

# Flock Talk

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

April 2024



hearts + doors wide open



**A MESSAGE** *from the Pastor*

## *Easter Hope for Good Fridays*

Did you get the full Holy Week experience? If not, you truly missed something. Sorry! It's like watching the first season of your new favorite Star Wars show, and then skipping to the season finale. It's awesome, but you miss how Mando or Ahsoka got there and once again saved the galaxy.

**In order to fully appreciate the real joy of Easter, you really need to have gone through the experience of Holy Week.**

There is just nothing like leaving worship in silent darkness on Good Friday after Jesus' suffering, death, and burial—and then returning again to church transformed by decoration, sunshine (hopefully), and joyful hymns to celebrate the good news of Christ's resurrection. Now, I know it may be too late if you missed it. But there will be next year. And in the meantime, you still need Easter hope for Good Fridays.

We all have days when life feels like there is not a ray of sun, joy, or hope. It might be because of plans not working out, the car breaking down, and frustrated arguments in the family. Or classmates, coworkers, or strangers at the store being mean. Or bad news about a friend's or grandparent's death. :- ( Do you have unshakeable, sustaining, and restoring hope for such days, situations, or entire seasons in your life?

There is hope! :- ) You only have to believe it. Of course we cannot make ourselves believe or feel hopeful. It's ultimately a gift of the (Pentecost) Spirit. But Jesus' resurrection brought hope to his disciples, and their witness can encourage us as well. If God can raise Jesus from the dead, then no circumstance is beyond God's control. There's always going to be another tomorrow—until Jesus returns again.

The apostle Peter assures us that faith in the resurrection gives hope for times of adversity: *"May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! On account of his vast mercy, he has given us new birth. You have been born anew into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. ... You now rejoice in this hope, even if it's necessary for you to be distressed for a short time by various trials. This is necessary so that your faith may be found genuine."* (1 Peter 1:3, 6-7, CEB)

- + Dear friends, it's not too late to learn how the good news of Easter can change our lives with hope through faith in new beginnings, second chances, and a better future. *Worship* and a special *Video Study* during the Easter season will help all of us trust in God's love, presence, and power for days when nothing goes right and no end is in sight. Please join, participate, and share.



Christ crucified is risen! Alleluia! Happy Easter—with HOPE,  
*Master Stefan Munker*

# SERVING THIS MONTH

COUNTER – Mike Plunkett

## ALTAR GUILD

7 – Carolyn Meier  
14 – Karen Hamilton  
21 – Liz Allen  
28 – Lori Evans

## COMMUNION ASSISTANT

7 – John Gibb  
14 – Carolyn Meier  
21 – Liz Allen  
28 – Mike Plunkett

## LECTOR

7 – Anita Swick  
14 – Diane Singler  
21 – Sandra Moody  
28 – Brenda Gibb

## USHERS

7 – Liz Allen and Maribeth Rahe  
14 – Charles & Sandra Moody  
21 – Heather & Mike Plunkett  
28 – Gail & Ken Schaal

## VIDEO & AUDIO

7 – Merle Imler  
14 – Liz Allen  
21 – August Plunkett  
28 – Merle Imler

## FLOWERS

7 – Charles & Sandra Moody  
14 – Kendra Finley  
21 – Donna Wille  
28 – *Still Available*

## ST. PAUL'S Annual Spaghetti Supper

Spaghetti  
Supper



Our annual Spaghetti Supper will be held on Friday, April 5. This year, in addition to our usual carry-outs and business deliveries from 11am-1pm, we will also be doing eat-in dining at that time. Carry-outs and eat-in dining will still also take place from 4pm-8pm as well. Please spread the word and invite others by sharing flyers and our event page on Facebook, and of course by word of mouth.

We will be needing lots of help that day. Sign up on the bulletin board letting us know how and when you can help. Please help on the 5th and enjoy fellowship and great spaghetti. We cannot do this without the help of many volunteers—especially with the extra eat-in dining this year! Please get in touch with Paula Keepper with any questions.

Serving *all you can eat* Spaghetti, Salad, Garlic Bread, Dessert, and Drinks. Ages 13-adult: \$12, ages 6-12: \$6, ages 5 & under: *free*. Dine-in & carry-out, 11am-1pm & 4-8pm!



## Highlights of WORSHIP

We will continue to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus during the entire Easter season. Like the first disciples, this is a time for us to learn about what it means that our Savior and Lord died for us so that we can live a new life in the light of the best good news of all time.

- + *LOL Holy Humor Sunday, April 7:* We will poke fun at the devil and death with some jokes and laughter to express our Easter freedom and joy.
- + *LSSI Good Shepherd Sunday, Apr 21:* On the Fourth Sunday of Easter, we always hear about Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and are invited to support the caring ministries of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois.



Through "Beyond Our Walls" we contribute each month to support ministries in our local community and around the world. As we share our gifts with those beyond our walls, we are reminded of the many ways that God touches our lives daily.

Our donations for April will be used to support the work of *Lutheran Social Services of Illinois*. This organization brings healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities by providing critical programs for the state's most vulnerable residents. LSSI is one of the largest providers of services from adoption and foster care, to counseling and prison ministry, to disability and senior homes. Please give generously in the big jug or a "noisy offering" during worship. Thank you for extending the reach of St. Paul's mission.



## Bingo OUTREACH

St. Paul's members are reaching out to residents in local care facilities through games like bingo and other activities.

- + The next outreach is still being planned, so please watch for upcoming announcements. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board when details are finalized.



## COFFEE & CONVERSATION

We continue our regular Coffee and Conversation fellowship most second Sundays of each month. As in the past, this fellowship time will fall on a different Sunday for certain months due to special holidays or events.

All are invited to join us for Coffee and Conversation following our worship service on Sunday, April 14.



MEALS ON WHEELS

A big thank you to everyone who helps to deliver Meals on Wheels each month. Our next scheduled weeks are April 15-19 and May 27-31. Please contact Carolyn Meier for more details or to volunteer.



All articles for the May newsletter will be due to the office by Monday, April 22.

Please submit any information that should be included to the office on time. Thank you.



Check out Easter materials from our **Church Library** on a shelf in the sanctuary. And there's more where those came from. Even though furniture is on loan and we're storing Christmas items from the basement, the library is open (or can be opened) anytime to everyone. Take a look, and take a book or DVD.



Our **LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS**

Serving Illinois since 1867, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) is one of the largest statewide social service providers.

LSSI served over 50,000 people last year, providing critical programs for Illinois residents, including foster care, mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, affordable senior housing, residential programs for people with developmental disabilities, home care for seniors, and services that help families who have been impacted by incarceration.

- + Please make a special offering to our social service agency on Good Shepherd Sunday at St. Paul's on April 21, or consider other ways of ongoing or personal support by visiting [www.lssi.org](http://www.lssi.org). Thank you!

*"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."* (Matthew 25:35-40 NIV)



**SYNOD** *Listening Campaign AND Strategic Planning Process*

*All Members Are Encouraged to Attend*

"Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches." (Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22)

Your participation is vital as to how the Spirit is calling us to participate more deeply in God's mission. This process is about listening for God's will and not about listening for our will. Bishop Busboom invites all of us to pray for openness to hear what the Spirit is saying, for wisdom to listen, and for the courage to act.

- + Help us pie the bishop and raise \$2,000 for ELCA World Hunger! Participate in an online survey that will be live April 3-17: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/CSIS-Survey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CSIS-Survey). If we meet the goal of 500 completed surveys, Bishop Busboom, Pastor Zitlow, and Deacon Fisher will all get a pie in their face at our synod-wide BBQ and Hymn Fest on Friday, June 7 during Synod Assembly, and a gift will be made to ELCA World Hunger.
- + An in-person listening session for all members in St. Paul's conference (yes, that includes you) is scheduled for Saturday, April 20 from 12:00-2:00pm at Peace Lutheran Church, 2800 W Jefferson St. in Springfield. Please watch for more details, and plan to attend.

**ONLINE COURSE:** *Liturgy and the Natural World*



Attend a free and inspiring four-part online series about *Liturgy and the Natural World* on Sundays, beginning April 7 from 6:00-7:30pm. Or you can join Wednesdays beginning April 10 from 7:00-8:30pm. Read more description and register at: <https://lstc.edu/learningcommunities/>.

**ONLINE COURSE:** *The Psalms for Justice-Seekers and Peacemakers*



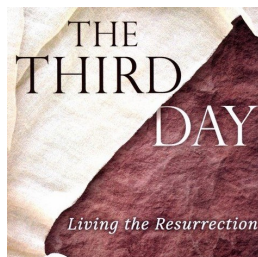
Lutheran School of Theology in St. Louis will host a four-part course on *The Psalms for Justice-Seekers and Peacemakers*, Thursdays April 18 through May 9 at 6:30pm via Zoom. The cost is \$55; recordings will be provided to those who register but can't attend a session. Learn more and register at: <https://lststl.org/>.



The following dates are still open on the 2024 flower calendar at St. Paul's.

**Apr 28 • Jun 9, 30 • Jul 21 • Aug 11 • Sep 8 • Oct 20 • Dec 29**

To reserve one of these dates, please fill out a form from the west entryway counter and put it in the offering plate during worship or turn it in to the church office. The cost is \$22.50. Thank you.



### The Third Day **EASTER VIDEO STUDY**

Learn more about living the resurrection with a new six-week study at 7pm on Monday evenings after Easter. Pastor Stefan will use the “Third Day” series of short videos by Tom Berlin, who uses his gift of storytelling to help us connect to the experience of several individuals around Jesus. Watch announcements for a starting date sometime after Easter.

Join Peter, Mary Magdalene, the apostle Paul, and others to learn how despair is turned into joy through the resurrection which can also transform your life. We will share conversation, snacks, and prayer. And everyone is invited and welcome.



**WELCOME** *New Council Members*

Newly elected to St. Paul’s congregation council are Merle Imler for Church in Society, Sandra Moody for Youth, and Ken Schaal as Council Secretary. Thank you, and continuing council members, for your willingness to serve on council at St. Paul’s.

The Fellowship position is still open. Please talk to Mike Plunkett or Pastor Stefan if you would like information or are interested in filling this vacancy.



### ELCA Conference of Bishops **CALLS FOR CEASEFIRE IN GAZA**

The ELCA Conference of Bishops met Feb. 27-March 5. Among other key business, the conference issued a statement and sent a letter to President Joe Biden calling for a permanent bilateral ceasefire in Gaza and urging the president and legislators “to do everything in their power to bring an end to the current suffering and lay the foundation for lasting peace with justice.” Read more at: [ELCA.org/News-and-Events/8219](https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8219).

### Free Lunches from **LADLES OF LOVE**



Each week from 11am-12noon on Wednesdays, St. Paul’s serves a free meal to the community, including a main dish, a side dish, and a dessert. The dedicated volunteers who prepare food, serve the meal, and clean up for Ladles of Love can always use more help each week. Please sign up in the kitchen or talk to Paula Keepper for more information on volunteering. Thanks!

+ *Note:* There will be no meal on Wednesday, April 3rd.



### **PARISH NURSE** *Ministry*

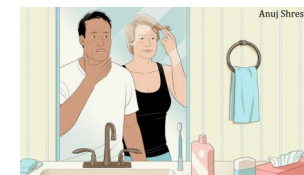
#### *Blood Pressure Checks and Wellness Information*

Lew McDonald takes blood pressures and provides information at church before and after worship, usually on the first Sunday of each month. Be sure to check in with Lew on April 7, and thank him for his ministry.

This month, Lew shares with us about doing a “Bathroom Mirror Self-Exam” to be aware of potential health concerns. There are eight total areas to focus on, which will be split up into parts over the next few issues of our newsletter.

#### **Bathroom Mirror Self-Exam (part 2 of 4)**

*From the curve of your back to the spots on your skin, you can learn a lot about your health from a close inspection in the mirror.*

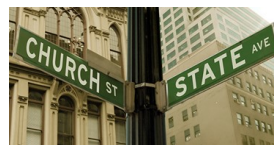


#### **Mouth**

*What to look for:* Plaque, a sticky bacterial film that contributes to gum disease. Purchase some disclosing tablets—chewable tablets that temporarily stain plaque a bright color like pink or blue. After chewing, look for any colored spots; use a mirror to see the back of the teeth. Call your dentist if concerned. Early-stage gum disease is usually reversible with a professional cleaning and an upgraded oral hygiene routine; late-stage gum disease, called periodontitis, is not.

#### **Throat**

*What to look for:* Lumps or bulges while swallowing. These could signal thyroid trouble, including hypothyroidism (which means an underactive thyroid), hyperthyroidism (an overactive thyroid), thyroid cancer, or a goiter (an enlarged thyroid). Have a glass of water nearby. Using a handheld mirror, zero in on the lower front area of your neck. Take a sip of water, tilt your head back slightly (keeping your eyes on the mirror) and swallow, looking for any bulges or lumps that appear in your neck. Don’t confuse your Adam’s apple for your thyroid; the thyroid sits below the Adam’s apple, closer to the collarbone, and is generally not visible unless something is amiss. If so, your family physician, internist, or endocrinologist can examine your neck and order any necessary tests.



#### *How Do **CHURCH AND STATE** Relate?*

A social statement on “Civic Life and Faith,” the relationship of church and state and related matters, is under development across the ELCA. A draft social statement is now available at [www.elca.org/civicsandfaith](http://www.elca.org/civicsandfaith). Your feedback will be accepted through September 30, in preparation for a scheduled vote during the churchwide assembly in 2025.

## CAUTION

### A WORD OF *Caution*

Recently, some members of St. Paul's received **spam messages** purportedly coming from Pastor Stefan. They were fake! Someone was apparently using his identity and asking for favors and gift cards.

Do not reply to or comply with unusual or suspicious messages. Look for telltale signs, for example spelling errors, strange e-mail addresses, and unusual but vague and urgent requests. Remember, never give out personal information online, or send gift cards for payment or donations.

Our pastor will never ask for money directly. Only give at church, use our St. Paul's payment service Tithe.ly, or make a transfer through the bank.

If you have any concerns, contact the sender directly and separately (*not* as a reply to the suspicious message). Pastor Stefan has checked his account security and changed passwords, but the scammers may still send messages for a while. Mark suspicious messages as spam so other messages like it can be flagged and minimized.



### Start a Personal **CONNECTION GROUP**

Would you like to connect with friends, neighbors or people in the community around dining tables, on playgrounds, during art classes, on hiking trails, and more? You can, easily, by doing something with others that you already enjoy or want to take up after Easter!

- + Ask Pastor Stefan about starting your own Connection Group with the Fresh Expressions (FX) method: in person, by phone/text at \_\_\_\_\_, or email \_\_\_\_\_.

It's a fun way to meet people and share faith like Jesus, Mary, and the other apostles did.



### FAITH+LIFE *Connection*

#### *Have You Opened Your Emails?*

With Faith+Life at St. Paul's you get a weekly reflection, activity, and prayer to connect faith and your everyday life, through God's message in the Bible and examples from current trends or events. Check them out, feed your faith, and join the conversation.

- + Weekly guides are emailed to members. You can discuss with others from St. Paul's on our Facebook page. Or chat with Pastor Stefan and others during St. Paul's Community Café on (most) Thursdays, 9-11am.



### Remember Our **SPECIAL CARE MEMBERS**

Members who are not able to join us at church for worship or have special circumstances always appreciate knowing they are remembered in our prayers or receiving other signs of care like a visit, call, or card. Please reach out and share needs or updates with Pastor Stefan.

Betty Bledsaw  
Joyce Gooding  
Bob Mulch, Sr  
Kris Whitley

Betty Darda  
Robin Houser  
Pat Osborn

Judie Donham  
Lyn Lingle  
Delores Plunkett

Doris Enochs  
Ken Meade  
Wayne Rhoades



### *Community Café* **AT ST. PAUL'S**

The Community Café at St. Paul's is a place to relax and connect with free refreshments and a dose of God's love. We invite everyone to check it out. Open (most) Thursdays, 9-11am.

- + Want to hang out or meet with others at other times? Just let Barista Stefan know and he'll set you up.

## prayer

### **MONTHLY** *Prayer Prompts*



## VENTURES

Each month, the ELCA provides a list of daily prayer prompts for members of our churches. Suggestions range from the commemoration of saints to secular holidays, and from church ministries to social issues.

- + Each month we share a copy of Prayer Ventures by email. Printed copies are available at church, or you can request one from the office.

Let's join together as we intercede for each other in the church and any in need throughout the world. The Apostle Paul wrote: "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." (Romans 12:12)



We all need to say a big and sincere *thank you* to our Administrative Assistant, Marina Mondragon, in St. Paul's office! We express our appreciation for the many ways you support our pastor, leaders, and members of our congregation to help us carry out the ministries we share. We are blessed by your God-given skills which you use with faithful dedication in your work.



Time to Think of **SUMMER CAMP**

It's not too soon or too late to think about attending camp for this summer. Through worship, study, games and activities, participants hear and see how active their faith can be. Pastor Stefan came to a personal faith, got connected to his own congregation, and felt called to pastoral ministry because of attending Christian camps as a teen.

- + Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) in beautiful Oregon, IL is a ministry of the ELCA in our synod, celebrating 50 years, and offers year-round retreat and camping for individuals and groups in cabins and a modern lodge with private rooms. Several summer experiences for elementary, middle, and high school kids are available. Check out activities, affordable fees, and register at: [www.lomc.org](http://www.lomc.org).



Seeking: **FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

Brenda Gibb has announced that she intends to retire from this position. She is willing to train a successor.

- + Please inquire about specifics and share your interest in applying for this paid staff position with either Brenda herself, council President Mike Plunkett, or Pastor Stefan.



**THANK YOU** for Your Gifts

Everything we have comes from an abundant God and from generous people like you within or outside of our church at St. Paul's.

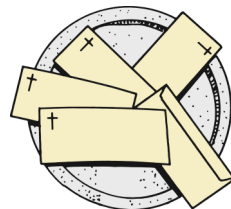
WE BELIEVE!  
WE SHARE!

Monthly Expenses = 15,174.10 | February Income = 11,609.95  
(Budgeted Expenses ÷ 12)

Your offerings make St. Paul's ministries possible, and support God's mission to bless the world through local, national and global partnerships.

There are several options for how you can support St. Paul's ministries and mission partnerships:

- + **Give** an offering when attending services at church
- + **Mail** checks to P.O. Box 266 when you miss a Sunday
- + Set up automatic transfers through your **bank**
- + Give **online** using Tithe.ly at [www.wideopen.church](http://www.wideopen.church)



Look **WHAT YOU MADE POSSIBLE!**

Watch a short video with highlights of activities at St. Paul's from year 2023 on our congregation's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/@stpaulshillsboro](http://www.youtube.com/@stpaulshillsboro)

Thank you for your gifts of time, donated materials, and offerings of regular tithes or for special needs! St. Paul's could not be the church with doors wide open if it were not for your hearts that are open to support our ministries.



Our prayers and condolences are with Liz Allen and family on the passing of her uncle Jim Allen on Tuesday, February 20.

We pray for and extend our sympathy to Cassie Gunn and family on the passing of her sister Becky Bost, who passed away on Friday, March 1.

The Lord is mindful of our need for comfort and has promised, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." (John 14:18)



We express our appreciation to our musician Cassie Gunn for her special piano pieces during Sunday services and during Lent gatherings. Your instrumentals and accompaniments inspire our congregation to worship a glorious God.



Thank you to all who helped to make, bring, and serve delicious food for our weekly Lenten gatherings to "Taste and See" the goodness of the Lord.



A huge thanks of gratitude for those who have completed their service in leadership of our congregation on our church council.

A huge thanks to all who donated candy, stuffed eggs, and volunteered for this year's Community Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by St. Paul's as part of the Ministerial Fellowship of Hillsboro area churches!



# April 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mar 31 7am Community Sunrise Service (Hillsboro Methodist) 10:15am Worship 	1 9am Sewing and Fellowship 9am Men's Coffee & Faith (Black Rabbit) OFFICE CLOSED	2	3 NO Ladies of Love 5pm Vocal Choir 6pm Bell Choir	4 9-11am Community Café	5 11am-1pm Spaghetti Supper 4-8pm Spaghetti Supper	6
7 9am Sunday School and Confirmation 10:15am Worship BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS	8 9am Sewing and Fellowship	9	10 11am-Noon Ladies of Love 5pm Vocal Choir 6pm Bell Choir	11 9-11am Community Café	12	13
14 9am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 11:15am Coffee and Conversation	15 9am Men's Coffee & Faith (Black Rabbit) 9am Sewing and Fellowship COUNCIL REPORTS DUE	16	17 11am-Noon Ladies of Love 5pm Vocal Choir 6pm Bell Choir	18 9-11am Community Café	19	20 12:00-2pm Synod Listening Session (Peace Lutheran Church, Springfield)
MEALS ON WHEELS — APRIL 15-19						
21 9am Sunday School & Confirmation 10:15am Worship	22 9am Sewing and Fellowship MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	23 7pm Council Meeting	24 11am-Noon Ladies of Love 5pm Vocal Choir 6pm Bell Choir	25 9-11am Community Café	26	27
28 9am Sunday School & Confirmation 10:15am Worship	29 9am Sewing and Fellowship	30	May 1 11am-Noon Ladies of Love 5pm Vocal Choir 6pm Bell Choir	May 2 9-11am Community Café	May 3	May 4

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday: 8:15-11:45am. The office is closed on Fridays.



4/2	Savannah Brinkman
4/3	Ryan Allen, Alex Petrone
4/4	Jan Marcott
4/6	Kate Schmidt
4/9	Conner Durbin
4/10	Roger Traylor
4/11	Meridith Sandlin, Benjamin Swick
4/13	Mary Traylor
4/14	Daniel Fenton Jr., Brett Wallace
4/15	Charlotte Hubbard
4/16	Audrey Shultz
4/18	Merle Imler
4/20	Jared Klein, Stefan Munker
4/21	Cole Deming, Tiffany Fenton
4/25	James Duzan, Ava Shultz
4/26	Chuck Durbin
4/28	Pat Osborn

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
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Website: www.stpaulshillsboro.net  
Facebook: www.facebook.com/stpaulshillsboro  
YouTube: www.youtube.com/@stpaulshillsboro

Pastor Stefan Munker  
Cell Phone:  
E-mail:

\*\*\*\*\*

### Church Council:

- President** – Mike Plunkett
- Vice President** – Charles Moody
- Finance** – Brenda Gibb
- Secretary** – Ken Schaal
- Christian Education** – Angela Kaculi
- Church in Society** – Merle Imler
- Evangelism** – Carolyn Meier
- Fellowship** – (Vacant)
- Property** – Greg Schoen
- Stewardship** – Lori Evans
- Worship & Music** – Liz Allen
- Youth** – Sandra Moody
- Youth Representative** – (Vacant)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 266  
Hillsboro, IL 62049

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Blessed be the  
*God and Father*  
of our  
*Lord Jesus Christ!*

By his great mercy  
he has given us a  
*new birth*  
into a  
*living hope*  
through the resurrection  
of Jesus Christ  
from the dead.

*1 Peter 1:3, NRSV*