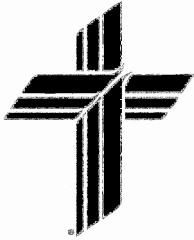


God's Family

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
150 W. Highway D
New Melle, MO 63365
(636)828-5616

Volume XXIII Issue 2
February 2023



• 10:00 a.m.—Sunday
Worship Service

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To the Ends of the Earth...from the Bottom of a Hole

I wonder what Paul was thinking: "How do I keep getting into these situations?" or "Could I have done something else?" or even possibly, "Was I right to listen to Jesus when he saw me on the road to Damascus... Was I just hallucinating?" I wonder if I would have the fortitude that Paul had. I know that the Holy Spirit grants His strength to God's people. It is not our own ability, but God's. But at the same time, I can't help but think, if it was left to me, a mere man, sitting in a hole, imprisoned again and again, beaten again and again, and now looking up through the top of the well at some palace ceiling, if I would...if I could keep going?



Caesarea Maritima was a roman city, built for the roman governors of the time of Jesus and the early Church. Pontius Pilate would have stayed in the city's palace. As later would Felix and Festus, the governors that would oversee Paul's fate after a brush up in Jerusalem (Acts 21-25) put him in trouble with the authorities.

It is speculated that Paul not only would have been in the palace before the Roman governors of the territory encompassing modern day Israel and the Palestinian territories, but also that Paul might have been imprisoned in the palace for quite some time. All because he claimed his Roman citizenship in order to demand a place before the throne of Caesar in Rome.

Roman citizens can't get beaten up and

imprisoned without great cause and reason! Oops. They didn't realize that this Paul character who was rabble-rousing in the name of some crucified Jew named Jesus called the Christ, was actually a n honest-to-goodness Roman citizen!

It makes it all the more remarkable. Paul could have taken his Roman citizenship, his position, his prestige and walked. He could have stopped proclaiming that this Jesus had risen from the dead and was Lord and lived out his days in relative security and peace.

Instead... he wound up in a hole. And what was he thinking? Woe is me? Maybe... we don't know all his internal

(continued on page 3)



February Birthdays

2/4 – Joyce Schiermeier 2/9 – Jackie Eslinger 2/27 – Amanda Mack
2/6 – Kenneth Webbink 2/25 – Dalton Schmidt 2/27 – Waylon Chappell
2/7 – Erick Kase 2/26 – Janie Fisher
2/8 – Becky Murphy 2/26 – Sally Goth

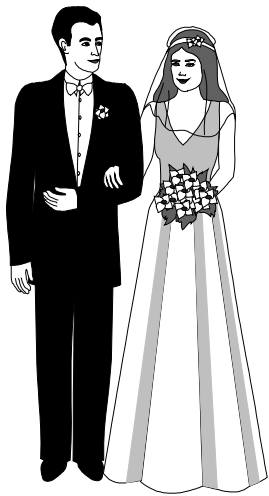


February Anniversaries

2/24 – Ralph & Carol Ramey – 61 years

February Services

2/5 – Sunday Service – 10:00 a.m. – Communion
2/12 – Sunday Service – 10:00 a.m. – No Communion
2/19 – Sunday Service – 10:00 a.m. – Communion
2/22 – Ash Wednesday Service – 6:00 p.m. – No Communion
2/26 – Sunday Service – 10:00 a.m. – Communion

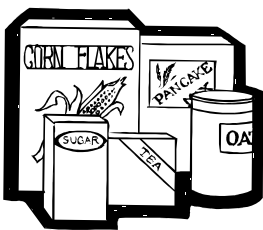


February Food Pantry Donations

Members of the congregation reported donating 36 food items and \$65.00 in cash to the New Melle Food Pantry during the month of January.

In the future, if you donate, please report this to Sherry in the office, so your donations can be included in our tally.

Meal-a-Month Needs for February



The **MEAL-A-MONTH ITEMS** for February: Mayonnaise, BBQ Sauce, gravy packets, applesauce, hot cocoa mix, pudding mix, brownie mix, saltines, sugar, fruit juice, cooking oil, Tuna Helper, and Hamburger Helper.

Please take your items directly to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in New Melle during their office hours. Call 636-398-5270 in advance to be sure there is someone present to accept your donation. Monetary donations should be made payable to “St. Vincent De Paul Society” (“Food Pantry” on the memo line). Monetary donations may be hand-delivered to the church or be mailed to: Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, PO Box 100, New Melle, MO 63365.

Please report your donation to Sherry Brandes in the office for Voters Assembly and Ladies Aid records. You only need to report number of items (or boxes or bags) and dollar amount. No names will be attached to the donations; just a monthly tally of the number of food items and dollars donated will be recorded.

NOTE: Food Pantry hours are: The 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. Please tell anyone who might benefit from this service!

Ends of the Earth *(continued from page 1)*

thoughts. Except one. "I'm going to Rome, Baby!"

St. Paul's, we are named after a human being who suffered greatly for one mission, one vision: To bring the gospel to the world. Even while standing before unjust men, and sitting in a damp hole, Paul had his sights set on Rome. No matter the challenge, no matter the struggle, no matter the effort, it was worth it to Paul to bring the gospel, the good news of Jesus to the known world.

We have been aptly named. We are in the process of formalizing and finalizing a vision statement. I don't know exactly what we will settle upon. However, I know that it will be for our movement into the future to do what our namesake sought to do, namely, share the gospel with the world!

Our mission is the great commission, to make disciples of all nations. Our vision statement will be the focusing concept of how we, in our specific place, context, time, and of course, our core values, will strive to make this vision a reality.

But what will it mean? It will mean, as St. Paul taught us, suffering, setbacks, and more than a few beatings.

But it will also mean, as St. Paul taught us, strength we never knew we had and conviction in our guts coming from the Holy Spirit driving us forward.

As St. Paul said, "Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ. (Philippians 3:8)

St. Paul's Church, while I wish we were a little closer to the Mediterranean, or any beach for that matter, I think we are right where we belong. Perhaps at times we feel stuck in a well, but let me assure you, our vision will have our eyes set to Rome. Do not lose heart, do not lose focus, and do not lose conviction in the one true faith in Jesus the Son of God our Lord.

My journeys to the Holy Land have taught me many things, and I am so glad to be able to share them with you. But one thing they taught me that I want to impart now, is that our Holy God has made more than just holy land... but rather a holy people, set apart for His purpose... we are those people, we are the church, our name is St. Paul's and we will never cease to proclaim the good news of Jesus to the world.

Amen.

In Jesus,
Pastor Maxx

Lenten & Holy Week Service Schedule

February 22—6:00 p.m.—Ash Wednesday
March 1—6:00 p.m.—First Wednesday in Lent
March 8—6:00 p.m.—Second Wednesday in Lent
March 15—6:00 p.m.—Third Wednesday in Lent
March 22—6:00 p.m.—Fourth Wednesday in Lent
March 29—6:00 p.m.—Fifth Wednesday in Lent
April 2—10:00 a.m.—Palm Sunday
April 6—6:00 p.m.—Maundy Thursday
April 7—6:00 p.m.—Good Friday
April 9—10:00 a.m.—Easter Sunday

During Holy Week, Pastor Maxx's theme will focus on connecting the passion week to his Holy Land experiences.

St. Patrick's Day Worship

St. Paul's will continue to formally recognize St. Patrick's Day in our Wednesday Lenten service. This year we will recognize St. Patrick and how God used him to witness and proclaim the gospel on Wednesday, March 15!

Come join us as we celebrate what Christ has accomplished and St. Patrick witnessed, too, by worshiping God and enjoying some green refreshments (St. Patrick's style) after the service!



Highlights from Israel

St. Paul's, I am happy to announce that the trip to Israel was a great success. Not only was invaluable information learned to fuel our ministerial task of teaching and preaching the Word, but also much was learned about the nature of hosting tours to the Holy Land.

Surrounded by fellow pastors and church workers, it was clear to all that, while not necessary, educational travel to the Holy Land can be a magnificent tool to help deepen and enliven the faith of God's people.

The goal will be to facilitate a trip in the next year or two. Details are still being worked out. While I can make no guarantees at this time, I am trying to gauge interest from those at St. Paul's in taking such a trip. If you are interested, please email Pastor Maxx at maxxjofish@gmail.com.

A view of the Temple Mount from the Mt. of Olives past the Kidron Valley.



Caesarea Maritima – Pilates Palace on the Mediterranean Sea



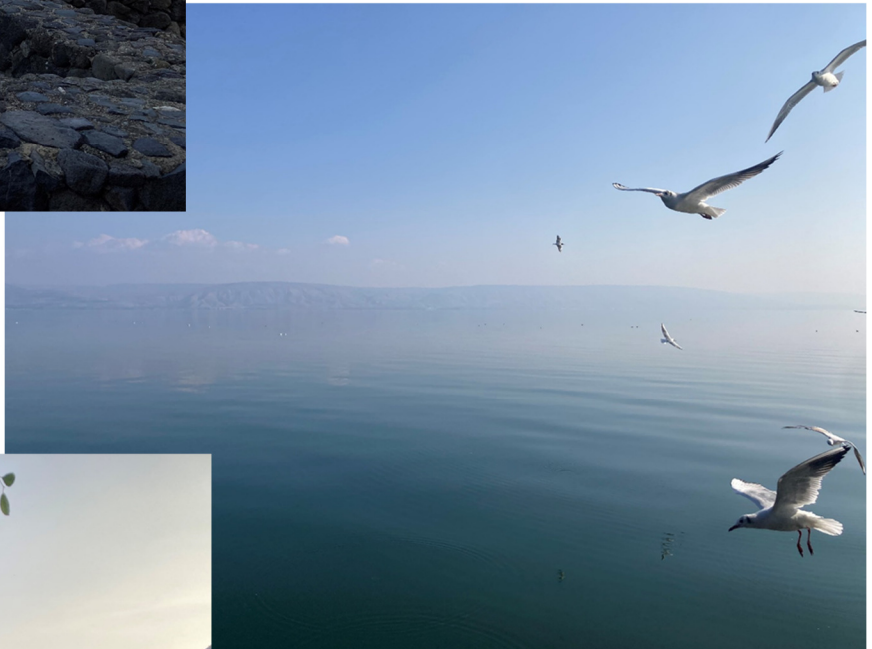
The Holy Sepulcher, the traditional burial sight of Jesus found within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City of Jerusalem





Ancient Capernaum... from the point of view from Peter's family house

The Sea of Galilee enjoyed with a flock of Seagulls (the birds, not the 80's band)



A mountainous passage that Jesus would have likely traversed

Pastor Maxx doing something ...



Harold Demien Retires as Elder for St. Paul's



On Sunday, January 22, Harold Demien officially announced to the congregation his retirement as an elder for St. Paul's. Newer elders, Mark Wehmeier and Jeff Schneider gave him a plaque in recognition of long-time service to St. Paul's.

Harold's dedication to the Lutheran Church has been constant and steadfast. He attended grade school at St. Paul's and was confirmed here in 1952. Following confirmation, Harold became an active member of the Walther League and remained active until marrying his wife Sharon in November of 1960.

Harold and Sharon made their new home together in the Orchard Farm area, so Harold transferred his membership to Trinity Lutheran Church, Orchard Farm in 1961. There he served on the Trinity Church Council for 25 years as Sunday School Superintendent, Head Usher, Elder, and Treasurer at Trinity.

In July of 2000, Harold and Sharon moved to New Melle and transferred their membership to St. Paul's.

Upon returning, Harold soon began his leadership role at St. Paul's. Harold served as treasurer from July 2001 to January 2021 (19½ years), and Elder during 2022 (1 year). He also ushered over the years at evening services and as the need arose.

Although retired from his leadership roles, we know we will still see our ever-faithful Harold in church as often as he is able.

Thank you, Harold, for all you have done for us. Your faithful service has been much appreciated and you will always be remembered for what you have done for St. Paul's. We pray that your dedicated, faithful service be an inspiration for those who step up to lead here at St. Paul's in the future.



Recognizing Harold's Service to St. Paul's. Mark Wehmeier, Harold, Jeff Schneider, and Pastor Maxx.

Notes from Our Two New Elders:

Mark Wehmeier has been a member of St. Paul's for 25 years. However, he has only been an elder since October 2022. He said trying to fill Harold's big shoes is going to be a big job, but he will try his best to do what he can to move St. Paul's forward. Mark said, "Harold's job was so big, we now have two people to take his place, but Jeff and I will do our best." Mark said Harold is a walking encyclopedia of information and they plan to call on him in the future to help them improve. Mark went on to say he hopes Harold is not completely done, yet, and that he will continue to usher whenever he is willing and able.

Jeff Schneider has been a member of St. Paul's for about four years. He and Annie moved to the New Melle area about 22 years ago. They will celebrate their 43rd wedding anniversary this summer. Jeff served as treasurer at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Altoona, Iowa, for three years in the 1990's. He is looking forward to fulfilling the responsibilities of being an Elder at St. Paul's for years to come and carrying on the level of dedication set forth by his predecessor, Harold Demien.



Pastor Maxx and Deaconess Janie will be going to Uganda February 2nd—February 16th to join our brothers and sisters of the Lutheran Church Uganda through our partners Hearts & Hope for Uganda.

We have supported Hearts & Hope for Uganda and their mission to walk with the LCU in providing food, drink, schooling, other opportunities, and of course, the hope of Jesus!

Janie is bringing Pastor Maxx along this time as a representative of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

St. Paul's has been a blessing to HHU & the LCU by providing funds to build a nursery facility, and more than a few goats to help local small businesses and food sustainability. We hope that the future means more partnership and more support!

They will be going to learn more about the situation on the ground in Uganda and how HHU operates here in the U.S. as well as in Uganda.

Ultimately, we will learn how St. Paul's can better partner with the Church, our fellow disciples in Uganda, and not to mention, how they can better partner and serve us, as we mutually walk together, learn

from one another, and support and encourage one another as the Church.

Pastor Maxx will be providing email, picture, and video updates, as well as utilizing some other ways, to keep St. Paul's connected with the them on their trip.

For more information about our partners at HHU check out the following:

<https://heartsandhope.org/>



NOTE: We will be having a presentation and luncheon on February 26, where Pastor Maxx will unpack all that happened on their trip and we will have a Hearts & Hope representative with us to explain more about Hearts & Hope for Uganda.

Special Olympics Polar Plungers

This year's Polar Plunge is coming soon. The "Plunge" will take place in Maryland Heights. The name of Pastor Maxx's team is "St. Paul's Divine Disco Divers". If you want to be on his team and take the plunge yourself at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 18th, you just need to sign up. Right now, Pastor Maxx has five other teammates, so please help them support THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS OF MISSOURI.

The website is <https://support.somo.org/team/468770>. If you would like to help financially support this cause, please go to the website and pledge whatever you amount of money you choose. Donations can also be made through Pastor Maxx or any other team member.

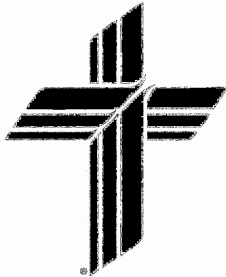
Note: In order for team participants to get a shirt for participating they need to raise a minimum of \$75 each. So, spread your donations around to all of our team participants.



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 70
New Melle, MO 63365

"A new command I give
you: Love one another."
John 13:34



St. Paul's Lutheran Church-
Missouri Synod

Fire Starters is St. Paul's Out-reach class. This class is where we bring in new members, answer questions for the curious, or just offer those outside our community a chance to get to know us.

Fire Starters is also our In-reach class. It is a chance for the disciples of St. Paul's to be reignited for the mission and go back to the basics, but also to learn more about their own story and ask important questions, as well as exercise their evangelism muscles by bringing and walking with their friends and family.

We sincerely ask and hope that all of you will participate in these classes as members, even if you do not have someone to bring. We all need the word, discipleship, and to be set on fire!

February 19th Fire Starter's—Ignition Class kickoff—11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.—Come see what St. Paul's is all about and learn more about our story of faith, and how the story goes on! Lunch is provided. Childcare will be available. Materials and resources provided for guests and visitors for free. Kindle the fire with our follow-up classes before Worship—8:45-9:45 a.m.—February 26th, March 5th, March 12th

If you can't make all the classes that's ok! We will offer the class multiple times a year, so you can get it all. Though it is always great to do them all at once, we want you to know your relationship with St. Paul's is more than just a class, but an ongoing process of discipleship as we walk together.

Note: Fire Starters is our "New Members" class in that its completion is required for membership next steps. If you are desiring membership and cannot make all the classes, we will work with you to complete the classes and be bought into membership in a way that works for everyone.

If you do not desire to be a member, but are sincerely looking to learn about our faith, AWESOME! We will not sneakily "make you a member" or sign up for things you don't want. We are just grateful to have you join us!

Questions? Call Pastor Maxx: 636-828-5616 (church office) or at 812-216-5891 (cell)



St. Paul's, Meet Cozy!

Pastor Maxx and Janie have a new dog and they wanted to introduce her to the congregation!

This is what they have shared, so far:

Cozy is named after the musical *Les Misérables* character, Cozette. They brought her home on January 7, 2023.

Cozy enjoys playing with her razorback Hog, biting Pastor Maxx's fingers, and napping with her momma, Janie.

Cozy can run real fast and catch "dad" when he tries to escape! Cozy also loves getting treats for learning how to "sit" and "lie down"!

Pastor Maxx says he hopes all of St. Paul's is ready for Cozy to come up in many sermon illustrations from here on out!

They are happy to welcome Cozy into their family, as well as our Church family!

