

THE MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2025

Isaiah's Audacious Hope

Dear Friends of St. Paul's,

Advent is a season of wonder and hopeful curiosity, when darkness is settling over the earth and the songs of the church look ahead to the coming peace of God. This year, all of our Old Testament readings in Advent come from the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah describes in beautiful poetic verse the qualities of the kingdom of God. Words you may recognize, like "they will beat their swords into plowshares" and "the wolf shall lie down with the lamb" and "waters shall break forth in the desert" all come from Isaiah passages we will read in Advent. They are some of the most beautiful and hopeful prophetic verse in the scriptures.

There's also something unique about these passages—they all come from what is called "First Isaiah." This is a portion of the book that is composed prior to the conquering of Israel by Assyria. Isaiah warns his people that their disregard of the covenant, their disregard for the poor, and their refusal to follow God's ways will result in catastrophe. Yet, while he is warning about this—God is sowing a counter-narrative of promise alongside it. Despite this, the prophet declares that God is imagining a future where the tools of war become implements of agriculture, and all creation is at peace with itself, and no one dies an early death. After the destruction, a just ruler will arise from the stump of the people, and God's ways will be known throughout the whole earth.

It strikes me that these Advent readings about hope all come from *before* the people's great catastrophe occurred. First Isaiah stands at the precipice of the complete collapse of his culture. And yet, even amidst

this frightening future, God is promising an absurd and audacious hope—that this destruction will not last, because God is more powerful than anything these empires can wield. This hope, through the words of the prophet Isaiah, survived much longer than the catastrophe—much longer than Babylon and Assyria combined.

It makes me wonder what it takes to trust in *that* kind of hope—the hope that sees through the catastrophe and through the other side. This Advent we will be exploring that question—what does it mean to be filled with God's hope, even in the darkest of days? I hope you will join us for worship, where we can root ourselves in that hope for the year to come.

Peace,
Maggie

St. Paul's Episcopal
1710 EAST SUPERIOR STREET, DULUTH

Festival of Lessons & Carols:
Sunday, Dec. 14, 6 pm

Christmas Eve Services:
Wednesday, Dec. 24, 4 pm
Family Service with
No-Rehearsal Pick Up Pageant
Every Child May Participate

December 24, 10 pm
Choral Candlelight Service

Christmas Day Service:
Thursday, December 25
Christmas Day Eucharist, 10 am



Building Our Legacy Campaign and Annual Giving Campaign Updates



Capital Campaign Gifts: As of Tuesday, November 25, 2025, we have received **106** gifts with commitments of **\$1,488,000.00** toward the Building Our Legacy Campaign! Please continue to submit intent cards so that we can reach our challenge goal of \$2 million.

Annual Giving Pledges: We have received **97** pledges with commitments of **\$289,882.00** for our Annual Giving Campaign which supports the Operating Budget. Please continue to submit intent cards so that we may reach our \$400,000 goal.

Thank you, everyone, for your incredible generosity!!

If you have any questions or would like to submit your pledge via email, contact Christine Melone at bookkeeper@stpaulsduluth.org.

New 2025 Christmas Memorials

Every year the altar guild is happily tasked with decorating St. Paul's for the Christmas season. We happily adorn our beautiful church with fresh balsam wreaths, garland, cheerful poinsettias, candles, and sparkling lights for everyone to appreciate. Monetary contributions from people like you, given in honor or gratitude for someone important in your life, make this possible.



If you would like to begin a new Christmas memorial by donating towards the holiday decorations in remembrance of your loved one(s) this year, please submit your request to the Altar Guild **on or before Monday, December 8**. We will acknowledge your memorial by including their name(s) in the 2025 Christmas services bulletins. Contributions of any amount are welcome; \$25 is suggested as a minimum. All memorials are continued year to year unless you indicate otherwise.

Please contact me if you would like to begin a new memorial or have any questions.

Merry Christmas,
Carrie Miller,
Altar Flowers Coordinator carmil4@msn.com

St. Paul's Loves Baptisms!



It was a delightful All Saints Day on November 2, 2025. We lovingly remembered the names of our faithful departed friends and family, we collected over 300 pounds of food and over \$1200 for the Chum Food Shelf, AND we baptized two young children at the 10 am service: Marlowe A. Lanz, daughter of Troy & Mackenzie (Allison) Lanz, and Samuel B. Sederberg, son of Derek & Haley Sederberg.

If you or someone in your family would like to be baptized, please contact the Parish Office. We are planning another baptismal day on Sunday, January 11, 2026, on the First Sunday after the Epiphany: The Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lay Eucharistic Visitor Program



In the name of this congregation, I send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that _____ to whom you go, may share with us in the communion of Christ's body and blood.

We who are many are one Body because we share one bread, one cup.

We say this along with the post communion prayer each Sunday. What does it mean? It means that over twenty of our members are unable to make it to Church. These are our beloved friends who are now partially or completely homebound. How do they get communion? They get communion when we bring it to them.

This is an invitation to join us as a Lay Eucharistic Visitor (LEV) to bring communion to them. Attend a simple soup supper and LEV training session on **Wednesday, December 10, 5:30-6:30 pm**. We will make sure that choir members will be able to attend their rehearsal on time.

Contact the Rev. Dr. Barb Elliott 218-340-0477 or Angie Shambour 218-310-1405 with your questions—and let them know that you plan to attend on 12/10/25.

Wednesday Forums in the Fall Supper at 6 | Forum at 6:30 pm

Please join us at 5:15 pm for Wednesday Eucharist

Our Faithful Ancestors: Saints For Our Times

1st & 3rd Wednesdays | Service Projects Hosted by Sophie Spehar on the 5th Wednesday
Wednesday Forums in the Fall of 2025 will focus on saints in the Episcopal Church. In the Episcopal Church, we honor special holy people who served God and others in remarkable ways. We celebrate some of the popular traditional saints, such as Francis, Hildegard, and Ignatius. However, we have also added important faith leaders in modern times to our calendar of observances, like Pauli Murray, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Enmegahbowh. This year our Wednesday forums will feature saints that we don't always celebrate on Sundays, while exploring how their example can lead us for our current times. If you have a favorite quirky or unsung saint and would like to participate, please reach out to Maggie at rector@stpaulsduluth.org

December 3: St. Nicholas of Myra

St. Nicholas of Myra is a beloved saint who cared for children. His legendary works to help children in his community became the foundation of the Santa Claus story.

This program will be geared towards an intergenerational audience with activities for both children and adults.



December 17: St. Lucy

St. Lucy is another beloved saint of Advent and the preparation for Christmas. We will learn about what we actually know about her, Advent traditions that developed around her, and why she matters to us today.

Do you have family traditions associated with St. Lucy's day? Please reach out to Maggie, because we would love to have you participate in planning this gathering.



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Sign UP TO HELP serve a WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEAL!
USE THIS LINK: <https://stpaulsduluth.org/sign-up/>

From Deacon Pat

In a lonely, fractured culture, Jesus offers a new kind of family.

Despite the unprecedented connectivity of the modern era, genuine community is vanishing. Isolation, transience, and superficiality can sabotage our formation into people of mature love. But through Jesus, we enter a new kind of family that offers intimacy, joy, healing, and commitment.

—John Mark Comer

Have you ever noticed how often we refer to the folks of our church as our “St. Paul’s family”? For the past month we’ve been hearing stories from members on Sunday mornings as each shared what this family has meant to them. In our faith community we are here as chosen family. Transformation happens in community. Elders and youngers and everyone in between gain a sense of family connection through participation in community and service. Opportunities include coffee hour and small group gatherings, Altar Guild and Outreach, and the many various volunteers, teams and committees that together form the structure of our family tree. Through service in community we see to the details that form the foundation that lets us come together in worship, in celebration, in formation, and in shared service. We are here for each other, and together we also reach out to serve God in our city. Together we can develop intimacy, joy, healing, and commitment.

Transformation happens in community. We are nourished together as we gather for prayer, worship, reflection, and communion. We are nourished together as we share the gospel while preparing a meal on Wednesday nights, or Saturday morning preparing the altar for worship, or working side by side at Damiano Center or Laundry Love, or meeting as a finance committee or vestry to see to the needs of the church, or joining our voices in choir, or sharing Jesus with our youngsters in formation. Last year I was stitching on the Chum quilt on the stage during a finance committee meeting, and I was struck by the camaraderie and laughter I heard as they saw to the budget. The friendships birthed

around the quilt frame are amazing. The people that gather for Practicing the Way are among my most treasured relationships birthed at St. Paul’s as we journey together following Jesus.

Are you feeling lonely and disconnected, and longing for hopefulness? At St. Paul’s we invite



you to join a new kind of family in Jesus. It doesn’t just happen, but through intentionality, commitment, and sacrifice our faith family continues to grow. We aren’t perfect. Like every family we struggle together and experience conflict, but through our commitment to each other and to God we work through the difficult bits as we strive together to love. What a gift it is to have people who love us enough to help us become more like Jesus! Like the action of waves on stone, we smooth each other’s rough edges as we become Beloved Community. Working through conflict in community with friendly antagonists, those who can confront us from a place of love, can transform us as individuals to become people of mature love and more like Jesus.

We are each of us being formed – unintentionally when we consume all the world offers us through unprecedented connectivity, or intentionally when we choose and filter what we consume to form us into a more loving person. We can experience the peace Jesus promised us. Becoming more like Jesus is how we learn to do as Jesus did, and how we partner with God to co-create the Kingdom of God here, in this time and place. Prayer and practice together as our St. Paul’s family can make miracles happen! Remember the women who founded St. Luke’s Hospital, and the community transformation that came with our last capital campaign. Remember, trust, pray, and practice as we grow as followers of Jesus and members of this beautiful family of St. Paul’s.

The Rev. Deacon Patricia Benson

Office: 218-438-5501

Cell: 218-206-5349

Deadline to submit items for the January issue of *The Messenger* is
8:00 am, Thursday, December 19, 2025.

Please email items to:

office@stpaulsduluth.org

Be a Light in the Storm

Please join Deacon Pat and faith communities from Duluth for the People's Convention at the Minneapolis Convention Center on Saturday, December 13. We will share our values for just and compassionate policy in this faith-based resistance to the rise of an authoritarian regime. The People's Convention is our first step together as we proclaim our shared values alongside leaders representing Muslim and Jewish congregations. This event is leading us on the Palm Sunday Path (below). We are hoping to fill a bus! Bishop Craig Loya has called this the most important work we can be doing at this time, and has invited us to participate.

Saturday December 13, ISAIAH People's Convention (For MN Clergy and Leaders)

Our People's Convention will be a gathering of 5000 people across our organization from 12 pm - 6 pm at the Minneapolis Convention Center. This will be a pivotal moment for Minnesota clergy and teams of lay leaders to launch the next phase of the Palm Sunday path, as well as the statewide agenda we will be adopting and working to achieve.

Registration: bit.ly/ISAIAH2025

Palm Sunday Path (There will be a local gathering in Duluth)

As Christians, we stand for healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and welcoming the stranger. We stand for telling the truth and honoring the dignity and worth of every child of God. As we live through a period of rapidly consolidating authoritarian power in our country, the dominating politics of hate, fear, greed, and division, are violating our values and tearing our country and democracy apart. We are living in an emergency, and we need to decide that now is our time to act in a new way. Now is our March on Washington moment. Now is our Confessing Church moment.

In response, a broad coalition of clergy, congregations, denominational leaders, and faith based organizations are coming together launching a path to mass actions for Christians across the country.

Step 1: Palm Sunday afternoon, March 29, 2026

Jesus entered into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passover, on a donkey, a symbol of a just, humble leader that honors the dignity and needs of the children of God, one that heals the sick, feeds the hungry, honors and welcomes the stranger. Historians tell us Roman authorities entered Jerusalem at the same time to show the power of the Roman empire and to control this freedom festival. Jesus provoked and drew a contrast. We will, too.

We will march, proclaiming God's values in contrast to the dominant politics of hate, greed, and injustice. We will be Christ's body now.

Our goal is tens of thousands of Christians marching in St. Paul, other regional centers, and hundreds of thousands more in state Capitols and cities across the country.

Step 2: Sustained Action on Medicaid Cuts, SNAP Benefit Cuts, and Immigration

The first thing Jesus did after entering Jerusalem was to overturn tables in the Temple, taking disruptive action provoking his fellow worshippers to stand publicly for the values of their faith and against the greed and injustice of the empire. **We stand for healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and welcoming the stranger.** We will unleash consistent strategic actions across the country through April, May, and June, to fight for our healthcare, the food on our tables, and our rights, worth, and dignity.

Step 3: July 4 Action

These actions will lead to a mass action in Washington D.C on July 4th, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence from a king. We will protect the sick, the hungry, and our neighbors. We will protect our freedom of speech and our ability to proclaim the gospel. We will tell our nation that what is happening in our country is wrong, and there is another way.

*The Rev. Deacon Patricia Benson
Office: 218-438-5501
Cell: 218-206-5349*

Lost Treasures from the Archives

From the New York Herald, December 24, 1893

HISTORY OF A CHRISTMAS POEM.

The "Visit from St. Nicholas"
Written as a Christmas Gift
to the Author's Daughters.

ITS PUBLICATION UNEXPECTED.

Reproduction of an Autograph Copy of
the Poem Prepared for the
New York Historical Society.

THE POET'S OTHER WRITINGS.

Probably no ballad written by an American is so widely known or has been so often reprinted as the "Visit from St. Nicholas." Its author, Clement C. Moore, was born in New York July 15, 1781, his father, Rev. Benjamin Moore, being the bishop of the diocese. ...

In 1862 Dr. George H. Moore, of the New York Historical Society, resolved to obtain if possible from its modest author an autograph copy of his famous poem, and he success my be learned from the following letter:—

"New York, March 15, 1862. Dear Sir — I have the pleasure to inform you that Dr. Clement C. Moore has been so kind as to comply with my request (made at your suggestion) to furnish for the archives of our society an autograph copy of his justly celebrated 'Visit from St. Nicholas.' I now enclose it to you. I hardly need call your attention to the distinctness and beauty of his handwriting, very remarkable considering his advanced age (he completed his eighty-second year in July last" and his much impaired eyesight.

"These lines were composed for his two daughters as a Christmas present about forty years ago, and they were copied by a relative of Dr. Moore in her album, from which a copy was made by a friend of hers from Troy, and much to the surprise of the author, were published (for the first time) in a newspaper of that city."

End-of-Year Giving

Please help us carry out your wishes. If you will note in the memo section of your check the fund to which your donation should be credited, the counters will be able to determine where your gift should go. Unless otherwise noted, pledge payments will first be applied to 2025 until paid in full and then to 2026.

If you want your gifts included on your 2025 year-end statement, please submit them to the Parish Office by 9:00 am Tuesday, December 30, 2025, or place them in the offering plate on Sunday, December 28. To the right is a chart that outlines the IRS guidelines we need to follow to determine the tax year credited for your contribution.

If you are making an electronic contribution, please complete transactions by December 24, 2025 to have them included in 2025 Contributions Received. Electronic transactions do not post on the weekends.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email.

Thank you,

Christine bookkeeper@stpaulsduluth.org

TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION	REPORT FOR 2025	REPORT FOR 2026
Checks written in December 2025 and deposited in church offering in January 2026		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in January 2026 but "backdated" to December 2025		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in December 2025, but "postdated" to January 2026		X
Checks written in December 2025 and deposited in the mail and postmarked in December 2025, but not received by the church until January 2026	X	
Checks written in December 2025 and deposited in the mail in December 2025, but not postmarked until January 2026 and not received by the church until January 2026		X

From Your Bookkeeper

Dear Parishioners,

Your year-to-date Giving Statements were emailed to you on November 3, 2025. Please check through your inbox and spam folders carefully to locate your statement.

Special Note: When making your contribution to the Capital Campaign or Annual Pledge, please note on the memo line of your check which of those the contribution is to be given toward.

October 2025 financials were presented to the Finance Committee and Vestry at their November meetings. Below is a summary of the October **General Operating Fund** results.



MONTHLY FIGURES: October	This Month	Year-to-Date
Total Pledges collected	\$24,630.48	\$317,025.89
Total non-pledged collection	\$4,891.32	\$56,246.87
Investment support	\$7,281.15	\$77,109.23
Total Income	\$36,8022.95	\$450,381.99
Total Expenses	\$52,193.31	\$488,785.07
Amount over/(short)	(\$15,390.36)	(\$38,403.08)

*The pledge collection amount for October was \$7,836.00 under the budgeted amount.

*Expenses were \$7877.00 over budget for the month of October, and \$5,033.00 under budgeted levels year-to-date.

*Our bottom line, income over expenses, for October, was a deficit of \$15,390.36

*Year-to-date we have a deficit of \$38,403.08.

If you have any questions, please call my office or email me at bookkeeper@stpaulsduluth.org.

Christine Melone, Bookkeeper

Greening St. Paul's Church



Sunday, December 14 – After the 10:00 am service

The Altar Guild invites everyone to help decorate the church for Christmas. Fresh evergreen wreaths and garland will be at the Superior Street entrances waiting to be unpacked and displayed. We need help attaching bows to wreaths and hanging wreaths and garlands around the church. Other tasks include hanging the star, adding lights to the garland, and more.

After a quick snack in the parish hall, please come to the Superior Street entrance of the church at 11:30 am if you are able to help.

Come enjoy the fellowship and festive atmosphere of a wonderful St. Paul's tradition.

From Your Vestry



It has been a memorable fall, with more activity happening than I will be able to contain in this article. The Capital Campaign has been successful in two very important ways, both foretelling a bright future for St. Paul's. Maggie's announcement last Sunday that we had reached just under \$1.4 million since Commitment Sunday (November 9) was astounding! We have

already reached the first of our three goals and are well on the way towards goal #2. This robust response will allow us to fix and upgrade items on the list of critical needs for this sacred property, and have a safer and stronger building for many years into the future. The even more impressive way we are seeing a stronger future for St. Paul's is, in short, YOU. The number of parishioners who stepped up to volunteer for the Capital Campaign is mind-boggling. The benefit is that every time more people meet, work together and get to know each other better, our community expands and becomes stronger. It empowers us all to collaborate as a community on the work of following Jesus and caring for our neighbors. If you gave of your time to assist with the Capital Campaign, I sincerely thank you.

Our youth and a few adults visited White Earth a few weekends ago, and we enjoyed the reports from Nate French and Anna Keto, who shared stories and reflec-

tions from the experience with the Vestry. They were thoughtful and articulate in their descriptions of the events they attended and the cultural awareness they came away with. Thanks, Anna and Nate for taking time out of your busy schedules to share your stories with the Vestry.

Other Vestry items from our November meeting include reviewing a draft of the budget for 2026 (Annual Parish Budget Meeting will be after church on Sunday, January 18), discussing needs of the various current, new and renewed committees here at St. Paul's, and reviewing the nominating committee's report on progress toward identifying candidates to fill Vestry and Delegate positions.

Finally, it is important to understand that in meetings such as the St. Paul's Vestry, a gavel is needed for calling the meeting to order, keeping the members in line and adjourning the meeting. Our Vestry has been lacking a gavel for years. Recognizing the absence of a gavel for the Vestry leadership, Angie Shambour presented the Senior Warden with a gavel to keep order. See picture above!

As we head into the very busy season of Advent, let us together share the feelings of hope and peace as we await the coming of the baby Jesus.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Diener, Senior Warden

Yoga at St. Paul's

Thursdays, 5:30 pm, in St. Paul's Carriage House

Yoga is for EVERY BODY! This is a beginner class but ALL are welcome. Colette Scheall, a longtime friend of St. Paul's, is the instructor.

Gentle Hatha Yoga, \$13 per class — please bring a mat for class.

The Carriage House is next door to church, toward 18th Avenue East. It has its own parking lot, accessed from Superior Street. No stairs, no long walks. This is a wonderful space with natural sunlight! Please try it!



Property Committee Update

The Property Committee (aka Building & Grounds Committee) is a standing committee of St. Paul's Vestry. Its mission is to provide a safe, beautiful, and inspirational place where the congregation can pray, learn, and grow in faith; and be a visible presence and witness to Christ in the neighborhood and city of Duluth.

The committee meets quarterly for one hour at 11:15 am, following church.

Its duties include:

1. Plan and oversee building and grounds needs, repairs, and restoration.
2. Ensure safety, sustainability, maintenance, and adherence to building codes.
3. Work closely with the Sexton in building maintenance and repairs.
4. Plan and manage major capital projects and coordinate with contractors and vendors.
5. Collaborate with the Finance Committee and Vestry to ensure financial integrity, good stewardship, and effective communication.
6. Provide quarterly reports of the committee's activities to the Vestry and an annual report in the Parish Annual record.

The current committee members are:

- Carol Andrews
- Jay Austin
- Mark Brown
- Jesse Devich
- Tom Diener
- Ryan Erspamer
- Mike French
- Tom Hamilton
- Mike Maddy
- Kathy Marinac
- Gary Olson
- Jill Peterman
- Nancy Schultdt
- Bill Stapp (Sexton)
- and Tom Elliott (Interim Chair)

Craig Fellman was past chair for about 20 years and masterfully led the committee and its work. Although Craig now lives in Minneapolis, he serves as an external consultant to this committee and is available remotely. Tom Elliott has been serving as Interim Chair for the last 1 ½ years but will step away in January 2026 when he becomes Senior Warden. The committee is recruiting a new chair now. Comments and suggestions are welcome by contacting Tom.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Elliott,
Interim Chair, Property Committee

Weather Cancellations



A reminder that if the Duluth School District cancels classes, all events or programs at the church are cancelled for that day and evening. On weekends (or any non-school day) if weather causes any cancellations of services or programs, please check our website www.stpaulsduluth.org or our Facebook page.

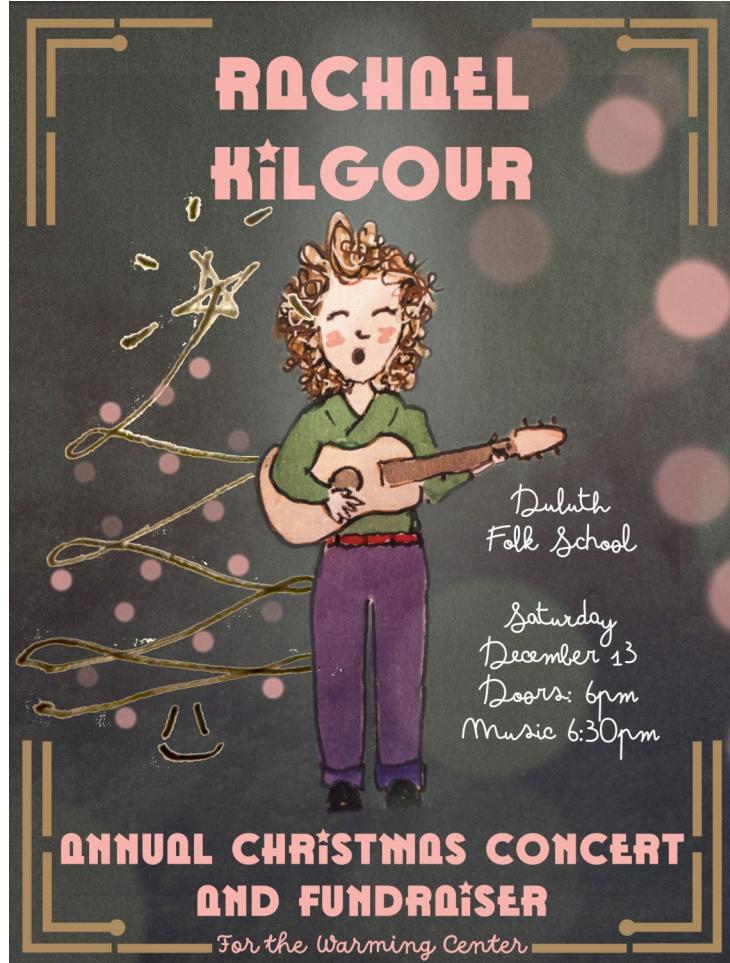
Homeless Memorial Vigil



The Homeless Memorial Vigil is an annual community gathering hosted by Chum to honor and remember those in our community who have died while experiencing homelessness over the past year. The event provides space for reflection, storytelling, and collective mourning, while raising awareness of the ongoing challenges faced by individuals without stable housing. The vigil will take place on **Monday, December 22, 2025, from 5:00 - 6:30 pm** on the steps of Duluth City Hall. Activities will include brief remarks from community leaders, the reading of names, moments of silence, and music. Attendance is open to the public, and candles and programs will be provided. Warm weather gear donations are welcome. Gloves, hats, hand warmers, and socks are all necessary.

- **4:30 pm** Meet at the Food Shelf Downtown (120 N First Ave W)
- **4:45 pm** March to City Hall
- **5:00 pm** Arrive at City Hall (411 W 1st St)

Raise Funds for the Warming Center



Join the fun at the Duluth Folk School following the LNPK Winter Market for the annual Christmas concert and fundraiser to benefit the Warming Center.

Saturday, December 13, 6:30 pm
Duluth Folk School
1917 W Superior St, Duluth

At this event, they are collecting donations for the Chum emergency shelter, aka The Warming Center:

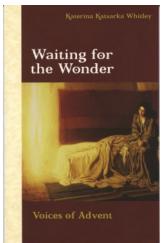
- CASH
- ADULT SOCKS
- ADULT GLOVES
- ADULT BOOTS
- HAND WARMERS
- SOFT BREAKFAST BARS
- POWDERED COFFEE CREAMER
- SUGAR

Warm drinks/food/desserts will be available for sale at the Dovetail Café.

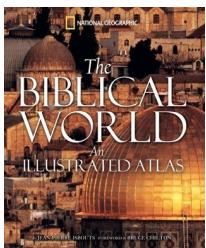
All ages welcome, singing encouraged.

From The Olcott Library

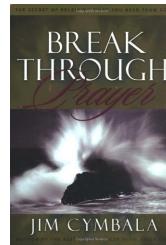
Here are some of the books that have been recently added to the Olcott Library:



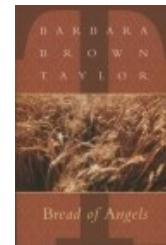
Waiting for the Wonder: Voices of Advent by Katerina Katsarka Whitley. I found this note from the donor tucked into the front of the book: "If you've ever wondered what it was like, what words you would use, to describe the discouragement, the joy, the trust of Isaiah or David or Mary, read this. This is one writer's attempt to give voice in a time of waiting."



The Biblical World by Jean-Pierre Isbouts. A National Geographic illustrated atlas that surveys the history of the Holy Land with more than 50 maps setting Biblical places and events in geographical context; more than 350 photographs, illustrations and works; and more than 60 timelines tracing developments and comparing histories across regions and civilizations of the Middle East.



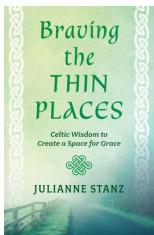
Breakthrough Prayer: The Power of Connecting with the Heart of God by Jim Cymbala. Cymbala, a pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, explains the principles of faith-filled, mountain-moving prayer that can transform circumstances, change lives and draw you closer to God than you've ever imagined.



Bread of Angels by Barbara Brown Taylor. A collection of sermons reminding us that God continues to be made known to us in the simple things that sustain our lives.



Treasured Stories of Christmas edited by Sarah Anne Stuart. Christmas stories by over thirty authors including Charles Dickens, Louisa May Alcott and Ray Bradbury.



Braving the Thin Places: Celtic Wisdom to Create a Space for Grace by Julianne Stanz. A "thin place" is where God's Grace is waiting to happen, it might be an important threshold, a soul friendship, a fresh chapter in your life, or a painful secret, fear or hardship. The author shows how we can experience each thin place as a point of departure on a sacred journey to a truer understanding of who we are meant to be.

Respectfully submitted,
Faye Witt, Librarian



Chum Connections

The **College of St. Scholastica Music Program** presents an annual Christmas concert, **O Holy Night** at The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary at 7:30 pm on Friday, December 5. Tickets are \$17, details here: <https://thecollegeofstscholastica.ticketspice.com/o-holy-night-2025>

Homeless Memorial Vigil on the steps of Duluth City Hall on **Monday, December 22**. (see p. 10 for more information)

Chum's 2026 Extravaganza fundraising event will be held on Thursday, February 12. More details to come; please mark your calendar and plan to join the fun!

Minnesota Homeless Day on the Hill is on **Wednesday, March 11**. Chum coordinates a group to travel to St. Paul to advocate for policy that supports shelter, affordable housing, and services to care for those experiencing substance use disorder or mental illness. Please mark your calendar and save the date for this annual event.

Merry and Bright

Greetings!

I'm writing on a cold and wet November morning. Even though the weather is gloomy and many things in the world feel unsettled and tense, I can hardly think of anything aside from all the good stuff happening in our church. It's been a banner fall in many ways. St. Paul's has really been bringing it lately: our congregation has been hanging hats and mittens on the warm line, we've been collecting so much food for people who really need it, visiting neighbors, and taking care of each other. We've had an amazing capitol campaign that wasn't just about money, but investing in and caring for a space that is our hearth. Our building is a launching place for all these good things, and it's heartening to see that folks want to preserve it so we can keep on with these works! As a staff we've been busy talking about how to cultivate leaders within our congregation so that our ministries can continue to grow. It's been a really fun and uplifting season in many unexpected ways.

Personally, I could not be prouder of the young people at St. Paul's. The Godly Play group is welcoming, joyful, thoughtful, inclusive, and eager. The Middle schoolers are showing maturity and leadership with many becoming A+ Acolytes. The Confirmands are taking their place, organizing an art show, learning about faith communities around the state, showing up to talk at Vestry meetings, and most importantly, becoming good friends.

As we approach Advent, there are many familiar things to look forward to. The gentle light of candles, the smell of pine, the cozy dark nights, cookies, carols, and laughter. All year long, as I look at the beautiful nativity scene behind the altar at the front of the church, I wait for Advent. Well, it's here! There's something in this season for everyone: Lessons and Carols, the Loaves & Fishes party, making wreaths, stories leading us to Bethlehem that we study in Godly Play, the Christmas Eve Pageant, and my personal favorite, the greening of the Church.

Here are some dates to remember—there's a lot going on this month, so please keep an eye on your email and bulletin announcements as well!

Advent wreath-making will happen after the 10 am service on Sunday, November 30, in the Parish Hall. You are encouraged to bring a frame from previous years if you'd like—they can be reused! We will have boughs, tools, decorations, candles, and helpers.



I'd like to remind families of a **VERY special kids coffee hour** after the 10 am service on Sunday, December 21. Kids of all ages and their grownups are warmly invited to belt out some classic Christmas songs, eat cookies, and make decorations in the Children's Room by the Parish Hall.

The **Christmas Eve Pageant** will be at 4:00 pm on December 24, and all children in attendance have a part if they'd like. We've got costumes of all sizes, and there are no lines to rehearse.

Middle schoolers will meet on Sunday, December 7, for coffee hour in the Faith Formation office on first floor, and in lieu of a meeting on the 21st, are invited to Christmas coffee hour downstairs.

Confirmation will meet on Wednesday, December 3 and 17, at the usual time.

If you'd like to know more, or would like to volunteer to help with any of the events listed above, please email me: kids@stpaulsduluth.org

Merry Merry!

Peace to you,

Sophie Gray Spehar,

Faith Formation Coordinator

NEW THIS SPRING: ST. PAUL'S ART SHOW

This year the Confirmation Class is holding an art show on May 24 to showcase their own projects as well as art from the congregation. If you would like to showcase your art of any kind, written, visual, or performing, please contact us by April 1, by filling out the Google form. Please reach out to Sophie or the Confirmation Class if you have any questions. You can also reach us through the following email: joanneerspamer@gmail.com

Please use this QR code to fill out the Google form.

Submitted by Anna Keto,
on behalf of the Confirmation Class



Advent and Christmas Music



Posters available in the Parish Office. Please help us spread the word!

Prelude Music for Christmas Eve Pageant Service

We invite young people who sing or play an instrument to play a prelude piece for the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve pageant service. The carols played should be sacred. This is a great opportunity for children to start using their musical gifts in worship. Children, grandchildren, cousins and friends are all welcome to participate! Contact Tom Hamilton with questions. There is a sign-up sheet outside the sacristy.



Following the Festival of Lessons and Carols, join us for a festive cookie reception in the Parish Hall. Bring treats to share if you wish; just drop off on Dec. 14.

Holiday Party for Loaves & Fishes

Help this holiday shine for our friends at Loaves & Fishes! Their community seeks volunteers to help host their annual Christmas Party. This celebration happens at St. Paul's in the Parish Hall on **Saturday, December 13, from 3:30-6:00 pm**, with dinner served at 4:00 pm. They need people to assist with decorating and setup on Friday; and meal prep, serving, washing dishes, cleaning up, or providing rides on Saturday. If interested, please email duluthcatholicworker@gmail.com



The Giving Tree

Help us spread God's love to our neighbors by purchasing a new gift for the folks at Loaves & Fishes in our neighborhood, or for the youth at Life House, or for the women and children at Safe Haven Shelter and Resource Center. A tree is located by the elevator on the second floor, with tags describing a desired toy or gift. Please select one of these special tags, purchase the gift requested and return it unwrapped, with the tag attached, by **Monday, December 8**. (If you'd like to put the item in a gift bag that is fine). We will accept any type of nonviolent toy for infants through teens. A great gift idea for teens are gift cards to local stores. If you have questions, please contact Val Groth or Susan M. Anderson. Thank you!



Giving Warmth to Our Neighbors

The Giving Warmth Line is up for the season. We supply mittens, hats, scarves, socks and other warm items. You may donate these items by setting them in the box on the back pew, NE side, or drop them off at the Parish Office during the week.

The line gets filled when we all take items and hang them up. On your way out the door after service or after coffee, grab something to add to the line (clothespins are provided). It is through all of us that the warmth of our church goes out the door to others.

Respectfully submitted,
Natalie Constance



LAY MINISTRY SCHEDULE – CHRISTMAS 2025

Please find a sub if you are unavailable for your scheduled date.

	December 24 4:00 PM	December 24 10:00 PM	December 25 10:00 AM
ALTAR GUILD	Teams 3 & 4	Teams 3 & 4	Teams 3 & 4
LECTORS	Z Stodola N Diener	M Dragich J Pastor	J Pastor
PRAYER LEADER	O Morin-Swanson	J Groth	J Pastor
VERGER	J Pastor	J Pastor	J Pastor
LEM	N Diener	M Dragich	J Pastor
CHALICE	Z Stodola	J Pastor	
BEARERS	M Gustafson J Pastor		
ACOLYTES	J Sadowski (H) R Wall S Keto	C Gustafson (solo)	Verger only
LIVESTREAM	N French	C Meehan	Ø
USHERS	J Wall D Morin K Swanson	J Sontag G Olson R Lyle	G Olson D Kolquist
LOCK UP	S Spehar	T Diener	D Pederson

LAY MINISTRY SCHEDULE – DECEMBER 2025

Please find a sub if you are unavailable for your scheduled date.

	December 7	December 14	December 21	December 28	January 4
ALTAR GUILD	K Leonard	C Conrad	C Miller	D Kolquist	K Leonard
	S Cox	S Hall	L Hultkrantz	S M Anderson	S Cox
	M Malone	A Sadowski		S Sommer	M Malone
		K Timmerman		T Jansen	
		L Kania			
LECTOR 8 am	A Mackenzie	F Witt	M Gustafson	A Mackenzie	F Witt
LECTORS 10 am	K Smith	Z Stodola	K Smith	J Pastor	S Sommer
	S Sommer	J Pastor	N Diener		J Pastor
PRAYER LEADER	P Peterson	H Hansen	A H Peterson	A Sundberg	L Brunfelt
VERGER	K Smith	K Smith	K Smith	K Smith	K Smith
LEM	K Smith	M Gustafson	K Smith	K Smith	S Sommer
CHALICE	S Sommer	J Pastor	N Diener	J Pastor	J Pastor
BEARERS	S M Anderson	Z Stodola	S M Anderson		
ACOLYTES	J Sadowski (H)	E Ersamer (H)	A Keto (H)	T Halverson (solo)	J Shambour (solo)
	S Peterson	Q Wall	M Spehar		
	T Halverson	H Buck	S Sundberg		
LIVESTREAM	J Austin	D Barthel	C Meehan	N French	J Austin
NURSERY	A Rennan	A Rennan	A Rennan	Ø	A Rennan
	E Ersamer	Y Quinn-Sikorski	J Schreck	Ø	E Ersamer
COFFEE HOST	M & C Bauer	M & C Gustafson	J & M French	C Meehan & E Jundt	L & B Brunfelt
USHERS	N Schultdt	M Brown	D Morin	G Olson	N Schultdt
	W Tabory	S Brown	K Swanson	R Lyle	W Tabory
	J Wall	D Kolquist	J Sontag	M Gustafson	J Wall
	R Finkel	R Silverness	H Schreck	P Waite	R Finkel
LOCK UP	D Pederson	B Stapp	S Spehar	M Brown	T Diener

Other Altar Guild Duties for December

December Linens:

L Hultkrantz, C Conrad, L Kania

Bread-Baking:

M Dragich



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
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