

SEPTEMBER 2026
The magazine of St. Paul Lutheran Church

journey

FALL GUIDE



Are we listening?



ON THE COVER:
Len and Joan Bruce

journey

SEPTEMBER 2026
Volume 14 | Issue 7

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MISSION
St. Paul Lutheran Church is a faith community, shaped around five core values: radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith formation, courageous service, extravagant generosity.

Journey (USPS 8314) is published monthly by St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA, 2136 Brady St., Davenport, IA, 52803. Periodicals Postage Paid at Davenport, IA.

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to *Journey*, 2136 Brady Street, Davenport, Iowa 52803

If you ever spend time in London, England, there are three words you'll likely hear over and over again every time you step on and off the subway: *Mind the gap*. Throughout the city's many stations, it's a friendly reminder over the speaker system for passengers to watch where they're stepping, not to trip on that small space between the platform and the subway doors.

What you might not know is that the voice that repeated that famous phrase thousands of times a day belongs to a man named Oswald Laurence, a long-time British actor. In the early 1960s, Oswald was selected by the London Underground to be the voice of this "Mind the Gap" voice announcement. That same voice would be heard for the next several decades.

For years after his death in 2007, Oswald's wife, Margaret McCollum, would visit the subway station almost daily, simply to sit and listen to her husband repeat those words. Though it wasn't a conversation, much less any assortment of words, she found some comfort or assurance in hearing that familiar, loving voice she knew so well.

"Each time I hear him speak," Margaret said, "it's as if he's speaking directly to me, reminding me of our shared life together. These few moments help keep his memory alive."

Several years later, in 2012, the city of London decided to change the voice of that announcement to a digital recording. Margaret was heartbroken and asked the city if she might have a recording of Oswald's announcement so she could keep listening.

While they fulfilled that request, once they learned about Margaret's daily trips to the subway, the city made a slight change to their plans. They put his voice back on the overhead speakers in one location — the closest station to Margaret's home, so she could still listen each day.

There's something special about hearing another person's voice. These days, we're sometimes quick to send emails or texts, valuing the convenience of an instant message over the slower, but sometimes deeper connection that can form through a phone call or in-person conversation. In an increasingly digital world, thoughtful listening and intentional connection can feel like less and less of a priority.

Studies have shown that newborn babies can immediately recognize and respond to their parents' voices. It's their first and most familiar sound. And for those who've accompanied loved ones through hospice care, we've learned that hearing



is usually the last sense to diminish before death. The voices of family and friends are often the last thing we hear in our time on earth.

I wonder if many of us might have the same sort of reaction or longing to hear God's voice, like Margaret McCollum or a newborn child, searching for a deeper reminder of connection and love.

I, admittedly, have never heard the audible voice of God. But I do think there's all sorts of ways to listen to God. We hear God speaking to us through scripture, of course. And through the beauty of nature and creation. Or through the voices of others we trust. God speaks to us when we still ourselves enough in the midst of our busy lives to have even a few moments of silence and reflection. Or through the meaningful experiences of serving others.

We could argue that God's voice is everywhere — on bike trails and in church sanctuaries, among gatherings with friends or in a quiet evening walk. The real question is... are we listening? Are we paying attention?

We could learn a lesson or two from Margaret's daily time at the subway station. When we set aside even a few moments for stillness, reflection, and intentional listening, we might just notice God speaking to us in the most interesting of ways.

Katy Warren

KATY WARREN
associate pastor

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Worship anchors this community. We gather to hear God's call, raise voices in praise, rediscover hope, celebrate gratitude, and welcome every soul.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Start-up Weekend

Saturday, Sept. 12 & Sunday, Sept. 13

Fall Start-up means we return to the fullness of Sunday morning learning for all ages and worship life. Learning for all takes place from 10:15-11 a.m.

Healing Liturgy

First Saturday of the month, Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Nov. 7, & Dec. 5, 6 p.m.

Once a month, a healing liturgy is held after 5 p.m. worship. The gathering seeks God's goodness and care for those seeking physical, spiritual, or emotional healing.

Upcoming Concerts

Talented ensembles and acclaimed choral performances. Music events are a gift from St. Paul to the community, welcoming area music lovers.

- ▶ **Nova Singers:** Sunday, Oct. 11, 4 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m.
- ▶ **QC Symphony Orchestra Holiday Brass Concert:** Sunday, Dec. 13, 3 p.m.
- ▶ **Big River Brass Band Holiday Concert:** Sunday, Dec. 20, 3 & 7 p.m.

Special dates

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▶ All Saints Weekend
Oct. 31 & Nov. 1, all services | ▶ Choral Advent
Sunday, Dec. 6, 9 a.m. |
| ▶ Joy Weekend
Nov. 7 & 8, all services | ▶ Blue Christmas
Monday, Dec. 21, 6 p.m. |
| ▶ Thanksgiving Eve worship
Wednesday, Nov. 25, 7 p.m. | ▶ Christmas Eve worship
Thursday, Dec. 24, 12, 2, 4, 6, 8, & 10 p.m. |

CHOIRS

For ages 4 through adults, St. Paul choirs sing songs of faith, with practices beginning Sept. 9.

Alleluia Choir | Ages 4-K

Wednesdays, 6-6:45 p.m., Room 206

Director: Sara Harless

Cantate Choir | Grades 1-5

Wednesdays, 6-6:45 p.m., Room 009

Director: Hillary Erb

Youth Choir | Grades 6-12

Wednesdays, 6-6:45 p.m., Chapel

Director: Dan Pepper

Chorale | College-aged & Adults

Wednesdays, 6-7:30 p.m., Room 011

Director: Nathan Windt

Open Spirit contemporary ensemble

Thursday evening rehearsals

Director: Brian Schou



MISSION & SERVICE

At St. Paul we give away more than 21 percent of our annual budget to people in need. St. Paul people also find great joy in volunteering for the benefit of others. Take a look at some of the opportunities available this fall and jump in — find something that excites you.

MENTAL HEALTH

NAMI Walks

Saturday, Oct. 10, 9:30 a.m.,
Veterans Memorial Park, 1645 23rd St, Bettendorf, IA 52722

Lace up your sneakers and join the St. Paul crew who walk each year to encourage understanding, reduce stigma, and support programs for people affected by mental illness. Registration is free; everyone gets a T-shirt. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups.

Friends and Family of Suicide Loss

First Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m., Library Conference Room

A space of healing for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide. This gathering provides a place to find understanding, comfort, and hope alongside others with similar experiences. When the first Monday falls on a holiday, we'll meet the second Monday instead. Simply show up—no sign up required. Contact: Deb and Joe James, joeдеб1984@gmail.com.



EARTH CARE

Make It Yours Neighborhood Cleanup

Saturday, Nov. 7, 10 a.m.-12 noon

The St. Paul corner of the world is a beautiful place. St. Paul people gather to pick up trash and debris in the blocks surrounding the campus. It's called the *Make It Yours* Neighborhood Cleanup. A great service project for all ages! Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Jules Irish, julesi@mchsi.com.

Environmental Team

The Environmental Team is a band of earth-minded St. Paul folks. They pick up trash every week on the St. Paul campus, scrub dishes at church meals, and support recycling initiatives. Think globally and act locally as a steward of this Earthly home.

► **Recyclers needed:** Twice a month volunteers gather all the items from the recycling bins at church. Wash, flatten, bag, and prepare items to be picked up by Scott County Recycling. Contact: Jan Lloyd, cmljmlg@q.com.

Soil Stewards

The St. Paul campus is welcoming, tidy, and lovely. Join the dedicated, fun community of volunteers who help to keep it looking great! Consider adopting a small, designated area to keep weeded, and/or an occasional larger team project that builds fellowship with people who share the same passion for gardening and helping this church look its best. Many hands make light work, so please consider lending a green thumb (or two)! Open to anyone. Contact: Peg Iglehart, peg.iglehart@gmail.com.



HOUSING

Habitat for Humanity

Put on a tool belt and help build through this ecumenical ministry. St. Paul volunteers work alongside families who dream of owning a home — and do the work necessary to make that dream a reality. No previous building experience is necessary. To help, visit stpaulqc.org/signups.

► **Saturday, Sept. 19**

Morning shifts are 8 a.m.-12 noon, afternoon shifts from 12 noon-3:30 p.m.

► **Saturday, Oct. 17**

Morning shifts are 8 a.m.-12 noon, afternoon shifts from 12 noon-3:30 p.m.

► **Saturday, Nov. 21**

Morning shifts are 8 a.m.-12 noon, afternoon shifts from 12 noon-3:30 p.m.

Humble Dwellings volunteers

Sunday, Nov. 8, 1-3:30 p.m.

Help transform an empty living space into a welcoming home for a neighbor in need by arranging gently used furniture and household essentials. No special skills are required — just a willingness to serve and make a meaningful difference in our community. Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Joel Moore, joel@stpaulqc.org.

FOOD

So All May Eat meal serving

Wednesday, Sept. 30, Monday, Nov. 30, Wednesday, Dec. 30, various times

People assemble meals at St. Paul and serve those meals at Zion Lutheran Church, Davenport. The initiative is called *So All May Eat*. Needed for the dates above are shoppers, cooks, and servers. Providing a warm meal to those who are struggling is one way we show God's grace to others. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Joel Moore, joel@stpaulqc.org.

Thanksgiving food and care collection

Thanksgiving Eve worship, Nov. 25, 7 p.m.

Stock a paper bag with nonperishable food and personal care items and bring it to church Nov. 25-29 to serve those who are food insecure. The items gathered are used to fill the shelves at the Friendly House Food Pantry.

What's needed? Soups, mac & cheese, canned meats, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, paper products, soap, hygiene items, and diapers and wipes. Help sort the donations in the Library Commons on Sunday, Nov. 29, anytime between 9 a.m. and 12 noon. Contact: Jessica Taylor, jessica@stpaulqc.org.

Karibu Market

St. Paul has an active partnership with Tapestry Farms, a Quad-Cities nonprofit dedicated to walking alongside refugees and strengthening access to resources in this community called Karibu Market. This hands-on ministry meets an increasingly urgent need: delivering fresh produce and essential care items to refugee families navigating difficult transitions and challenging circumstances.

Volunteers are needed monthly to help load and deliver produce and essentials boxes to families on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Contact Allison Winter, allison@stpaulqc.org.

COMMUNITY CARE

St. Paul diaper ministry

This ministry collects and distributes diapers and wipes for families connected to Tapestry Farms' work with immigrant and refugee communities. The diaper ministry is currently seeking donations of diapers and wipes to help grow their supply. Contact: Sara Harless, saraharless@stpaulqc.org.

Spontaneous serving

Spontaneous Serving connects those with the time and a desire to help St. Paul members or community organizations in need. Commitments are one-time and less than two hours, such as taking someone to a medical appointment, staying with a family member, running errands, or helping with tasks. Requests are distributed through the St. Paul app under Sign Ups, or by calling the church office, 563-326-3547. Volunteers and service requests are welcome. Contact Lori Byerly, iabyerlyt.l@gmail.com.



COMMUNITY

Connection lies at the heart of faithful living. At St. Paul, we come together in circles both intimate and expansive, weaving our lives together in meaningful ways. Here's a glimpse of the groups and gatherings ready to welcome all with open arms.

GATHER TOGETHER

Wednesday Night Kick-Off at St. Paul

Wednesday, Sept. 9, 5-6:30 p.m.

Kick off a new season of togetherness and enjoy a meal in community. After dinner, kids and adult choir members head to choir and confirmation while everyone else stays to connect and relax. Whether or not you're in choir or have children, you're invited to enjoy an unhurried evening of community. A goodwill donation supports the meal. Starting in October, gather again on the first Wednesday of each month: Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2, Jan. 6, Feb. 3, and April 7. Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups.

Golden Agers luncheon

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 10 a.m., Sanctuary

St. Paul senior adults, 75 years and older, come together for the Golden Agers worship and luncheon. RSVP by calling Jennifer Garvey at 563-326-3547, or sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups. Rides are available upon request. If you need a ride, please RSVP by Sept. 28 to help with coordination.

Blood Donor Day

Sunday, Oct. 25, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Give the gift of life. Blood donation is simple and takes about 45 minutes with conversation and refreshments afterward. Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

Women of the ELCA

Women of the ELCA creates space for women to connect monthly through shared friendship, mutual support in faith, scripture exploration, and meaningful service projects. Contact: Carol Kerker, carolkerker@gmail.com.

► **Advent by Candlelight:** On Monday, Nov. 30, 6-8:30 p.m., begin your Advent experience by attending this holiday event! Enjoy holiday-themed tables, delicious desserts, and an Advent meditation. All women of St. Paul and their guests are welcome. Sign up to host a table and invite friends! Childcare available upon request. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups or at the Info Center. An informational meeting will be held Sunday, Oct. 4, 10:10 a.m. in the Library Conference Room. Come learn more about volunteer roles including decorating and logistics. There's a spot for every talent and helping hand.

Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, Oct. 4, 4 p.m., North Lawn

On the Feast Day of St. Francis, the sounds of barking, meowing, and cawing join our prayers as we give thanks to God for our pets and all creation. Gather on the lawn with your beloved pets. Bring a lawn chair or blanket. No need to sign up — just show up with your furry, fuzzy or feathered friends. Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

KnitWits

First and Third Wednesdays of the month, 5:30 p.m., starting Sept. 16, Elevator Commons

Knitters, crocheters, handweavers, and more are invited to share time over yarn as we work on service and individual projects and meet new people. Don't know how to knit or crochet? Someone will be glad to teach you. If you don't knit, bring your wit! Contact: Beth Johnson, bajohnson3740@gmail.com.





Cinema and Spirituality

*Third Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.,
The Last Picture House, Davenport*

Each month of 2026 screen a film from the book *Films for All Seasons* by Abbey Olcese. Upcoming films include:

- ▶ **Sept. 15:** *Labyrinth* (Imagination)
- ▶ **Oct. 20:** *Coco* (Legacy)
- ▶ **Nov. 17:** *The Bishop's Wife* (Faith)
- ▶ **Dec. 15:** *Children of Men* (Hope)

Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups. \$5 tickets (cash preferred). Contact: Tim Suddarth, timsuddarth@yahoo.com.

Now what? Finding meaning in Retirement

*Tuesday, Sept. 22, 6:30 p.m.,
The Tangled Wood in Bettendorf*

Gather with other retirees to explore how to build a life of meaning, purpose, and connection in retirement. Come for conversation, encouragement and shared wisdom as you navigate this new season of life. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

Empty Nesters Group

*Monday, Oct. 5, 6:30 p.m.,
The Tangled Wood in Bettendorf*

Whether one child has left or the house feels fully quiet, gather with other parents navigating this evolving independence and figuring out what your role looks like now. Come for connection, good food and honest conversation about this season of family life. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Katy Warren, katy@stpaulqc.org.

SUPPORT & CARE

Care Companions

Care Companions are not experts or counselors, but those who walk alongside other church members and share their journey for a time. Friendship, presence, and prayer are their tools. Join at any time throughout the year. Interested in learning more? Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

Caregivers Support Group

Second and fourth Tuesdays, 1-2 p.m., Church House Living Room

All caregivers are welcome to gather to share ideas, gather resources, support one another, and learn how to nurture one's own needs while supporting a loved one. Guest speakers share every fourth Tuesday. Steve Kalber and Kathy Becker facilitate. Contact: Steve Kalber, steve@stpaulqc.org.

Living With the Loss of a Child

First Mondays, starting Sept. 14 (due to Labor Day), 6:30-7:30 p.m.

As parents who have lost a child, this group gathers to share, learn, and grow together in faith. For any parent who has experienced the loss of a child and is looking for connection. Contact: Teresa Keller, teresak@stpaulqc.org.

Parkinson's Support Group

Third Thursday of the month, beginning Sept. 17, 1:30 p.m.

This fall, St. Paul launches a new support group for caregivers and those living with Parkinson's disease to find community, share what they're learning, and know they're not walking this road alone. Led by Steve and Kathy McManigal. Contact: Teresa Keller, teresak@stpaulqc.org.

Prayer Team

The Prayer Chain works quietly and steadily behind the scenes. Prayers rise for illness or challenges, and in praise or thanksgiving. No request is too small. Requests are worded for confidentiality. For a prayer request or to volunteer as one who prays, contact the church office at (563) 326-3547 or email Paula McPherson, mcphpaula@msn.com with "Prayer Team" in the subject line.

Quilters

Sept. 15, Oct. 20, Nov. 17, Dec. 15, Fellowship Hall

This devoted group of caring quilters, beginners and experts alike, gather monthly to sew, tie, cut, and piece together beautiful works of art that are donated to those in need. They also welcome those who would like to cut squares or sew quilt tops at home. Contact: Belinda Holbrook, belinda@holbrook.fm.

Holding space for those who grieve

Sundays, Oct. 18 & 25, and Nov. 1, 8, & 15, 10:15-11 a.m.

A supportive, compassion-filled series for those who have experienced the recent death of a loved one. Explore the difference between grief and bereavement, offering steadying tools that hold us through the heaviest of days. Led by Pastor Sara Olson-Smith and Deacon Joel Moore, sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

ADULTS

As Lutheran Christians, we consider our lives to be unfinished products. That's why we regularly seek ways to grow in faith and deepen the meaning of our days. At St. Paul, we cultivate a community of lifelong learning.



FAITH EXPLORATION

Bible Study: Heart|Soul|Mind

Thursdays, beginning Sept. 17, 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall

This fall, Dr. Lisa Powell explores the book of Genesis to discover how God is a God of covenant. From creation and the garden to Abraham and Sarah, from the flood to the captivity of the Hebrew people, explore what God's promises and relationships teach us about faithfulness, trust, and belonging to God's story. Whether you're familiar with these stories or encountering them for the first time, this study invites you to ask questions, engage deeply, and encounter the God who calls us into covenant relationship. Contact: Lisa Powell, powelllisad@sau.edu.

► **Lisa Powell** is Professor of Theology at St. Ambrose University. She received her MDiv and PhD in Systematic Theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.



Fed on Scripture lunchtime series

Mondays, 12 noon, Church House Dining Room

Spend your lunchtime in conversation about Jesus and his teachings. Using a contemplative practice of Bible study called Lectio Divina, we read, share and pray through Jesus' words from the Gospel of John. No experience necessary, just an open heart and your own lunch if you want it. Each week covers a new passage, so come when you can! Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

Conversations of faith and culture

First Thursdays of the month, 6 p.m.

Gather with Pastor Mark for a discussion of select articles from the *Christian Century* magazine and other similar publications and blogs. Articles are available in the library two weeks prior to each gathering. Meet in the Luther Loft. Contact Mark Niethammer, mark@stpaulqc.org.

Theology Pub

*Second Thursday of the month, 6 p.m.,
Boozie's, 421 W. River Drive, Davenport*

Word has it that some of the best theology has been fashioned over tables loaded with good food and drink, and an atmosphere of strong friendship. Come to enjoy a rich mix of people and perspective, as we informally explore the many ways in which our faith intersects with our lives and the world. Contact: Justin Marquis, justinmarquis@stpaulqc.org.

Interfaith Creation Care Team

*Fourth Tuesday of the month, 12 noon,
Church House Dining Room*

The Interfaith Creation Care group is a coalition of people from diverse faith communities in the Quad Cities who demonstrate that caring for the earth is a deeply spiritual act. Rooted in the principle that creation care is an act of neighborly love, the group shows how small community actions can collectively address climate change. To connect or subscribe to the newsletter, email interfaithcreationcare@gmail.com. Contact: Becky Wiese, rlawmd@yahoo.com

SMALL GROUPS

College + Christ

College-aged adults (18-22) gather to deepen their faith and journey through life together. Contact: Adrianna Blackwell, blackwelladrianna@sau.edu.

Faith, Health, and Wholeness Coffee Chats

Settle into conversations on faith, health, and wholeness on the first and third Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m., in the Luther Loft. Each month features a different subject. Contact: Dortha DeWit, dorthamdw@aol.com.

Guys Coffee Group

Grab a cup of coffee and settle in to connect with fellow St. Paul men. Meeting on the second and fourth Mondays, 10 a.m., Library Commons. Contact: Dave McPherson, davemcph@msn.com.

Pickleball group

If you enjoy playing pickleball, a group of St. Paul people would love for you to join in the fun. On Thursdays at 1:30 p.m., meet at Kiwanis Park in Bettendorf for fun and community. Bring your own equipment and refreshments. Contact: Kit Whan, kitwhan1963@gmail.com.

St. Paul Birders

St. Paul members actively birdwatch at various locations throughout the QCA. Contact: Duane Haas, dhaas.dh@gmail.com.

Tech team

Do you have an interest in all things tech? Help run slides, audio/visual equipment, and other sanctuary technology during Saturday and Sunday worship services and special events. Contact: Cooper Schou, cooper@stpaulqc.org.

Young Adults

The young adult ministry is designed to give those in their 20s and 30s fun social events and meaningful service opportunities. Contact: KarrieAnne Burke, karrieanne16@gmail.com.



BOOK LOVERS

Occasional Tuesdays Book Group

Tuesdays, Oct. 13, 20, & 27, 7-7:45 a.m., Library Commons

Read and discuss Kate Bowler's *Joyful Anyway*. Kate, a Duke University professor who survived a stage-four cancer diagnosis, goes looking for joy that doesn't depend on life getting easier — not the toxic-positivity kind, but the kind that turns up unexpectedly in ordinary days. With honesty and humor, she makes room for small, extraordinary moments amid grief, boredom, and longing. The book is available in the Book Corner. Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Katy Warren, katy@stpaulqc.org.

Faithful Readers

Thursdays, Sept. 10 & Oct. 8, 7 p.m., Luther Loft

At the September meeting of this literature discussion group conversation focuses on *One Was a Soldier* by Julia Spencer-Fleming. The October meeting is *Stone Yard Devotional* by Charlotte Wood. All books are available in the Book Corner. Contact: Dave Crowe, davidcrowe@augustana.edu.

All St. Paul Reads 2026: *Theo of Golden*

Sunday, Oct. 18, 3-4:30 p.m., Library Commons

All St. Paul Reads is encouragement for the congregation to read and talk about a single book title in the same year. Enjoy desserts and conversation with a guest presenter. Childcare is available upon request. *Theo of Golden* is about a mysterious stranger who visits a small Southern town, collecting pencil portraits of its residents in exchange for hearing their life stories. The book is available in the St. Paul Book Corner. Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups.

A WARM WELCOME TO:

Justin Marquis

PASTORAL INTERN

Justin Marquis (pronounced “mar-queue”) joined the staff in August, bringing a philosophy professor’s curiosity, a semi-cross-country bike tour’s worth of patience, and a conviction that church can hold both its history and its future at once.

Justin studied philosophy, religious studies, and history at Purdue University, earned a master’s degree in philosophy there, and went on to earn a doctorate in philosophy from Loyola University Chicago. He taught philosophy at American University in Washington, D.C., before sensing it was time for something new. A detour through bartending in Cincinnati, a pandemic, an unexpected office job at a Lutheran church in Chicago and a 2,500-mile bike tour later, he’s arrived at St. Paul as part of a new kind of internship, one that stretches across three and a half years while he completes seminary.

Tell us about your journey from professor to seminary student.

“I was working in Cincinnati and trying to find myself. I had left the world of academia and I was figuring out who I am. For so long I’d thought of myself as a philosophy professor, but I didn’t want that to be my sole identity. I took that time alone on the bike trail to heal from the disappointment of what I thought my life was going to be and to become content with what life threw at me. It was really a sacred time of meditation. It was a form of prayer.

Two years in, I met my partner, Zyzzy. This was right around when the pandemic hit. Meeting her at just the right time was also important for me. I wouldn’t be here, considering serving in the church, if all of these things hadn’t happened.

When the world reopened, we decided to start fresh in Chicago where I found office administrative work at Irving Park Lutheran Church. I went into it thinking it would be just a job. I was really taken by surprise by this community, the good they did, and the way they showed love to people.”

What was the turning point?

“While working at Irving Park, I was asked to help with a funeral for a partner in a same sex couple. This was my first time inside a worship service in 20 years. The way the church honored and surrounded this family, I thought ‘that is how the gospel can be.’ It was a really eye-opening, life-changing moment.

Not long after, I preached for the first time. Getting to do that for people who want to be there, for all ages, all backgrounds, having it make a difference in people’s lives, it was very soon after I preached that I realized that’s what I’m supposed to do.”

How did you prepare for this next chapter?

“We spent five months and 2,500 miles bicycling across the Midwest, visiting Lutheran congregations along the way. It was so much fun to live off of our bikes, in a



tent, and see places from a different angle than we normally get to see.”

What excites you about the future?

“I’m intrigued by the interplay between something that is ancient and has a past, and something new that isn’t burned by the past but learns from it. I want to see how that tradition can be cultivated in a world that needs a lot of love right now.”

A new model for internship

Justin’s internship at St. Paul looks different than current intern Sarah Yotter. He’s enrolled in Wartburg Theological Seminary’s Master of Divinity (MDiv) Collaborative Learning program part-time. This program is a model built around partnership between students, congregations, ELCA synods, and the seminary itself, rather than a traditional on-campus track. He will work at St. Paul in a part-time capacity while completing the program.

SUNDAY LEARNING

On Sunday mornings, you'll find a variety of presenters and topics for adult classes, 10:15-11 a.m. Meet up with God's word, some riveting ideas, and interesting people. No need to register in advance. Grab your cup of coffee and settle in. Contact: Pam Garrett, pam@stpaulqc.org.



IN THE CHAPEL

SEPTEMBER 13

Healthcare at a crossroads

Tom Bowman, CEO, Community Health Care, Inc.

Major federal healthcare legislation passed in July 2025 including the One Big Beautiful Act carries real implications for how our communities access and afford care. CEO of Community Health Care Tom Bowman explores what's changing and why it matters.

SEPTEMBER 20

An introduction to artificial intelligence

Ben Driscoll, Director of AI, Twin State Technical Services

Curious about AI but it all feels very daunting? Learn what it is, why its use has grown rapidly, and practical ways to use it in your everyday life.

SEPTEMBER 27

Meet St. Paul intern Justin Marquis

Justin Marquis and Pam Garrett, residency & community programs admin

Meet Justin, St. Paul's newest intern from Wartburg Theological Seminary. Ask questions, connect with him, and hear about his faith journey. It's a chance to welcome Justin into the St. Paul community.

OCTOBER 4

When death draws near

Sara Olson-Smith, St. Paul pastor, Joel Moore, St. Paul deacon and registered nurse, and Dr. Steve Sorenson, MercyOne Genesis hospice director

Gather to explore the inevitable: when we die. Discover how Scripture comforts us, how angels intersect this liminal space and how death is both a physical and spiritual moment we will all experience.

LUTHER LOFT

Sacred landscapes: God of gardens & wilderness

Sundays, Sept. 13-Oct. 18, 10:15-11 a.m.

Nature imagery is bountiful in the Bible, but two settings provide the backdrop to some of the most well-known stories in the biblical narrative. Join intern Sarah Yotter for a six-week series on the gardens and wilderness of scripture, exploring the themes of each and their relationship to one another. Beginning in the garden of Eden and ending in the garden city of Revelation, explore wandering the wilderness, the prophets, Jesus' baptism and temptation, and the Garden of Gethsemane and the tomb. Contact: Sarah Yotter, sarahyotter@stpaulqc.org.

► **Week 1 | Sept. 13**

The Garden of Eden

► **Week 2 | Sept. 20**

Israel in the wilderness

► **Week 3 | Sept. 27**

Wilderness prophets

► **Week 4 | Oct. 4**

Jesus in the wilderness

► **Week 5 | Oct. 11**

Holy week

► **Week 6 | Oct. 18**

New creation

COMING UP:

Curious about what's coming up next at St. Paul? Scan the QR code to discover an exciting lineup of learning opportunities exploring topics that matter to your daily life. Don't miss out — scan now and see what's waiting for you!



KIDS & FAMILIES

Kids and families can find a wonderful second home at St. Paul. Staff and volunteers bring big hearts for sharing faith, and the congregation seeks to be a loving sign of God's grace for all families.



SUNDAY MORNINGS

Learning for kids

Sunday mornings, 10:15-11 a.m. starting Sept. 13

On Sept. 13, Sunday morning learning begins for the school year. Look for friendly St. Paul faces on that day to guide you. Registration and weekly check-in take place in Lower Commons for 3-year-olds through 5th grade. Contact: Abbey Cathelyn, abbey@stpaulqc.org.

Childcare

Staffed childcare for infants through kindergarteners is available every Sunday morning. Children are always welcome in worship, but the childcare service helps families who need assistance during the worship hour and at other times. Parents can stay in touch with childcare workers via text.

Nursing Moms' Room

A room for nursing moms, located next to the elevator area near the central staircase, is available. Find rocking chairs, a changing table, supplies, and a video feed from the Sanctuary during worship.

FAMILY FUN

Trunk or Treat

Sunday, Oct. 25, 5-7 p.m., South Parking Lot

Gather for St. Paul's spook-tacular family celebration! The night includes pizza and short worship service, followed by candy collecting and an epic parking lot dance extravaganza. Come dressed in your favorite costume and get ready for a night of fun. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Abbey Cathelyn, abbey@stpaulqc.org.

Christmas Pageant

Sunday, Dec. 13, 10:15 a.m.

Calling all kids ages 4-grade 6. Children delight in sharing the story of Jesus' birth through the annual St. Paul Christmas pageant. There are opportunities for kids with all levels of experience. Rehearsals are Wednesdays in November and December with a potential Saturday rehearsal. Contact: Abbey Cathelyn, abbey@stpaulqc.org.



PRESCHOOL

St. Paul Preschool is a loving community for children, ages 2-4. The church's classrooms fill with light and life on Monday through Friday mornings, 8:45-11:45 a.m., September through May. With a professional staff leading the way, this little village for preschoolers is solidly constructed in Christ's love. Questions? Contact preschool director Karen Strusz, karenstrusz@stpaulqc.org, or visit the preschool website at stpaulqcpreschool.org.

FALL MILESTONES

Kindergarten: Discover worship

Saturday, Sept. 19, 4 p.m.

Kids ask questions and explore St. Paul worship. A Bible and monogrammed worship bag for each child adds to the fun. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Abbey Cathelyn, abbey@stpaulqc.org.

Ninth Grade: Blessing of the keys

Sunday, Oct. 11, 10:15-11 a.m.

Parents and students come together for conversation about new responsibilities in life, including driving. A blessing is said over keys. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Ellie Lindmark, ellie@stpaulqc.org.

Third Grade: Bible Adventures

Sunday, Oct. 18, 10:15-11 a.m.

Students learn together about the written word of God. Each child receives a personal Bible and a blessing from the congregation at 9 a.m. worship. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Abbey Cathelyn, abbey@stpaulqc.org.

Tenth Grade: Share. Save. Spend.

Sunday, Nov. 8, 10:15-11 a.m.

This is a moment to pause and talk about money intentionally. Families begin the conversation about money and examine our hopes and values. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Ellie Lindmark, ellie@stpaulqc.org.

Four-year-olds: Pray and play

Sunday, Nov. 15, 10:15-11 a.m.

Children and parents learn about prayer and talking with God through fun, interactive stations. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Abbey Cathelyn, abbey@stpaulqc.org.

COMING UP:

Scan the QR code for a family & youth ministries calendar for the program year, including milestones for all ages.



PARENTING

Dads Group

Monthly gatherings

A gathering of guys hoping to strengthen some connections in the QCA. The group gathers for food and beverages, games, discussions, and other opportunities. Contact: Mike Koepp, michael.koepp@gmail.com.

Family Dinner and Parenting Conversations

Second Tuesdays of the month, beginning Sept. 15 (due to Labor Day)

5 p.m. family dinner, 5:30 parenting conversations, childcare provided

Gather with other families for food, play, and conversation. After sharing a simple meal, parents discuss a recent podcast, an article, or another parenting topic while the kids are cared for by our childcare team. Connect with other parents for support and encouragement while the children play! A freewill donation is accepted to help cover the cost of food. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Katy Warren, katy@stpaulqc.org.

Mom's Morning

Second and fourth Thursdays, 9-10:30 a.m., Church House Living Room

Friendships form when mothers of young children get together. Mom's Morning is a gathering that celebrates parenthood with laughter, prayer, and mutual support. In our time together, we study the Bible, explore parenting topics, and sometimes just hang out and drink coffee. Childcare is provided. Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

Mom's Night Out

Monthly gatherings

Gather with other moms for a monthly night out. Activities range from dinners to yoga in the park, and escape rooms to backyard gatherings. Email Chelsea Clark to be put on the Mom's Night Out email list at chelseamclark12@gmail.com.

Parents of Tweens & Teens

Occasional gatherings

Connect with other parents of children ages 8-18 as you navigate the joys and challenges of raising tweens and teens. Whether you're looking for support, conversation, or community, you'll find a welcoming place to connect. Contact: Rachael Suddarth, rachael.suddarth@gmail.com.

YOUTH

This is the place for off-the-charts fun, faith, and friendship. But it's so much more. Every encounter is aimed at nurturing and strengthening the faith of young people and their families in powerful ways.



MIDDLE SCHOOL

678 Daybreak

Sundays, starting Sept. 13, 10:15-11 a.m., Youth Room

Sunday gatherings are offered each week for students in grades 6-8. Kids develop a devotional pattern of asking questions, reading the Bible, and wondering and sharing about God. Most seventh and eighth graders also serve as acolytes during worship or sing in the Youth Choir. Contact: Ellie Lindmark, ellie@stpaulqc.org.

Confirmation

First three Wednesdays of the month, beginning Sept. 9, 6:30-8 p.m.

For youth in grades 7 and 8, St. Paul's confirmation ministry is a creative, Spirit-enlivened experience, built on relationships with God and others. To sign up, or for more information, contact Katy Warren, katy@stpaulqc.org.

The fall confirmation retreat for seventh-graders is Sept. 11-12, and for eighth-graders on Nov. 6-7. Both retreats take place at church and around the QCA.

678 Night

Wednesdays, Sept. 30 & Oct. 28, 6:30-8 p.m.

High-energy games + togetherness + great Bible studies + campfire-style worship = 678 Night. This group for those in grades 6, 7, and 8 meets periodically throughout the year. Watch for 678 announcements. Contact: Ellie Lindmark, ellie@stpaulqc.org.

HIGH SCHOOL

Sunday mornings

High school youth volunteer to teach Sunday learning for younger children, assist with worship, usher, work in the nursery, or sing in the Youth Choir.

Sunday Night Live (SNL)

Sundays, starting Sept. 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Youth Room

Grab a booth or a spot on "the carpet monster" for Sunday Night Live (SNL). SNL is a strong framework for high school youth, a fun place to get recharged before school on Monday morning. Jump into super-sized life experiences. SNL has something for everyone. Contact: Ellie Lindmark, ellie@stpaulqc.org.

Confirmation Faith Stories

Sundays, Sept. 20, 27, & Oct. 4, 10:15-11 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Faith stories are the culmination of confirmation at St. Paul. This fall, for three Sundays during the learning hour, ninth-graders share brief presentations describing how they see God at work in the world and in their lives. Anyone from the congregation is welcome to attend. Contact: Katy Warren, katy@stpaulqc.org.



Council Notes

With the program year right around the corner, St. Paul soon welcomes back all kinds of learning opportunities with many other fall activities to come. Pastoral intern Justin Marquis joined the staff in mid-August. Learn more about his internship program on pg. 10.

Karibu Market, a partnership with Tapestry Farms, marked one meaningful year of service and expanded from one to two markets each

month. The initiative now serves 40 refugee families with dedicated support from more than 50 volunteers who serve the neighborhood.

The Mission Board approved funding for two new organizations: Clock, Inc. and Central Community Circle Food Pantry, drawing resources from the Mission Board Fund.

The youth room received a refresh with new paint and carpet, brightening the space.

Pam Garrett takes on expanded role

When Pam Garrett walks into St. Paul, her day is full of possibility. She might be scheduling next month's chapel learning speakers, connecting a St. Paul person with a service opportunity, or dreaming up the next learning session that will shape the spiritual formation of our pastoral interns.

Pam has managed the pastoral residency program part-time for the past two years. Now, with an expanded role and increased hours, she has taken on two new responsibilities that deepen St. Paul's commitment to learning, service, and spiritual growth. Pam's new role, Residency and community programs administrator, wraps in the oversight of the residency program, helping to coordinate chapel learning sessions, and as a volunteer coordinator.

Pam's path to St. Paul wound through a career in accounting and, more recently, real estate. A Bettendorf native, she and her husband, Darren, joined St. Paul in December 2023.

"I love to organize everything and anything," Pam said. "I'm good at breaking down big projects into smaller, more manageable pieces," an instinct that now shapes how she supports the residency program.

As volunteer connector, Pam matches St. Paul people with service opportunities, working alongside Deacon Joel Moore to help people find ways to make a difference. As chapel learning coordinator, she works with the pastoral team to identify speakers and hosts conversations that nourish faith.

Behind the scenes, Pam is the connector, the organizer, and the cheerleader for a congregation that wants to be a training ground for ministry. Her expanded role honors the work already underway and opens new doors for St. Paul people to live out their callings.



WORSHIP at St. Paul

► September 5 & 6

Season after Pentecost

Preaching:

5pm/9am: Sara Olson-Smith
8/11:15am: Katy Warren

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

► September 12 & 13

Season after Pentecost

Preaching:

All services: Mark Niethammer

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

► September 19 & 20

Season after Pentecost

Preaching:

5pm/9am: Katy Warren
8/11:15am: Sara Olson-Smith

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

► September 26 & 27

Season after Pentecost

Preaching:

5pm/9am: Mark Niethammer
8/11:15am: Sarah Yotter

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

► October 3 & 4

Season after Pentecost

Preaching:

5pm/9am: Sarah Yotter
8/11:15am: Sara Olson-Smith

Liturgical tradition:

5pm/8 & 9am

Contemporary Open Spirit:

11:15am

CONNECT WITH ST. PAUL

St. Paul App

Access the calendar, manage your giving, connect with small groups, and more.



Podcast

Featuring the worship life of St. Paul with music, scripture, and a message.



Social Media

Stay up-to-date with news, events, and photos of our life together at St. Paul.





ST. PAUL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

2136 Brady Street
Davenport, IA 52803

STARTUP WEEKEND

STARTING SEPT. 13 *Learning for all: 10:15-11 a.m.*

