

News N' Notes



ST. Paul's
Lutheran Church, School & Daycare

Celebrating 25 Years of Service

Kristen Gestrich, Elizabeth Decker, and Carol Welton each are celebrating 25 years of service to our Lord. We praise God for the work that these ladies' do. We had a chance to speak to them to find out a little more about their careers and hopes for the future.

Kristen Gestrich began her teaching career as "a 1st and 3rd grade teacher at St. Paul's in Oconomowoc for 2 1/2 years at which time I married Scott. We moved back to Janesville where I received my call to St. Paul's. It has brought me great joy to serve at the school where I began."

When asked about her favorite thing about St. Paul's, she responded, "It's the many families who I am blessed to have met with and all of the children who have touched my heart through the many years of teaching here."

And she says, "I pray that St. Paul's continues to grow and serve Janesville, and continue to reach out into the community sharing God's love and mercy."

Elizabeth Decker began teaching in 1983 "with my first Call to Salem Lutheran School in Gretna, Louisiana. I met and married the love of my life in 1985 and have taught at Lutheran Schools in Baton Rouge, Indiana, Wyoming, Minnesota, Illinois before my husband accepted the Call here at St. Paul's.

"I received my Masters in Education in 2013 and still enjoy learning ways to get kids to think through problems and love learning.

"I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to teach in many places and to glean from so many veteran Lutheran school teachers.

"My favorite thing about St. Paul's is the wonderful support of the

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Celebrating 25 Years of Service

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congregation and parents. I love working with children and seeing their growth through out the years.

“My prayer for St. Paul's is that our church and school continue to be the place to grow in faith, serve in love and always remember, IT'S STILL ABOUT JESUS! “

Carol Welton has “been with St. Paul's from before I could walk! I was married here and my three children have attended school here also. I started working in the kitchen with Carol Skeel. One year later I became an aide. I was an aide for many of my 25 years along with being in Day Care between 7-8 of those years. I am still presently between the kitchen (yes, again) and the Day Care.”

What is your favorite thing about St. Paul's? “Only one thing! The Children! And being able to tell them of their Savior! Of which they still impress me at their excitement of their knowledge of Him.”

I pray that “we stay strong in the truth in what God is telling us through His Word. In Matthew 6:33 He says, ‘But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.’ Through the Bible Study The Armor of God I've learned that the Holy Spirit's job is to chip away at everything that doesn't look like Jesus. May God's gift of faith in us guard our hearts to continually seek His truth and to remember all of our blessings have been given to us by a loving Heavenly Father.”



The Best Ending Ever

He is risen! He is risen, indeed! We say that with such conviction and we should for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very heart of our Christian joy.

If that's true, then why doesn't our Mark's Easter story end with those women joyous over the resurrection? Those women have just heard: **He is risen!** Why aren't they doing the happy dance? Why aren't they shouting **Alleluia!**? Why aren't they running as fast as their little feet can carry the Good News to everyone? Instead, the very last words of the very last verse of the very last chapter of the Gospel of Mark says about those women: ... **they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.** Do you think that the Gospel writer Mark owes us a rewrite? Let's see if he does.

We'll begin at the top. Picture this: Early that Sunday morning three women set out, carrying spices to anoint Jesus' body that had been placed in the tomb just before sundown Friday. These three *Spice Girls* want to get there before the body deteriorates any further.

But when they arrive things aren't what they expect. The stone's been rolled away! No body! A young man in a white robe is sitting there! It's an angel, of course. And in the Bible whenever angels appear to humans, humans get scared. It's a natural reaction to the supernatural.

OK. Up to this point, we can understand the women being scared. Where's Jesus' body? Who's this stranger?

The angel tells them why they shouldn't be scared: **You seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.** In other words: *Ladies, you've come to the right tomb. He's gone! He's alive! Death lost!*

Well, that's Good News. And there's more: **But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.** That Good News needs to be passed on to Jesus' closest followers, His disciples.

Because they're the same guys who, Jesus predicted on Thursday night would desert Him in His hour of need. And they did. Predicted they would run away like scared sheep. And they did. Predicted that big braggart Peter would deny Him three times. And you know what? He did!

So Peter is here singled out to be told that Jesus isn't kicking him out of the disciples' club. None of the disciples would be. Because three times Jesus had predicted that He would die and rise for them. And He did. Three times Jesus had predicted that He would meet their Thursday night failure with His Easter morning forgiveness. And you know what? He did!

And these three women are now being sent to tell the disciples that it's all true because **He is risen!** And they will tell the story because they've seen it. Seen Jesus die! Seen the empty tomb! Seen the angel! Seen that **He is risen!** And so they believed when they were told that they would meet up with their once dead but now living Lord and Savior Jesus in Galilee.

OK, fine. But then why do the women go away from that empty tomb afraid? Well, think about it. Everything was not what they'd expected. No body! Empty tomb! Stranger in white? Convince people of this unbelievable story? Besides, Jesus' enemies were still around. They'd killed Jesus. What deadly danger was in store for them? And so to counteract their fears, Jesus pre-

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The Best Ending Ever

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dicted He would overcome every scary thing for them.

Jesus predicted He would die on the Cross on Good Friday and overcome the power of sin and death on Easter. And we know He did because: **He is risen!** Jesus predicted that He would perfectly pay the price for all our sins and leave them in His grave. And we know He did because: **He is risen!** Jesus predicted that He would so totally triumph over our death that Heaven's gate is now forever open to us. And we know He did because: **He is risen!** Jesus predicted He would make it possible that nothing would ever separate us from His love. And we know He did because: **He is risen!**

So I don't really think that the Gospel writer Mark owes us a rewrite. Because scared though they were, those three women did go back to the Disciples and Peter and eventually tell them that their once dead but now living Lord and Savior Jesus Christ loved and forgave them. Then those loved and forgiven disciples told somebody about Jesus' love and forgiveness and that somebody told somebody and that somebody told somebody all the way down to somebody telling you and me.

The story of Easter morning is a *to be continued* story. Easter is you and me telling children that *Jesus loves them this they know for the Bible tells them so*. Easter is you and me telling teenagers that Jesus loves them and forgives what they did last Friday night. Easter is you and me telling young couples and singles how wonderful life is because God really has an eternal plan for their lives.

Easter is you and me telling single parents how incredibly proud God is of the precious work they're doing. Easter is you and me showing folks with mangled marriages that we care for them. Easter is you and me telling folks who have given up on the Church that we'd be pleased to sit with them in our pew and help them work through their heartaches. Easter is you and me telling the frazzled checkout clerk that it's still a good day because Jesus loves her. Easter is you and me reminding some senior citizen shut-ins that their names are written in the book of life.

So you see, the Gospel writer Mark doesn't owe us a rewrite of his ending. The story of Easter is a . . . *to be continued* story . . . continued through you and me. And that's **THE BEST ENDING EVER**.

God bless you all!

Pastor Dan Decker

P.S., The Easter story will continue this fall. A weekend will be set aside this fall for all of St. Paul's members to be involved in a weekend of serving. Watch future newsletters and bulletins for more details.

Visual Faith Bible Journaling

Would you like to learn what Bible Journaling is? Are you interested in scrapbooking, but would like to learn how to do that in your Bible? Would you like to learn new ideas or have a Bible Journaling Scripture Plan? Do you just need motivation or time to work on your journaling?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, join us for a morning of **Visual Faith Bible Journaling from 9 -11 am on Saturday, April 28 in room 202.**

No experience is necessary. There is no wrong way to do any of this and you don't have to be an artist! If you have a journaling Bible, markers, gel pens, or colored pencils, bring those along. If you don't, we will have some blank and printed pages and some other supplies for you to use. For more info contact kpingle@stpaulsianesville.com

One Day Vacation Bible School

Save the date! **VBS Saturday, August 4** will be our one day, family fun, Shipwrecked themed VBS.

Due to construction in our parking lot and Ringold Street this summer, VBS will look different this year. But we are excited to share a wonderful day of learning about how Jesus rescued us and how we can share that with others in our community. Be watching for more details to come!

If you'd like to volunteer in anyway from planning, decorating, leading, organizing, working behind the scenes, shepherding kids, helping with a cook out, and so much more, contact kpingle@stpaulsianesville.com We need around 100 volunteers to make our day happen and would love for you to get involved. It is a great way to serve our Lord, our kids, and our community!



Women's Comedy Night

St. Paul's Women's Ministry Comedy Night is Friday, April 13 at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall (the church basement).

Bring a friend and a dessert, snack, or appetizer and join us for food, fun, and laughter as we experience joy in the Lord.

RSVP by April 12 to kpingle@stpaulsianesville.com.

Official Acts

Deaths:

03-10-2018

Gloria F. R. Schmidt

Membership

Changes:

03-08-2018

Mitchell Cagney
released to Faith
Lutheran Church,
Janesville WI (ELCA)



In Sympathy:

Please remember in your prayers Jeff Schnell on the loss of his mother, Joyce Schnell; Michael Schmidt on the loss of his mother, Gloria Schmidt;

It's A Girl!

The anticipation is finally over, and we have our Comfort Dog!

Her name is Mary and she is ready to help create opportunities to share the mercy, compassion, presence and proclamation of Jesus Christ. Mary's Bible verse is Luke 1:37 *For nothing is impossible with God.*

Mary is a super sweet girl who loves to meet and greet new people. She loves her daily groomings as well as her massages. She's even been known to "purr" during her massage.

Mary has already been busy visiting new places and working with her handlers. She will

have many upcoming events in the near future, including the Gala of Giving in May, where she has donated something fun for the auction. Also, watch for more details about a fundraiser at the Festival Foods Brat Stand later in May.

Please contact Mary by email, through Facebook or by talking to one of her team members, if you know of someone, or someplace that would benefit by a visit from her.

Her email address is:
Mary@K9Comfort.org .

Find Mary on Facebook at Mary Comfort Dog. This is a great way to stay updated on what she is doing.



OGT Needs Your Help

OGT Needs Your Help. Those are the words from the last newsletter received from Orphan Grain Train. This worthy organization which St. Paul's has been supporting the past several years has depleted its inventory of hygiene kits, school kits and back packs. The requests and need of these items are great within the US and worldwide.

In response to these needs, a large container will be placed at the far end of Fellowship Hall (the church basement) to collect any supplies donated.

School needs include anything our own students use in their classroom: paper; pencils; crayons, and such. Backpacks are available for those who wish to take one home, fill it with items, and return it to the container.

Health kit needs are: small dark colored hand towel and wash-cloth; new, wrapped bar of soap; toothbrush and toothpaste; comb; and nail clippers.

If you are a Thrivent member you can apply for a Thrivent Action Team grant and the seed money goes towards purchasing supplies.



The Potter

With mindful purpose I was formed
Of earthly particles of clay
And cast upon the Potter's wheel
For shaping in a special way —
Through tides of trials with swords of pain
The Master Craftsman tempered me
Yet suffered so much more than I
Upon that Cross at Calvary.



This poem was written by our former member, Lucille Gorrell Lembrich, and was published in a collection entitled, "With Silver Trumpets." We thank Lucille's family—especially daughter, Margaret Tegt, and son, Paul Lembrich—for sharing her works with us.

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran
Church, School
And Day Care

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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Regular Worship Schedule:

Thursdays at 6:30p

Saturdays at 6p

Sundays at 8a & 10:30a



Parking Lot Project Update

April 2018

St. Paul's will be contracting with Frank Silha to complete our parking lot excavation and reconstruction this summer. We plan to start as soon as possible after school is out. Weather permitting, we anticipate that the project will be substantially complete and usable by the last week of July. We will be communicating construction plans with our neighboring property owners shortly.

We are very hopeful that we can work with the City of Janesville to arrange to move the home at 1217 E Holmes to another nearby city lot, rather than demolishing the home. An unpaved driveway from Holmes Street will be one of the first tasks. Having that access point during construction will allow the heavy equipment traffic to enter at grade level. It will also alleviate traffic on Ringold Street, as the city will be doing extensive road work on Ringold during and beyond the time our parking lot is under construction. There will also be storm sewer work going on in our area at the same time.

We know that logistics this summer will be very challenging. We will do our best to communicate information as soon as it is available - for example, specific schedules, parking instructions and changes in available access points. This project will require a lot of patience and compromise from all of us, but it will be a relatively short period of inconvenience to endure. The reward will be a beautiful, safe and functional new parking lot!

If you have any questions about the parking lot project, please contact:

Duane Mundth (dmundth@themorsegroup.com, 608-208-9034)

OR Cindy Perkins (cperkins@stpaulsjanesville.com, 608-754-4471 X307)