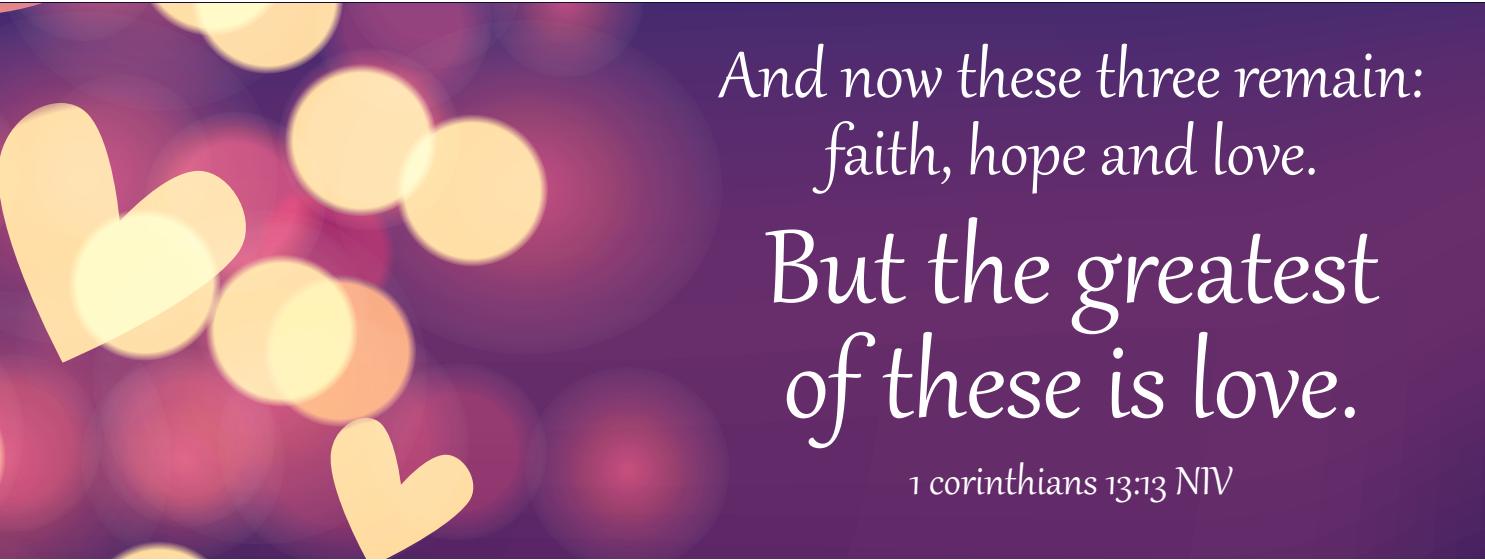




NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024



And now these three remain:
faith, hope and love.

But the greatest
of these is love.

1 corinthians 13:13 NIV

"I'm Extra Special!"

by Pastor Robert Schrader

This last summer, I bought a new pair of shorts (actually my mom bought them for me, she makes sure I stay somewhat in style). On the cardboard tag that was hanging on them it said, "I'm extra special."

Maybe it was talking about the shorts (they are a nice pair!). But I read it like it was telling me that "I'm extra special." That made pause and ask: why? "Why, Old Navy, am I extra special?"

I feel like this is a message that we hear a lot. We're taught to affirm everyone. Advertisements tell us all that we're each unique and beautiful in our own way. Songs and movies promote the message that each of us is exceptional.

And just like I asked my shorts, I'll ask these sources: why? For reasons that I'll get to in a moment, I truly do believe that each and every one of us is extra special. However, outside of a Christian worldview, I think these claims are entirely baseless.

Think about it. Our culture predominantly believes that we only exist because a dense ball of matter exploded and created the universe, in which, through random chance, single-cell organisms were able to form, from which, through more random chance, homo sapiens eventually came into existence. According to this theory, each and every one of us is a very ordinary collection of particles that came together purely by accident. In

other words, we're entirely insignificant and there's nothing on which to base the claim: "I'm extra special."

If someone were to tell you otherwise, don't be afraid to ask, "Why?" I encourage you to do some Christian apologetics, engage them, and have them think about it – make them defend their position. But also, always be ready to come back and tell them that they actually are extra special. And when they ask, "Why?" You can tell them...

First, you're special because God determined that you were worth creating. When you think about it, there are quite literally an unlimited number of possibilities for how God could have arranged the atoms,

molecules, and cells that make up your body. But he decided to organize them into 'you.' You're not an arbitrary conglomeration, rather God "knit (you) together in (your) mother's womb" which means that you are "*fearfully and wonderfully made*" (Psalm 139:13-14). You really are extra special – because God created you!

Second, you're extra special because God said so. Psalm 8:5-6 says of man, "*You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands.*" When he created the world, God decided that human beings would be extra special. We're the only part of creation that was made in God's image, the only part of creation into which God "breathed...the breath of life", the only thing that God created after which he said it was "very good."

Third, you're extra special because God redeemed you. John writes: "*In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love...that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (1 John 4:9-10). When Satan and his angels rebelled against God, he didn't save them. But when humans rebelled against God, he put in motion a plan to save us. And he did so in the most personally tragic fashion – he sent his

Son to die on the cross for our sins. To God, you are so extra special that he sacrificed the most special thing that exists – himself – in order to redeem you.

Finally, you're special because God wants to spend eternity with you. To God, you're so desirable that not only did Jesus die on the cross for you, but afterwards he rose from the dead and ascended to "*go and prepare a place for you*" (John 14:3). You are so extra special that he reserved a room for you in the most lavish, most wonderful place that exists!

Now, this is all quite incredible, isn't it? I don't have to try to convince myself against all odds that "I'm extra special" in order to keep my self-esteem from faltering. I don't have to buy all the latest styles or do all the coolest things or achieve the most impressive results. I don't have to fool myself into thinking that somehow I'm great on my own, nor do I have to climb the impossible mountain of proving my worth. Instead, "I'm extra special" – not because of who I am or what I've done – but because of who God says that I am and because of what God has done for me. And that's a firm base on which to stand, on which to live, on which to die, and on which to live forever!

The other day, I was walking outside the church, and I noticed one of the stained-glass windows – it looked

terribly ugly. It was dark, splotchy, and unattractive. But then I went inside, and I looked at that same window – now it was beautiful! It was colorful, bright, and lovely. What was the difference? I viewed it from the proper side; I saw the sun shine through it, not reflect off of it.

It's the same with ourselves. No matter how hard we try, we'll never really be able to convince ourselves that we're special if we let God reflect off of us, if we ignore him. The reality is, that in and of ourselves, we're like the outside of that window – ugly. But if we view ourselves from another perspective, if we let God and his light shine through us, then, because of him, our true beauty, our true significance, our true glory is unmistakable. Because of God, "I'm extra special" – and so are you!

Pastor Robert Schrader



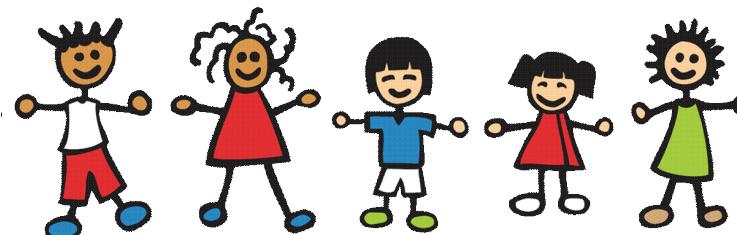
Early Childhood Center

Enrollment for the 2024 - 2025 school year has begun. The following classes are available – 3 year old Preschool which meets on T, Th from 9:00-11:30 AM or 12:30-3:00 PM and the 4K program which meets M, W, and F from 8:30-11:30 AM.

A spot will be saved for your child when the registration form (yellow tri-fold found on the wall in the Gathering Area) along with the \$75 registration fee is turned in.

(Bring it to the Early Childhood Center or the church office.) Tuition is \$100 per month for Preschool and \$170 per month for 4K. The SCRIP program is available to help offset the costs and earnings can be banked as soon as a child is enrolled.

Child Care is also available on days or times when your child is not in school. Openings are available for children ages 2 ½ - 5 years old. Child Care is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM. The hourly rate is \$5.25 per hour for 3-5 yr. olds and \$5.50 for 2 ½-3 yr. olds. If you or anyone you know would be interested, contact us at preschool@stpaulfalls.com, call 467-6733 or stop by the Early Childhood Center.



Thank You from Helping Kids

Now that 2023 has ended and we look forward to 2024, we can't express our gratitude enough for the support from all of you to the Helping Kids program. Without you there would be no program and many kids would not have the basic necessities. Whether it be a monetary donation, school supplies, food, or prayer, we give sincere thanks for your generosity and kind hearts. Since the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year kids have been helped with:

- 72 school back packs with supplies
- 109 items of clothing for all the schools
- 149 hygiene items for the middle and high school
- 20 packages/boxes feminine products
- 12 boxes of snacks to assist in classrooms
- 18 boxes of food
- 16 pairs of shoes
- 12 water bottles
- 16 jackets and snow pants
- 20 winter boots, hats, and gloves

We are currently helping 3 families with food boxes each month, and we provided them with a Thanksgiving and Christmas food box so they too could have a holiday meal. There is an additional family we assist with non-perishable, microwaveable food when needed as they do not have access to a frig or stove. The needs are great in our community and because of your generosity, we can help meet those needs.

Thank you for your continued support and helping to "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2)

Blessings to all for a happy, health and prosperous 2024.

Sherri Halverson and Maria Bender – Helping Kids



Sunday School

This month all grades will be starting a new unit. Our 3K-3rd graders will be learning about how God is always with us. The Bible stories of Jonah, Daniel, and Esther fit into this theme. Our 4th and 5th Graders will be learning about King David and all the lessons we can learn from him including being a friend and being responsible. Special thank you to all our Sunday School teachers who teach each week and care for our children!



AWANA

This month at AWANA we will start learning about the church seasons. We will be learning about the seasons of Lent, Pentecost, and Advent. Our themes this month are Valentines Day, Western, and Silly Sock Night. During the season of Lent, AWANA will be ending early at 7:05. All are encouraged to join us at 7:15 for Lent services. Reminder that there is no AWANA on February 7.



VBS Save the Date

Save the date for VBS 2024! VBS will be taking place July 21-24 3-6 PM here at church. Children 3K-5th Grade for the 2024-2025 year can join us. More information coming soon.



Children, Youth, & Family Event

Come and join us for Swimming at the Sheboygan Falls Aquatic Center on Feb. 4 at 12-2 PM. This event is free and all are welcome. The church swimsuit policy is in place. If you have any questions, please see Nicole or Savannah

Mark your calendar for our upcoming events.

March 10th 3:00-5:00 Bricktacular Creations at Church

April 14th 5:30-7:00 Bowling at Odyssey Fun Center





The cold temps and snowstorms did not keep our Confirmation students down! We continued strong in our lessons during the month of January! In February we start to work on our final units of the year! It is also retreat season for our confirmands. These retreats are an important part of their learning and it's awesome to see friendships grow and strengthen. We had a great year of FISH and our High School helpers did a great job running games all year long.



Youth Group

Youth Group on Sunday nights had a great month with some awesome theme nights. Bingo night was filled with many laughs and lots of great prizes! Game night held some great competition. We have really enjoyed exploring how Jesus raised up the 12 disciples during Bible study. We look forward to February as we get to serve together and enjoy some time at the Falls Aquatic Center.

Watch our website for the latest schedule.
<https://stpaulfalls.com/youth-young-adult/>



Young Adults

St. Paul Young Adults

had a great time on a few different occasions in January. We celebrated with all those home from college. We gathered for a breakfast-for-dinner event with a white elephant gift exchange. Both are great events to connect with our young adults.



Watch social media for future events!



Youth Mission Team

Our Youth Mission Team had a great time at their second meeting/training. We talked about the importance of communication while on a mission trip. We also made some big decisions regarding our trip. Please keep this group in your prayers as they continue to grow and serve! Thank you so much for your support during our Seroogy's candy bar sale!

Children, Youth, and Family events

We had a great turnout at our **Children, Youth, and Family** Roller skating event!

We had a great time skating around the rink and doing the limbo competition.

Thank you to everyone who came out in the cold!



Reasons to Celebrate

Who doesn't love a great celebration? It's an opportunity to deviate from daily routines in order to acknowledge something truly special or remarkable. Over the past few months, the Crusader family has had numerous occasions to celebrate:

- LHS varsity boys basketball coach, Nick Verhagen, was recently honored as the winningest coach in LHS history, with 236 wins and counting.
- The Crusader varsity girls basketball team broke several school records this season: junior Addy Verhagen now holds the record for assists (325) and steals (201) and recently scored her 1,000th point; senior Faith Pape ranks #1 in school history for rebounds (736) with senior teammate Alex Stricker in 2nd place with 626.
- Neat Repeats Thrift Store surpassed \$4 million in all-time sales.
- 21 exceptional students were inducted into the National Honor Society.
- 14 talented musicians were recently selected to the Big East Honors Choir or Band.

We also celebrated the gift of Lutheran education during National Lutheran Schools Week, January 21-27. Did you know there are only 103 Lutheran high schools in the US, in 31 states? That means 19 states do not even have ONE Lutheran high school. That really puts into perspective how blessed we are to have Sheboygan Lutheran literally in our



The girls' varsity basketball team, celebrating several broken records in the LHS gym

backyards. Rooted in God's Word, LHS is a place to excel academically while being equipped and prepared for lives of Christian leadership; a place to be loved, nurtured, and welcomed by teachers and staff who genuinely care; a place where faith is strengthened, prayer is encouraged, and individual gifts are celebrated.

The theme for the 2024 National Lutheran Schools Week was "Connected," inspired by John 15:5:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing!"

The theme emphasized the importance of staying connected to God and to one another when we face challenges and difficulties and when we celebrate in joys and triumphs.

Please join me in continually celebrating and praying for Sheboygan Lutheran High, our SALSA elementary schools, the daycares, early childhood programs, and Sunday Schools of our association congregations, and all those providing faith-based education throughout our nation!



Chemo Care Packages

Confirmation student will be putting together 75-100 bags for both male and female cancer patients on April 3rd as a part of their service project night. Your help is needed in collecting those items! Please consider donating the follow items:

- lemon drops & peppermints
- neck pillows
- gum
- Chap stick
- hand sanitizer
- hand lotion (unscented, sensitive)
- lip balm
- kleenex packets
- a notepad
- crossword/ search a word
- warm socks
- packets of thank you/ blank cards
- coloring pages/pencils
- mini notebook & pen
- Mittens & hats
- Devotion books
- non-alcohol mouthwash
- deck of cards
- special, fun pillowcases
- dangly earrings
- scarves
- Adult coloring books/pages
- colored pencils
- crosses
- tea packets
- pill organizers

(with the Monday thru Friday slots)

***Any lotion, moisturizer, mouthwash – anything like that should be travel size and needs to be fragrance free as patients can be sensitive to smells.*

If you are a Thrivent member, this is a great way to use Action Team Dollars! Speak to Nicole on what to apply for!

Donations can be dropped off at the giving area by **March 27, 2024**



Kringle Sale

February 18th

Purchase a kringle following Worship Service to support the Youth Mission Team



Available in the Gathering Area



Love INC is extremely excited to start the new year refreshed and rejuvenated, and we hope that you are ready to spread the word about Love In the Name of Christ. As we begin this new year, we want to focus on **LOVE in ACTION** based on Ephesians 4:2, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." There are so many opportunities for you to join the Love INC Movement and put **YOUR** love into action! Please go to loveincsheboygancounty.org or call 920-783-6701 to find all the great ways you can help your neighbors.



Love INC

**Love In the Name of Christ
of Sheboygan County**

Thank You and Other News



Guatemala Mission Trip Basket Auction

The Guatemala mission team is preparing our baskets for auction! **These baskets will be out for bidding at the back of church as well as online on 2/28.** If anyone has a small or side business they would like to promote by making a small donation, we will incorporate your donation into our baskets. This would be great advertising for you! *Please contact Aaryn Feile by 2/15/24 at gauthgarret@yahoo.com.*

Thank You

Many thanks and blessings for your recent contribution to our Personal Care Ministry. It seems this particular ministry is always in high demand, so your donation is very helpful. God bless you!

Your Love INC Family



The Gathering Place – November Giving

We want to thank everyone that donated to November Giving and to let you know that we exceeded our goal! Thank you for your generous support and your prayers for our program.



Rebuilding Together Thank You

The cash donation and many volunteers we received from your organization helped us make repairs to eleven homes in 2023. Your support helped us complete the largest number of homes we have been able to serve in recent years. We greatly appreciate your contribution to our ability to serve disadvantaged residents of Sheboygan County.

Student Bibles, Adornment, Christmas Blessings, Early Childhood Center, The Gathering Place, Quilters, Love Inc, Falls Food Pantry, Helping Kids, Salvation Army, Anchor of Hope and Sheboygan Falls Christmas Tree Lighting Contest.

Thank you for your support of the TNT sale all these years!

Lorrie Wilson, President

Night to Shine

Night to Shine 2024 is almost here!

February 9th is quickly approaching and we are getting excited for the prom night experience! To make this an unforgettable experience, we are looking for 200+ volunteers to make our guests feel loved and remind them they are loved by God. Please consider showing God's love to people with special needs by cheering on our Kings and Queens as they walk down the red carpet and get crowned in the sanctuary from 5:30-8 PM. No registration required!

As always, prayers and monetary donations are much appreciated. Can't wait to see you there!



Financial Report - December 2023

Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Financial Results- 6 Months Year to Date Actual, Budget & Variance				
	6 Months Ended 12-31-23 Actual		6 Months Ended 12-31-23 Budget	Variance from Budget (Short)/Over
General Offerings	\$ 654,259		\$ 675,085	\$ (20,826)
Other Income	\$ 26,382		\$ 15,720	\$ 10,662
Mission Offerings	\$ 48,774		\$ 42,884	\$ 5,890
Total Income	\$ 729,414		\$ 733,689	\$ (4,275)
Operating Expenses	\$ 661,200		\$ 690,601	\$ (29,401)
Mission Support	\$ 48,774		\$ 42,884	\$ 5,890
Total Expense	\$ 709,974		\$ 733,485	\$ (23,511)
Surplus (Deficit) Total	\$ 19,440		\$ 204	\$ 19,236
Capital Improvement Fund				
	Monthly Activity Increase (Decrease)		Balance at Month End	
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 38,070		\$ 275,641	
Membership Report				
Baptized Members	2,033		Confirmed Members	1,732

Celebrate Recovery®

A CHRIST-CENTERED 12 Step program

We CELEBRATE God's amazing healing and restoration!

**Did you know... that 2 out of 3 people attend
CR for NON-addiction issues?**

We all have struggles. What do you struggle with?

Depression, Anxiety, Anger, Feelings of Unworthiness and Being Less Than, Paranoia, Perfectionism, Obsessive Thoughts, Co-Dependency, Loneliness, Control, Fear, Resentment, Addiction to Food, Drugs, Sex, Bad relationships, Unforgiveness, Money Issues, Emotional or Sexual Abuse, Pornography, Jealousy, Selfishness, Judgement of Others, Unfaithfulness, etc.

Principle 2

Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.

"Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

Step 2

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13)

Hope and Sanity – When we can admit our denial and powerlessness over our hurts, hang-ups, and habits then we can begin to experience Jesus' grace and mercy. He gives us HOPE to overcome and restore us to SANITY. We finally see the light in the darkness, and we begin to move from chaos and lies from the enemy to peace by the healing power of Jesus Christ. We take a first step in trusting Jesus. Through the work that we do in this program we see that He can and will restore our lives and our relationships.

Are you ready to take that first step in your journey of recovery from life's difficulties?

You were never meant to walk this life journey alone...

**Come join us at Celebrate Recovery!
Your forever family is waiting! You are not alone!**

**Celebrate Recovery follows a Christian 8 Principal / 12 Step process
to heal from life's hurts, hang-ups, and habits!**

Entrance #4 – 300 Wing

Dinner: 6:00 PM

Large Group: 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Open Share Group (Gender Specific): 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Fellowship: 8:30 PM – 9:00 PM

No sign-up necessary, the only requirement is confidentiality!

Everyone is Welcome! We are waiting for you!

For additional information contact Julie J. @ 920-207-1397

St. Paul Lutheran Church

730 County Road PPP

Sheboygan Falls WI 53085



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Pastors

Kyle Backhaus, Senior Pastor
Robert Schrader, Associate Pastor
Tom Gudmundson, Pastor Emeritus
Donald Hasse, Pastor Emeritus

Lay Leaders

(Contact Church Office for contact information)

Tom Splittgerber,
Congregation President
Jeff Berg, Congregation Vice President
John Rische, Head Elder
Donna Felch, Treasurer

Church Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Fridays: Closed

Church Phone: 920-467-6449
Church Fax: 920-467-4239
ECC Phone: 920-467-6733
The Gathering Place: 920-627-6847
Website: www.stpaulfalls.com

Worship Schedule

Thursday:
6:30 PM Informal

Sunday:
7:45 AM Traditional (*Hymns*)
9:15 AM Blended (*Hymns & Praise Band*)
10:45 AM Contemporary (*Praise Band*)

Wee Care Nursery

Staffed Sunday from 9:15 - 11:45 AM

Children & Youth

(all below during the school year)
Sunday School: 9:15 AM service
AWANA Wed Night: 6:00 PM
Confirmation Wed Night: 6:00 PM
Youth Group Sunday Night: 5:30 PM

Early Childhood Center

3 year-old class (during school year)
Tuesday & Thursday:
9:00 - 11:30 AM or 12:30 - 3:00 PM
4K Class (during school year)
Monday, Wednesday & Friday:
8:30 - 11:30 AM

Child Care

Monday through Friday:
7:00 AM - 5:30 PM
Ages 2 1/2 - 5 years – call for Drop-ins

The Gathering Place & Memory Matters

The Gathering Place
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday:
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Memory Matters
Thursdays: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM