



HAPPY NEW YEAR

"I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
- Jeremiah 29:11

I don't blame people for missing what happened in the small town of Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago. Who would have thought that the Lord of heaven and earth would come into the world as a child born in a stable?

Looking back at 2023, you might find yourself remembering some of the triumphs and trials of the past year. Even if you have had some wonderful successes in the past twelve months, you can probably remember some low points as well. As you enter a new year, remember that God's plans have always been to prosper his people. He can transform ordinary events and difficult trials into key moments that help his plans to prosper. He is not out to harm us, but the dark moments we experience can be part of the most important lessons to help us grow nearer to Him.

God has a way of saving his world that we may find hard to understand. He introduced his Son into the world and brought about our salvation in a way that could easily be overlooked—and yet he has changed the world, and his kingdom keeps growing. That same God comes into our lives and draws us into his plans for a hope-filled future!

Lord, my life is in your hands. I praise you for the joys you have brought in the past year, and for the ways you refine me through the trials in my life. Prepare me to be part of your work in the year ahead. In Jesus, Amen.

"A Strange Way to Save the World" - Pastor Bill Sytsma

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PASTOR MARC'S INSTALLATION

December 3, 2023, was a milestone in the life of St. Paul's Church. After more than 2 years of searching, we were able to start a new chapter with the installation of Pastor Marc Castro as our Lead Pastor. At the elder prayer meeting on December 2, Pastor Marc, Andrea, and their children were prayed for and anointed with oil. On Sunday morning, Pastor Terry Schoenfeld and Todd Brooks joined us for an installation service. We celebrated with a luncheon afterwards to welcome the Castros to the St. Paul's family. Please keep the Castro family in your prayers as they begin their ministry with us.



VAN RAALTEN UPDATE

Dear St. Paul's,

Thank you so much for your generosity as a church in supporting missions around the globe, including our family! We are so blessed with your support, including the recent Christmas gift. Thank you!

Here's our ANNUAL REPORT for 2023. Along with my colleague Brandon Wilkes, we saw God move in 64 collaborative spaces involving 3,979 people in these 4 areas:

- **Prayer:** Partnered with 13 prayer agencies, serving 42 prayer meetings involving 1,621 people
- **7 Local Pastor Collaboratives:** involving 289 pastors that innovated and executed these 4 new ideas: raised \$2.6M to address the historical injustice in housing, an Overnight Pastor Prayer Summit, a joint Christmas Outreach in Ferguson and Theological Training for Urban Pastors
- **27 'networkers'** innovated 2 new ideas: host a 'Front Row Seat' Bus Tour (uniting Christians by showing them the city) and a plan to minister to the families of victims of violence.
- **6 Focus Teams** (focusing on a specific area of community need) created 13 collaborative spaces involving 1404 people, innovating 11 new ideas of which 8 were executed, like blessing 65 families with homes through a robust partnership with 6 housing agencies, audacious goal setting for those working with 500,000 immigrants, connecting 40 not for profits in a ministry fair and educating the church for engagement.

Financial need: Due to demographic changes with key supporters, inflation adjustment and a change in my corporate chaplaincy job, we are faced with the challenge to raise an additional \$35,000 in 2024. Would you consider becoming a partner with us? Checks made out to 'Gateway Metro St. Louis' can be left in either my mailbox at the church office, handed to Barbara van Dyk or mailed to 12865 Somerton Ridge Drive, St. Louis, MO 63141. Thank you for standing with us all these years! We look forward to a great 2024!

For more info: see recent newsletters and annual report at www.stpaulsefree.org/upper-room

-- Marco van Raalten, Network Facilitator, Gateway Metro St. Louis

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Women's Fellowship Our next meeting is January 10. Bring your own lunch - dessert/drinks provided.



Women's Glow Brunch

A big thank-you to the Women's Fellowship Committee for planning an enjoyable brunch that helped the ladies start off the holiday season in style!

The food was delicious and the music program with Richard and Shelly Bell, accompanied by Diane Mohr, was fantastic! We also want to thank the men for serving.



Christmas Craft Sessions Thank you to Elizabeth Thomas for leading a Christmas craft event. All those who attended went home with lovely arrangements to display for the holidays.

ELDER / DEACON NEWS

- The December Elder Board Meeting was fairly simple in December, with the Deacons giving an update on our financial position and Pastor Castro becoming familiar with some of the ongoing business of the church.
- David Pollmann will be looking for volunteers for a new ministry called **“Helping Hands”** to aid the elderly / infirm with projects around their home. See below for more information.
- The Elders would like to encourage our folks to attend a **Wednesday Night Worship** when it kicks off again in January.
- The **Budget Hearing** has been set for Monday, January 15, at 7:00 p.m. The **Annual Congregational Meeting** will be on Sunday, January 28, at 12:30 p.m., preceded by lunch.
- On Saturday, January 27, the Elders will have their **Shepherding Meeting**. Congregants are encouraged to join us at 9:00 a.m. to pray for St. Paul’s and for the Annual Meeting.
- Any **questions** for the Elder Board can be sent to elders@stpaulsefree.org.

NEW ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Beginning January 7, Paul Feiner will be leading an ABF based on his book: *New Jerusalem After the Millennium*. This should be a great follow-up to Pastor Terry’s class on the millennium. Please consider attending and encouraging Paul, a fairly new attendee at St. Paul’s.

HELPING HANDS

In response to God’s call to love our neighbor and care for widows and orphans, we are assembling a group of volunteers to address some physical needs of our congregants. We know that this type of help often occurs informally at St. Paul’s, but we want to make everyone aware of how to give and get this help and support.

Helping Hands would take on home maintenance tasks, odd jobs, and other activities to support those in the congregation who are unable to do so themselves due to age, medical condition, lack of skills or other individual circumstances. Examples of this support could include (but not limited to) electrical and plumbing repair, safety upgrades, lawn care and flooring repair. Another facet of this support might be to recommend and oversee the hiring of contractors for larger jobs that cannot be done by the team (e.g., roof repair, sewer repair, tree service etc.) It is anticipated that the person needing support will pay for any supplies required as they are able. The hope is that no one will be denied support due to funding concerns.

For this to work we need two groups of people.

1. Volunteers who can provide services and support. For those who would like to help but don’t feel that they are “handy” enough, there will be opportunities to learn some skills “on-the-job” by working with others who already have the expertise in a given task.
2. Folks who have needs and will make those needs known.

Please contact David Pollmann @ 314-517-4848 if you are interested in either helping or getting help. We look forward to this new ministry opportunity at St. Paul’s.



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

Family Christmas Party

Around 80 people showed up at our Family Christmas Party. The kids had a blast eating pizza, making custom hot-chocolates, creating treat bags from a candy bar, decorating cookies, and visiting Santa and his elf! Thanks to Lisa Stahlhut and her many volunteers that made the night a success.



A new Wednesday evening kids program, **JAM**, will be launching in January. This program is designed for kids and their families. Each evening, we will be having a free family dinner, bible stories and crafts. Check the Sunday bulletins or website to get more information.

Lots of volunteers are need, so if you are interested in helping please contact Lisa Stahlhut at lisa@stpaulsefree.org



YOUTH GROUP

Youth Christmas Party On December 16, Pastor Marc joined us for the 2023 Christmas party at the del Cid's home. We had an awesome time with lots of good food and fun. Karaoke was a great hit! We enjoyed singing and dancing to all the Christmas hits. Thank-you to the del Cid family for hosting us.



THANK-YOU

Thank you, everyone, for all the cards, calls, and help you've given us this past year. - Nancy Mueller

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Budget Hearing** - Monday, January 15, at 7:00 p.m.
- **Annual Congregational Meeting** - Sunday, January 28, at 12:30 p.m., preceded by lunch.
- **Sausage Supper** -
February 4 from 12:30 - 6 p.m.
 - ⇒ All proceeds will go to support St. Paul's Youth
 - ⇒ Lots of volunteers are needed!
 - ⇒ We also need lots of desserts!
 - ⇒ We will be taking orders for uncooked sausage \$6/lb
 - ⇒ More Info / sign-up sheets will be in the weekly bulletins.



Join us for fresh sausage, homemade mashed potatoes, gravy, saurkraut, and dessert.

FEBRUARY 4, 2024
12:30-6PM

\$12 per plate in advance, \$13 at the door

Kids 11 and under dine-in for free!

Happy Anniversary!

ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS

David & Susan Pollmann 01/08 41 years

Tim & Nancy Dahl 01/16 42 years

Happy Birthday!

Betty Keely 01/02
Camila del Cid 01/04

Joan Knappenberger 01/04
Jan Smith 01/09
Pauline Indermark 01/11
Mary Louise Serdy 01/18

Donna Triebe 01/22
Ralph Stahlhut 01/24
Arthur Maclean 01/26
Ruth Wyne (100) 01/31

MEMORIALS

Marlene Eschenbrenner, age 89, of Maryland Heights, Missouri passed away on Sunday, December 3, 2023. She was born May 12, 1934, to Oscar and Edna (nee: Sieferer) Leininger. They have preceded her in death, as have her siblings Paula and Gerald, her sister-in-law LaVerne (Alan), and grandson Jeremy. She is survived by: her loving husband of 70 years Charles E. Eschenbrenner; her children: Charles A. (Sharon), Tina Louise; her grandchildren: Jessica (Dave), Marcy (Matt), Justin, Jason (Monica), Tad (Crystal), Tara (Tim); her great-grandchildren: Dane, Logan, Syllas, Sutton, Cody, Tyler, Alexa, Jordan, Kelsea, Ethan, Kylie; her great-great-grandchildren: Azai, Emmy, Phoebe, Francesca, Kaius, Lily.

Marlene was a longtime member of St. Paul's and belonged to the Women's Fellowship Group for many years. She enjoyed fishing, flowers and gardening. She loved playing pinochle with her church friends. She particularly enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Delcie Lee Payne, age 99, passed away on December 12, surrounded by her family. She was born on May 17, 1924 to the late Vernon and Dora Ryther in St. Louis, Missouri. Delcie was preceded in death by her loving husband, Donald Eugene Payne as well as her brother, Paul Ryther, and sister, Avis Breite. She is survived by both of her children, Patty (Mike) Hake and Marilyn Bergjans, one granddaughter, Gina (Josh) Malawy, and four great grandchildren, Issabella, Ellery, Paisley, and River Malawy.

Delcie worked as a realtor while she and her husband raised their two daughters. They were very active in their church and volunteered a lot. They loved to travel and visited many countries and every state but North Dakota. They enjoyed spending time at their little farm in Davisville, MO. Being a wife, a mom, a grandmother and great grandmother were her greatest joys.

Frank Leon May, age 80, of St. Louis County, Missouri, was called to his heavenly home on Monday, December 25, 2023. He was born on May 29, 1943 in St. Louis, Missouri, the son of Melvin and Mathilda (nee Ernst) May.

A proud veteran, Frank served his country in the Vietnam War in two tours from 1967 to 1969. Though he never saw combat, the military was a formative part of Frank's life. Upon his return, he met, became engaged to, and married his lovely wife, Lynn. In the years that followed, he raised two children, Cheryl Smith (Rick) and David May (Marci), who gave him five grandchildren: Jacob, Owen, and Phoebe Smith, and Devin and Fiona May.

His professional career led him to the Monsanto Company and the University of Missouri - St. Louis, where he served as a research investigator in the chemistry department. His work on x-ray diffraction and crystallography could have filled several volumes, and his knowledge of chemical structure was unparalleled among his peers.

Frank was active in the Normandy High School Class of 1961 community and sent email reminders of classmates' birthdays, only stopping when he was diagnosed with lung cancer in October 2023. Frank's passions included fishing, photography, his church community, and stamp collecting. At St. Paul's Evangelical Church in Creve Coeur, Frank and Lynn organized community dinners for more than 30 years, sang in the choir, and played in the bell choir. A consummate chef, Frank frequently found himself in the church kitchen, cooking for men's bible study, the rummage sale, Madrigal dinners, and more. Frank was also very passionate about helping the church's youth; from 1998 to 2002, he led youth mission trips to various places in the U.S. He was a part of the Monsanto Stamp Club for more than 44 years and built an impressive collection, leaving his family in wonder.

Frank will be dearly missed by his loving family and many friends.

St. Paul's Evangelical Church
9801 Olive Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63141



Sundays

Worship Service 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School 11:00 a.m.

Mondays - Church Office Closed

Tuesdays

Quilters and Project Linus 9:30 a.m.
Prayer & Care Meeting 1:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Women's Bible Study 9:00 a.m.

Thursdays

Praise Ringers 6:00 p.m.
Chorale 7:00 p.m.

1/08 Deacons 5:30 pm / Elders 7pm

1/10 Women's Fellowship 11:30am

1/15 White Cross 9:30am

1/15 Budget Hearing 7pm

1/22 Quilts of Valor 9am

1/27 Pray with the Elders 9am

1/28 Annual Meeting / Potluck 11am

2/04 Sausage Supper 12:30 - 6pm