



Hello Fellow Ministers in Christ,

What a busy time of year! We are focused on putting up a tree, decorating, cooking, baking, planning for gatherings for family, travel and shopping for the perfect gift and wrapping. The season of Advent is a counterbalance to the hectic activity and focuses on spiritual versus physical considerations and expectation. These four weeks are a time of hope and expectation to celebrate the birth of Christ and to celebrate the second coming of the Christ. The Christ who comes with power and glory in the clouds at the end of time and we are finally reconciled with God in our righteousness. To counteract the hectic nature we take time to try to pause and contemplate and repent and change our perspective as we try to further transform to be the type of person Jesus wants us to be, a light in the midst or darkness. We start this season reminding ourselves that Jesus Christ is our hope.

Martin Luther in “Out of the Depths I Cry to You” ELW#600 wrote:

*In you alone, O God, we hope, and not in our own merit.
We rest our fears in your good Word and trust your Holy Spirit.
Your promise keeps us strong and sure;
we trust the cross, your signature,
inscribed upon our temples.*

*My soul is waiting for you, Lord, as one who longs for morning;
no watcher waits with greater hope than I for your returning.
I hope as Israel in the Lord,
who sends redemption through the Word.
Praise God for grace and mercy!*

To Luther, hope is not a nice sentiment or an expression of wishful thinking. It is our cry of our trusting heart. In his commentary on Romans, Luther writes: “Hope changes the one who

Guiding Principles

We are a people who:

- ✿ Listen for God's Call
- ✿ Believe and Trust in God's Call
- ✿ Answer God's Call
- ✿ Support each other in times of joy and sorrow
- ✿ Live out our faith in prayer and service
- ✿ Share food with the hungry
- ✿ Believe the gospel is for all, not just Christians.

hopes into what is hoped for” and “the thing hoped for and the person hoping become one.” When we hope in this way the object of our hope is something outside ourselves. When we place our hope in the Lord, Luther believed, we are drawn more closely into the presence of God.

As we focus on the coming of Christ believe and Trust in God's as we of imperfect people figuring out together what it means to follow Jesus in the 21st century.

We believe in God’s grace given as a gift to each of us for the sake of the world.

We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God that centers our faith on a God who continually loves us no matter what! We celebrate baptism and communion as sacraments – real tangible things and moments where God’s grace is given for you. We confess the ancient creeds of the church, the Apostles’, Nicene, and even the Athanasian Creed – ancient words that summarize the incredible ongoing story of God and us ... including you.

We believe that salvation is a gift from God through grace that cannot be earned or accepted. It is God’s gift and God’s work. We believe that God has called us together as a church to be an anchor of hope in the world today.

We believe we are gathered as a church only to be sent – to be sent out in the world, engaged in the community and world around us – to accompany others and do God’s redeeming work. We believe in caring and sharing generously and walking with you through the ups and downs of life.

We believe we are all children of God, regardless of age or generation, young, old, or in between.

We believe that God has brought LCHope together in this time and place to make a difference in name of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

When a baptized Christian affirms the faith (often called confirmation) the presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism and asks the question: Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism: to live among God’s faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

- Support each other in times of joy and sorrow
- Live out our faith in prayer and service
- Share food with the hungry
- Believe the gospel is for all, not just Christians.

We should have no fear since God gives us hope. It is difficult to be on guard and alert at all times when we are in the often hectic times of the Holiday season. That's why it is important to focus on the right thing at this time. Worship is our central activity together and during our worship together during Advent we light a candle each week during Advent on the Advent wreath. The Sunday School students made Advent wreaths for their homes which can be helpful to pause as we observe Advent as well as a time for us to teach our children about the coming of Christ. The round shape is a symbol of eternal life, the eternal victory of over death through Jesus Christ. Each Sunday a candle is lit representing hope, peace, joy and love, respectively. Lighting the candles is a reminder of the light Christ brings into the world and we are to be the light with God's Work, Our Hands as we feed the community along with myriad other activities. During Advent we are asking people to bring products that can't be supplied through the Greater Lansing Food Bank because of supply chain issues and have placed a wagon in the Narthex (the entry way) to place these items when coming to worship or devotions.

Also, we have distributed devotionals which can be read daily as we anticipate the Christ child. This is a good time to explore the beginning of the good news of Christ. We can anticipate the joy of the coming of our Lord!

At the annual meeting the budget for 2023 was approved. I am always amazed at the generosity of the people at St. Paul. There are also many other contributions of time and talent that do not appear on a balance sheet. Volunteers for the Food Pantry and Church Facilities have been very beneficial. All of this supports our carrying out our mission in the community. The Mission House paid off this year so there is nothing owed on either property freeing up funds to do for others.

We have a new Green Team which has already made progress in being better stewards of God's resources while lowering our power bills. Thank you for the volunteers to carry out this important task.

We will also have new Council members. Thank you to those volunteering for this very important position and to those whose terms are up for their service to the congregation. The Council continued to show true leadership as they navigated through the many issues brought about by Covid-19 and other challenges.

We thank the Lord for the new families that have joined us as we pray for those who do not worship out of caution. Hopefully they will come again.

If God is for and with us who can be against us?

Beyond hope weekly themes coming up for lighting the candle for the Sundays leading to Christmas are peace, joy and love, with the candle in the middle representing the light of Christ as finally being lit to a new beginning. We know Jesus came to us but it is a mystery when Jesus will come again.

“Coming of the Son of Man” at an unexpected hour. Since we do not know what time this is as we live in the tension of “now and not yet” we prepare for the unknown time in Advent, trying to focus on those things that will distract us from the commercialization of Jesus birth. We gather for worship, we attend mid-week soup gatherings, we read scripture and do bible study, we pray, do devotions, and serve others. There is no Black Friday. We do not have to go to extraordinary shopping to get the perfect gift. Because of our belief in Christ we already have the perfect gift from God - eternity. God’s word does not pass away. The cost? It is free. We then use this freedom to follow Christ who gave himself for us as we serve others knowing that everything is okay. Our hope is in the person of Jesus Christ.

Mary and I look forward to being with and working together with you this next year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Pr. Carl

Social Outreach & Ministry

Food Pantry Report for December 2023 Newsletter



St. Paul Pantry

A total of 152 clients were served in October 2023, which meant 43 families were helped. So far since January 1, 2023, we have served 1467 clients which means 449 families have been helped. We could not have accomplished this without the support of our congregation and the

dedicated volunteers who work at the Food Pantry.

Between January 26, 2023, and October 25, 6298.11 pounds of food was donated to the Food Pantry from members of the congregation, as well as outside donors from the community. During the month of October, we received 640.8 pounds of food. We are very grateful for these donations.

We recently received word that during the Simply Giving campaign at Meijers which ran from Sunday, July 2, 2023, through Saturday, September 30, 2023, we received another \$1,110. Thank you to everyone who donated to this campaign. This money will come in very handy with the rise in food prices and inability to obtain some supplies from the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

The Food Pantry is asking for donations of used books for our library, both adult and children. During the month of December, we will also be collecting new coloring books, puzzle books and activity books that will be handed out for the children of Food Pantry clients for Christmas. The Food Pantry is currently seeking volunteers who might be able to assist on the 3rd Monday morning of each month to unload the Food Bank Delivery. We generally meet around 8:30-8:45a.m. and are finished by 10:00 a.m., depending on the number of volunteers that we have. We are also looking for volunteers who could work at pantry distribution on the 1st and 3rd

Wednesday evenings of the month or the 2nd and 4th Thursday afternoons. Anyone who is interested in helping can contact Bev Johnson or Tracy Collins.



During December the Food Pantry is continuing to request donations of the following items, which are currently in short supply or unavailable from the Greater Lansing Food Bank:

TOMATO PASTE TOMATO SAUCE SALT RAVIOLO'S MANDARIN ORANGES
CAKE AND BROWNIE MIXES ICING CRACKERS
LAUNDRY DETERGENT HAND SOAP DISH SOAP BODY LOTION

Upcoming Events



We are raising money to donate to ELCA Good Gifts this holiday season!

Check out the bulletin board in the narthex to see how much we raise in the month of December to donate to Good Gifts this year. More than 85% of your gift directly supports programmatic work. Your gifts support work in 88 countries. The ELCA Good Gifts catalog is on the table in the narthex if you would like to see the possibility your gift will support.

Soup Supper



Come to Soup Supper on the following
Wednesdays in December at 6pm.

- December 6
- December 13
- December 20

Sign up to volunteer for one of the evenings!

children's program



The children's Christmas program will be
performed on Sunday, December 17th during
worship.

Dates to Remember:

- **Sunday, December 3** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am
- **Monday, December 4** - Worship Committee meeting @ 6:30pm
- **Wednesday, December 6** - Food Pantry Distribution @ 5:30pm, Soup Supper @ 6pm
- **Sunday, December 10** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am
- **Wednesday, December 13** - Women's Bible Study @ 11am, Soup Supper @ 6pm
- **Thursday, December 14** - Food Pantry Distribution @ 1pm
- **Friday, December 15** - Blood Drive 11am-4:45pm
- **Sunday, December 17** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am with children's program
- **Wednesday, December 20** - Food Pantry Distribution @ 5:30pm, Soup Supper @ 6pm
- **Thursday, December 21** - Council meeting @ 7pm
- **Sunday, December 24** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am, Lessons & Caroles evening worship @6:30pm
- **Thursday, December 28** - Food Pantry Distribution @ 1pm
- **Sunday, December 31** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am

December Birthday Celebrations

12/07 – Sharon Br.


12/26 – Judy St.

12/29 – Jon Ke.



*if you were accidentally omitted, please contact the church via voicemail or email.

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship	4 Worship Committee meeting 6:30pm	5	6 Food Pantry 5:30-7 Soup Supper 6pm	7	8	9
10 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship	11	12	13 Women's Bible Study 11am Soup Supper 6pm	14 Food Pantry 1-4	15 Blood Drive 11am-4:45pm	16
17 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship w/ children's prg	18 Newsletter Deadline	19	20 Food Pantry 5:30-7 Soup Supper 6pm	21 Council meeting 7pm	22	23
24 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship 10am/6:30pm	25	26	27	28 Food Pantry 1-4	29	30
31 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship		St. Paul Lutheran Church 3383 E. Lake Lansing Rd. East Lansing, MI 48823 517/351-8541 www.stpaul-el.org	Our Purpose: Feeding God's people both inside and outside while listening to what the people need.			