



November 14, 2021 24th Sunday Pentecost

Mailing/Offices: 103 E. Cedar Street, Anamosa IA 52205 Website: www.stpaulanamosa.com Fax: (319) 462-4843



St. Paul community was blessed with the presence of Bishop Amy Current at our Wednesday and Sunday worship services, November 3 and 7. On Wednesday, she handed the 3rd & 4th graders bibles as Pastor Rodney read the blessing.

On Sunday she was present as we prayed for the St. Paul “All Saints”.

If you missed being at this weekend’s services the 10:30 service is posted on YouTube and St. Paul Website. We are still working on posting the Wednesday Service (an eblast will go out when that is available).



The Wednesday night community of St. Paul coming together to worship and welcome Bishop Amy Current. Tonight we were able to follow through with our Promise we as a Congregation made at their Baptism by gifting our 3rd & 4th graders with Adventure Bibles. May they know and feel God's love and may it be a light in their faith journey.

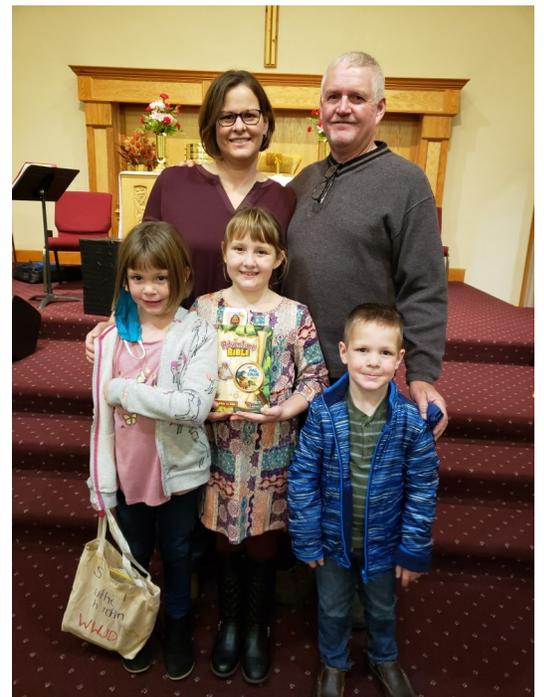


This is the Word of the Lord.

May this Bible be a blessing to you;

May you read and study God's word.

May God speak to you as you learn, and may you rejoice in its good news.



Please Pray for the Following

(Why people want prayers isn't important, *the prayers are!*)

for Del Prout, Joyce Wendt, and for continued and growing health of our community.

To add a name call or email Lois at 462-4841/stpaulanamosa@gmail.com. Names will be listed for 4 weeks and may be renewed.

ALY: November is St. Paul Lutheran Church's turn to prepare the ALY bags. If you are available Thursday mornings at 10:00 and can help out please come to the lower level of the CE building.

GriefShare meets on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 pm in the lower level of the CE building. If you would like to attend please call Nancy Douglas for details at 319-551-3358.

AA meets in the lower level of the CE building on Tuesday evenings at 8:00 pm.

Jones County Food Bank: Items needed this week: canned vegetables, canned fruits, beef stew, Mac & Cheese and personal care items. **You may drop off food donations to the church office during regular business hours or during WD4. Please place items under the table in the entryway. A church member will contact Julie to make arrangements for delivery.**



Tree Walk: It is a GO!

The Tree Walk will be held at the Lawrence Community Center December 10-12.

We will be hosting the St. Paul Café again this year. Thank you for all who have already volunteered to help. Shifts are starting to be formed and Sunday shifts are complete.

Please e-mail Deb Hardersen if you can help with a Friday or Saturday shift.
(deb.hardersen@gmail.com)

Introduction: November begins with All Saints Day and ends in or near Advent, when we anticipate Christ's coming again. It is fitting, then, that the readings today tell of the final resurrection and the end time. In the turmoil of hope, fear, and disbelief that these predictions provoke in us, Hebrews sounds a note of confident trust. Christ makes a way for us where there is no way, and we walk it confidently, our hearts and bodies washed in baptismal water, trusting the one who has promised forgiveness. The more we see the last day approaching, the more important it is to meet together to provoke one another to love.

First Reading: The Book of the Prophet Daniel 12:1-3 NIV

We're approaching the end of the Church year, {the new liturgical year begins with Advent on November 28, 2021} and so the readings deal with the "end times." "That time," as Daniel refers to it, is the Day of Judgment when YHWH will reestablish His reign. Daniel {a name meaning "God (El) has judged"} was a boy taken into Babylonian captivity in 606 BCE. He had the gift of interpreting the dreams and visions given to him by God. In the story, Daniel tells those who endure the hardships under corrupt leadership by staying faithful to YHWH that they will be vindicated by Israel's patron angel, Michael {mighty one of God (El)}, at the end of time. Those who are in the grave (*Sheol, the place of holding*) and awaiting deliverance will be raised for final judgment. Those who aligned themselves with the wicked kings will experience eternal horror and separation, while the innocent faithful will rise up to reconstitute the People of God. This kind of apocalyptic language teases out discussions about the nature of eternal life. Is heaven here and now or is it in another dimension of time and space? Is Daniel promising eternal life to individuals or to the nation of Israel? If it's to individuals, then in what form do they "live on forever?" Daniel does not attempt to answer these questions; his words are merely to inspire hope, faithfulness, and forward looking in his persecuted people.

This promise of resurrection is unprecedented in the Hebrew Scriptures. The widespread view in the Old Testament was that the dead joined their ancestors in *Sheol*, not a place of torment but a place of waiting, separate from communion with God's presence on earth, similar to Hades or the netherworld. Daniel's message was simply that those who have stood fast during the times of persecution are promised an eternal reward with the God of Israel.

Here's the twist. The author of this book named "Daniel" was actually writing around the year 165 BC, four hundred years after Daniel lived in the Babylonian exile. Why did the author choose to recall the story of Daniel in the Babylonian exile? Because the stories were so similar he could use the more ancient one to encourage his own Jewish community to remain faithful to their religion at a time when they were being lured away by the high brow Hellenistic culture while simultaneously suffering a bloody persecution under the oppressive Greek ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanies, who wanted them to abandon the law of Moses in favor of his religion. Those who had remained faithful to YHWH while in Babylon, who did not abandon the Sabbath or intermarry with the Babylonians, returned to Jerusalem to reestablish the Temple and the religion. From that remnant, the members of the author's community had descended. He wanted them to know that God is the master of history and time and is greater than the human plans of the people who followed other gods (i.e. Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, etc). Plainly said, the Jewish relationship lived faithfully with the One True God leads to everlasting life.

Psalm 16

2nd Reading: The letter to the Hebrews 10:11-14, 19-25 NIV

The ministry of the priest in the Jewish ritual tradition was to assist the faithful in offering their animal and grain sacrifices to YHWH in thanksgiving. These sacrifices were offerings to God for various reasons: gratitude for harvest and fertility, recalling the Exodus to freedom, re-consecrating a person after childbirth or burial or healing (recall the ten lepers whom Jesus sent to the priest). Each of these had legal prescriptions attached to them; sometimes the action was more done out of obedience to the law and less as a response to a relationship with YHWH. The sacrifice allowed the person to return to their community, and helped provide livelihood for the priests who did not have their own land. According to the author of Hebrews, a person can offer burnt holocaust to God without ever involving self-sacrifice, and because of this, the sacrifices do not overcome the separations from God that plague humans as consequences of sin. In contrast, Jesus played both the roles of priest and sacrifice when he humbly offered his once-for-all perfect self-sacrifice on the altar of the cross to reveal His Father's love. Any separation or disorder that existed in creation was overcome by this ultimate act of surrender, and for those who follow his actions in their daily lives, external sin offerings are no longer needed. The Jewish role of priest was made defunct; an important point for this author who was trying to keep members of his Christian community from returning to their Jewish ways.

So then, to what are we drawn as Christians? The Spirit of Christ alive in us means that with contrition {humility and a sense of love} we seek the forgiveness already expressed in Jesus' actions. We don't offer sheep or goats or bulls on a fire or altar, rather we daily offer ourselves to God in the Spirit of Christ and consummate it all in our Sunday Eucharist.

Gospel: Mark 13: 1-8 NIV

The invitation from Mark is to look at the world around us and notice the growing darkness, turmoil, and strife present. If we look too long, we can be overcome by a sense of doom and gloom. That's not what we want to happen, but in a way, the Church is intentionally asking us to do this so we can also see the light of Christ overcoming this darkness. We will celebrate our belief in this reality during the Christmas season.

Like Daniel in his day, Jesus is speaking in apocalyptic language {revealing what has been previously hidden} because he wanted to lift up those who felt beaten down by the troubles and drudgery of their lives under the Romans and hypocritical Jewish religious leadership. Apocalyptic language can be troubling to some because it is so symbol laden and seems only to point to future events; consider this intriguing example. But we know that while Jesus seems to be referring to a future time, he is actually speaking of himself and his present time. It is true then, that his generation did not die without having the signs available to them (the cycle of a new moon, the darkness of night, shooting stars, the budding of the fig tree). Whether they grasped them or not is another issue. The point is that Christ the judge is near.

Mark's community too was undergoing persecution at the hands of the Romans (under Nero around 65 A.D.). It was the end of the world as they knew it. Mark wrote his gospel at this time because he feared that the apostolic voices of Peter and Paul would be lost to the Church following their deaths. We are reminded by Mark that like this early Christian community when we place our faith in Christ and

Taped services are found on St. Paul website, St. Paul YouTube page or St. Paul Facebook page.

Wednesday, November 10

- * **6:00pm Worship**
Greeter: Marge Bohlken
Reader & Prayers: Paula Sisler
PowerPoint: Myra Powell
- * **6:00pm WD4**

Sunday, November 14

- * **8:30am Worship**
Comm Prep: Dee Ihlenfeldt
Greeter: Ed & Susie
Reader & Prayers: Virginia Danielson
PowerPoint: Lois Ocenosak
- * **10:30am Worship**
Comm Prep: Amy Christianson
Greeter: CJ Sullivan family
Reader & Prayers: Shawna & Andrea Giegerich
PowerPoint: Ruby Robertson
- * **4:00pm Confirmation Meeting**

Tuesday, November 16

- * 1:30pm Scripture study (in person CE bldg.)
- * 6:00pm Grief Support—LL CE building
- * 7:00pm AA— LL CE building

Wednesday, November 17

- * **6:00pm Worship**
Greeter: Ken & Pam Humpal
Reader: Beth Hora
PowerPoint: Darcie Tenley
- * **6:00pm WD4**

Thursday, November 18
3:00pm HACAP distribution

Sunday, November 21

- * **8:30am Worship**
Comm Prep: Jan & Verna
Greeter: Dale & Pat Jensen
Reader & Prayers: Pat Jensen
PowerPoint: Grant Lubben
- * **10:30am Worship**
Comm Prep: Jeff & Barb Switzer
Greeter: Jamie Hamblin & Kinsley
Reader & Prayers: Kathy Dornbusch
PowerPoint: Dales kids

Office Hours

Monday	9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
Tuesday	8:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m.
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.— 2:00 p.m
Thursday	9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
Friday	Office Closed

stay focused on the light and hope, our ills will be transformed. The closest we come to this fulfillment is when we gather for the Eucharist. It is a different reality for those of us whose lives are not daily being threatened by hostile forces, but we do suffer in our own ways. Ideally, we are lifted and encouraged by the prayer, presence, and unity of those around us. The light shining through the community of believers, the Word proclaimed, and the Sacred Body and Blood, together overcome the gloom of the world. Christ is really present; he lives in us and we are his eternal Word. It is the end of the world as we know it, and we are the people who stand gazing at the signs of the end times while proclaiming the power of God that overcomes all darkness and fear. We, too, can love each other from death into life.

Taking it home:

- Share with someone what you consider to be the most threatening “darkness” in your life.
- Tonight, pray that the light will break through that darkness; call upon Jesus. Instead of cursing the other political party or damning the lawmakers who see things differently than you, pray for blessing and ongoing conversion that all might benefit from their influence.
- What are your visions for your future? Where will you be five years from now? Ten years? What will you be doing? More importantly, list three characteristics you hope people will use to describe you (i.e. honest, forgiving, wealthy, sensitive, just....)
- Offer yourself to God today; three days from now, reflect back on how God has used you to lift someone up. If you can’t identify a time, try again and invite someone to help you evaluate next time.
- Can you think of people who might hear today’s message of hope in a similar way to Mark’s community (Iraqis, Syrians, military personnel, an addict, Libyans, Afghans, Native Americans and Indigenous populations, the uneducated, child laborers, people in abusive homes...?)
- We Christians are supposed to be the power and glory of God for all to see. How are we doing?

Mindfulness (set aside three minutes. Breathe. Read slowly three times. Which words or ideas hold energy for you? What images emerge in you?) “When I can stand in mystery (not knowing and not needing to know and being dazzled by such freedom), when I don’t need to split, to hate, to dismiss, to compartmentalize what I cannot explain or understand, when I can radically accept that “I am what I am what I am,” then I am beginning to stand in divine freedom (Galatians 5:1). We do not know how to stand there on our own. Someone Else needs to sustain us in such a deep and spacious place. This is what the saints mean by our emptiness, our poverty and our nothingness. They are not being negative or self-effacing, but just utterly honest about their inner experience. God alone can sustain me in knowing and accepting that I am not

a saint, not at all perfect, not very loving at all—and in that very recognition I can fall into the perfect love of God. Remember Jesus’ first beatitude: “How happy are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of God” (Matthew 5:3). How amazing is that? I think this might just be the description of salvation and perfect freedom. They are the same, you know.”

— Richard Rohr, *Radical Grace: Daily Meditations by Richard Rohr*

ENCYCLICAL LETTER *LAUDATO SI'* OF THE HOLY FATHER Pope FRANCIS ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Given in Rome at Saint Peter’s on 24 May, the Solemnity of Pentecost, in the year 2015, the third of my Pontificate.

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR COMMON HOME

III. LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY

35. In assessing the environmental impact of any project, concern is usually shown for its effects on soil, water and air, yet few careful studies are made of its impact on biodiversity, as if the loss of species or animals and plant groups were of little importance. Highways, new plantations, the fencing-off of certain areas, the damming of water sources, and similar developments, crowd out natural habitats and, at times, break them up in such a way that animal populations can no longer migrate or roam freely. As a result, some species face extinction. Alternatives exist which at least lessen the impact of these projects, like the creation of biological corridors, but few countries demonstrate such concern and foresight. Frequently, when certain species are exploited commercially, little attention is paid to studying their reproductive patterns in order to prevent their depletion and the consequent imbalance of the ecosystem.

36. Caring for ecosystems demands far-sightedness, since no one looking for quick and easy profit is truly interested in their preservation. But the cost of the damage caused by such selfish lack of concern is much greater than the economic benefits to be obtained. Where certain species are destroyed or seriously harmed, the values involved are incalculable. We can be silent witnesses to terrible injustices if we think that we can obtain significant benefits by making the rest of humanity, present and future, pay the extremely high costs of environmental deterioration.

Response to *Laudato Si'*: What words or phrases leave an impression on you? Are you compelled to change your behavior or thinking because of it?



The Pounds-for-the Pantry Church Challenge has begun!

From now until Monday, December 20, bring as many donations as you can to the church or directly to the food pantry. If you bring them to the church, Kristy Fortune and volunteers, will deliver our donations to the food pantry.

Five area churches have joined in this challenge to fill the pantry's shelves. Each time we make a donation, the food pantry staff will weigh it. They will keep track of each donation total in pounds.

If you prefer to make a monetary donation, each dollar donated will be equal to 1 pound. If you want to make a food donation, but are not able to bring it to church, call Susan Koppenhaver (319) 423-1976. She will pick it up from you.

At the end of the time, the church that has donated the greatest number of pounds will be announced and a church winner will be named.

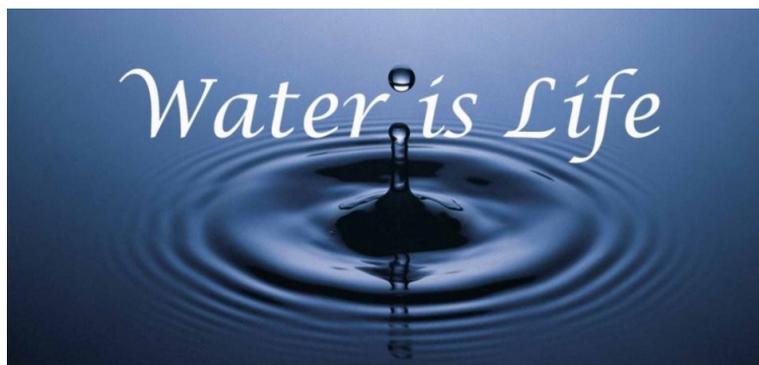
Help us earn that first trophy while making the holiday season better for so many.

Let's help the food pantry "gain weight"!



Help St. Paul raise funds for a Simple Water Well through ELCA Good Gifts. \$2,500 is the goal for one water well. Donations will be accepted during Advent. Please make checks out to St. Paul with ELCA Water Project in the for line. A water well display will be in the church during Advent for cash donations (collected after each service).

About the Water Well Project: Lack of access to safe water is one of the biggest challenges to overcoming poverty. It's also one of the most powerful opportunities to create change. **With a simple water well, spring box or other water point, as many as 500 families gain access to clean, safe water.** Communities are healthier. People spend less money on medical expenses and more on food and education. And instead of spending hours each day gathering water for the family, women and children have time for work and school. Talk about a future filled with hope!



Mailing Address:

**St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
103 East Cedar Street
Anamosa, IA 52205**

Return Service Requested



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

In-Person Worship Services*

Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. Blended

Traditional Sunday 8:30 a.m.

Contemporary Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Covid protocols for indoor services

**Taped service is available on
YouTube, Facebook and website.**

*** All Services now inside the church**