

Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.

# ST. PAUL'S CONNECTION

## February 2026



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Website

Visit us on our Website at [www.stpaulucelgin.org](http://www.stpaulucelgin.org) and  
Facebook at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Elgin, IL

Browse our Church Calendar on our website to keep up to date on  
our various events. You can find the calendar on our website at  
[www.stpaulucelgin.org](http://www.stpaulucelgin.org) and click on the  
calendar link



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### What's in this Issue:

- From the Pastor
- Lent at St. Paul's
- Changes at St. Paul's
- Constitution Review Committee Begins
- Diaper Ministry
- Christian Education
- Nursery Make-Over
- Author Visit & Family Fair
- Pancake Breakfast
- Lenten Mission Project-Blessing Bags
- MLK Food Drive
- Thriving in Nature
- Financially Speaking
- February Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Save the Date:

- Congregational Meeting; Sunday, Feb. 1
- Diaper Collection; Sunday, Feb. 1
- PADS; Tuesday, Feb. 3 & 17
- Soup-er Bowl Sunday; Sunday, Feb. 8
- Ash Wednesday; Wednesday, Feb. 18
- Author Visit & Family Fair; Sunday, Feb. 22
- Lent Study begins; week of Feb. 23
- Pancake Breakfast; Sunday, Mar. 8

**Church:** 40W720 Plank Rd., Elgin, IL 60124

**Office:** 12N268 Switzer Rd., Elgin, IL 60124

**Mailing:** P.O. Box 5598, Elgin, IL 60121

**Phone #:** 847-628-6118 / **Email:** [stpauls4me@yahoo.com](mailto:stpauls4me@yahoo.com) / **Website:** [stpaulucelgin.org](http://stpaulucelgin.org)

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Rev. Liz Patz, Pastor

Sherry Severing, Administrative Assistant

Jon Kobel, Choir Director

Ron Zemke, Interim Pianist



## How's it going with your star word?

Is it fresh on your mind? Lost in your car? Has it popped up in surprising ways? Or is its significance being rolled out in a slow burn? As we journey through the season of Epiphany, here are three ways to let the light of your word shine:

**Look it up in the dictionary.**

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Even the simplest word may have multiple definitions or uses. And what about synonyms, antonyms? History of the word? Examples of its use?

**Search it in an online bible.**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

Choose your translation of choice in the drop down box. I start with the NRSVUE (New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition). NIV, CEB, and The Message are great, too.

**Google "Valentine's Day" plus your word.**

For example, my word this year is FRIENDSHIP, so I googled "Valentine's Day friendship." The AI Overview comes up with some interesting facts and connections.

Your star word is with you for the long haul. May it guide you to familiar comforts, fresh questions, and new understandings of God's presence and faithfulness.

Peace,  
Pastor Liz

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## Lent at St. Paul's

### This Lent we're standing *At the Door*

A door marks a decision point, a moment of discernment. When we stand on the threshold of something new, how do we decide whether to open the door or turn back? There are so many moments in our lives when we are *At the Door* of discernment. *We need to ask ourselves—where is God and how is God calling us? Who else is involved, trying to keep us out or help pull us over the threshold? What is needed to take the next step? The Bible tells us that God also stands At the Door and knocks, always seeking to enter our lives. Join us for this Lenten Season as we explore all the ways in life and faith that we are At the Door.*

## Ash Wednesday Service, February 18th at 7:00 p.m.

What doors are closed in our lives? How do we grieve the ones that are slammed shut? Where is it possible to open them again? Where do we need repentance and renewal? Join us for our Ash Wednesday service, which will include worship, singing, the imposition of ashes, and the promise of restoration. Let's wait *At the Door* together.

## An "Unlikely" Lent Study

Monday AM Session 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday PM Session 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

At the Ministry House

A scripture study and current events mash-up. We will study unlikely, ordinary bible characters in the Holy Week and Easter scriptures using Rachel Billups new book and DVD series *An Unlikely Lent: Extraordinary People of the Easter Story* (<https://a.co/d/iPoueT1>) and ask what we can learn from them to help us love boldly and respond faithfully to injustices today. See the sign-up at church starting February 1st. Questions? Contact Pastor Liz.

## From the author Rachel Billups:

"...the Resurrection was not witnessed in isolation; it unfolded before a crowd. In that crowd were women and men who slipped through the margins of our Bibles, people who stood in the shadows, but whose presence still shaped the moment. Might their stories have something to teach us today? There was the servant girl who confronted Peter. Or the story of Simon of Cyrene who was just minding his own business when he was compelled to carry Jesus's cross. May we find in them an invitation to a different kind of Lenten journey - a journey that explores freedom, courage, and connection through the lives of these unlikely characters.



## Save the Date

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 1

Annual meeting immediately following worship. We will celebrate a year-in-review of our life together and vote on the 2026 budget and officers.

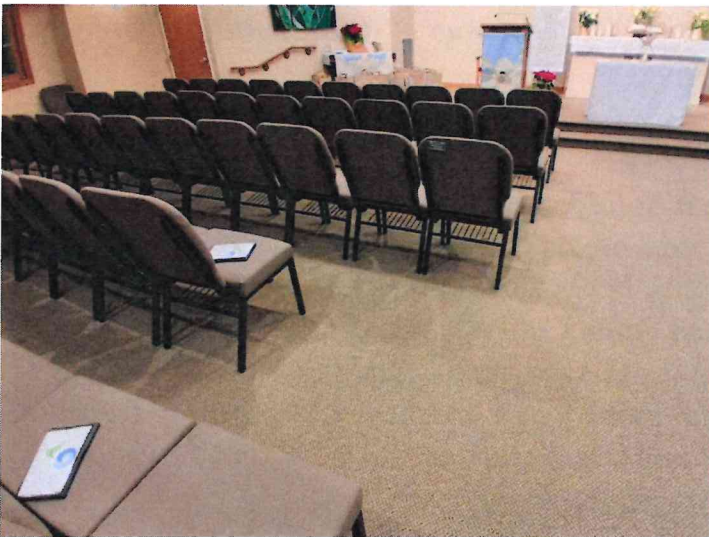


# Changes at St. Paul's

A number of things have been done recently to help make St. Paul's open to all who attend:

1. Have you noticed something missing from the sanctuary recently? Chairs have been removed from two areas to make room for wheelchair accommodation.
2. Larger print bulletins are now available on Sundays for those who need one.
3. Gluten free communion wafers are offered for those with intolerance.
4. Worship slides now include written instructions for sitting and standing for anyone who may not hear them verbally.

We continue to find ways to make our building and worship experience available to everyone. "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here."



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## Constitution Review Committee Begins

A committee has been appointed and assigned the task to review the church's constitution. The members of the committee are:

Barb Kamp, Chair  
Maya Garner  
Bill Guptail  
Quinn Post  
Karen Volkening

This will be a one year process with any updates or changes being brought to the congregation for approval at the annual congregational meeting in 2027.



## MINISTRY NEWS

### Diaper Ministry

#### February 1st Diaper Collection

The first Sunday of the month at St. Paul's is our diaper collection. We continue to collect **sizes 1-6** and the diapers can be dropped off in the narthex, to the left of the entry doors. Your generosity and dedication to the diaper ministry is truly appreciated.

Thank you for your continued support with providing diapers/monetary donations so that we can serve families in our community who are experiencing diaper insecurity. We continue to need size **6 diapers**. This past week, two different families called the church office looking for diapers. It is a gentle reminder that families are struggling with the basic essentials and thanks to you, families know we are here to help provide for their children's' needs.

Karen Smith, Karen Snyder & Barb Kamp

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#### Volunteer Mondays & Wednesdays

We continue to bring diapers to the community playgroups twice a month. Diapers are ready for you to take on Sunday or pick-up from the church office. It's a super simple volunteer opportunity - pick-up diapers, go to the location, set out the sign, and distribute a pack of diapers to moms that ask for one. Sometimes no one at the play group needs diapers - and that's ok!

Thank you for representing St. Paul's and helping families keep their little ones dry, healthy, and happy.

Sign-up sheets are on the hall bulletin board. Please consider helping at the following events:

Zion Lutheran Church (330 Griswold, Elgin)  
First Monday of the month - 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Izaak Walton (899 Jay St, Elgin)  
Last Wednesday of the month - 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  
*Together, we are "Changing Lives One Diaper at a Time"*

Blessings, Karen Smith, Karen Snyder, Barb Kamp





# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

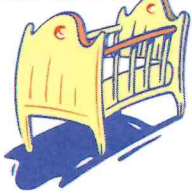
## Hand Tied Blankets

On Sunday, January 18th, the children tied the ends of hand-made fleece blankets with Sara Tustin. It was a joy to see them all working together to make the fleece blankets for children in need. The blankets will be donated to School District U-46 & 300. Thank you Sara for your time, care, and love in making this opportunity possible.

Karen Smith (CE Ministry Council Chairperson), Karen Westerman, Ken Volkening, Kylie Smith, Janet Werner, Ginny Mursewick



## Nursery Make Over



## Nursery Make-Over

A huge thank you to Heather Heinrich, Kylie Smith, Melissa Wiggin, and Ashley Young for offering to help with our nursery make-over. We are excited to give the nursery a fresh new look and create a more inviting space for our littlest ones and their families.



## Save the Date: February 22nd

## Author Visit & Family Fair

We are so excited to welcome Traci Smith, a best-selling author and speaker known for her work on practical faith practices for families on Sunday, February 22nd. She will lead our worship service and a one hour hands-on experience for all after church.

We're so excited to welcome her and we highly encourage families to join us for this amazing opportunity as we begin the Lenten season.

There will be a sign- up sheet in the Narthex starting February 1st.

CE Ministry,

Karen Smith, Council Chairperson

Karen Westerman, Ken Volkening, Kylie Smith, Janet Werner, Ginny Mursewick



## Save the Date

On **Sunday, March 8th** the children will be hosting a pancake breakfast after worship. All are invited! A free will offering will be collected to give to PADS.

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# Missions Ministry

## Lenten Mission Project- Blessing Bags

We are continuing our mission partnership with Well Child Center of Elgin. Well Child serves parents, children and families in our community with an emergency food pantry, a dental clinic, WIC services and more. We are supporting their food pantry by assembling kid-friendly, shelf stable non-perishable ingredient bags. Receive cards will be hung on a tree in the narthex beginning February 22. Please purchase all of the ingredients on the recipe card.

For example-

1 cup of flour = Purchase 1 small sealed bag of flour

2 tbs of cocoa = Purchase 1 small can of cocoa powder

Please return the recipe card and ingredients in the draw string bag provided ( available from the tree table) by Sunday March 29th. Plan to stay after worship on March 29th to write friendly notes for each bag.

Please reach out to Karen Snyder, Allison Smith, Anne Heinrich or Barb Kamp with any questions.





## MLK Food Drive

Thank you to everyone for the donations to the MLK Food Drive. We filled 22 bags, simply amazing!



Mission Ministry



## Honoring King's memory through service



RYAN RAYBURN FOR THE DAILY HERALD  
Bill Snyder of Pingree Grove delivers donations Sunday from St. Paul's United Church of Christ during the annual Dr. King Food Drive at the Food for Greater Elgin food bank.



# THRIVING IN NATURE

**AT HAWTHORNE HILL NATURE CENTER**

**FREE!**



Every first Thursday, 10am-3pm  
Ages: 1-8 yrs.

with storytimes from Gail Borden Library Readership:

Jan 8th\*: 11:30am & 12:30pm  
Feb. 5th: 11:30am & 12:30pm  
March 5th: 11:30am & 12:30pm  
April 2nd: 11:30am & 12:30pm  
\*second Thurs. due to holiday

**OUTDOOR PLAY**  
**HIKING**

**NATURE CRAFTS**





# Puzzle!

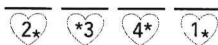
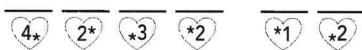
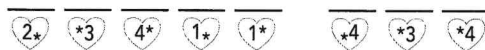
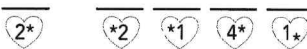
We see hearts everywhere and love sharing cards and greetings with friends and family.

Use the code to discover a special message from God — perfect for any day, any month.

CODE:



"



Jeremiah 31:3

Answer: "I have loved you with an everlasting love."



## LOVE CODE BREAKER

Change some of the letters below to reveal this verse!

Change:

C's to L    Z's to H    P's to R  
J's to A    Q's to T    X's to E  
K's to O

(The other letters stay the same.)

" L C K V X Q Z X C K P D Y K U P

G K D W I Q Z J C C Y K U P

Z X J P Q J N D W I Q Z J C C

Y K U P S K U C J N D W I Q Z

J C C Y K U P M I N D J N D

W I Q Z J C C Y K U P

S Q P X N G Q Z "

Mark 12:30

Answer: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

## Bible Quiz

The New Testament uses several Greek words to describe love. Which of the following best represents the **selfless, sacrificial** love that God shows to humanity?



- A) Eros
- B) Phileo
- C) Agape
- D) Storge

Answer: C (See John 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 13)



# Financially Speaking

The total 2025 receipts through December were \$256,954.98 which includes giving for fixed expenses as well as charitable giving. See below:

	December	Year-to-Date
<b>Offering</b>		
Pledged Offering	\$10,863.00	\$157,383.00
Contributions (Non-Pledged)	\$6,037.00	\$26,491.00
Loose Offering	\$748.00	\$4,529.00
<b>Denominational Support</b>		
OCWM (Illinois Conference)	\$565.00	\$7,385.00
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$0.00	\$315.00
Neighborhoods in Need	\$0.00	\$515.00
Strengthen the Church	\$0.00	\$415.00
Christmas Fund/Veterans of the Cross	\$380.00	\$380.00
<b>Church Fund Support</b>		
Land, Building and Equipment Fund	\$165.00	\$13,240.00
Coffee Hour donations	\$93.00	\$906.00
General Fund	\$0.00	\$1,185.80
Scholarship Fund	\$0.00	\$1,400.00
"J" Dollars	\$170.00	\$868.00
Members Out Reach Fund	\$500.00	\$500.00
<b>Specific Ministry Support</b>		
Music Fund	\$0.00	\$265.00
Mission Projects	\$0.00	\$1,165.00
Diaper Ministry (Including May Community Drive)	\$20.00	\$2,825.00
Fellowship and Hospitality	\$150.00	\$350.00
<b>Seasonal Giving</b>		
Easter Breakfast	\$0.00	\$460.00
Lent/Easter Offering	\$0.00	\$2,796.00
Heritage Fest	\$0.00	\$2,723.00
Christmas Offering	\$1,164.00	\$1,164.00



	September	Year-to-Date
<b>Church Project Support</b>		
Member Donation Toward Sanctuary Sound Equipment	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
<b>Community Support</b>		
Pads 5K Sponsorship	\$0.00	\$1,080.00
Elgin Pride	\$0.00	\$122.00
Pads Emergency Appeal	\$0.00	\$2,360.00
Bienvenido's Emergency Appeal	\$0.00	\$1,640.00
<b>Other</b>		
CD Interest	\$0.00	\$11,296.77
Memorial Giving	\$0.00	\$4,046.00
Miscellaneous	\$0.00	\$67.07
Christmas Flowers	\$480.00	\$510.00
Easter Memorial Flowers	\$0.00	\$375.00
Initial Offering (Related to Giving Envelope)	\$0.00	\$51.00
150th Celebration Dinner	\$0.00	\$3,465.00
Donation to CE for VBS	\$0.00	\$266.34
\$1,000 Donation to CE for Confirmation	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Christmas Trees	\$70.00	\$710.00
CE Pumpkin Sale	\$0.00	\$64.00
Craft Fair	\$40.00	\$520.00
Living Nativity Free Will Offering	\$121.00	\$121.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$21,566.00</b>	<b>\$256,954.98</b>

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this report or on your statements.

Karen Westerman,  
Financial Secretary  
847-727-9973



2/07 Taylor Smith  
 2/07 Marilyn Straub  
 2/9 Brett Wolfe  
 2/12 Stephanie Schmidt  
 2/13 Ron Zemke  
 2/16 Debbie Monteith  
 2/20 Paula DeFarno



2/17 Douglas & Jennifer Volkening  
 2/18 Lorrel & Susan Petty

**\*\*Please forgive any omissions. Please contact the Church Office by email or by phone at 847-628-6118 with corrections.**



### Worship Online

Watch our Services live on YouTube every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. or watch them when you have time. Just scan the QR Code or go to YouTube and search St. Paul's United Church of Christ



### Online Giving

Your gifts to the church provide for our ministries and programs. To make an online donation scan the QR Code or go to our website at [www.stpauluccelgin.org](http://www.stpauluccelgin.org) and click on the give link.



### March Newsletter Deadline: February 19th

If you have an article you would like included in the next Newsletter, please submit it to the office by emailing [stpauls4me@yahoo.com](mailto:stpauls4me@yahoo.com) no later than the deadline!

