

THE SPECTRUM

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL-REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

JANUARY
2024

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

Sunday School
Confirmation
9:30 a.m.

Adult Forum
9:10 a.m.

Nursery
Kids with Parents
10:15 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. ter.



Epiphany!

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

An older festival than Christmas itself, Epiphany celebrates the “manifestation” of Jesus to the world. This is actually a three-week theme: the arrival of the magi (the first manifestation), the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan (the second manifestation), and finally the first miracle at Cana (the third manifestation). This triptych forms the Church’s oldest celebrations of the meaning of Jesus’ birth. This year, SPR will celebrate our annual observance of Epiphany as a Vigil service (the evening before), on **Friday, January 5, 7:00 p.m.** What is Epiphany without food? Magi are hungry after a sojourn with a star, and so we invite you to bring an appetizer to share for our 6:00 p.m. Epiphany reception in Tidemann Hall. This is simply a time of fellowship and joy as the “twelfth night” passes and we continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus. See you there!

EPIPHANY holds a special place in my heart. The first time I celebrated Holy Communion was on Epiphany, and every year, this oft-forgotten feast day reveals new treasures (no pun intended) as the Church moves from its celebrations of the nativity into the proclamation of the Gospel: God is with us, and we best live like that is true. Our lives announce it, and the integrity of Christian people makes this assertion believable and in-line with the claim that the Epiphany makes.

As I write to you however, the world continues to be at war; and as of mid-December, the death-toll in Israel/Palestine has surpassed 19,000 people, 70% of them women and children. Evil begets evil begets evil begets evil, and the cycle of human brokenness continues in ways that make our recent celebrations of Christmas seem—if not flippant—at least out-of-step with the very geography of Bethlehem’s location these days.

What is to be done?

There are, of course, no easy answers, and the story of the Epiphany is one that is on “repeat” through the ages forever. A jealous Herod (read: those who seek power) are out for blood, and will wage war against the innocent to establish it firmly. Herod, after all, killed his own children when they became a threat to him. The tragic part is, of course, that I am not speaking of one side in this conflict or the other; or even the current conflict specifically. The story is old; it is repeated in a thousand different variations in places from Ukraine to Yemen to El Salvador. The “Herods” come in many forms: gangs, terrorist organizations, governments, politicians who dither while people die, those who simply can’t be bothered to learn the intricacies of various conflicts or their history.

Within all of this—and within all of these conflicts—is the Holy Family. They, too, take on

various guises, and it is important to remember (as we have been reminded before) that the Holy Family was, themselves, a refugee family seeking safety for their future and fleeing their particular Herod. The Holy Family is an Israeli family living on a Kibbutz; it is a Palestinian family in a hospital seeking emergency medical care; it is an Ethiopian family caught up in that country’s civil war, that—in these days—is intensifying. It is the family held at the border and the family that is dealing with opiate addiction who is keeping the secret hidden from everyone that they know. The Holy Family is all across the world; and in our own pews.

Into this, breaks the “epiphany” of hope: Christ himself. We’re not talking about some kind of pie-in-the-sky “idea” that the Church just holds as a sentimental nod to an ancient story. We’re talking about an epiphany that—though old—must have useful and use-able implications for now. The question follows: can an ancient story of seekers and stars and

Herods and divinity find a home among us now?

We say yes. Not because the particulars are terribly different (see above), but because the themes of the Epiphany are timeless and timely. People seek safety: *check*. People look for a sign to lead them: *check*. Herod rages: *check*. Treasures are spread far and wide to offer praise: *check*. Jesus Christ—the Epiphany of the Trinity—continues to live among God’s people and to be with God’s people: *check*.

All of these things remain constant and true, and I suspect that our vocation as Christian people is to direct all these broad themes toward a greater one: hope. All is not lost, though sometimes it may seem so. All is not despair, though sometimes it may seem so. All is not cynicism and “the art of the possible;” God is making all things new. This includes a world that



“We’re talking about an epiphany that—though old—must have useful and use-able implications for now.”

must be transformed by the re-creating power of new life and new hope, symbolized most profoundly in the incarnation that we celebrate at Christmas and Epiphany, but also that we celebrate in the gathered assembly and the sacramental mysteries that remind us that we are not alone. You are not alone. There are fellow seekers with you, plodding along, having rejected the violence of Herod “to make their way home by another route.” The “route” is a commitment to peace, to justice, to mercy. The “route” is extending kindness beyond what we normally would do; the “route” is, perhaps, not a way at all, but a person who embodies all of these things: Jesus himself.

May God bless you this Epiphany, and I pray that (at least insofar as it concerns you and your house), you will hold tightly to the hope of the world and the “bright Morning Star” who will bring all things to their rightful and peaceful conclusion.

+Pr. Patrick H. Shebeck, Senior Pastor



FROM THE CANTOR

On December 7, a crew from SPR went to Feed My Starving Children in Eagan to pack meals for children in the Dominican Republic. Along with volunteers from other churches and several

groups of Scouts, we packed 117 boxes for a total of 23,272 meals, enough to feed 69 kids a daily meal for a year. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped spread the light of Christ into a hungry world!

To celebrate, a stanza by Elizabeth Cruciger, the first Lutheran woman hymn writer, whose hymn “The Only Son from Heaven” was printed in the first Lutheran song collection in 1524.

Awaken, Lord, our spirit to know and love you more,
In faith to stand unshaken, in spirit to adore,
That we, through this world moving, each glimpse
of heaven proving,
May reap its fullness there.

Sr. Stacie Lightner



Above: Sr. Stacie Lightner led a small group from SPR in a service project at Feed My Starving Children in Eagan. 23,272 meals were packed that evening as SPR joined groups of Girl Scouts, community groups, and corporate sponsors. This is enough to feed 69 children for a year. Be on the lookout for some upcoming service projects during Lent!

BUDGET Q & A Join Us on January 21

If numbers and budgets are your spiritual gift, you are invited to join us for our annual Budget Q&A on Sunday, January 21 at 9:10 a.m. (during Adult Forum Time), hosted by the Parish Council. You can find out why we spend as much as we do on postage, toilet paper, and Sunday School supplies. This is to (hopefully) save some time at the Annual Meeting on January 28.

ADULT FORUM IN JANUARY: MARK

Each Sunday Starting January 7 at 9:10 a.m.

This year, the lectionary assigns us Mark as our guide. This first Gospel is a fascinating look into the early Christian Community and the world into which Jesus preached. For several Sundays in January (starting January 7) and February, we will be doing an in-depth study on Mark using the ELCA’s “Book of Faith” initiative. No experience is necessary, come to as many or as few sessions as you would like. A reader guide is provided on the first Sunday of our Study. MARK your calendars!

The Spectrum Published Monthly

St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church

100 Oxford St N St. Paul, MN 55104

Issue: Volume 44 #1



THEOLOGY ON TAP

Thursday, January 18, 7:00 p.m. at the Dual Citizen Brewing Company

Please join us at Dual Citizen Brewing Company (725 Raymond Ave, St Paul, 55114) for our January "Theology on Tap." This month's theme: *Miracles*. For the young and young at heart, this gathering is to kick the theological football around. Join us!

EL SALVADOR SCHOLARSHIPS

The Global Ministry Team is once again raising funds to support the children of our sister parish, Cristo Libertador, in Nahualapa, El Salvador. The new school year is starting in January, and we need your help to provide scholarships for the students. If you are already sponsoring a student, we will email you soon with information on how to renew your sponsorship. For those interested in sponsoring a student or looking for more information, Krisi Matenaer or Sandy Iverson will be available in the narthex after church throughout December. Thank you for your support! Your contribution is highly appreciated and will make a real difference in the lives of the children in our sister parish community.



Left: SPR's Confirmation Classes took a trip to the Guthrie Theater to see "A Christmas Carol." Here, Sebastian and Mathias Badilla pose for a quick picture in the lobby of the theater.

BIRTHDAYS

- 02 Anne Halgerson
- 04 Don Colbert
- 07 Kim Brennan
- 08 Elizabeth Adedigba, Gary Sande
- 09 Nancy Seleen, Oliver Yang
- 10 Jeannie Entenza
- 11 Sandy Iverson
- 13 Jon Stevens
- 17 Emerson Mattson
- 19 Al Oertwig
- 20 Krisi Matenaer
- 21 Juan Ramirez
- 23 Lu Beckman, Tom Dunn
- 24 Rich Gehrman
- 25 Eldora Pearson, Chris Thomforde
- 27 Nadia Ramirez
- 30 Kris Stevens
- 31 Alma Maki

ANNIVERSARIES

- 17 Karen and Scott Hanson

LISTEN SERIES: LOOKING FOR HOME

SPR's LISTEN Series this year will focus on homelessness under the theme "Looking for Home." We will make use of the book "Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement," as well as various speakers coming to join us. LISTEN starts on Wednesday, February 21 at 7:05 p.m! Watch for more information!

ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, February 14

6:00 p.m. Private Confessions in the Church

7:00 p.m. Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist



Above: Wandering Lutherans who are friends of St. Paul-Reformation were in Wittenberg, Germany in December and report that the “Reformation Tree” that SPR had planted to commemorate 500 years of the Reformation is doing just fine! This is a reminder of Luther’s famous quote: “If the world were to end tomorrow, I would plant a tree today.”

ANNUAL MEETING WITH PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

+ SPR will gather for its regular Annual Meeting the last Sunday of January, **January 28, 12:30 p.m. via Zoom**. The meeting will only be held via Zoom, allowing members who are away for the winter to join us. On the docket are elections to Parish Council, budget approval, and two constitutional changes that require congregational approval:

- Second ratification of last year’s change to establish quorum. Constitutional changes require two affirmative votes in consecutive years. You will recall that this change established that, going forward, a quorum for the Annual Meeting is 40% of the average worship attendance for the previous year as reported on the Parochial Report; this vote will be the second of two and becomes effective immediately upon adoption.
- The Constitution establishes an Endowment Fund, but no Endowment Committee. The Parish Council moves that the Constitution be changed to specifically establish the Endowment Committee as a standing Committee of the Parish Council, specifically referenced in the Constitution. Between this year and next, work will be done to rewrite and establish bylaws for

this committee to streamline its grant process and how its funds are invested. This, too, requires two votes over two consecutive years, and so will take effect (pending approval) in January of 2025.

All baptized and confirmed members may vote, and we hope that you will join us for this important part of our life together. The Zoom link will be in the Friday e-mails starting in January. All you have to do is...click, and you’re in!



TWIN CITIES MLK BREAKFAST

Join in Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Legacy on Monday, January 15

A beloved Twin Cities tradition, thousands from the community gather to celebrate the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. on

Monday, January 15 under the theme “Elevating New Voices for Justice and Equity.” Proceeds will benefit the UNCF Twin Cities and support local students of color attending HBCUs. Tickets are \$65 and are available at www.mlkbreakfast.com.

Tickets for online viewing also available.



Above: SPR’s own St. Nicholas—Leo Treadway—visits on Advent II to remind our children of the meaning of the Christmas Season. Shoes were filled with candy, and activity booklets distributed for at-home celebrations. A special thank you to St. Nicholas and all his helpers...see you next year!

JANUARY MINISTRY SCHEDULE

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

January 7 Baptism of Our Lord

Jamie Block, Victoria Smith, *Asst. Ministers*
John Whalen, Bonnie Olson, *Lectors*
Noelle Puroway Chloe Proctor,
Grant and Tanner Rouillard-Horne, *Acolytes*
Jim Bowen, *Cantor*
Anthony Hedlund, Sandy and Tim Iverson,
Bonnie Olson, *Greeters/Ushers*
Linda Dahlen, Open, *Coffee/Treats*

January 14, Second Sunday after Epiphany

Amy Rouillard, Kathy Thomforde, *Asst. Ministers*
Alice Swan, Joe Voss, *Lectors*
Lillie Eiken, *Acolyte*
Mike Banks, *Cantor*
Dorcas Adedigba, Kristin Benson, Roman Hund,
Deanna Sande, *Greeters/Ushers*
Deanna Sande, Alice Swan, *Coffee/Treats*

January 21, Third Sunday after Epiphany

Ian Block, Aaron Brown, *Asst. Ministers*
Jamie Block, Colleen McGuire, *Lectors*
Sebastian Badilla, *Acolyte*
Margaret Schuster, *Cantor*
Kristen Damberg, Cheri Gohr, Anthony Hedlund,
Lay'Ani Stuart, *Greeters/Ushers*
Karen Allard, Jake and Heidi Kutz, *Coffee/Treats*

January 28, Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Jamie and Ian Block, *Asst. Ministers*
Eldora Pearson, Diane Aase, *Lectors*
Alexander Salo, *Acolyte*
Carsten Slostad, *Cantor*
Joe Herbert, Bonnie Olson, Deanna Sande,
Jan Swenson, *Greeters/Ushers*

ADULT FORUM is on Sunday at 9:10 a.m. in Tidemann Hall. This is a “gem” of St. Paul-Ref’s life together. Join us to learn, discern and discuss.

January Study: *Questions for Jesus: Studies in Mark*



+ For all of January, we will engage “Questions for Jesus: Studies in Mark.” Why this? Because Mark is our “tour guide” for the next year of Gospel readings. An overview of this earliest Gospel will enrich your hearing of it for the coming year, and this study is particularly aimed toward asking—with Mark—some difficult questions about how we follow Jesus. Learner guides are free...come as often or as little as you like, and no experience is required!

CRAFTACULAR THANK YOU

Thank you for all that you did by participating in, volunteering for, donating yummy baked goods, or purchasing something at the 12th annual Craftacular and Holiday Bake Sale. Your presence made this event something special.

And every hour you spent helping to prepare the space, set up, tear down, decorate, clean floors, bathrooms, and counters, post signs, or share our flyers with your friends - your time paid off in a thousand different ways. **So thank you!!**

I'm happy to report that overall earnings topped out at \$11,495.23. The bakery alone - which is 100% donated to the music program - sold \$1512.75! And if you haven't heard, the lefse sold out in less than 35 minutes! When we add in the vendor percentages that are donated to the church, the music program will receive \$2615. **Amazing!!**

So - again, a HUGE thank you for being part of the Craftacular and Holiday Bake Sale.

Margaret, Sarah, Sr. Stacie, Victoria, Jennifer, Cindy, and Pastor Patrick

QUILTING for Charity Join us on **Saturday January 6, 10:00 a.m.** You can sew, arrange blocks, iron, tie layers together, cut fabric! Work on your own projects. 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 January 20.** 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.



- Set-up up Good Gifts Christmas Tree and resolve lighting outlet issue.
- Bring up lights and Christmas trees for the chancel in the church. Prepped Luminaries.
- Replace bulbs in Tidemann..
- Put up outside vinyl Christmas Service signs.
- Painted floor of northside bathroom.
- Clear and then clear gain leaves outside elevator entrance are

Staff: Discuss additional rent payment and sign the 2024 Lease with the St. Paul Conservatory of Music. Discuss possible return in January of the Ramsey County Warming Hub.

Thanks to all who volunteer to keep this building and spaces inside in condition to use and rent out.



Above: A hearty crew gathered in mid-December for "Trees Up!" with festive goodies and some Christmas Carols. Thanks to all who helped!



The Breakfast Club

BREAKFAST CLUB + Join us **Sunday January 7** 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 the building: Seal the windows in the Tidemann Hall. Rope off Laurel Side stairs.
- Set-up tables and chairs for Advent Tea.
- Bring Advent Lanterns to the sanctuary.

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 January 3.

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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PARTING SHOT



Sporting snazzy new aprons, SPR's Meals Ministry gathers in December to prepare meals for SPR members. This was coupled with Carolers from the Choir who delivered these meals and good cheer to many. Thank you to all who volunteered!