

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
January 28, 2018



# St. Paul Lutheran Church 2017 Report



# St. Paul Lutheran Church

## Connecting People to Jesus

We are a congregation of the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. We were formed in 1952 as the Lakeland Mission. 28 people attended the first service that was led by Pastor Claus of Milford and Paster Gerken of Walled Lake. The people gathered to hear the promise of God that we are children of God through the work of Jesus. On November 9, 1952 our congregation began to connect people in our community to Jesus. The Spirit of God worked among those people to form them into a community that cared for each other and for their neighbor.

Today we continue to connect people to Jesus. We seek opportunities to serve our neighbor. God provides us with blessed opportunities to share His love with our neighbors, family members, friends, and co-workers.

In this review and forecast you will see the following:

1. A review of our core ministries
2. A look at our ability to meet our desired outcomes in 2017
3. A look ahead to 2018

## **Worship**

We offer worship services at St. Paul Lutheran Church to deliver the gracious gifts of God. Every Sunday we offer the Lord's Supper at the 8:30am and the 11am Divine Services. Our services follow the liturgy of the Lutheran Service Book. The 8:30am service uses hymns and the organ. The 11am service uses hymns, songs, and the praise band. In both services we trust the Spirit of God is at work in the Word of God to deliver to us the saving good news of Jesus Christ. During the summer we offer an alternative worship time on Monday evenings for people who are unable to be present on Sunday morning.

Besides our weekly gathering around the Word of God and the Sacraments, we also celebrate festivals of the church on their appointed dates. Easter and Christmas are highlights of our worship life as we celebrate the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In preparation for these festivals we offer midweek services during Lent and Advent. This year Christmas Eve landed on a Sunday, and we experienced higher than expected attendance in the morning when we celebrated the 4th Sunday of Advent.

All of our services are supported by wonderful volunteers and caring people that seek to make our time together filled with welcome and grace. The Festival Choir and Handbells support our worship at Easter and Christmas time. The Kantorei continues to provide occasional musical leadership to the 8:30am service. The praise band members use their gifts to support our worship at the 11am service. The confirmation students serve as acolytes. In 2017, Bob Vedder handed off to Mike Hausch the work to ensure that every Sunday we have volunteers to serve as lectors, ushers, greeters, communion assistants, and audio/visual support. The Altar Guild serves every week to ensure our sanctuary is prepared to celebrate the Divine Service.

### **Average Sunday Worship Attendance**

2015 - 223 (Monday night avg 23)

2016 - 224 (Monday night avg 17)

2017 - 232 (Monday night avg 22)

Recently we are experiencing growth especially in the 8:30am service time. The Monday night attendance was down in 2016, but in 2017 returned back to previously experienced levels.

- We live in a community where it is difficult for young people to buy their first home. There are several new subdivision developments under construction in our area, and hopefully these new homes provide opportunities for people to move into our community.

- The youth sports culture in our area schedules events on Sunday mornings with no respect for the sacred opportunity we have been given to gather in worship. Families are encouraged to speak directly to coaches and league organizers about not scheduling practices and games on Sunday mornings.
- Regular worship attendance nationally is being redefined as once or twice a month instead of every Sunday. What does this trend mean for how we communicate through before-service-announcements and the weekly bulletin?
- We need to develop an ongoing method to follow up with people who slowly drift away from regular worship attendance. In our congregation we rely on people in the pew to notice when their neighbor is missing, and we need to become more purposeful in identifying people who change their patterns in attendance.

## **Spiritual Oversight**

The pastoral care ministry at St. Paul Lutheran Church is coordinated by Pastor Gaertner. He preaches from God's Word the conviction of our sins and promise of salvation in Christ Jesus. He visits people who are sick and homebound, and he brings to them the care of God's Word and the comfort of the Lord's Supper. Adult instruction classes in 2017 were taught on a one-to-one basis between the participants and the pastor.

It is important that the ministry of spiritual care is not isolated to the office of the pastor but is supported by the lay people in the congregation. Pastor Gaertner was supported in ministry to the sick by volunteers that would also visit people to pray and share the comfort of God's Word. In 2018 it will be possible that a team of spiritual care givers gets organized to support the care of souls in our community. If you are interested in serving on a team of volunteers that regularly visits home bound and convalescing individuals share this news with Pastor Gaertner.

We began 2017 with 964 baptized members and 573 communicant members. We finished the year with 959 baptized members and 568 communicant members. There remains an unreconciled difference in numbers between our running totals that have been carried across the last few years and the actual number of people that we have recorded as members in our church management software. In 2018 there will be a significant change in our membership numbers so that they accurately represent people who participate in the ministry of St. Paul Lutheran Church in our community.

## Christian Education

Our Christian Education ministry provides opportunities for people of all ages to connect to Jesus and supports them in their life-saving relationship with Him. Mike Hausch, our Director of Christian Education, seeks to equip the members of our congregation to do the work of this ministry. The congregation hired Miriam Yakimow to be our Director of Family Ministry and to bring renewed focus to our ministry to families with children ages birth - grade 6.

Vacation Bible School is a successful annual event at St. Paul that serves to shape the identity of this congregation in the wider community. During one week in July our congregation brings together volunteers and children to hear the good news that we are children of God who are loved and redeemed by Jesus. Mary Brandau mentored Ashleigh Mowers to take on more leadership with VBS.

Adult Bible study opportunities at St. Paul provide people the time to strengthen their connections with their Lord and Savior and also strengthen their connections within the body of Christ. We offer several study opportunities but we look to increase the number of people involved and diversify the time and type. This year we repeated our fall small group preaching and teaching focus with the book *Loved and Sent*. We did not experience any new small groups and so need to examine how we develop and nurture small group ministry at St. Paul.

Sunday School can be a vital tool for connecting people to Jesus. We have a caring group of teachers. The Sunday school takes place 9:45am-10:45am. Children are encouraged to invite their friends to join them during the Education Hour. Our Sunday School has adopted a new to us curriculum called "Spark." The lessons are three weeks long and include stations that involve many disciplines of learning. Parents are encouraged to attend an Adult Bible study while their children are in Sunday school. This year we added a purposeful high school class taught by Kathy Kless.



Youth confirmation at St. Paul remains a valuable reentry tool for families to get connected to Jesus at St. Paul Lutheran Church. This spring Mike Hausch and Pastor Gaertner will evaluate how this program fulfilled our desired outcome of developing followers of Jesus.

Averages in 2017 for participants in different Sunday morning Christian Education opportunities:

- 6 people attending Fresh Brew Bible Study at 7:30am on Sunday morning.
- 37 people in Education Hour

- 5 people at Kid's Connection that takes place during the 11am service for children in preschool through 2nd grade

Mike Hausch's reflections on 2017 and anticipations for 2018

Blessings in the rearview mirror...a great partnership with Kroger and Gleaners that helped us feed the hungry in our community, several visits to Concordia University, Ann Arbor to demonstrate a Lutheran university as an option for post high school education, confirmands confessed, responded to a need of expectant mothers served by Family of God in Detroit and provided diaper bags as a gift, high schoolers heard of our Mighty Fortress on Mackinac Island, partnered with Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Detroit as a new Camp Restore site building a fence for family to protect them from stray dogs, on a weekly basis shared the love of Jesus and built a community of faith with Middle School and High School students.

Looking out the windshield...sharing the love of Jesus with those who come searching: children, students, singles, parents and grandparents, partnering with Appalachia Habitat for Humanity and First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Tennessee to provide affordable housing in Scott and Robbins Counties in Tennessee, again connecting with Camp Restore: Detroit to assist our neighbor in need, finding helpful ways to connect with our new neighbors in our community as new homes are built in Hamburg and Green Oak Townships, looking and responding for new ways to serve our neighbor and demonstrating the love of Jesus in ways that are helpful.

## **Mercy**

The Holy Spirit was at work in our congregation as we witnessed remarkable works of mercy accomplished in our community through our compassionate care events. We are connecting people to opportunities to serve their neighbor.

We do face some challenges including how to connect the resources we possess with the people in need. Our food pantry has this year sought to increase opportunities for people to receive help by offering open shop days two times a month. These open shop days do not require appointments through Love INC.

Mike Hausch is preparing two groups to go on service trips this summer. One trip to Camp Restore in Detroit. The second trip will be to Appalachia Habitat for Humanity.

- Easter Baskets
- Lutheran World Relief - quilts
- Red Cross Blood Drives
- Daisy's Food Pantry

- Gas to Go
- Lunch Bunch - funded in 2017
- Lutheran for Life Baby Bottle Boomerang
- Christmas Food Baskets and Gifts
- Angel Tree Gifts
- Greeting Cards for people on our prayer card
- Love Knots, a knitting ministry
- Compassion International Child Sponsor Program
- Needy 100 Fund - funds used to support members of our congregation in crisis
- Community Food Garden
- Food Gatherers Food Garden
- Service trip to Houston in support of relief efforts following Hurricane Harvey
- Camp Restore: Detroit
- Family of God Mission

## **Family Ministry**

We experience the fruits of our participation with the Family Friendly Partners Network that has trained and equipped us in family ministry education so that within the church and community marriages are stronger, homes are healthier, and families are better able to impress the hearts of their kids with God's love and grace.

We hired Miriam Yakimow in August to serve part-time as our Director of Family Ministry. She is charged to work especially with families that have children ages birth - grade 6. She has brought a renewed emphasis to our Sunday school and highlighting family milestones.

In family ministry, the goals for 2018 are to provide a systemic approach for families, using milestones, to reflect on the promises made at Baptism and to encourage/promote faith conversations in the home. In addition, to provide cross+generational opportunities and events for faith conversations. We desire to encourage generations to share faith stories and experiences. Building on the goal to encourage faith conversations in the home. In 2018 there will be the development of quarterly family connect classes. These classes will explore the biblical model for faith formation and share resources to equip families to be the center for faith development. We want to encourage the vocation of parents as teachers of the faith.

Reflecting on her first months at St. Paul Miriam shared, "It is a joy to be working in a congregation with a pastor, staff, and members who embrace, encourage, and practice the importance of sharing one's faith in the home. The parents and adults who have embraced and encouraged our faith milestones have been a delight, and I have enjoyed seeing what has been discussed in our classes, practiced at home. I am blessed by the enthusiastic Sunday school teachers and support staff, willing to engage the children of St. Paul with the love of Christ and the knowledge of what God has done for us in the Biblical story."

Our youth ministry offers monthly experiences for our 4th - 6th graders, middle school students, and high school students. Our goal for our youth ministry is for opportunities for youth to connect with Jesus, with each other, and to opportunities to serve.

## **Outreach**

The big events that support our outreach into the community include the Easter Egg Hunt, Fall Festival, VBS, and Advent by Candlelight. We have the opportunity to reach out to the lost in our community through events that encourage our members to invite people to St. Paul. As our members engage with their neighbors we need to provide side-door events that are welcoming to invite people to enjoy. Church members are also involved in telling others about Jesus Christ and inviting people to receive the gracious gifts of God's grace at our worship services. Our outreach to the community is also supported through our compassionate care ministries. When we share resources with people in need, we also invite them to come to St. Paul Lutheran Church and learn more about the love of Jesus. Simple acts of meeting needs and serving the community in different ways connect people to the love of Jesus. In 2018 we will offer modules that will equip people to have confidence that Everyone is His Witness.

Our greatest challenge facing our outreach into the community is helping church members understand they can share their stories of faith as a part of their normal relationships at work, home, school, and neighborhood. We do not need to wait for special events to invite people to know the love of Jesus.

We encourage people in our congregation to pray for and support world missions through specifically highlighting the work of the Odemba, Sharp and Esala families.

Advent by Candlelight participants enjoyed skits acted out by members of our own congregation. Thank you Carol and Alice for your leadership.

Mike Hausch has taken on the responsibility of efforts to create a positive first impression on Sunday morning. He also has been asked to seek ways to help people move from identifying as spectators at St. Paul to becoming participants in the ministry. If you are interested in helping to serve as a volunteer on Sunday morning or to help people find welcome at St. Paul please talk to Mike.

## **Fellowship**

The people of St. Paul Lutheran Church enjoy events that allow them to connect with their brothers and sisters in Christ. In 2017 our fellowship events focused on bridging generations.

- Coffee Hour on Sunday morning
- Ascension Day Barbecue
- Advent by Candlelight
- Simple Suppers during Lent and Advent
- Men's Breakfast and Bible Study on Saturday mornings
- Weekly Bible studies at the church building or in homes
- OldTimers
- Harvest Dinner
- Fall Festival

If you are interested in leading an event that gathers us together for fellowship, then please talk to Pastor Gaertner.

## Facility and Finances

Brief Report on 2017 Finances	Budget	Actual
General Fund Receipts (excluding 2% transfer to repair and replacement fund)	\$427,160.00	\$463,430.00
General Fund Expenses	\$426,219.00	\$410,961.09
General Fund Income Gain (loss)	\$941.00	\$52,468.91
Non-recurring capital expenses not budgeted		-\$19,486.94
General Fund Income Gain (loss) for 2017		\$32,981.97

Balance Sheet	Dec. 31, 2016	Dec. 31, 2017
General Fund Checking	\$68,952.82	\$102,023.84
General Fund Savings	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Restricted Special Funds	\$104,122.75	\$92,281.94
Total Cash Balance	\$223,075.57	\$244,305.78
<b>Loan Balances</b>		
Mortgage	\$79,986.00	\$82,780.00
Construction Line of Credit	\$27,801.00	\$0.00

Our finances in 2017 demonstrated a commitment by the people of our congregation to fund the mission that God has given us to accomplish. The offerings in support of the gospel good news mission of connecting people to Jesus demonstrates confidence in the blessings of God and His call for us to be His people in our community and around the world.

Our facilities continued to experience significant upgrades this year.

## **Highs**

- New boiler installed
- Exterior and interior painted with reduced costs through CEF Grants
- Drain tile installed on the south side of the basement to reduce water issues
- New door and concrete pad installed at east fellowship hall doors
- Old Timers meeting weekly to maintain and improve our facilities

## **Lows**

- Activity Center (known by some as the Fisher House) showing its age
- Likely that the HVAC in the sanctuary will need to be replaced in 2018
- Continuing water problems on the east side of the basement

## **A look ahead to 2018**

God works through the Word of God at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Our heavenly Father creates us to be His people in this place as the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to call, gather, and enlighten us. All this happens through God's Word at work in our life-changing relationships with God, with each other, and with our neighbors. At St. Paul we are connecting people to Jesus, to each other, and opportunities to serve our neighbor.

We encourage you to examine your walk with Jesus and prayerfully consider which area you need to most grow in this year. Then, we ask that you and your family to make a commitment to let St. Paul help you hit these targets for your spiritual life.

## **Targets for 2018**

### **Connecting to Jesus: 3 Bible Studies**

**St. Paul families** commit to attend Bible study 3 times/month, averaging 75% attendance over the next year.

**The congregation** must provide high-quality Bible classes for the whole family. This requires us to recruit, train, and equip leaders with the tools necessary to create a place where God works through the Word of God, where life-change occurs.

### **Connecting to Each Other: 3 Family Nights**

**St. Paul families** commit to spend at least 15 minutes, 3 times/week (at dinner, watching a movie, reading a book, etc.) talking about the mission they trust God is calling them to join through devotion, discussion, and prayer.

**The congregation** must provide devotional materials, Bible studies, and prayer support for families. We will provide opportunities and encourage families to share stories of their discussions and prayers.

### **Connecting to the Community: 3 Acts of Service**

**St. Paul families** commit to participate in at least 3 acts of service in 2018, including one in their neighborhood, in their community, and for the world.

**The congregation** will provide instructions for neighborhood action teams, at least 6 project opportunities for the community, and at least 2 servant trips and several in-gathering of items to be distributed around the world.

### **Sharing God's Love: 3 Invitations**

**St. Paul families** will brainstorm 3 people/families whom they feel God is calling them to pray for and invite to a fellowship event, worship service, or connection activity throughout the year.

**The congregation** will provide at least 4 outreach events for members to invite others. We will encourage families to share success stories and provide opportunities for accountability. Guests will be invited to return through a personal connection by members.

### **New Ideas?**

We operate at St. Paul Lutheran Church on an action team model. We have a church council that meets to make sure our congregation stays on target and that are teams have the resources they need to do that which God has called them to do in our congregation and community. We do not have standing committees that meet to simply meet. We have teams that form to be active in our ministry. Some teams have long term goals and other teams meet for a one-time project and then disperse. If you have any idea for how the people in our community can be a part of God's kingdom building work, then first consider if it will help connect people to Jesus, to each other, or to opportunities to serve our neighbor. If your idea fits into that framework then our church council wants to equip you to accomplish your goal. We work together at St. Paul with our many different gifts to be a part of how God's good news of Jesus changes lives.