

The Messenger

The Newsletter of First Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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In this season of Advent...

And there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2.7)

Well, ready or not, here I go into my first December at First Saint Paul's, as I eagerly look forward to experiencing the sentiment expressed in the old familiar song, "It's the most wonderful time of the year." Indeed, from my pastor's perspective, I do have a sense of wonder as I consider my new surroundings here in the big city. The atmosphere is going to be very different, and above all my sense of wonder is focused on the thousands of people in the nearby condos and apartments. And I wonder: How many of them will be spending Christmas by themselves? Also, I wonder: How many will be here and far away from family and friends back home? Further, I wonder about how many are yearning to find a fellowship of believers which has room for them?

Years ago, before GPS when our family went on vacation trips, we would look forward to finding a nice motel with a swimming pool. However, there were times of letdown in seeing only the lit sign, "No vacancy." Then we'd be stuck looking for whatever we could—and doesn't that scenario find a parallel in the Christmas story? No vacancy at the Hotel Bethlehem! The two pilgrims Mary and Joseph found themselves far away from home and the inn had no rooms available. Can you imagine their stress with the baby on the way? No running water, no bed, no midwife. Our images of the scene are often so air-brushed that we fail to appreciate their dilemma.

Why do I share this with you? As I prepare for the special celebrations and worship services later this month, my biggest concern is: Will there be no room at the inn of First Saint Paul's? I ask this because, more than any other church I've been involved with, there are going to be many pilgrims, far away from home who are going to step into the inn of First Saint Paul's. Now, of course, there will be

Advent & Christmas Services

12/11 - 3pm Christmas Concert & Candlelight Reception

12/18 - 11am Christmas Sing-Along following 9:30am service

12/24 - 7pm Christmas Eve Service w/ Metropolis String Quartet

12/25 - 9:30am Christmas Day Service

room in our narthex and worship space, but will there be room in the inn of our hearts? Those people at the Hotel of Bethlehem were busy – caught up with the cares and anxieties of life. So much so, they had no time for Joseph and his pregnant wife. Will there be visitors coming to First Saint Paul’s who are pregnant with life’s cares? There might well be, and so how important it is to give each person a firm handshake, make eye contact, and be sincere. And please note this: At any gathering you will find two types of people who arrive with one of two attitudes:

I’m so glad to see you! Or I’m so glad you see me!

Do you see the difference? The pilgrims coming into the inn of First Saint Paul’s yearn to know that you notice them. It can produce long lasting effects when you really care enough to get beyond the accustomed greeting and engage in a conversation. “Somebody paid attention to me,” they say to themselves.

Back in 1965, the Andersonville Methodist Church in Sumter, Georgia received a \$178,000 donation from a New Jersey resident, Robert Brown. Mr. Brown wrote that he had been impressed by the congregation’s welcome during a one-time visit many years earlier.

Please know I’m not saying we greet others with the prospect of getting money. Rather, may we greet visitors to experience the joy of showing people that they matter. They sense that there is room in the inn of our hearts. It may seem like a small thing to you but it may be huge to them, and remember the words of our Lord: “I was a stranger and you made me welcome ... As you’ve done to the least of these, you’ve done it unto Me.”

God’s best to you in this most festive of seasons,

Pastor Gregg

Pastor Gregg D. Koenig

Pastor Gregg
Vacancy Pastor



Standing on the remnants of fall, Concordia students rest after stringing Christmas lights along our patio fence and around both trees!

Our Stewardship Luncheon on November 20





Are You Missing Someone?

Request from the Elders: As the pandemic recedes, more people are returning to in-person Sunday worship services. But attendance numbers are still down approximately 30% to 40% from pre-2020 figures.

Is there someone who you have not seen in church in a while and are missing? Are you wondering what has happened to them? Pastor Gregg and the Board of Elders would like to hear from you so we can make an effort to reach out and reconnect to people you may not have seen at worship since the pandemic began.

Weekly Advent Reflections

There will be no mid-week advent services this year. Instead, look out for short videos each week from Pastor Gregg, in which he will share a devotional as we prepare for our Christmas celebrations.

Each video will be uploaded to the church YouTube channel, @FSPaulsChicago. A link will be included in the weekly service invitation sent out each Wednesday.

Devotional booklets for adults and children are also available in the narthex to help you and your household pray through this advent season. We have enough for one booklet per household.

New Banners & Sign Repairs

Evangelism & Outreach Board welcomes fall and winter with spring colors and new message on banners by front door of First Saint Paul's. As these signs were being installed, we also completed repairs to the two 30" x 10 foot high signs at the busy corner of Irving Park Road and Clark Street on the building at Wunder's Cemetery.



Christmas Concert 2022

How Shall We Approach This Wonder?

First Saint Paul's annual Christmas Concert will take place on **Sunday, December 11, 3:00 pm**. The annual Christmas concert is a tradition at First Saint Paul's that goes back over forty years, but has even longer roots in our congregation. This is a wonderful treasury of music and outreach to the local community!

How Shall We Approach This Wonder? is a relatively new choir anthem by the poet Kris Kuhn and composer Carl Schalk. It seeks to ask us: is the birth of Jesus something that is just for individuals, or do we share the good news of God-with-us with the world? Combined with other hymns, anthems, and carols, the Concert will present the Christmas story and how we respond in various way.

As in past years, the concert will include several meditation reflections, choral pieces, instrumental works, and hymns for the assembly. Pieces familiar to many include "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" by Gustav Holst, Handel's "And the Glory of the Lord" from Messiah, the early American "Hail, Thou Blest Morn," and Holst's "Christmas Day," a piece incorporating four familiar Christmas tunes. We will also include three Christmas pieces of Ralph Vaughan Williams in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth.

We will be led by a fine orchestra of players familiar to First Saint Paul's, as well as by organ, piano, and harp. There will be many opportunities for the congregation to sing familiar carols. We hope that members and friends of First Saint Paul's will make plans to attend the concert this year.

Following the concert, we will again have the lovely candlelight reception in fellowship hall. This opportunity to gather is perhaps as enjoyable as the concert itself!

Bakers: we welcome your holiday cookies, bars, and breads! There will be a sign-up at church so that we can plan for the reception.

Presenting fine music with orchestra and guests for the Christmas concert takes significant financial support. Members and friends have been generous with their support through the years, and we invite you to participate once again. We have four levels of giving, traditionally named for various ranks of angels: angels (to \$49); archangels (\$50-149); cherubim (\$150 – 299); and Seraphim (\$300 and over).

Your Christmas gift also provides music for the Christmas Eve service, when we will once again have the marvelous Metropolis String Quartet playing pre-service and accompanying hymns and choir in the service.

Once again, we hope that you will make plans to attend the Christmas concert on December 11 and festival services of the season.

Steven Wentz
Cantor



FIRST SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Christmas Concert

How Shall We Approach This Wonder?

Featuring the First Saint Paul's choir, soloists,
orchestra, and carols for the assembly

December 11th, 2022

1301 N. LaSalle, Chicago

Time: 3:00pm

Free concert with candlelight
reception to follow

312-642-7172

www.fspauls.org

Schedule of Events

- **Dec. 7:** Church Council Meeting at 7pm
- **Dec. 10:** Foot Clinic at 10am
- **Dec. 11:** Christmas Concert at 3pm
- **Dec. 18:** Christmas Sing-Along in the Fellowship Hall following morning service
- **Dec. 24:** Christmas Eve Service at 7pm
- **Dec. 25:** Christmas Day Service at 9:30am
- *There will be no services on New Year's Eve this year*
- **Jan. 1, 23:** New Year's Day Service at 9:30am

December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 1 st Sunday in Advent	28	29	30	1	2	3
4 2 nd Sunday in Advent	5	6	7 Church Council Meeting	8	9	10 Foot Clinic
11 3 rd Advent Christmas Concert 3pm	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 4 th Sunday in Advent	19	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	7

Architecture Students Sketch at First Saint Paul's

On November 15, 2022 we welcomed Professor David Langdon and nearly 150 of his students to our building. Professor Langdon teaches at the College of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology. His Introduction to Architecture lecture course visits notable Chicago buildings and locations each week to give freshman students and opportunity to practice drawing.

Professor Langdon expressed his thanks, writing, "Thank you so much for allowing our students to visit First St. Paul's today, and Jen, your introduction to the church was wonderful and educational and really brought the church to life."

The students came in two sections, one morning and one afternoon, and were met by Jen Masengarb, who gave them background on the building, Edward Dart, and the history of First Saint Paul's. The students then had time to complete their drawing assignments.



Praying Through the Church

BECAUSE WE ARE A CHURCH FAMILY, a community of faith, we have a concern for one another—a concern that is expressed on Sunday mornings as we pray for members of our church family by name.

WE PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER, remembering the words of St. Paul to the Apostle to Timothy, “I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone...” and the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

WE ALSO ENCOURAGE members and friends of the congregation to make their prayer requests, births, illnesses, deaths, anniversaries, and special occasions for intercession or thanksgiving known to the pastor, preferably before the Sunday morning services, but in cases of emergency, right up to the service time.

THE FOLLOWING FRIENDS & MEMBERS of our church family will be remembered in the services of worship during the month of December.

December 4

Sarah Sekki || Megan Smalter || Eric Soderlund
James & Bonnie Spurlock || John & Valerie Stodden
Tom Stemwedel & Paula Borg, Nina, Molly, and Ben
Gene & Carole Svebakken

December 11

April Szymanski || Robin Tangren and Holden Foster
Betsy Pennington Taylor || Florence Toma
Joe & Judee Tomlinson

December 18

Elisabeth Wallner, Margarete and Aryana
Allison Warren & Erik Hemingway, Brooke and Olin

December 25

Todd & Barbara Webb, Henry and Lucy
Elisabeth Weber || Steven & Sue Wentz

Official Acts 2022

Baptisms

Apr 6: Jude Matthew Burier, son of James and Alicia

Oct 16: Nolan Joseph Wolf, son of Anthony and Julie

Weddings

May 28: Peter Wirtala and Victoria Bujny married at First Saint Paul's by Pastor Doug Groll

December 10: Kyle Uzcategui and Andrea Erdman married at First Saint Paul's by Pastor Jeff Leininger

Deaths

Maurice Tanter

Transferred Out

Daniel Johnson || Rev. Paul & Karren Krause
Julie Umnus || Roger Adams || Rev. Walter Kahlben
Tom & Emily (Edkins) Bohac

Transferred In

Evan Majic

Moved, No Transfer

La Rae Adair || Mike Vrshek || Megan McGinnis
Haley Randolph || William and Elsa Van Hout
Eric and Alana White || Jude Burier || Charlotte Keblusek

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

Members Who Died in 2022

Maurice Tanter

✠ Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. ✠ They sing before the throne of God ✠

FIRST SAINT PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*First Saint Paul's, established in 1846,
is the oldest Lutheran Church in Chicago.
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was
founded when historic meetings were held
here in 1847.*

1301 N. LASALLE DRIVE
CHICAGO, IL 60610
312.642.7172
www.fspauls.org



CHURCH STAFF

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SERVICES OF WORSHIP

Sundays

Divine Service at 9:30am in person
and livestreamed

Adult Bible Class at 11am

Sunday School (ages 4-10) at 11am

HOLY COMMUNION

Celebrated every Sunday morning

ELECTED CHURCH OFFICERS

* Voting member of Church Council

Chairman*

Gavin Morgan

Vice Chairman*

Susan Rosborough

Recording Secretary

Robin Tangren

Assistant Recording Secretary

Jody Lucey

Treasurer*

Bryan Schneider

Assistant Treasurer

Cheryl Kobetsky

Financial Secretary

Pam Kaji

Assistant Financial Secretary

Arlene Dahm

Membership Secretary

Gretchen Randall

Chair, Board of Christian Education*

Betsy Pennington Taylor

Chair, Board of Stewardship*

Asa Carter

Chair, Board of Evangelism & Outreach*

Tom Randall

Chair, Board of Social Ministry*

Vacant

Chair, Board of Worship & Music*

Janette Ramirez

Chair, Board of Deacons*

Buff Bethlen

Board of Elders

Howard Ansoorge

Doug Harkness

Christine Lutze

Susan Morgan

David Rogner, Chair*

Board of Trustees

Tom Boisseau

Michael Cacicio, Chair*

Dwight Deppen

Alex Griebel

Robert Miller

Deacons

Buff Bethlen, Chair*

Diane Krizan

Liz Lassiter

April Szymanski

Allison Warren

Nominating Committee

Nancy Ansoorge

Amy Harkness

John Mason

Betsy Pennington Taylor

Mike Schubert, Chair

COMMITTEE/GROUPS CHAIRS/CONTACTS

Altar Guild

Sandy Lawrence

Communion Assistant Coordinator

Janette Ramirez

Community Meals

Mike Cacicio

Concordia Cemetery

John Stodden

Human Resources Committee

Susan Rosborough

Liturgical Arts

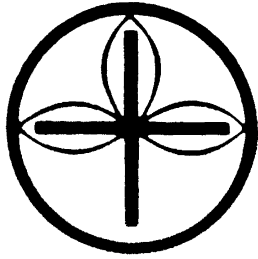
Darlene Fahrenkrog

Lutheran Home

Susan Rosborough

Wunder's Cemetery

Dwight Deppen



FIRST SAINT PAUL'S

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

1301 N LASALLE DRIVE CHICAGO IL 60610

JOIN US ONLINE

www.fspauls.org/services



YouTube



@FSPAULSCHICAGO

“We welcome you to be at home among us.”