

THE SPECTRUM

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL-REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2025

Liturgies
8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School
Confirmation
9:30 a.m.

Adult Forum
9:10 a.m.

Nursery
Attendant Ava Hacker
is on duty every Sunday
from 9-11:45 a.m.

Livestream video via
SPR's FB page or look
in your e-mail on
Sunday mornings.

Visit us on the web!
www.stpaulref.org

St. Paul-Reformation is
a congregation of the
Evangelical
Lutheran Church in
America (ELCA).

100 Oxford Street N.
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-224-3371
office@stpaulref.org

The Spectrum items, articles
and columns need to be to
the Parish Office by the 12th
of the month. The Spec-
trum goes to print on the
15th and this date is hard
and fast. Articles received
after the 12th may or may
not be included.



Above: An auspicious crew helped to put up the trees for Christmas at SPR, complete with wine, cheese, and a duet rendition of "Sleigh Ride." Thanks to all who helped!

Follow the Star!

Epiphany is Monday, January 6 at 7:00 p.m.; Reception at 6:00 p.m.

The Twelve Days of Christmas end on Epiphany Day, which falls on January 6 each year. Please join us as we celebrate the arrival of the Magi: we gather at 6:00 p.m. for a Reception (please bring an appetizer to share), followed by Holy Communion in the West Transept at 7:00 p.m. As every year, you will be invited to take chalk home to bless your homes, an Epiphany tradition. If you have not joined us before, this is a great "bookend" to Christmas. See you there!

AS I WRITE TO YOU THIS MONTH. the parish office is in full-swing to get all the things done that need doing before Christmas. Much like your own homes, there is a list of tasks a mile long that needs attention before everything is “set” to celebrate Christmas.

And, at the same time, we are about to enter into an imperfect story with imperfect people. Quite frankly, the story of Christmas is a mess, no matter how beautiful the music may be or how warmly the candles glow.

This “mess” is underlined even more as we celebrate Epiphany: possible spies from the east who have come seeking a new king, going on about some kind of *something* in the heavens. As I write to you, much of the East Coast of the United States is a-tizzy with concerns about unidentified drones that are circling New Jersey. People want answers! They are demanding of their politicians an explanation, and—of course—conspiracy theories abound.

This is not so different from the Epiphany. Things have been seen in the heavens that might have dangerous political implications for a world that is carefully balanced. One false move, and the apple-cart might tip over. The fear and anxiety that Americans feel in general has been exacerbated by a time of political transition and, yes,...drones over New Jersey. Matthew’s report that Herod was “greatly distressed” and “...all Jerusalem with him” is not so hard to imagine. When politics change, or have the potential to change, there might be rough waters ahead.

What are Christian people to do, and might Epiphany have something to teach us about an unstable political world, or megalomaniacs in search of power, or—more importantly—about the God’s constancy in the midst of such things? What is a faithful response when, it seems, much of the world is coming off its hinges?

An extremely important part of the Epiphany story is to remember that—in the end—Herod did not win. This is a certainty for Christian people: we know how the story of God’s kingdom ends. God is in control, and God *will be* in control.

That is the long-game, but what about the “Innocents” who are slaughtered along the way? Some comfort “God’s Kingdom” is to “Rachel, weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted.” There is very real collateral damage along the way in every political situation, including the status quo.

Secondly, Herod—as all tyrants—ultimately lives his life based upon *fear*. Fear that his throne will be usurped, fear that he is not what he says he is, fear that the lies that marked his reign will be exposed for what they are: lies.

It is so with every Herod. Lies do not become the truth simply by saying them enough

times, and the visit of the Magi remind us of this. We are not dealing with idiots here; we are dealing with shrewd operatives who can see through Herod’s motives to “come and do the child homage” in favor of a careful listening for God. When they do, they are “warned in a dream to return to their home by another road.” In so doing—going *another way other than Herod’s way*—they begin the subversive activity of acknowledging where power really lies: in God. It doesn’t mean that Herod isn’t real or to be taken seriously; it means that—as Mary says- “...the mighty will be thrown down and the rich sent away empty.” At Christmas and during Epiphany as its exclamation point (!) we take these words seriously. Seriously enough to quiet our doubts, seriously enough to calm our fears, and seriously enough to give us grace and strength for the “road home” that lies ahead. Christians choose to “go by another road,” and that road proclaims that Christ is king, and no other. +Pr. Patrick Shebeck



“This is a certainty for Christian people: we know how the story of God’s kingdom ends. God is in control, and God will be in control.”

FROM THE CANTOR

All you good Lutherans know that to wish you Happy New Year on January 1 is a month belated since the liturgical year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, which was December 1 in 2024. But if you want to celebrate on January 1, fear not, for the lesser festival of the Name of Jesus falls every year on January 1. What better way to mark a new calendar year that with a festival connected to one of the earliest Christian hymns?

According to the gospel of Luke, on the eighth day after his birth, Jesus was circumcised and named Jesus, “the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.” (Luke 2:21) “Jesus” is the Greek form of “Joshua,” which means “the Lord saves.”

Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi begins with greetings and an exhortation to live lives worthy of Jesus. Paul is in prison, but says that this circumstance has allowed him to proclaim the gospel to the whole palace guard. He is trying to follow the example set by Jesus, and, at the beginning of chapter 2, encourages the letter recipients to do the same. We are to be humble and value the interests of others above ourselves. Paul then includes a lengthy quote, which seems to be one of the earliest Christian hymns:

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

(Phil. 2: 5-11)

It was countercultural to claim the title “Lord” for Jesus. We’re so used to hearing it that it washes over us, but it was a sign that God was in charge, not the emperor. To this end, think of ELW #416, “At the Name of Jesus” by Caroline M. Noel:

*At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess him king of glory now.
It is God’s good pleasure we should call him
Lord,
Who from the beginning was the mighty Word.*

or

#620 by John Newton:

*How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer’s ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,
and drives away all fear.”*

Perhaps these three hymns can fortify us with the good news that Jesus Christ is Lord (and not anyone else) and that when we have doubt and uncertainty, we can call upon the name of Jesus for comfort and strength. May the name of Jesus be a blessing to us all year long!

+Sr. Stacie Lightner, Cantor



DRAG BRUNCH AT ROXY'S CAFÉ

Saturday, January 11 at
2:00 p.m.—TIME
CHANGE



SPR's June Drag Brunch was such a hit, that we've decided to do it again! For the young and the young at heart, Roxy's Cabaret in Minneapolis will present this show, with breakfast available from the Nicollet Diner right next door. Tickets are \$20, and can be paid either online or by dropping a check in the narthex. We have fourteen tickets reserved for seatings at 1:30 and 1:45 p.m. *We hope to see you there!*



COMMEMORATION OF MLK SUNDAY JANUARY 19 MLK BREAKFAST— JANUARY 20 8:00 A.M. BOTH IN PERSON AND ONLINE

Tickets must be purchased to attend at the Convention

Center or to receive link to view the event. There will be no satellite in person locations. This year's keynote speaker is Michelle Norris, a journalist with NPR and one of the most recognized radio voices in the country. Don't miss it!

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting will be held on **Sunday January 26 immediately following the 10:30 a.m. via Zoom only.**

This allows many of our remote members to join.

On the docket: constitutional changes, election of new Parish Council Members, Adoption of the Budget, and an overview of the coming Capital Campaign. All confirmed members are eligible to vote. An e-mail with the Zoom Link, as well as a link from SPR's website will be available the week before. If you would like to check out the constitutional proposals, those are also available on SPR's website.



BIRTHDAYS

- 01 Gabriel Ripley
- 02 Anne Halgerson
- 04 Don Colbert, Anna Matenaer
- 07 Kim Brennan
- 08 Elizabeth Adedigba
- 09 Nancy Seleen, Oliver Yang
- 10 Jeannie Entenza, Ani Zlimen
- 11 Sandy Iverson
- 13 Jon Stevens
- 17 Emerson Mattson
- 19 Al Oertwig
- 20 Krisi Matenaer
- 21 Juan Ramirez
- 23 Tom Dunn, Lu Beckman
- 24 Richard Gehrman
- 25 Eldora Pearson, Chris Thomforde, Judi Verdugo
- 27 Nadia Ramirez
- 30 Kristine Stevens
- 31 Alma Maki

ANNIVERSARIES

- 17 Karen and Scott Hanson



Above: Everyone can help! Here, Isaiah—age three—holds the missal for Pr. Patrick during the 8:00 a.m. liturgy. Well done...you're on your way, kid!

COUNCIL CORNER + The Parish Council met on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, for a short meeting followed by a holiday gathering.

- Pastor Shebeck provided an update on the 2025 Stewardship Campaign, with approximately 75% of pledges made to date.
- Revenue through October remained on track with expenses slightly up resulting in a small deficit. Work on 2025 budget continues by Finance Committee with proposed budget available in January. Budget will be reviewed in an upcoming Adult Forum and presented at the annual parish meeting in January.
- Council approved the use of Endowment Funds for a recent cast iron pipe malfunction resulting in damage to the on-demand heat system control panel.

+ Kristin Benson, *Council Secretary*

Below: The SPR quilters made a large donation of quilts to the Harriet Tubman Center. Here, member Pam Peyton proudly displays these fine works...which will be used to support the Tubman Center in its work. You can learn more at www.tubman.org



BIBLE MATTERS

Please join us **via Zoom** starting on **Wednesday January 8 at 10:00 a.m.** for this time of study, fellowship, and learning as we look forward to the coming week's lectionary texts. The Zoom link will be in the weekly email, and the lectionary texts will be sent the day before. We hope you can join us!

No Bible Matters on January 1.

WARMING HUB UPDATE + The SPR Warming Hub is up and operational, and has been serving Youth and Families since the beginning of December. The daily census has been low given the unseasonably warm weather, but—so far—all is going well.



Above: When dealing with trees and wreaths, it is best to have professionals who know what they are doing! Here, SPR member Ed Stuart and his granddaughter Layani do battle with the Advent wreath ribbons! Well done, team!

JANUARY MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Thank you to all the volunteers who help make the 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning services “run.”

January 5 Second Sunday of Christmas

Anthony Hedlund, Victoria Smith, *Asst. Ministers*
Kathy Thomforde, Bonnie Olson, *Lectors*
Mikko Matala, Lu Beckman, *Acolytes*
Jamie Block, *Cantor*
Bonnie Olson, Joe Voss, *Greeters/Ushers*
OPEN, *Coffee/Treats*

January 12, Baptism of Our Lord

Victoria Smith, Kathy Thomforde, *Asst. Ministers*
Joe Voss, Jim McGowan, *Lectors*
Elizabeth Adedigba, Henry Hanson,
Daniel Adedigba, Mya Wagner, *Acolytes*
Jesse Crosby, *Cantor*
Anthony Hedlund, Annette Hines, Bonnie Olson,
Joe Voss, *Greeters/Ushers*
Anastasia Polda, Linda Dahlen, *Coffee/Treats*

January 19, Second Sunday after Epiphany

Amy Rouillard, Ian Block, *Assisting Ministers*
Hilary Hund, Cheri Gohr, *Lectors*
Matias Badilla, *Acolyte*
Chris Lyman, *Cantor*
Roman Hund, Ed Stuart, Jan Swenson,
Greeters/Ushers
Karen Allard, Alice Swan, *Coffee/Treats*

January 26, Third Sunday after Epiphany

Aaron Brown, Victoria Smith, *Assisting Ministers*
David Gjerdrum, Colleen McGuire, *Lectors*
Alexander Salo, *Acolyte*
Jim Bowen, *Cantor*
Kristen Damberg, Bonnie Olson, Jim Halgerson,
Anne Halgerson, *Greeters/Ushers*
Marjie Ruth, Steve Ruth, *Coffee/Treats*

ADULT FORUM is on Sunday at 9:10 a.m. in Tidemann Hall. In January, there is no Adult Forum on January 5 or 26. Annual Meeting matters discussions will be held on January 12 and 19. Join us to learn, discern and discuss.

1|12 ANNUAL MEETING CONSTITUTION Q & A

During Adult Forum at 9:10 a.m. in Tidemann Hall on Sunday January 12 + Periodic review of our Parish Constitution is good housekeeping! Come and see what changes are proposed (minor, mostly) in preparation for the Annual Meeting.

1|19 ANNUAL MEETING FINANCE Q & A

During Adult Forum at 9:10 a.m. in Tidemann Hall on Sunday January 19 + If you love seeing how much we spend on snow removal, stamps, or heat, this is the meeting for you! Please join us as we answer your questions about the budget, saving time (and tears!) at the regular Annual Meeting!

1|26 "ALL CREATION SINGS": CHAT WITH AUGSBURG FORTRESS



+ SPR welcomes Augsburg Fortress Worship Associate and ELCA Deacon Jennifer Baker-Trinity to discuss with us the new Hymnal Supplement recently published by Augsburg Fortress entitled “All Creation Sings.” New Hymns join old favorites in this latest resource for music-making in the ELCA!

HAVE YOU RETURNED YOUR 2024 PLEDGE CARD?

If not, not to worry! There are two ways you can do it:

- 1.) Return the **pledge form/paper pledge card** via the mail;
- 2.) **Make your commitment online** using the link in the Friday e-mail, via our website, or on SPR's Facebook Page. *Thank you in advance!*

QUILTING AND KNITTING *for Charity* Join us on **Saturday January 4 10:00 a.m.** You can sew, arrange blocks, iron, tie layers together, cut fabric! Work on your own projects. Join in on the fun! Bring a snack to share. Coffee provided. Contact Gwen Peyton at gwenpeyton5@gmail.com.

MEALS MINISTRY!

Once a month, SPR members help each other by preparing and delivering meals for members who may find it challenging to always have a home-cooked meal. Meals cooked in the church kitchen at **9:00 a.m. on Saturday January 18.** Volunteers needed; if you can chop, cook, package, measure or just like to socialize, please join us. The alley door will be open. Your contributions for this ministry are greatly appreciated. For more information please contact Gwen Peyton, gwenpeyton5@gmail.com.



BREAKFAST CLUB + Join us **Sunday, January 5** at the Louisiana Café on Selby Ave after the second service. All are



welcome to join this time of fellowship, good conversation and food. No agenda: just fellowship!

BUILDING UPDATE + The Tuesday Crew and others continue working on multiple repair, improvement projects.

Projects to Winterize: Put sand and salt buckets, shovels and chippers by all outside doors. Cover outside of A/C unit in the Conservatory. Clear leaves from outside elevator vestibule multiple times. Close off Laurel side steps.

- Reorganize garage so ceramic ceiling tiles can be stored in the garage.
- Change analog clocks, hang quilts, put up Christmas giving tree in Narthex.
- Put up outside vinyl Christmas signs.
- Craftacular: Hang lights in east alcove, put together lamps and connect to power for Craftacular vendor. Clear and return items to and from closets. Remove tables and chairs from lower auditorium and west side classroom so custodial service could sweep and mop floors..
- Brian Olson has replaced a window in the kitchen, removing the over-a-century-old original for a brand new, energy efficient one! Thank you, Brian!

Staff: Discussion with Tuesday Crew regarding lights and tables/chairs for Craftacular; and placement of ceramic roof tiles in the garage

Thanks to all who volunteer to keep this building and spaces inside in condition to use and rent out.

DONATE TO SPR USING YOUR SMARTPHONE! *A great way to donate whether you are at church or out and about!* Now you can give from anywhere in the world! It's fast, easy, and secure. Search your app-finder for **"GivePlusChurch,"** download it, click "sign up," and follow the instructions. You can donate to either the Good Samaritan Fund or the Parish General fund (in addition to your regular pledge). Give it a try! **Thanks to all who are using this quick and easy way to donate!**

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St. Paul, MN 55104

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Above: SPR members Chris Lyman, Andres Albertsen, Roman and Hilary Hund gathered at Bad Weather brewing for December's Theology on Tap. The topic? Christmas, of course...and how we navigate as people of faith through sometimes messy stories. Our next gathering is in February...hope you can join us!