

August 2026

St. Paul News

St. Paul Lutheran Church
9844 SW. Greenville Rd
Greenville MI 48838

Bishop Schneider-Thomas	1	Mental Health Corner	10
Pastor Nan	2-6	The Culture of Generosity	11
Thrivent	6	Prayer: The Heartbeat of Our Life	11
Calendar	7	Together	
Service Calendars	8	St. Paul Lutheran Blood Drive	12
Ministry activities	9	Greenville Ecumenical Food	13
Ministry Dates	9	Pantry	
		Ice Cream Social	13
		Spiritual Growth/Shalom	14
		Prayed for in Worship in July	14



A Letter from Bishop Julie



The church is not the building, it's the people. We all know that — even though in our language we continue to use the word “church” to talk both about the community of Christians and the building they occupy. The same could be said for “the synod.” The synod is the gathered group of Jesus followers who make up the congregations in the area of North/West Lower Michigan. All of us are the synod together. It is also true that we use “the synod” to refer to the synod staff and perhaps additionally the synod council — the people who are in leadership positions in our synod.

It is my hope that all of you in some way will be able to experience being a part of “the synod.” It is encouraging to begin to connect with people beyond our individual congregations and ministry sites. The energy of that was palpable as we gathered for Synod Assembly in May.

Some of these synod relationships are long-standing. At Synod Assembly, we celebrated congregations and rostered leaders who have been a part of our synod community (and its predecessors) for decades.

This month, I want to celebrate a person whose ministry has blessed our synod for many years: Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek.

Rebecca has served alongside four bishops in a variety of roles, including Executive Assistant, Director of the Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry (ELMM) Program, and most recently, Director of Finance. In every position, she has brought excellence, wisdom, and deep faithfulness to her work. Our synod has been richly blessed by her gifts.

Personally, what I will miss the most is Rebecca's steady encouragement of us as a staff, and the way that she helps us to stay grounded in God's love and purposes. She has been a trusted colleague, a faithful servant, and a true blessing to our staff and to this synod.

Rebecca will retire on August 31. I hope you'll take a moment to send her a note, share a favorite memory, or offer a word of thanks and blessings. I know she would be grateful to hear how her ministry has touched your life, just as it has touched so many of ours.

Thank you, Rebecca, for your faithful service. May God richly bless you in the next chapter.

PASTOR'S REFLECTION



THE CRUCIFORM (CROSS SHAPED) LIFE OF A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

Dear Followers of Jesus,

Greetings in Christ! Below you will find an article that I have been praying and chewing on the past couple of weeks. I have emphasized the words that catch my attention.
Which ones catch your attention?

The Jesus follower is a cultural outsider—a misfit who does not quite fit within the machinery of the world.

They live slightly out of step, swimming against the current, hearing a different music, learning to walk to its rhythm. There is something about following Jesus that makes normal life feel strange. Or perhaps **it makes us realize how strange “normal” has become.**

We may dress our faith in the language of philosophy, speak with cultural fluency, and even find ourselves in places of influence. We may learn how to sound respectable, how to make Christianity appear polished, reasonable, and safe. But underneath the polish, beyond rhetoric and social finesse, **we remain, in the eyes of the world, fools.**

Unless, of course, we surrender the very thing that makes us Christian and settle for a Christianity without Christ.

Perhaps that is part of the problem. We have spent so much time trying to make Christianity appear normal, respectable, and useful that we **have forgotten how strange it really is.**

Maybe it is time to make Christianity weird again.

Not weird for the sake of performance. Not eccentricity as theatre. Not religious cosplay.

But strange in the way the gospel is strange.

Strange enough to **forgive** enemies when revenge feels more reasonable.

Strange enough to **share** bread with the poor instead of building bigger barns.

Strange enough to **believe** that the meek matter, that the last are first, and that peacemakers are blessed.

Strange enough to **call power** to account **and still kneel to wash feet**.

Strange enough to **believe** that a man executed by the state is the image of God and the hope of the world.

Strange enough to **trust resurrection** in a culture obsessed with control, self-preservation, and endless self-construction.

At its center, the gospel is a scandal that refuses to be tamed.

It is public truth. **A true myth. A story large enough to make sense of all other stories.**

It tells of a crucified God who carries the sins of the world—a slaughtered Lamb who, risen and ascended, reigns not by domination but by self-giving love.

This message disturbs. It unsettles the accepted wisdom of the age.

By “the world,” we mean those forces that survive by domination—the systems and habits that normalize oppression: unchecked capitalism, consumerism without limits, the hoarding of wealth, militarism, the worship of power, and the cold creed of dog-eat-dog survival.

The kingdom of Jesus is not built on these things.

The crucified Christ is not merely someone to be admired from a distance. He is an **invitation—into** solidarity with suffering, rejection, and those pushed to the edges of society.

He calls us toward the addict, the refugee, the homeless man outside the supermarket, the woman carrying shame like a second skin, the exhausted single mother, the forgotten prisoner, the mentally unwell, the one everyone else crosses the road to avoid.

In this crucified God, who enters fully into human pain and does not turn away, we meet grace.

And grace asks something of us.

It calls us into a cruciform (cross shaped) life.

To love those who have been taught they are unlovable.

To forgive what the world insists should never be forgiven.

To practice a nonviolence that looks like weakness to those addicted to power, but is stronger than the violence that shapes empires.

To choose presence over platform, faithfulness over influence, community over celebrity.

To pray. To wait. To bless. To lament. To keep Sabbath in an economy that demands endless production.

To follow Christ, then, is to inhabit this upside-down kingdom.

It is to become an alternative community—resident aliens in a culture of domination, learning to live now by the future of God.

We were never called to be chaplains to the status quo.

We were called to be witnesses to another kingdom.

People of table and towel.

People of cross and resurrection.

People who believe love is stronger than empire, grace outruns shame, and mercy has the final word.

This is the way of the cross. The way of costly grace. The strange new world breaking in.

And so perhaps the church needs less branding and more beatitudes.

Less performance and more presence.

Less anxiety about relevance and more courage to be holy fools.

Make Christianity weird again.

Not trendy. Not safe. Not useful to empire.

Just faithful.

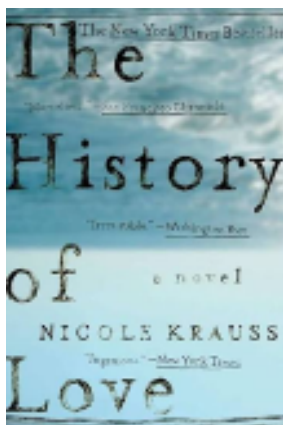
Just cruciform (cross shaped).

Just enough like Jesus to make the world wonder what on earth has happened to us.

- Swales, 2026

May we be fools for Christ!

Pastor Nan



***COME READ WITH PASTOR AND
FRIENDS***

AUGUST 8, 2026 SATURDAY

10AM – 12NOON

The choices for this new year of reading together include the following: books by Jewish authors (that are not focused on the Holocaust) OR a friend's favorite book that they want to share with the group OR a friend's WTR (want to read) book on their personal list.

Why Jewish authors? We are living in a time where hate crimes and violence against Jewish people are increasing all over the world. Reading, listening, to their stories and imagining how they are experiencing these experiences can help us better understand both our similarities as well as our differences. Reading helps us be more empathic in our relationships.

Agreement Is Not Biblically Required for Us to Show Empathy

When responding to the pain of others in our world, we do not have to assess if we agree with who they are and everything they have done in their lives for us to offer empathy. We offer our support because those grieving, suffering, and struggling are children of God, worthy of God's love! As believers, we are called to be tangible agents of God's light and love.

Matthew 25: 34 – 36

34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

WEDNESDAY BIBLE/BOOK STUDY

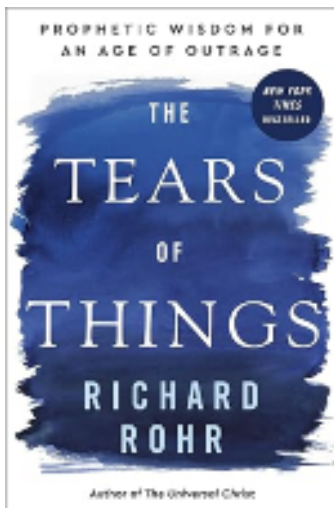
We meet on Wednesdays from 2 pm – 3 pm in the large classroom.

Current read/study:

We are currently reading and studying with Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He is a famous Lutheran theologian whose writings are frequently referenced as we live out God's call on our lives. This book reminds us of why "we" are in community: by God's design. This will likely carry us through August because the writing is chewy (that is deep and dense).



There will be two books offered in the next series. The group will choose which one we read next including these two titles:



Richard Rohr focuses on the prophets of the Bible.

Rev. Lenny Duncan writes a part manifesto, part love letter, and part confession to call us out as we follow Jesus.

Thrivent Choice® is now easier and more impactful

The new Thrivent Choice empowers members to have a bigger impact with less effort, making it easier to support the causes close to your heart.

Meet the new Thrivent Choice

As always, Thrivent Choice enables you to direct support to organizations you care about through Choice Dollars®. For each Choice Dollar directed, Thrivent provides \$1 in grant funding. And now, to help expand on the program's mission of bringing generosity to life, we've made a series of meaningful upgrades to the program.

When are Choice Dollars available?



What is the timeline to direct Choice Dollars?



Who can direct Choice Dollars?



August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Sunday worship 9:30am Affirmation class after worship Special congregation meeting after worship	3 Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	4 Food Mission 10am- 12 noon St. Paul Lutheran Church Blood Drive 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	5 Bible study 2pm Food Mission 5:30pm Mark sabbath	6 Mark at Synod Heart- Centered Connections at Faith-Okemos 1- 3:30pm	7 Council Reports Due Short Meditation zoom 1:30pm	8 1
9 Sunday worship 9:30am Affirmation of baptism class hosting coffee hour Affirmation class after worship	10 Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	11 Food mission 10am	12 Bible study 2pm Food Mission 5:30pm Mark sabbath	13	14 Short Meditation zoom 1:30pm Camp/Bon Fire 6pm	15 Read with pastor & friends 10am-12pm
16 Sunday worship 9:30am in the Pavillion Affirmation class after worship Loose change offering	17 Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	18 Newsletter Articles Due Food mission 10am	19 Bible study 2pm Food Mission 5:30pm Mark sabbath	20 Council 5:00pm Legacy lunch ladies 1pm BK	21 Short Meditation zoom 1:30pm	22
23 Sunday worship 9:30am Blessing of the backpacks and briefcases Affirmation class after worship	24 Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	25 Food mission 10am Senior Citizens Fellowship 12 noon	26 Bible study 2pm Food Mission 5:30pm Mark sabbath	27	28 Short Meditation zoom 1:30pm	29 Mark at NWUSE MI Youth & Young Adult Teams meeting at Faith- Okemos
30 Sunday worship 9:30am Affirmation class after worship Pastor anniversary	31 Al-Anon 5pm Building closed Pastor sabbath	 Annual reports are Due August 31st 			Penny wars start in September	

August Serving Calendar

St Paul Service Calendar	Assisting	Proclaimer	Sound	Lead Usher	Nursery	Counters	Music
August 2	Janet W-M	Amy S	Lee H Diane C Karen H	Curt B	Donny M	Joy S Karen H	Sarah F.
August 9	Josh S	Barb B	Diane C Paul R Connie T	John C	Shirley H	John C Lisa B	Sarah F.
August 16	Rocky H	Connie T	Lee H Diane C Lisa B	Bob K	Amy S	Shirley H Connie T	Sarah F.
August 23	Alicia D	Janet W-M	Paul R Lee H Tara C	Kevand S	Volunteer	Kevand S Diane C	Sarah F.
August 30	Connie T	Karen P	Paul R Lee H Tara C-T	Curt B	Donny M	John C Lisa B	Sarah F.

Dates, and names are Subject to change.

If you are going to miss a Sunday that your scheduled, please get a sub.

Ministry Dates

All are welcome to participate in the events below

Sharing the joy of Christ !

August 3,10,17,24,31 Al-Anon 5:30pm building closed until 8:30pm

August 2,9,16,23,30 preparation for Affirmation of baptism classes

August 4 St. Paul Lutheran Church Community Blood Drive from 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

August 7 Council Reports due

August 9 the Affirmation of Baptism class hosting Coffee hour

August 14 the ministry is hosting the camp/bondfire at St. Paul, up under the trees in front of the garage 6pm

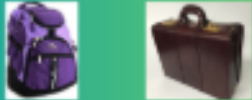
August 18 Newsletter articles are due

August 16 Loose Change offering

August 23 Blessing of the backpacks and briefcase tentative

August 25 Senior Citizen Fellowship 12 noon, bring a dish to pass and a \$5-\$7 gift bag for bingo

Blessing of the Backpacks and Briefcases
August 16th at 9:30am
During Worship



The ministry will be blessing all students, teachers, and other adults who wish to be blessed for the first day of school and for 2026-2027 ministry year.
Bring your backpack or briefcase to be blessed on the 16th!

Affirmation of Baptism Class



August 2,9,12 after worship in pavilion , 23, 30
after worship around 11:00am in the large classroom

Worship



August 16th at 9:30am
St. Paul Lutheran Church Pavilion

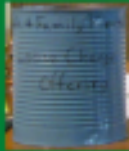
WHY is blood donation important?

Cancer patients,
burn victims,
trauma patients,
and others
require blood to
HELP HEAL!



3rd Sunday loose change offering

The loose change offering help provide funding for the children, youth, and family ministries at Saint Paul.



This Month the offering is on August 16



Camp/Bonfire
August 14th @ the Fire Pit 6:00pm
we will be meeting up under the trees by the garage
park in front of the garage



Senior Citizen Fellowship
August 25 at 12 noon
Senior Citizens Fellowship at St. Paul, please bring a dish to pass and a gift bag for Bingo no more than \$7.

Mental Health Corner

On August 4th, the ministry is hosting a blood drive with Versiti / Blood Center of Michigan. Many of us remember when it was known as Michigan Blood. As a congregation, we have had several members who have undergone scheduled treatments or procedures, while others have found themselves in emergency situations. As I write this, over the past week and a half I have visited several members in the hospital who required blood because they needed it. Others had blood available because of the medical procedures they were undergoing, just in case.

The need for blood remains high, and blood donations are always needed to support local hospitals and patients facing surgeries, illnesses, traumatic injuries, and other medical emergencies. A single donation can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who depend on a safe and reliable blood supply.

Like blood, our mental health is something that also needs care and support. A mental health emergency can look different for every person. What may seem like a small concern to one person may feel overwhelming to another. We have seen many stories in the news lately involving interactions between law enforcement and individuals experiencing mental health crises. My hope is that, as a ministry, we can be a place where anyone feels comfortable reaching out if they sense that their mental health is struggling. We want to support you, listen to you, and help connect you with the care, resources, or people who can best meet your needs. Please, if you feel that you need help in any way, let us know. We are here to walk alongside you and support you.

When I say that you can come to us, I mean everyone who is experiencing mental health concerns. It doesn't have to be a crisis before you reach out. This is especially true for those beginning a new endeavor, such as a new school year, a new grade, a new job, or a new career. Come and talk with us. We are here to listen and, if needed, help connect you with resources and tools that may be beneficial. I know that starting something new can be jarring and can bring new stress, new feelings, and new experiences. If you need us, we will be a caring presence. We are here for you.

Matthew 11:28–29 says:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

As followers of Christ, we are also called to help carry one another's burdens. Together, we can lean on one another, offer support, and help provide rest to those who need it. If you are feeling overwhelmed, come and let us walk with you as you seek the rest and hope that Christ offers.

Mark Dombkowski,
Ministry Coordinator
Mental Health Coach
First Responder

The Culture of Generosity (COG)

The team is working on three main fronts. First is highlighting all our many ministries at St Paul--for example, see this month's Newsletter article on our several Prayer ministries (attached). Second, we are working to serve as a catalyst for ways of sharing generously, such as the new regular potlucks, which unite us in the fellowship of breaking bread together. Third, we are working to relate our ministries to the financial needs of the church as an organization. Last Fall the congregation passed a budget that makes possible the many ministries we are highlighting. But that budget, which would cover our bare bones expenses, had a \$31,000 deficit built in. Now, seven months into the year (our first year without the contributions of Settlement), we are feeling the pinch. We invite the congregation to think with us and Council about how we can creatively address this.

Thanks for prayerful consideration!

COG Team Diane Christensen, Bob Kamphuis, & Constance Teddy

Prayer: The Heartbeat of Our Life Together

The early Christian church devoted itself to four essential practices: worship, prayer, caring and outreach/service (Acts 2). Last month we reflected on worship. This month we celebrate another hallmark of a vibrant congregation—prayer at St Paul.

Martin Luther reminds us why prayer is so central: "God wants to encourage us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him confidently with all assurance." Prayer begins not with our words, but with God's invitation.

At St. Paul, prayer is woven into the fabric of our life together in many different ways. When someone is facing illness, grief, or another urgent need, our Prayer Chain quietly springs into action. Requests move from person to person, surrounding people with faithful, caring prayer.

Others gather through Shalom, where participants explore the rich heritage of Christian prayer. Drawing from contemplative traditions, Celtic spirituality, the mystics, spiritual direction, and other practices, they discover fresh ways to listen for God's presence and pray together.

Many members begin each week with Mark's emailed prayers, thoughtful reflections that connect Scripture, the life of the congregation, and the needs of the world. During worship, the Prayers of the People invite us to lift our hearts together in intercession and thanksgiving. Some have also found the Labyrinth to be a meaningful way to pray—not with many words, but through a quiet, intentional walk that opens space to listen to God.

GREENVILLE AREA ECUMENICAL FOOD MISSION

The Greenville Area Ecumenical Food Mission (GAEFM) that operates out of our St. Paul building is solely reliant on community donations and volunteer workers. You can help by purchasing and donating items from the list below:

Canned fruits and vegetables
Cereal
Pancake mix and syrup
Saltine crackers
Toilet paper and personal care items
Pasta, rice, packaged potatoes or meal helpers
Canned beans (all varieties)
Canned tomatoes, pasta sauce
Soups (all varieties)
Boxed macaroni and cheese, Ramen noodles
Canned meats
Peanut butter and jelly



Monetary donations are always needed. Checks should be made to GAEFM. Gift cards to Meijer or Aldi for purchases made by volunteer shoppers are helpful, too.

Donations can be delivered to the church or brought directly to the pantry during distribution hours (Tuesday 10am to 12pm, Wednesday 5:30-7:00pm). Checks and cards should be delivered to the church office or mailed to: St. Paul Lutheran Church (attention GAEFM), 9844 SW Greenville Rd, Greenville, Mi 48838.

Please join us
Barrie's House Inc.
Ice Cream Social
Date: August 16th, 2026
Time: 1-3 p.m.
Place: Barrie's House



Please write a affirmation, blessing, or prayer on the blessing sheet on the table by the entrance for our students for the 2026-2027 school year by Sunday August 16th. The ministry will pass the blessing sheets in note books to be given on Sunday August 23rd



Spiritual Growth/Shalom Group

I Thessalonians 5:16-18. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of the Lord. This is my hope for you this month as you enjoy summer. Look for more exciting Shalom events in next few months

On Fridays during the month the Shalom Group (members from 7 different churches from around the state and nation) meet on zoom for a ½ (1:30-2:00pm) hour short meditation. One of the shalom group members leads the group in a reading of a bible verse, devotional, or a passage from a book. There is reflection, and some times discussion, depending on what the group needs for that day. The short meditation is open to all. Please join us.

Topic: Shalom short meditation

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9589368430?omn=88590889863>

Meeting ID: 958 936 8430 Passcode: W0r5h!p

Passcode is Capital W, number Zero, lower case r, number 5, lower case h, exclamation point !, lower case p

August 9th the Affirmation of Baptism class hosting Coffee hour

On August 9th the Coffee hour will be hosted by the students of the affirmation class as there affirmation of baptism project



Prayed for in July In worship

Bob Perdue, Carol Rasmussen, Dennis Dombkowski, Joanne Bryer, Larry Ross, Leroy Hansen, Lois Davis, Katharine Serviss, Mary Jean Mallo, Peter Hansen, Shirley Hansen, Shirley Moerdyke, Shirley Sly, Terri Clark, Steve Vanhooose, Karen Buchholz, Mary Ann Johnson, Denise (nee Johnson),

St. Paul Lutheran Church

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Church Staff

Pastor Nan Dehnke	616-754-6676, pastorstpaulandsettlement@earthlink.net
Mark Dombkowski,	616.754.6676, 989-330-0982, Luke15youth@gmail.com
Ministry Coordinator	familyministry@stpaulca.org
Office	616.754.6676 office@stpaulca.org

St. Paul Lutheran Church Office Hours:

Monday closed
Tuesday 10 am – 2 pm
Wednesday – closed
Thursday 10 am – 2 pm
Friday 10 – 2 pm

Council Reports
are due to the
Office on the 7th
of the month

**News letter
articles are due
on the 18th of
the month.**

So the newsletter is
available on the last
Sunday of the month.

To give to
St. Paul use
the
Tithe.ly giving
QR code



St. Paul Ministry Contacts

Church Council: John Chadwick
Affirmation of Baptism: Mark Dombkowski
Altar Flowers: Joyce Scott, Alicia Dombkowski
Altar Guild, Lisa Brown, Janet Wulf-Marvin
Building & Grounds/Property: (Lawn: Dale Morris)
(Building: Janet Wulf-Marvin, Lisa Brown)
Ecumenical Food Pantry: Nancy LaMere
Endowment Fund: Diane Christensen
Eucharistic Ministers: Mark Dombkowski
Growing in Grace: Mark Dombkowski
Labyrinth: Shalom
Luncheon Guild: Connie Teddy
Memorials: Carol Rasmussen, Lynn Cooper
Personnel Committee: John Chadwick
Prayer Chain: Lynn Cooper
Sharing the Joy: Amy Smith
Sound: Mark Dombkowski, Paul Richardson
Shalom Team: Shirley Moerdyk
Treasurer: Diane Christensen
Worship and Music: Heather Nielsen

Church Council

St. Paul: Diane Christensen, John Chadwick, Alicia Dombkowski, Shirley Hartstock, Ed Johnson, Robert Kamphuis, Sue McGee.

Events, meetings, and activity Dates & time are subject to change.

When the Greenville Public Schools are closed during the school year, St. Paul Lutheran Church is closed check with ministry leaders to see if the ministry you are a part of is happening when the schools are closed