts are on Dec. 13-15 at various locations, including at St. Paul's UCC on Summit Avenue on the 14th (tickets required). See exultate.org for more information.

Monday, December 16 at 10 am: Advent Tea featuring the Central High School Chamber Choir (free!)

Saturday, December 21 around 10 am (exact time TBD): carolers deliver food from Meals Ministry to our shut-in members

+Sr. Stacie Lightner, Cantor

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SAINT NICHOLAS ON DECEMBER 8

An SPR tradition, we invite all SPR children of whatever age to welcome St. Nicholas on **Sunday, December 8** as he makes his annual visit and

helps prepare us for Christmas. Don't forget to put your shoes in the narthex on the way in. Other St. Nicholas activities and crafts will be available for kiddos.

THE GIVING TREE + SPR's annual Christmas "Giving Tree" is up and ready to make a difference in this world! This year, you can take an "ornament" home with you off the tree. Each ornament has some kind of project or agricultural gift that the Lutheran World Federation will make on your behalf in developing nations through the ELCA's "Good Gifts" program. Rather than give your loved ones another pair of socks...how about giving a flock of geese on their behalf? Even better: a flock of chickens, or a cow, or a micro-loan to a woman-owned business! The choice is yours but the impact will be large. We hope you will join us as we "pay it forward." Thank you!

ADVENT CONCERT AND TEA MONDAY. DECEMBER 16 AT 10:00 A.M.

Come hear the glorious sounds of the Central High School Chamber Choir, whose music making will warm your heart and fill you with hope for the future! Come for the music, stay for the treats. A light reception follows.

TREES UP! + Please join us on **Tuesday, December 17 at 6:00 p.m.** as we put up SPR's Christmas Trees. Bring some wine or individually wrapped cheese/snacks to share, and be ready to sing a few Christmas carols!

ELIZABETHAN SYNGERS HOLIDAY CONCERT

Saturday, December 9 at 5:00 p.m. Tickets required and are available on the Elizabethan Syngers website.

HANGING OF THE GREENS + We will gather for the Hanging of the Greens on **Monday, December 23 at 6:30 p.m.** Many hands make light work, and helping get things together makes such a difference for our Christmas worship. Please join us!



BETTY SCHMIDT IS 100!

+ SPR's oldest and wisest member, —Betty Schmidt—turns 100 on Christmas Day.

Betty's family invites you to a birthday celebration on Sunday December 22, 1:00—3:00 p.m. at Otto Hall at the address below.

Please join in on flooding her with birthday cards to celebrate her. Cards can be sent to:

Betty Schmidt
The Gardens At Episcopal Homes
1860 University Avenue West
Saint Paul, MN 55104

BIRTHDAYS

02 Lee Stupica
04 Chloe Proctor
08 Marge Charmoli
10 Scott Hanson, Jameson Weber
11 Alex Salo
16 August Maki
18 Karen Allard
20 Teresa Ortiz
21 Deanna Sande
23 Kristen Damberg
25 Betty Schmidt
27 Josh Weichel
31 Diane Brennan, Matthew Webster, Oulia Yang

ANNIVERSARIES

02 Karen and Ed Stuart
18 Alyn Bedford and Bill Convery
27 Kathy and Chris Thomforde

COUNCIL CORNER + The Parish Council met on Tuesday, November 12, 2024.

Council reviewed the final edits of the recommended changes to the SPR constitution and approved the final version. Council reviewed and approved the proposed changes to the SPR By-Laws. The constitution and by-laws will be available online to members by Thanksgiving and presented at the Annual Meeting in January 2025.

Revenue through September remained strong with expenses slightly over resulting in a small surplus. SPR sent 3K collected through special offerings to the ELCA Hurricane Disaster Relief Fund.

Council reviewed a preliminary Capital Campaign timeline with a potential launch scheduled for Fall 2025.

The Warming Hub will begin on December 1. This year guests will include families with children and youth ages 16—24.

Kristin Benson, Council Secretary

DOOR HANGING KNOCK KNOCK

+ In preparation for Christmas, SPR will be gathering teams of two people to blanket our neighborhood to knock on doors, meet community members, and invite them to Christmas with a snazzy flyer. This is **on Tuesday, December 17, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**, chili lunch afterward at church. Sign up to do this in the narthex. It's an extrovert's dream, and **now is your opportunity to put your money where your mouth is when you talk about "outreach."** Together, let us take the church out to the world! *Let's do this!*

THEOLOGY ON TAP. CHRISTMAS EDITION. DECEMBER 19. 7:00 P.M.

Lake Monster Brewing, 550 Vandalia St. #160. St Paul

On the right: Karen Allard, Eldora Pearson, Linda Dahlen, Kelly Bartnick, Jim McGowan, Alice Swan roll out dough to make lefse. Not pictured are Marilyn McGowan and Tim Iversen cooking the dough on lefse griddles.

JANUARY HAPPENINGS

EPIPHANY SERVICE-

Friday, January 5, 7:00 p.m.; reception at 6:00 p.m.

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD—JANUARY 7

COMMEMORATION OF MLK—JAN. 14



MLK BREAKFAST— JANUARY 20 8:00 A.M. BOTH IN PERSON AND ONLINE

Tickets must be purchased to attend at the Convention Center or to receive link to view the event. The Keynote Speaker is Michele Norris, Journalist, NPR Host and Author. Link to the registration webpage will be in the weekly email.

ANNUAL MEETING Q & A

During Adult Forum at 9:10 a.m. in Tidemann Hall on Sunday, January 19.

ANNUAL MEETING DATE

The Annual Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 26 immediately following the 10:30 a.m. service via Zoom only.**



DECEMBER MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Thank you to all the volunteers who help make the 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning services “run.”

December 1, First Sunday of Advent

Aaron Brown, Victoria Smith, *Asst. Ministers*
 Karen Hanson, Jim McGowen
 Elizabeth Adedigba, *Acolyte* Josh Weichel, *Cantor*
 Anette Hines, Hilary and Roman Hund,
 Margaret Schuster, *Greeters/Ushers*
 Anette Hinge, Margaret Schuster, *Coffee/Treats*

December 8, Second Sunday of Advent

Aaron Brown, Kathy Thomforde, *Asst. Ministers*
 Alyn Bedford, Susan Martyn, *Lectors*
 Mikko Matala, *Acolyte* Jesse Crosby, *Cantor*
 Dorcas Adedigba, Kristen Benson,
 Cheri Gohr, Joe Voss *Greeters/Ushers*
 Karen Allard, John Johnson, *Coffee/Treats*

December 15, Third Sunday of Advent

Margaret Schuster, Joe Voss, *Asst. Ministers*
 Carla Hagen, Jan Swenson, *Lectors*
 Lu Beckman, *Acolyte* Dawn Klesk, *Cantor*
 Anette Hines, Hilary Hund, Ed Stuart *Greeters/Ushers*
 Carla Hagen, Teresa Ortiz, *Coffee/Treats*

December 22, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Ian Block, Jamie Block, *Asst. Ministers*
 Aaron Brown, Shirley Henning, *Lectors*
 Henry Hanson, *Acolyte*
 Erica Perl, *Cantor*
 Cheri Gohr, Eldora Pearson, Joe Voss, Josh Weichel, *Greeters/Ushers*
 Eldora Pearson, Josh Weichel, *Coffee/Treats*

December 29, First Sunday of Christmas

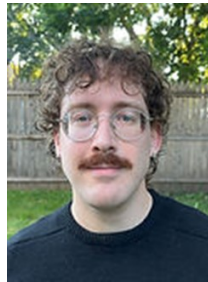
Aaron Brown, Joe Voss, *Asst. Ministers*
 Linda Dahlen, Jamie Block, *Lectors*
 Mikko Matala, Mya Wagner, *Acolyte*
 Jim Bowen, *Cantor*
 Anette Hines, Ed Stuart, *Greeters/Ushers*

ADULT FORUM is on Sunday at 9:10 a.m. in Tidemann Hall. We have an incredible line up of speakers. Join us to learn, discern and discuss.



December 1 Danger Ahead: Emerging Christian Nationalism Penny Edgell, U of M.

Dr. Penny Edgell is Professor of Sociology at the University of Minnesota, and a frequent speaker on the dangers of Christian nationalism. Edgell will explore the decline of religious commitment and the increase in nonreligion and spirituality since 1990. She will analyze data from the American Mosaic Project, Beyond Christian Nationalism survey, and Nonreligious Engagement and Well-being survey along with secondary sources to develop a new framework for understanding the transformed landscape of religion in the United States.



December 8 Welcome Home: Refugees in Minnesota, Noah Wilkerson, Minnesota Council of Churches.

Noah Wilkerson is a member of the Outreach team for the Minnesota Council of Churches' Refugee Services. Since 1984, MCC Refugee Services has welcomed more than

10,000 refugees from around the world to lives of freedom, hope and opportunity in Minnesota, helping them with everything from finding housing, accessing basic needs resources, to gaining citizenship and achieving their dreams in the U.S. Noah works with businesses and volunteers to source donations for refugee clients.

HAVE YOU RETURNED YOUR 2024 PLEDGE CARD?

If not, not to worry! There are two ways you can do it:

- 1.) Return the **pledge form**/paper pledge card via the mail;
- 2.) **Make your commitment online** using the link in the Friday e-mail, via our website, or on SPR's Facebook Page. *Thank you in advance!*

QUILTERS AND KNITTERS *for Charity* Join us on **Saturday December 7, 10:00 a.m.** You can sew, arrange blocks, iron, tie layers together, cut fabric! All knitters, crocheters, and quilters invited. Join in on the fun! Bring a snack to share. Coffee provided. Contact Gwen Peyton at gwenpeyton5@gmail.com.

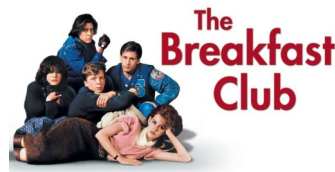
MEALS MINISTRY!

Once a month, SPR members help each other by preparing and delivering meals for members who may find it challenging to always have a home-cooked meal. Meals cooked in the church kitchen at **9:00 a.m. on Saturday December 21**. Volunteers needed; if you can chop, cook, package, measure or just like to socialize, please join us. The alley door will be open. Your contributions for this ministry are greatly appreciated. For more information please contact Gwen Peyton, gwenpeyton5@gmail.com.



CAROLING AND MEAL DELIVERY

Saturday, December 21 around 10:30 a.m. Carolers and the SPR Meals Ministry are once again teaming up to offer singing delivery of home cooking to our shut-ins. Meet in the lower auditorium around 10:30 a.m., and when the meals are ready, small groups will depart to spread holiday cheer. The more singers we have, the fewer locations each team will need to visit. This is not about dazzling musical performance, but about hospitality and goodwill and spreading the love of God through food and togetherness. Children and youth would be most welcome to help out! **Please RSVP to Sister Stacie by December 18.**



BREAKFAST CLUB + Join us **Sunday December 1** at the Louisiana Café on Selby Ave after the second

service. All are welcome to join this time of fellowship, good conversation and food. No agenda: just fellowship!

BUILDING UPDATE + The Tuesday Crew and others continue working on multiple repair, improvement projects.

Projects: Winterize: Put sand and salt buckets, shovels and chippers by all outside doors. Cover A/C units, remove A/C units from Pastor's office and apartment windows.

- Paint Office Suite so it is refreshed for any potential new tenants.
- Change analog clocks, hang quilts, put up Christmas giving tree in Narthex.
- Craftacular: Hang lights in east alcove, place floor lights in east alcove. Clear and return items to and from closets. Remove tables and chairs and janitor supplies for use of those spaces by vendors. Return all these items.
- Install toilet paper dispenser in white bathroom

Professionals: Replace rusted leaking ceiling cast iron pipe in lower level kitchen. Replace heat controller system that was destroyed by leaking water. Replace monitor boards on heaters.

BIBLE MATTERS

Please join us **on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.** via **Zoom** for this time of study, fellowship, and learning as we look forward to the coming week's lectionary texts.

No Bible Matters on December 25 or January 1.

DONATE TO SPR USING YOUR SMARTPHONE! *A great way to donate whether you are at church or out and about!* Now you can give from anywhere in the world! It's fast, easy, and secure. Search your app-finder for **"GivePlusChurch,"** download it, click "sign up," and follow the instructions. You can donate to either the Good Samaritan Fund or the Parish General fund (in addition to your regular pledge). Give it a try! **Thanks to all who are using this quick and easy way to donate!**

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