

Serve
Support
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St. Paul Lutheran Church and School • Royal Oak, MI

The Masthead

St. Paul Lutheran Church & School
Monthly Newsletter



January 2026

Church Office: 248-541-0613 & School Office: 248-546-6555

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REV. JAKOB ANDRZEJEWSKI



“New Year, New... Me?”

Every January, we do it—we declare with bold confidence, “This is it. This is the year.” The year we finally eat better, read more, spend less, run farther, pray deeper, organize everything, lose twenty pounds, and somehow become the sort of person who actually enjoys kale.

And then reality shows up: the treadmill squeaks, the planner disappears by January 12th, someone brings donuts to the church office (why is it always donuts?), and after a week of “early morning devotions,” we’re negotiating with the snooze button like diplomats at a peace summit. January reveals something about us: our resolve is strong, but our strength is limited; our hopes are big, but our habits are stubborn; we want transformation, but we cannot manufacture it by sheer willpower. That’s why the good news of January isn’t a fresh start on your calendar—it’s a fresh start in Christ. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Paul doesn’t say, “If anyone tries harder...” or “If anyone finally gets their act together...”; the newness doesn’t come from you—it comes to you, from Jesus. He is the One who makes new. He is the One who transforms. He is the One who pulls you forward when your resolutions fall apart like a cheap folding chair. January reminds us that Christian life isn’t self-improvement—it’s Christ-renewal. You’re not given a list of spiritual resolutions; you’re given a Savior. So if your year is starting messy—if you’ve already broken your resolutions, already fallen behind, already wondering how you’ll get through a month that feels seventy days long—take heart. Your hope isn’t in your performance but in His promise: “I am making all things new” (Revelation 21:5).

Not some things. Not the things you manage to fix. All things. Including you. So as you step into the year ahead with its unknowns, burdens, joys, and surprises, do what God’s people have always done: don’t trust your resolve—trust your Redeemer. And maybe, just maybe, enjoy a donut without guilt. WWJD? He’d eat that donut. “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22–23).

Pastor Andrzejewski



Vestry Update

From our Vestry Vice President ~ Steven Carpenter



150th Anniversary Ribbon-cutting ceremony
Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce
Dec. 2, 2025

2025 has flown by, and we are deeply thankful. As we reflect on the year behind us, we give thanks for the many ways God has been at work at St. Paul—within our congregation, our community, and our shared mission. This year also marked the joyful completion of our three-year capital campaign. We are grateful for the visible and lasting improvements it made possible, including a new welcome center, improved office spaces, and new—now leak-free—windows in the school gym. Even more, we celebrate that this work was completed with more than \$100,000 under estimates.

As Vestry, we began the year with a nearly blank slate—stepping into a new governance model and a shared opportunity to listen, discern, and build together. Through prayerful collaboration, we developed a comprehensive policy handbook spanning governance, worship, discipleship, education, outreach, and Christian care. We are grateful to see just a few of these thoughtful and meaningful policies already taking root—such as *Fellowship*, which supports welcoming

small groups and deeper relationships. At the same time, we are excited about what lies ahead, including *Grow in the Word*, a commitment to deepen engagement with Scripture across all ages by 20% annually.

These policies (*available through the church office*) support our newly rewritten mission—**Serve. Support. Share.** We are grateful for the strong foundation laid this year and confident it will allow St. Paul to grow and flourish for the *next 152 years*.

We are also thankful for the focused work of Vestry members serving alongside key initiatives—Jeff with the Housing Committee, Marshall with the Marketing Committee, and Steven with the End of Year Giving Committee, to name a few. This shared leadership has produced meaningful results, from St. Paul Royal Oak commercials on television to our 150th Anniversary ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce.

That same spirit of collaboration carried into our End of Year Giving Campaign. We extend our sincere thanks to those who helped in its coordination, and to every member who prayerfully responded.

Your generosity is already making a difference, and we are deeply grateful.

As we close the year, we do so with gratitude and anticipation—thanking Art Steiber and Brian Hermann for their faithful Vestry service, and joyfully welcoming Lily Paul and Chay Smith as new Vestry members. **With thankful hearts for the year behind us and excitement for the year ahead, we move forward together in faith.**

FINANCE

Weekly contribution needed based on approved 2025/26 budget: **\$13,700**
Weekly Contributions Received:

11/30 \$10,911
12/7 \$17,576
12/14 \$14,642
12/21 \$18,295



ELECTRONIC GIVING

St. Paul offers a convenient electronic giving option to help you keep up with your intended offerings. Please enroll on our website
www.stpaulroyaloak.org—or QR code below. For questions, contact Sue in the church office.

2026 Vestry Members:

Chris Schultz—President
Steve Carpenter—Vice President
Rachel Harris—Secretary
Marshall Mackinder—Financial Secretary
Jeff Szerdi
Lily Paul
Chay Smith
Pastor Andrzejewski
Chris Francik—School Principal
Please email sprovestry@gmail.com if you'd like to reach out to our vestry members.

Meet the Staff

Every month we will feature a different staff member! This month we are introducing our middle school teacher & band director—**Kurt Schmidt**.

Kurt Schmidt, a life-long Lutheran, began teaching at St. Paul, Royal Oak in August of 2024. He is currently in his 43rd year of teaching with over 30 of those years in Lutheran schools. He has taught students in every grade from 1st-12th during that time but enjoys guiding middle school students the most as they begin discovering a much broader outside world.

Mr. Schmidt has three lovely daughters, three fantastic sons-in-law, and five grands ranging from almost 2 through the oldest at age 9. One family is in Oakland County, one (literally) in Chicago, and one outside Chattanooga, in northwest Georgia.

He finds so much to enjoy about his current position at St. Paul where he instructs upper grade students in ELA courses, our bands, and shares the Gospel in morning Bible class that starts three of the mornings each week. Probably the highlight for him is recording and editing the weekly Channel V News Crew broadcast. Every 7th and 8th Grader is an important part of the Crew, and each one is seen "on air" every week performing their assigned role.

Outside of school, Mr. Schmidt frequently attends jazz concerts and festivals throughout southern Michigan and northern Ohio. He sings tenor in the St. Paul Chancel Choir. And being a Buckeye by birth, he is a huge fan of The Ohio State University and any Cleveland team. (His grandpa's college roommate [at Concordia, Springfield] played 2nd base for the 1920 World Series Champion Cleveland Indians.)



Thank you, Mr. Schmidt, for all the wisdom, joy & love you share with our staff & students EVERYDAY!



Many, many thanks to all members who make our church AMAZING! Specifically, we'd like to acknowledge the individuals who have helped in the following areas recently

*Volunteers who are on our altar guild—thank you for not only taking care of our sanctuary each week but also for being in charge of decorating our sanctuary last month for Christmas!

*Volunteers who serve on our trustee board. Thank you for taking care of our buildings—both inside and out.

If there is an area that you'd love to help with at SPRO, please reach out!



HEY PASTOR...

(A short Q&A column answering common faith or Bible questions)

Q: I am curious as to why there are not any Crucifix's in the Sanctuary with Jesus on the Cross. Is this unique to the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod or a St Paul Royal Oak decision?

A: Thank you for this thoughtful question! It's actually one that Christians have asked and answered in different ways for centuries. Some churches prominently display a crucifix (a cross

with the body of Christ), while others use a cross without the corpus. Both are historically Christian, and both communicate deep theological truths.

Here at St. Paul, you'll notice that while we don't currently have a crucifix, we have crosses everywhere—on banners, windows, paraments, architecture, and art. None of that is accidental. The cross is the beating heart of the Christian faith. Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23), and our sanctuary reflects that preaching.

So why a cross instead of a crucifix?

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has no prohibition against crucifixes. In fact, plenty of LCMS congregations use them, and many pastors (including Luther himself) encouraged their use because they visibly proclaim Christ's sacrifice. St. Paul happens to lean toward the "empty cross" tradition, which emphasizes the completed victory of Jesus. The empty cross proclaims:

Christ was crucified for you.

Christ has finished the work of salvation.

Christ is risen and alive.

A crucifix, on the other hand, highlights the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus—His real, physical, atoning death on our behalf. Both are true. Both are good. Both are deeply Lutheran.

Whether a church displays a crucifix or an empty cross isn't about what we believe but about how we visually emphasize what we believe.

Crucifix = the cost of salvation. Empty cross = the completeness of salvation. St. Paul simply leans toward the second emphasis in its particular sanctuary design.

You might be pleased to know this, however... there is one crucifix on the church. I wear a big one on my chest during services we offer communion to visually amplify the message "this is my body; this is my blood."

Have a question you'd like answered? Send them to office@stpaulroyaloak.org or visit the church office!

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

BIBLE CLASS OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday Bible Class 9:45am w/Pastor Andrzejewski (lounge)
 Sunday School 9:45am w/ Liz & Jerich Lopez (school)

Weekday/Saturday Bible Classes

Mondays 9:00am Women's Bible Class (Sept-May) (lounge) Contact Lee Ann Millinger or Rita McClatchey
 Wednesdays 10:00am Pastor Andrzejewski (lounge) (Sept-May)
 Thursdays 8:00am Men's Breakfast at The Avenue Restaurant (Woodward, N of 13 mile) Contact Mike Rasmussen
 3rd Saturday, 7:30am Men's Breakfast/Bible Study, (Sept-May) (lounge) Contact Chuck Brewer



Coming in February ~
 Annual Big Game
 Bash

Plan to join us for Superbowl Sunday on February 8th starting at 5:45pm in the lounge to watch the game on the big screen. More details to come early next month! Contact Chuck Brewer with any questions—
brewerchuck10@gmail.com.

Please plan to join us Friday, Jan. 16th and Saturday Jan. 17th to un-decorate the sanctuary and tidy up our church areas. We need many hands to pack away ornaments & boxes. Please reach out to Kathy Eifert with questions ~ holland4me@yahoo.com.



Monthly Bible Readings

LCMS Series C

New Small Groups are HERE! Sign ups are in the Welcome Center.

Alternating Wednesdays at church—6pm
 Leader—Betsy Newton
msnewton27@yahoo.com

Alternating Sundays at Gowman house—6 or 7pm
 Leader—Jeff Gowman—gowmanjt@yahoo.com

Sundays @ 9:30am in the church nursery
 Leader—Elli Harris
elizabethharris2128@gmail.com
 Focus—Moms of young children

1st & 3rd Sundays at church—6:30pm
 Leader—Heidi Bowdich
hbowdich@icloud.com
 Focus—High School Youth

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at church—6:30pm
 Leader—Lisa Kokko
kokkopuff@comcast.net

Day/Time—TBD at Francik house
 Leader—Chris Francik
cfrancik@stpaulroyaloak.org

Mondays at church—9am
 Leaders—Lee Anne Millinger & Rita McClatchey
leeanne.millinger@att.net
 Focus—Women

Sanctity of Life Sunday & Baby Bottle Boomerang!

Sunday, January 18th is Sanctity of Life Sunday. Please consider supporting our local Care Net Pregnancy Center of Berkley/Detroit. We will have baby bottles available for you to fill and return Jan 18th-Feb 8th. Coins are great but the bottles can also be filled with bills & checks (made out to Care Net Berkley/Detroit). All funds go directly to Care Net and are used to assist local mothers in crisis. Information on the center is available at <https://www.carenetberkleydetroit.org/>
Last year we raised over \$3500!!!!



Jan. 4	2nd Sunday after Christmas	1 Kings 3:4–15	Psalms 119:97–104	Eph. 1:3–14	Luke 2:40–52
Jan. 11	The Baptism of Our Lord	Isaiah 42:1–9	Psalms 29	Rom. 6:1–11	Matt. 3:13–17
Jan. 18	2nd Sunday after Epiphany	Isaiah 49:1–7	Psalms 40:1–11	1 Cor. 1:1–9	John 1:29–42a
Jan. 25	3rd Sunday after Epiphany	Isaiah 9:1–4	Psalms 27:1–9 (10–14)	1 Cor. 1:10–18	Matt. 4:12–25

SCHOOL MINISTRY



St. Paul Lutheran School

100+ Years of God's Grace

Our Mission

"Serve, Support & Share Where God Calls Us!"

Statement of Purpose

St. Paul Lutheran School equips children for a life of service with a foundation of academic, physical, spiritual, and social maturity centered around Christ Jesus.



Miranda Lorence ~ Kindergarten Teacher

We are excited to invite families to Kindergarten Round-Up later this winter. This is a wonderful opportunity to explore all that our school has to offer: hands-on learning, faith-filled lessons, a nurturing environment where children grow academically, socially, and spiritually. At our school, every child is loved and valued, and we share the joy of learning and the love of Jesus with our students. From reading and writing to fun projects, and faith-centered activities, there is so much for children to discover.

I am especially looking forward to meeting new families and reconnecting with familiar faces. Children who are new to St. Paul quickly become part of our school family, and we take pride in creating a warm, welcoming community where children and parents feel at home. We can't wait to open our doors, share our classrooms, and show how education and faith work together every day to help each child grow. We also invite you to share this opportunity with friends or family who may be interested in joining our school family. We look forward to seeing you and sharing what makes St. Paul such a special place.



Coming Soon

St Paul Lutheran School

Preview Night

Day and time will be announced soon. Please plan to help us get the word out about our amazing school and everything it has to offer. We'll have flyers for everyone to share with the community, family & friends.

Join Our PTL Team! The Parent Teacher League (PTL) is looking for enthusiastic moms and dads to join our board! Do you enjoy planning events? Have a knack for organization, communication, or media platforms? Or maybe you simply love supporting our school community? Whatever your skill set, there's a place for you on the PTL team! Joining the PTL is a wonderful way to get involved, meet other parents, and make a lasting impact on our students and school. If you're interested or would like more information, please reach out to Rose West, PTL President (313-595-6958), or Julie Hansen, PTL Treasurer.



Thank You for Blessing Our Christmas Shop!

We are truly grateful for the incredible generosity of our St. Paul families. Your handmade gifts were beautiful, thoughtful, and filled with the kind of care that makes this tradition so special. It's clear how talented and giving our community is, and our children were blessed by your creativity.

A heartfelt thank-you as well to the wonderful volunteers who gave their time to help set up, wrap gifts, and walk alongside our students as they shopped. Your support made the entire experience joyful for our children, and we couldn't have done it without you.

Thank you for sharing your gifts, and your hearts, with our school this Christmas season. Happy New Year!



PTL Happenings Coming Soon!

Be on the lookout for our next events:

Red Robin dinner night - January 20th

Crispell's dinner night - February

Valentines Dance - February 13th

Stay tuned for more details in our weekly church bulletin!

As always, thank you for your support!

Chapel Offerings for the Second Quarter go to help support our church food pantry. Thank you for all the support for this ministry Vikings! Last quarter we raised over \$272 for Camp Restore—Detroit!

School Calendar

January 5	School Resumes
January 16	1/2 day—end of 2nd quarter
January 19	No School—MLK Jr. Day

Coming in February:

Valentines Dance—2/13
Winter Break—2/16 & 2/17
Parent/Teacher Conferences—2/26 & 2/27

Church Notes

Directory

Church Office

248-541-0613

Pastor Jakob Andrzejewski

(cell) 734-644-0059

revjski@stpaulroyaloak.org

office@stpaulroyaloak.org

Sue Francik—Office Manager

502-381-3597

Greg Paul—Director of Music

248-765-0316

School Office

248-546-6555

school@stpaulroyaloak.org

Chris Francik

502-381-3643



Community Food Pantry Monthly:

1st Thursday (drive thru) 11am-1pm and

2nd & 4th Mondays (walk-in) 9am-12pm

Community Food Pantry is always

accepting food donations.

If you have any questions or would like to assist, please reach out to:

Lee Ann Miillinger (248)417-9526

Cathy Greener (248)953-1567

Barb Stefan (248)219-7469

Thank you for supporting our community!

Elder Listing

By Alphabet:

A, B, D—Tony Valdes

(248)505-0925

C, E, F, G—Chip Eising

(248)763-0314

L, M—Chuck Brewer

(586)822-8619

H, I, J, K—Kevin Calhoun

(348)343-8643

N, O, P, Q, R—Mike Rasmussen

(248)515-4605

S—Jim Schultz

(248)302-6435

T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z—Bryan Harris

(586)480-4840

Serving us in Worship in January

Altar Guild—Melia Woelmer & Terri Brockmiller

Ushers—8:15— David Owens, Steve Snell, Andrew Volchko, Elders on duty

Ushers—11—Jeff Gowman, Brian Charlton, Dave Hemming, Mike Boyd

1/4/26:

Counters

8:15—Libby Walker/Emily Bashore

11—Merideth Sanislo/Amie Szerdi

Readers

8:15—Barb Costakes

11—Rita McClatchey

1/11/26:

Counters

8:15— Carrie Smith/Ben Schultz

11—Kristen Gowman/Rick Thomas

Readers

8:15—Kevin Calhoun

11—Jeff Szerdi

1/18/26:

Counters

8:15— Heidi Bowdich/TBA

11am—Kathy Eifert/Andre Sanislo

Readers

8:15—John Aufdemberge

11am—Marshall Mackinder

1/25/26

Counters

8:15— Chay Smith/Emily Bashore

11am—Julie Thomas/Chris Francik

Readers

8:15—David Newton

11—Terri Brockmiller

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES:

Traditional 8:15am

Sunday Bible Class 9:45am

Traditional 11am

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday 8am-4pm

Friday 9am–3pm

OFFICIAL ACTS

Baptism:

Hudson David Hughes—

December 7, 2025



ALTAR FLOWERS

Altar flowers are available to purchase in honor or memory of a loved one or for a special occasion. Sign-up details are located to the left of our new Welcome Center on the board. All bouquets may be ordered for \$30 each (**NOTE—price change**). Fill out an envelope and make a check out to St. Paul Lutheran.

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

St. Paul School

In memory of **Darlene Baker's brother**—by Jim & Karen Charnawskas

St. Paul Church

In memory of **Darlene Baker's brother**—by Clara Lichtenberg

In memory of **Donna Brewer**—by Margaret Lawrence

GIFTS—Donate to the church by giving a memorial or honorarium by using the card located in the Welcome Center. This is a two part card, one to go with the gift to the church and the other to be mailed to the family. Contact the church office with any questions. Thank you.

Find Us
Online...

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stpaulroyaloak

Web: www.stpaulroyaloak.org

Our livestream is available on our very own You Tube channel at www.stpaulroyaloak.org/live.

You can also access our bulletins on our website at www.stpaulroyaloak.org/news-and-notes/. Be sure to check out our #5thStreet Gospel video clips and share it!



January Birthdays

Jan 1st	Danielle Workman	Jan 13th	Paul Brown
Jan 2nd	Lauren Banker	Jan 14th	Al Manteuffel
Jan 3rd	Erik Olsen	Jan 18th	Jason Roche
	Remy Szlaga		Michelle Ohngren
Jan 4th	Ezra Simon (Newton)	Jan 19th	Henry Eising
	Ephraim Simon (Newton)	Jan 22nd	Laura Newell
			Kaylee Guilmette
Jan 6th	Emily Bashore	Jan 24th	Sara Jarvey
Jan 7th	Brian Louwers		Courtney Woodward
Jan 8th	Dawn Heins	Jan 25th	Susie Wlotkowski
	Andrea Keeble	Jan 28th	Jeff Lehman
	Aaron Brandt		Parthenia Mickens
Jan 9th	Gabrielle Charlton	Jan 30th	Hope Malczynski
	Jenelle Jackson	Jan 31st	Beverly Limbaugh
Jan 10th	Peggy Schwartz		Esther Simon (Newton)



If we've missed listing your birthday, please contact the church office 248-541-0613

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 New Year's Day All Offices Closed	2 All Offices Closed	3
4 8:15am • Worship -C 9:45am—Bible Class & Sunday School 11am • Worship 1pm Brewer Memorial	5 School Resumes 9am • Women's Bible Study • Trustees 7pm • Elders	6 Epiphany	7 8:30am • Chapel 10am • Bible Study	8 8am • Men's Break-fast 7pm • Choir 8:30pm • Bell Choir	9	10 9am • New Member Class
11 8:15am • Worship 9:45am—Bible Class & Sunday School 11am • Worship -C	12 9am • Women's Bible Study • Trustees • Food Pantry	13 7pm • Vestry Meeting	14 8:30am • Chapel 10am • Bible Study	15 8am • Men's Break-fast 7pm • Choir 8:30pm • Bell Choir	16 10am • Undecorate Church School—Half Day	17 7:30am • Men's Break-fast 10am • Confirmation • Undecorate Church
18 8:15am • Worship -C 9:45am—Bible Class & Sunday School 11am • Worship	19 School Closed MLK Jr Day	20	21 8:30am • Chapel 10am • Bible Study	22 8am • Men's Break-fast 7pm • Choir 8:30pm • Bell Choir	23	24 9am • New Member Class
25 8:15am • Worship 9:45am—Bible Class & Sunday School 11am • Worship-C	26 9am • Women's Bible Study • Trustees • Food Pantry	27	28 8:30am • Chapel 10am • Bible Study	29 8am • Men's Break-fast 7pm • Choir 8:30pm • Bell Choir	30	31