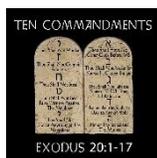


JANUARY 2026 St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church Connection

106 S. Maple St. PO Box 357 North Freedom, WI 53951

Message from the Pastor



The First Commandment

“You shall have no other gods before me.”
(Exodus 20:3)

This year, the newsletter devotions will be going through Luther's Small Catechism, starting with the Ten Commandments. God gave the commandments first of all to the Israelite nation under Moses. God had called this nation to be his own. The Lord wanted to make it clear to them what it meant for them to be his people, and what his will for them was.

The first commandment captures that clearly: “You shall have no other gods besides me.” All the nations around them, such as Egypt and Canaan, worshiped false gods. Egypt had a god of the sun, a god of the moon, a god of the sea, and so forth. The Canaanites worshiped idols like Baal and Ashtoreth that included fertility rites and even involved prostitutes. The Lord told the Israelites, “Don't have any of that. Worship me, the LORD, alone!”

The commandments also express God's moral law, his will for all people of all time. Martin Luther explained the first commandment in his small catechism: “*We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.*” A false god doesn't have to be Baal, or Allah, or Buddha. A false god could be our bank accounts, or a football game, or our family members, or ourselves, if we put our trust in money or place them ahead of God in our hearts.

This commandment shows us our sin, doesn't it? We may fear what others think rather than what God thinks, so we go along with the crowd in certain sins instead of following God's will. Or we set our heart's desires on the

things of this world, our homes, even our families, ahead of God. Even just momentarily putting our trust in our own reason ahead of God breaks the first commandment. Proverbs 3:5 tells us, “Trust in the Lord with *all* your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding” (EHV, emphasis mine).

Fellow sinners, let us continually repent, turn from our sins, and turn to our Lord for mercy. Thank the Lord, his Son Jesus came to obey this and every commandment perfectly for us. Having fulfilled the law, he then paid for our sins on the cross. “The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Thank God for his forgiveness! And what better way to thank him than by obeying the first commandment. Keep the Lord God as number one in your hearts. Fear him, love him, and trust in him ahead of your parents and kids, more than your bank accounts and your teachers, more than your life itself.

--Pastor Timothy Blauert

January Worship

Sunday, Jan. 4. 2nd Sunday of Christmas. 8:30 a.m. communion service. Theme: Our Savior is born to make the Father known.

Sunday, Jan. 11. 1st Sunday after Epiphany. 7:30 and 10 a.m. worship. Theme: Jesus appears as the Christ, the Anointed One.

Sunday, Jan. 18. 2nd Sunday after Epiphany. 7:30 and 10 a.m. communion services. Theme: Jesus appears as the sacrificial Lamb of God.

Sunday, Jan. 25. 3rd Sunday after Epiphany. 7:30 and 10 a.m. worship. Theme: Jesus appears as the Light shining in darkness.

Daily Devotions in January will finish the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke and start the book of Acts. Psalm 119 will be the Sunday devotions. Grow daily in the Word!

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ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING

Sunday, January 11th at 8:35 a.m.

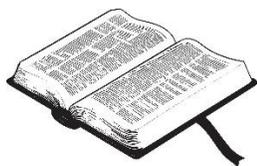
All members are encouraged to attend our annual meeting, between the 2 services on Jan. 11. We will have reports from 2025, approve of the budget for 2026, and elect church councilmen for a 3-year term. Jim Dohner is stepping down from his term. Dave Zimmerman has agreed to run for another term. Paul Fuller has been nominated for a term.



Sunday School

We thank the children for presenting the message of Jesus' birth at the children's service on Dec. 24! Sunday School is resuming on January 4 after the service during fellowship hour. Thank you to Lori Cook and Lynn Zimmerman for teaching.

BIBLE CLASS UPDATE



Bible Class will be resuming with a new topic on Sunday, January 18. Our topic is Elijah: A Prophet on Fire. Bible Class time is from 8:45 to 9:45 a.m. on Sundays when there isn't fellowship or a council/congregation meeting. All adults and teens are welcome to join us!

LADIES' AID

The Ladies' Aid's next meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 13th at 6:30 p.m. All women are invited to join us for a time of devotion, service and fellowship.

GAME NIGHT, Tuesday, Jan. 20th



We'll get together for our monthly game night on Tuesday, Jan. 20th at 6:30 p.m. Bring your favorite board or card game, a snack to share, and a friend!



CARDS

Mary Klemm is our Sunshine Lady for St. Paul's. If anyone is sick or needs a card of encouragement, please contact her.

ALTAR GUILD

The altar guild sign-up sheet is on the table in the fellowship hall. This is a great way to help with worship at St. Paul's. Please speak with Rose Vertein if you are interested and have questions. Thank you!



Altar Flowers

On the table in the fellowship hall, please sign up to bring altar flowers for a particular Sunday, in honor of a birthday or anniversary, in memory of a loved one, or just on your own. Please refer to the directions in the fellowship hall for caring for altar flowers.

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106 S. Maple St. PO Box 357 North Freedom, WI 53951

ST. PAUL'S "INFORMATION" PAGE

Pastor: Rev. Timothy Blauert

Church secretary: Elaine Shimniok

Contact us: Church office: 608-522-4493

Pastor's cell phone: 507-279-8560

Email: stpaulsnf@hotmail.com or

tkblauert@outlook.com

Website address: www.stpaulslutheran-nf.org

Worship times: Sundays 7:30 and 10 a.m.

First Sunday, 8:30 a.m.

Communion, 1st & 3rd Sundays

Sunday School: Sundays at 8:35 a.m., or after the service on the first Sunday of the month.

Adult Bible study: Sundays at 8:45 a.m.

Church Council

President: Jim Dohner

Vice-president: Dave Zimmerman

Secretary: John Shimniok

Treasurer: Mark Shimniok

Financial secretary: Jeremy Zimmerman

Head usher: Bill Page

Ladies' Aid

President: Elaine Shimniok

Secretary: Kristine Blauert

Treasurer: Elaine Shimniok

Sunshine Lady: Mary Klemm

LWMS Reporter: Linda Ennis

Church organist

Susan Grossenbacher

Church Custodian Vonnie Leifer

**Please remember our shut-in members with
your prayers and visits**

Ellie Schultz

Please let Pastor know if you are sick, in the hospital, or are having any other difficulties. He'll be glad to visit and have a devotion and pray with you, as well as offer communion. His contact information is on the left column of this page.



Happy Anniversary!

Phil and Mary Klemm – January 14, 2008



Happy Birthday to:

Lynn Zimmerman – January 1

Paul Fuller – January 4

Jacob Shimniok – January 5

Jim Ahrensmeyer – January 6

Mary Klemm – January 11

Ben Henke – January 17

Chad Zimmerman – January 26

Callie Hammermeister – January 26

Angela Filip – January 29

Our Offerings & Service to the Lord

Nov. 30, 7:30 am Attend.: 13; Offering: \$330

10 am Attend.: 8; Offering: \$445

Dec. 7, 8:30 am Attend.: 49; Offering: \$2,435

Dec. 14, 7:30 am Attend.: 32; Offering: \$1,405

10 am Attend.: 16; Offering: \$495

Dec. 21, 7:30 am Attend.: 34 ; Offering: \$805

10 am Attend.: 19; Offering: \$1,090

Dec. 24 (C.Eve) 3:30 pm Att.: 49; Offer.: \$6,780

6 pm Attend.: 56; Offering: \$5,845

Dec. 25 (C.Day) 8:30 am Att.: 15; Offer.: \$755

Average attendance: 8:30 am (combined): 49; 7:30 am: 26; 10 am: 14. Christmas average attendance: 40.