

St. Paul News

St. Paul Lutheran Church
9844 SW. Greenville Rd
Greenville MI 48838

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A Letter from Bishop Julie



The spiritual life grows as love finds its center beyond ourselves. Faithful and committed relationships offer a door into the mystery of spiritual life in which we discover this: the more we give of self, the richer we become in soul; the more we go beyond ourselves in love, the more we become our true selves and our spiritual beauty is more fully revealed. In marriage, we are seeking to bring one another into fuller life.

— From the homily at the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton, given by Richard Chartres, Anglican bishop of London.

These words certainly apply to marriage relationships, but I would also argue that they lie at the heart of the practice of Christianity. The cross, our central symbol, is God's message of this. Jesus moves beyond himself: beyond his own pain and suffering, beyond his own will, beyond his own survival instincts, beyond his own best-interests to do something that reaches far beyond anything he could have done for himself.

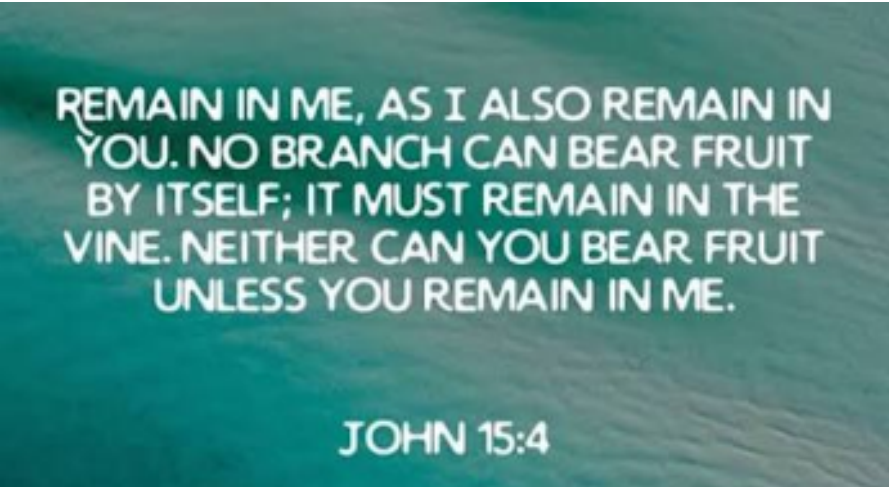
The more we go beyond ourselves in love, the more we become our true selves, and our spiritual beauty is more fully revealed. What a challenge! Our very instincts move us to look out for ourselves for survival, but we also acknowledge that we are so much more than our instincts. We also know that there is joy in giving ourselves away. There is joy in volunteering to teach someone to read. There is joy in giving away food. There is joy in adopting a pet from an animal shelter. There is joy in fixing a good meal for a friend. There is joy in raking an elderly neighbor's leaves.

In May we gathered for Synod Assembly under the theme, "Connected." In that gathering, we find the joy as we go beyond our congregations and ministry sites to become one body of believers worshiping, learning and working together in that time to do the work of our synod.

In the two months since Synod Assembly, I have seen "Connected" play out among us as we have all returned to our congregations and ministry sites: Pastors switching pulpits for a Sunday to fill an urgent need. Congregations willing to share their pastor for a Sunday. Youth groups traveling to parts of our state hit by storms to lend a hand to the Lutheran community. Synod council members giving their time to listen in places that are struggling. Congregations in Lansing joining together to do VBS.

Thanks be to God for the Spirit's work drawing us beyond ourselves to discover the profound connection upon which God has created this world. Thanks be to God for the strength and hope we find as we love beyond ourselves. The spiritual life truly does grow as love finds its center beyond ourselves. May God continue to connect us, shape us, and send us into the world bearing witness to that love.

In Christ, Bishop Julie



REMAIN IN ME, AS I ALSO REMAIN IN
YOU. NO BRANCH CAN BEAR FRUIT
BY ITSELF; IT MUST REMAIN IN THE
VINE. NEITHER CAN YOU BEAR FRUIT
UNLESS YOU REMAIN IN ME.

JOHN 15:4

Dear People of God,

As the “brr”months are upon us, we will see, hear, and feel the changes. Some of our members are living in some heavy duty changes in their lives due to health challenges. As a community of faith, we know and believe that God doesn’t give us what we can handle, God helps us handle what we are given. This month’s article is a prayer especially for these “here and not yet” times that we are living in God’s kindom now.

God who accompanies us on our journeys,
we often wonder how we got here.

Where we are is the accumulation of millions of small and big choices,
some made by us,
others made for us.

And that “here” where we find ourselves?

It might be good beyond what could have dreamed.

A sense of meaning, a beautiful circle of care, a sturdy faith.

We give you thanks for all of that.

But “here” can also be a place of despair, pain, worry, or confusion.

We’re not sure how we’ll get through today,

and we fear what tomorrow could bring.

Everything feels tenuous and precious.

Most of us, I’d guess, live between these two versions of “here.”

We know we have much to be grateful for, like...

We also have a lot that we and the people we care about are going through,
including people we don’t actually know
but for whom we have deep empathy.

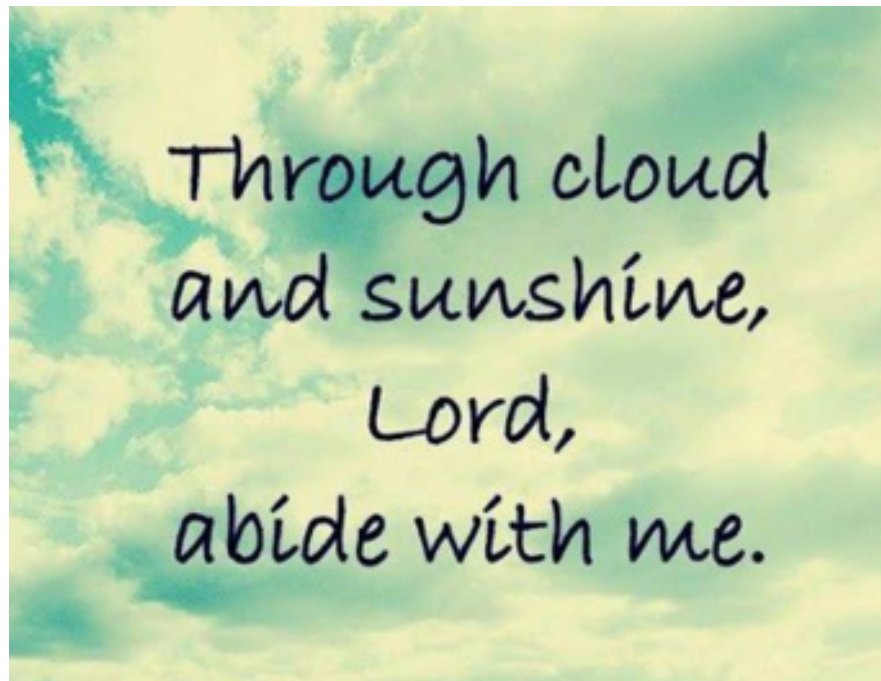
We lift up to you...

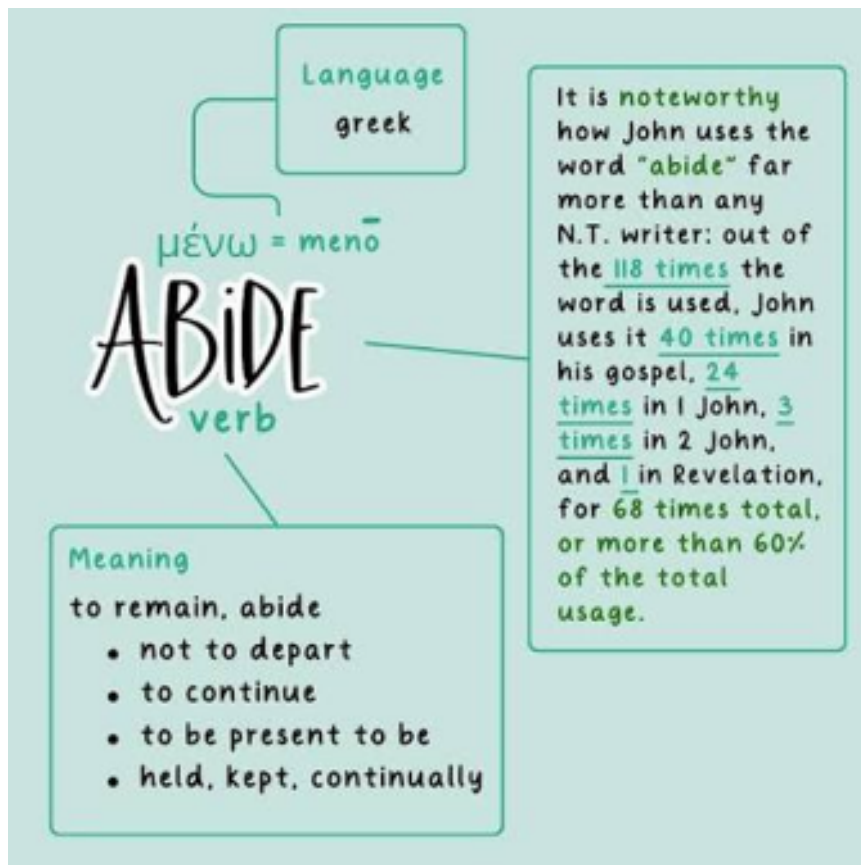
No matter how we experience "here,"
may we remember that "here" is where you are too,
celebrating with us when things go well
and offering comfort and tangible help through the words and deeds of others
when they do not.

There is no place we can go apart from you,
because we are your people,
and you are our God,
now and forever.

May we live and act in the confidence that we are always held,
here, there, and everywhere,
by your strong, tender hands.
We pray with the courage of your Spirit
and in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Nan





***COME READ WITH PASTOR AND FRIENDS
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 10 AM – 12***



***This is a favorite
book of one of the
members of our
group.***

So how much does it cost for our congregation to have all the licensing to print, project, and stream the liturgy, hymns and songs per year?

\$1,103 dollars licensing + \$400 paper + ink/copier (leasing and supplies) + internet usage cost

Printer lease per year \$6048

We could look at a printer copier that is smaller

We could use our hymnals more

September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Penny wars start in September	1 Food mission 10am Bell Practice 5:45pm	2 Bible study 2pm Share the Joy meeting 10:30am Food Mission 5:30pm Financial Viability meeting 6pm	3 Legacy Homebound Lunch Prep 10am	4 Short Meditation zoom 1:30pm Mark on vacation	5
6 Sunday worship 9:30am Potluck after worship Affirmation class after potluck	7 Council Reports Due Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	8 Food mission 10am Bell Practice 5:45pm	9 Bible study 2pm Food Mission 5:30pm Mark sabbath	10	11 Short Meditation zoom 1:30pm Council packets collated	12 Read with pastor & friends 10am-12pm
13 Sunday worship 9:30am Affirmation class after worship	14 Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	15 Food mission 10am Bell Practice 5:45pm	16 Bible study 2pm Food Mission 5:30pm Mark Sabbath	17 Council 5:00pm Legacy lunch ladies 1pm culvers	Newsletter Articles Due 18 Short Meditation zoom 1:30pm	19
20 Sunday worship 9:30am Bells Play Affirmation class after worship	21 Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	22 Food mission 10am Bell Practice 5:45pm	23 Bible study 2pm Food Mission 4:30pm Vocal Choir practice 4:30pm Mark sabbath	24 Worship and music meeting 4pm	25 Short Meditation zoom 1:30pm	26
27 Sunday worship 9:30am Vocal Choir sings Affirmation class after worship Green Acres worship 3pm	28 Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	29 Food mission 10am Senior Citizens Fellowship 12 noon Bell Practice 5:45pm	30 Bible study 2pm Food Mission 5:30pm Mark sabbath		First Fruits Auction Oct. 11	Annual congregational Meeting Oct 18

September Serving Calendar

St Paul Service Calendar	Assisting	Proclaimer	Sound	Lead Usher	Nursery	Counters	Music
Sept. 6	Alicia D	Barb B	Lee H Diane C Karen H	Curt B	Donny M	Joy S Karen H	Sarah F.
Sept. 13	Connie T	Connie T	Diane C Paul R Connie T	John C	Shirley H	John C Lisa B	Sarah F.
Sept. 20	Dorinda K	Amy S	Lee H Diane C Lisa B	Bob K	Amy S	Shirley H Connie T	Sarah F.
Sept. 27	Janet W-M	Janet W-M	Paul R Lee H Tara C	Volunteer	Volunteer	Diane C	Sarah F.

Dates, and names are Subject to change.

If you are going to miss a Sunday that you are scheduled, please get a sub.

Ministry Dates

All are welcome to participate in the events below
Sharing the joy of Christ !

September Penny wars all of September

September 7,14,21,28 Al-Anon 5:30pm building closed until 8:30pm

September 6,13,20,27 preparation for Affirmation of baptism classes

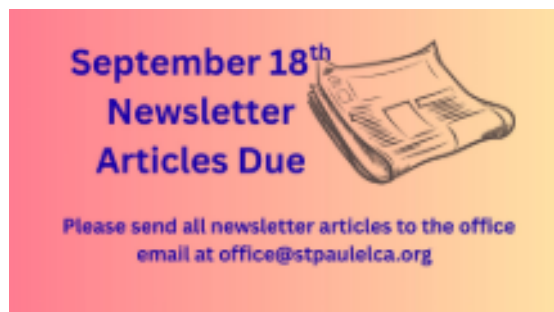
September 4-9 Mark on vacation

September 7 Labor Day office closed

September 6 Potluck Sunday

September 7 Council Reports due

September 29 Senior Citizen Fellowship 12 noon, bring a dish to pass and a \$5-\$7 gift bag for bingo



Mental Health Corner

September is the end of summer and the beginning of fall. The sun is starting to migrate south, and we notice the earlier and earlier sunsets. This can cause our mood to become less happy or joyful, and our mental health can slump because we are receiving less and less natural light. As we get further into fall and then into winter, it can become harder to enjoy what life has to offer because it is darker outside. Our mood and mental health can take a hit because our circadian rhythm has less light to help keep it balanced.

I saw an interview on the news where Dr. Sue Varma, a board-certified psychiatrist, stated that “walking for 15 minutes twice a day can boost one’s mood and promote mental health.” She stated that walking allows people to decompress, clear their minds, and refocus, especially if the stroll is outside. The fresh air and green surroundings can be restorative, and a simple change of scenery can put things into perspective. Studies have shown that walking is an “evidence-based intervention for reducing depression and anxiety.” Here is the link to the interview:

Interview with Dr. Sue Varma

The nice thing is that you don’t need to spend any money to do it. All you need to do is go for a walk. If you are at St. Paul, there are 36 acres that you can explore by walking around the property.

Also, on the property, just west of the southwest parking lot, is the labyrinth. It is a great place to stop and listen to the wildlife on and around the property. The great thing is that if you aren’t comfortable walking around the property, you can walk the labyrinth, which is three-quarters of a mile in and out from the start.

If you don’t want to walk, you can just sit outside and enjoy the sunshine and listen to the wildlife around you. A walk can be a great way to meditate, pray, and listen for God.

We can celebrate the wonders God has created and remember that through our baptism, we are God's beloved children. We can also remember that what Paul wrote in Romans 6:4 is true:

“Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.”

So, go for a walk. Enjoy the sunlight and the wildlife. Take some time to reset and recharge. And as you walk, take a moment to notice God's creation, breathe, pray, and listen for God.

Mark Dombkowski,
Ministry Coordinator
Mental Health Coach
First Responder

The Culture of Generosity (COG)

Blessings Given to Our Church

St Paul has received many gifts that have kept money from coming out of our budget. Several months ago, it was discovered that the piano bench was cracked and may have been dangerous for sitting. One of our members bought and replaced it with a brand new one several weeks later.

The sound desk members have been working very hard to solve the problem of pastor's batteries not lasting through the entire service. Many regular batteries and their chargers were bought by one donor. They were trying to find the right ones that would last. Unfortunately, none worked. Now two people have donated around \$500 to purchase very high-quality batteries that will last over 7 hours. Luckily problem solved.

Also, let's not forget the building and ground maintenance department. Throughout the years, several people have stepped up and paid for repairs to broken equipment. Others have donated equipment they were not using, or they have bought new. Some people have also paid for gas to power the machinery. This generosity has greatly helped to keep our expenses within this line item's budget.

In conclusion, these are just a few instances that support our church and has helped us pay our bills. I am sure there are a lot more that have not been mentioned. Anyway, we greatly appreciate everyone's support! Thank you!!

Diane Christensen - Treasurer

Thoughts on Church Culture from the Culture of Generosity Team

Congregations have life cycles. After introduction and start up, churches typically enter a prime period in which Mission is "the boss". People sacrifice for the vision. Then most congregations reach a peak. This could be a plateau that lasts for decades.

This is the prime stage in the life cycle but it is perilous. The church looks healthy on paper, doing the kinds of things that COG has been highlighting in newsletter articles (what a healthy congregation does according to Acts: worship, prayer, caring, and outreach). But the focus often subtly starts shifting from reaching people to keeping people.

Then, all too often decline starts to set in. The building and the past become the boss. Decisions are made based on the budget and the feelings of long-term members. Congregations in this stage feel stable, but energy is internally focused and consumed by program maintenance rather than a clear sense of mission. Why do WE exist?

Congregations in decline become risk-averse. Typically these bodies are asset rich (building and endowment) but mission poor.

Where are we? For each category, circle what you think best describes St Paul.

A. Finances

1. Offerings are less than expenses
2. Offerings cover expenses
3. Offerings exceed expenses

B. Vision

1. Poorly defined; resists change
2. Cautiously adopts refreshed directions
3. Eagerly embraces

C. Relationships

1. Silos, factions, conflict, isolation
2. Pleasant but shallow
3. Mutual caring; promoting each other's flourishing

D. Welcome

1. We take care of our own
2. Passive 'anyone is welcome'
3. Active welcome and inclusion—the marginalized, family, friends and neighbors

E. Leadership

1. Paid religious professionals and support staff are expected to do most of the work
2. Widespread lay involvement; some activities are lay led
3. Staff equips members for participation and leadership as much as possible

If most are 1s and 2s, the congregation needs to pivot, to re-set, to re-become.

What will we do if we need to shift from 1s and 2s to 2s and 3s?

As individual members, where are we? On Sundays, the core group that gathers seem to participate in the life of the church in four ways: worship, learning/growth, service, and giving—in different ways, with different gifts. Is that what we should promote for every member and prospective member? How could we do that concretely?

GREENVILLE AREA ECUMENICAL FOOD MISSION

The Greenville Area Ecumenical Food Mission (GAEFM) that operates out of our St. Paul building is solely reliant on community donations and volunteer workers. You can help by purchasing and donating items from the list below:

Canned fruits and vegetables
Cereal
Pancake mix and syrup
Saltine crackers
Toilet paper and personal care items
Pasta, rice, packaged potatoes or meal helpers
Canned beans (all varieties)
Canned tomatoes, pasta sauce
Soups (all varieties)
Boxed macaroni and cheese, Ramen noodles
Canned meats
Peanut butter and jelly



Monetary donations are always needed. Checks should be made to GAEFM. Gift cards to Meijer or Aldi for purchases made by volunteer shoppers are helpful, too.

Donations can be delivered to the church or brought directly to the pantry during distribution hours (Tuesday 10am to 12pm, Wednesday 5:30-7:00pm). Checks and cards should be delivered to the church office or mailed to: St. Paul Lutheran Church (attention GAEFM), 9844 SW Greenville Rd, Greenville, Mi 48838.

Share the Joy

First Fruits Silent Auction October 11

Growing up at St. Paul, I (Amy Smith) fondly remember Harvest Sunday. On a designated Sunday each Fall, bushels of apples, potatoes, squash and pumpkins would fill the space below the altar. The window sills were adorned with jars of home canned items: beets and tomatoes, peaches, pickles-a visual delight. The congregation's First Fruits were given generously to provide for the needy in the community in thankfulness to God's bounty.

On Sunday, October 11, St. Paul's generous spirit and God-given gifts will be on display as we celebrate the same blessings of God's extravagant love. The annual First Fruits Silent Auction is our opportunity to use our time, talents, and treasure to honor our loving God for his care for our church family and all of his creation. Your participation is needed in providing home-grown, hand crafted, and homemade items for auctioning. Donations of skills, time, and treasures are needed as well. The proceeds are donated to the Greenville Area Ecumenical Food Mission that operates entirely on donations. This is a Sharing the Joy sponsored activity.

Spiritual Growth/Shalom Group

One Minute Meditations

Body Scan Meditation

Find a comfortable seat, allowing your body to relax and eyes to gently close.

Bring warm awareness first to the crown of your head, then let it trickle slowly over your scalp and face. Scan downward through the neck, shoulders, back and chest, noticing any sensations without judgment. Move down through the belly, hips, legs all the way to the toes.

If tension arises, direct a long, soothing exhale right to that spot.

Topic: Shalom short meditation

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9589368430?omn=88590889863>

Meeting ID: 958 936 8430 Passcode: W0r5h!p

Passcode is Capital W, number Zero, lower case r, number 5, lower case h, exclamation point !, lower case p

Love to Sing ... Come Join Us!!

Once again the **Keep It Simple Choir** will start meeting in September. Just like last year...it will be simple because the choir will only sing once a month. It will be simple because there will be only one short rehearsal each month. The songs chosen to sing will be easy to learn and joyful to sing. Our first practice will be held on Wednesday, September 23 at 4:30. We will sing at the worship service on Sunday, September 27. Anyone who loves to sing is welcome. Just show up when you can and enjoy making joyful music singing God's praises.

Contact Linda Hansen for more information...810-923-3505

Prayed for this month In worship

Bob Perdue, Carol Rasmussen, David Johansen, Denise Hoppe, Dennis Dombkowski, Joan Chadwick, Joanne Bryer, Larry Ross, Leroy Hansen, Katharine Serviss, Karen Buchholz, Ken Billmeier, Marlene Grams, Mary Ann Johnson, Mary Jean Mallo, Nelda Gallagher, Peter Hansen, Russ Lincoln, Shirley Hansen, Shirley Moerdyke, Shirley Sly, Steve Vanhoose, Terri Clark.

Thankful Word Search

L	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	D	F
Y	U	Y	E	G	N	N	R	E	A
L	B	F	R	S	I	H	W	R	I
I	L	F	K	K	I	P	A	O	T
M	R	E	P	N	M	A	T	G	H
A	X	M	A	L	A	U	R	L	F
F	U	D	A	V	R	H	H	P	U
P	K	S	A	K	E	I	T	H	L
J	P	M	E	Y	X	S	G	O	B
O	G	Y	L	O	V	E	G	K	Z

Find these words in the puzzle above:

THANKFUL

FAMILY

THANKSGIVING

PRAISE

FAITHFUL

TURKEY

FRIENDS

PSALM

PUMPKIN

LOVE

St. Paul Lutheran Church

9844 SW Greenville Road
Greenville, MI 48838

Phone: 616-754-6676

E-mail:
office@stpaulca.org

Church Staff

Pastor Nan Dehnke	616-754-6676, pastorstpaulandsettlement@earthlink.net
Mark Dombkowski,	616.754.6676, 989-330-0982, Luke15youth@gmail.com
Ministry Coordinator	familyministry@stpaulca.org
Office	616.754.6676 office@stpaulca.org

St. Paul Lutheran Church Office Hours:

Monday closed
Tuesday 10 am – 2 pm
Wednesday – closed
Thursday 10 am – 2 pm
Friday 10 – 2 pm

Council Reports
are due to the
Office on the 7th
of the month

**News letter
articles are due
on the 18th of
the month.**

So the newsletter is
available on the last
Sunday of the month.

To give to
St. Paul use
the
Tithe.ly giving
QR code



St. Paul Ministry Contacts

Church Council: John Chadwick

Affirmation of Baptism: Mark Dombkowski

Altar Flowers: Joyce Scott, Alicia Dombkowski

Altar Guild, Lisa Brown, Janet Wulf-Marvin

Building & Grounds/Property:

(Building: Janet Wulf-Marvin, Lisa Brown)

Ecumenical Food Pantry: Nancy LaMere

Endowment Fund: Diane Christensen

Eucharistic Ministers: Mark Dombkowski

Growing in Grace: Mark Dombkowski

Labyrinth: Shalom

Luncheon Guild: Connie Teddy

Memorials: Carol Rasmussen, Lynn Cooper

Personnel Committee: John Chadwick

Prayer Chain: Lynn Cooper

Sharing the Joy: Amy Smith

Sound: Mark Dombkowski, Paul Richardson

Shalom Team: Shirley Moerdyk

Treasurer: Diane Christensen

Worship and Music: Heather Nielsen

Church Council

St. Paul: Diane Christensen, John Chadwick, Alicia Dombkowski, Shirley Hartstock, Ed Johnson, Robert Kamphuis, Sue McGee.

Events, meetings, and activity Dates & time are subject to change.

When the Greenville Public Schools are closed during the school year, St. Paul Lutheran Church is closed check with ministry leaders to see if the ministry you are a part of is happening when the schools are closed