



St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran

Church • School • Preschool

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

February 2025 Newsletter

Seeking to proclaim Christ and Him crucified to more people more often.

Stewardship is all about love?

Valentine's Day! That's the big day that usually gets marked out in February. Sure, Presidents Day, Groundhogs Day, the Superbowl, these all exist within the month as well but then the Superbowl really isn't a holiday and history and rodents, well, let's just say they pale in comparison to the celebration of love. This too is slightly ironic as the day ultimately was meant to commemorate St. Valentine who was said to marry couples against the wishes of the government and was then beheaded for his actions on ... yep, Valentine's Day. Not very romantic, I suppose. Regardless, February becomes the month of love.

This year, February also marks the first month after our congregational budgeting process ... perhaps even less romantic yet. But as we set our minds to what it takes to keep ministry humming along here at St. Paul's, Stewardship is all about love, at least that's how the Lord regularly frames it in the pages of His book.

That's right, in fact, everything we think, say and do, including our spending, is to be a giant love letter to God. That's the point of the Commandments after all. Love for God first and then love for neighbor says Jesus (Matthew 22:34-40) to the Pharisees who tried to make Him pick a commandment. Or consider Jesus' words to the rich young man who thinks he has kept all of those commandments. Keeping God first. Loving perfectly. Interestingly, it's money that trips him up (cf. Mark 10:17-31).

My point in writing is not to make you feel guilty though. Far from it, I'm often no better than the rich young ruler as I survey the blessings poured out upon me. I certainly don't keep God's Law perfectly. That First Commandment, loving God with all my heart, soul, mind, strength, if it's not money, then it's spouse, kids, life, you name it. Yes, that first commandment, it just might be the

hardest one to keep as every other one nestles up within it.

Ah, but then that's where God's love comes into play. God so loved the world, John writes (John 3:16,17). God so loved you that everything which is a stumbling block for us, simply wasn't for Him. We were the most important thing to God! So much so that He would give His one and only Son for us, let Him die for us. All so that we might be with Him forever. In that same love, He provides all that I am and all that I have, both physically and spiritually, as Luther so elegantly puts it in all three explanations to the articles of the Apostles Creed.

His providence, His forgiveness, His gift of faith, well, as a branch connected to the vine, it produces fruit within me. I bubble up in love. Love that expresses itself in the way I live. In the things that are most important to me. Yes, dare I say it in the way I use my time, my talent, and my treasure. No, whether I give 1% or 100% won't change my status as His child, that will always be secure in the blood of Christ. In the same way that my kids telling me that they love me doesn't make them any more or less my child. Yet, I would guess you want to hear it back and if they never expressed their love for you, you might even get concerned.

Ach, enough of the stewardship sermon. It's February, it's time to love. And stewardship, well, it turns out it is a pretty good way to show our love to God.

⁷ But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:7-9

Budget Numbers for 2025

The four funds of our congregation comprise the total budget each year. They are the Current or General Fund, the largest of the four, which includes all the daily expenditures within the congregation (called workers' wages, insurance, utilities, also in this total is parsonage mortgage and our WLA commitment), Missions is our Congregations Mission Offerings or CMO given to synod each year, the Improvement Fund is designed to take care of upkeep of facilities, and our Debt Fund seeks to pay the mortgage for the church.

General Fund: Our Voters approved \$835,668 in 2025 which marks a 1.83% increase over last year's budget. The largest portion of this of course is compensation (\$686,410), then our WLA Commitment (\$57,408), Utilities (\$43,545), Miscellaneous [paper, Bible Studies,] (\$30,970), Property & Other Insurance (\$15,119).

Missions: Our Voters approved \$39,482 for the support of our Synod and the Missions we undertake together around our globe. This is the same number that we assigned in 2024 marking neither an increase or decrease and comprises a little under 5% of our budget. When combined with our WLA support the congregation gives a little over 10% of our budget in offerings to the support of ministries outside our walls.

Improvement Fund: Our Voters approved \$6,000 which has been our annual amount for a number of years.

Debt Fund (Mortgage): After our 3 year renewal our interest rates climbed to 6.9%. This means our payments for the year come to \$156,884 or \$13,074 per month.

All totaled, our needed offerings for 2025 come to \$1,038,035 or \$86,502.92 each month. With 300 mailboxes in the congregation, this averages out at \$288.35 each month or \$3,460.12 annually, around 5% of the median household income for North Fond du Lac, WI. The individual fund breakdown would look like \$232.13 General, \$10.97 Missions, \$1.70 Improvement, & \$43.58 Mortgage each month. We know not everyone will be able to do this, others will likely be able to do much more. We only ask that you prayerfully consider the blessings God has given and what proportion to return as we thank God for all He has provided. We remain confident that He will bless it and all of us as we do so.

For Further Consideration: Prov. 3:9-10; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 10:5-10; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:7-9; 2 Cor. 9:6-8

Happy Birthday

By day not year ... that can be your own little secret.

Pam Reiser	2/1	Garrett Fischer	2/15
Cody Sokolik	2/1	Eric Kivela	2/15
Shannon Eiler	2/2	Antonia Laudolff	2/17
Gary Miller	2/2	Ursula Curry	2/17
Jonah Rickert	2/3	Andrew Heller	2/18
Vicki Tadych	2/3	Sophia Miller	2/19
Carol Schwefel	2/3	Cameron Schwartz	2/19
Andrea Dowland	2/5	Marci Balson	2/19
Jenna Krupp	2/5	Jessica Marshall	2/20
Kim Robinet	2/6	Abigail Mielkie	2/21
Lynn Pollack	2/7	Peter Ferriol	2/22
Sherri Linzmeyer	2/8	Jennifer Slattery	2/22
Cheri Cearns	2/8	Heather Zittlow	2/22
Bridget Oelke	2/8	Cathy Mikle	2/22
Andrew Hintz	2/9	Mary Briski	2/22
Ava Schoenbach	2/10	Jenna Frederick	2/26
Delaney Merten	2/11	Scott Marshall	2/26
Thomas Kemnitz	2/11	Tyler Dukelow	2/26
Amanda Emerich	2/11	Sheila Stettbacher	2/26
Daniel Krenn	2/11	Scott Schwartz	2/26
Beverly Buerger	2/11	Mitchell White	2/27
Tom Hagman	2/12	Julie Hilbert	2/27
Amanda Dykstra	2/13	Bob Grace	2/27
Rob Burkholder	2/13	Alan Ahrens	2/28
Jacob Slattery	2/14	Jennifer Kryzyanowski	2/28

A fun birthday activity. Find your baptism certificate and recall the day when you were born into the family of God.

God's own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ! He, because I could not pay it, Gave my full redemption price. Do I need earth's treasures many? I have one worth more than any That brought me salvation free, Lasting to eternity!

Mr. Michael Ross Called for Principal and 7&8 grade teacher

A Call was extended to Michael Ross currently at Reformation in San Diego, CA where he serves as 5-6 grade teacher. You can reach out to Mr. Ross via e-mail should you wish at rossm@refsd.org.

**Look for the 2024 Annual Report in mailboxes
later this month.**