



**Midwest
FOOD BANK**



2024 Annual Report

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Forrest, IL



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God's love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ's love. In Psalm 93, we read: "More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore" (4-5).

God's love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church's ability to share the message of God's love to people who are longing for it. Through your

“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you've helped carry this message of God's majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God's promises, sure of God's love and goodness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Forrest, Illinois
Annual Meeting February 2, 2025

Agenda

1. Opening

- a. Call to Order – *Neal Harms, President*
- b. Prayer – *Pastor Dave Castner*
- c. Motion to Accept the Agenda – *Neal Harms, President*

2. Reports

- a. 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes – *Peg Austman, Council Secretary*
- b. Treasurer's Report – *Tom Kilgus*
- c. Statistical Parish Report – *Beverly Koerner*
- d. Pastor's Reflections – *Pastor Dave Castner*
- e. Memorial Fund - *Tom Kilgus*
- f. Evangelism/Stewardship - *Jerry & Peg Austman and Gene & Carolyn Riha*
- g. Second Century – *Art Lehmann*
- h. Vision Fund - *Jerry Austman*
- i. Lutheran Youth Organization – *Jeff Austman*
- j. Christian Education/Sunday School – *Julie Harms*
- k. Lady's Bible Study Group – *Judy Bachtold*
- l. Paul's Place – *Paula Crane*
- m. Piecemakers – *Carolyn Riha*

3. Old Business

4. New Business

- a. Elections Church Council - 3-year term 2025, 2026 & 2027
 - i. Church Council – Jerry Austman (trustee), Monica Markley (secretary), Samantha Stork (elder)
 - ii. Synod Delegates – Gene & Carolyn Riha
 - iii. Prairieview Delegates – Dennis & Elise Evelsizer
 - iv. Committee Chairs
 1. Memorial - *Tom Kilgus*
 2. Evangelism - *Jerry & Peg Austman and Gene & Carolyn Riha*
 3. Second Century – *Art Lehmann*
 4. Vision - *Jerry Austman*
 5. Property - *Trustees*
 6. Christian Education – *Julie Harms*
 7. Worship – *Pam Kilgus*
 8. Paul's Place – *Paula Crane*
- b. Staff Compensation
 - i. Pastor
 - ii. Secretary
 - iii. Organist/Pianist
 - iv. Cleaning staff
- c. Financial Support
 - i. Madagascar Seminarians
 - ii. Prairieview
 - iii. Fairview Haven
 - iv. Matt and Janelle Steidinger – Amazon
 - v. Dan and Dawn Hall – Albania
 - vi. Evan Bachtold Family – Ireland

5. Adjourn

- a. Motion to Adjourn
- b. Close with Lord's Prayer

St. Paul's Lutheran Church Annual Meeting
February 11, 2024

The meeting was called to order by President Paula Crane at 11:14 am.

Pastor Dave Castner led in prayer.

Jerry Austman made a motion to accept the corrected agenda (correction-adding Fairview Haven to financial support list). Carolyn Riha 2nd. MC

Reports:

*A motion to accept the 2023 Annual Meeting minutes as printed was made by Sandy Schrof, 2nd by Jerry Austman. MC.

*A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as printed was made by Jeff Austman, 2nd by Brent Crane. MC.

*Jerry Austman made a motion to accept the remaining agenda reports as printed, Jim Gerber 2nd. MC.

Old Business: none

New Business:

A: Rich Stork made the motion to approve Lisa Heiser and Brent Crane to the church council, 2nd by Art Lehmann. MC

B: Brent Crane made the motion to approve Carolyn Riha and Amber Maurer as synod delegates (June 6-8 in Decatur), Jeff Austman 2nd. MC.

C. Neal Harms made a motion to approve Dennis and Elsie Evelsizer as Prairieview delegates, Jerry Austman 2nd. MC.

D: Ruth Luttrell made a motion to accept the remaining committee chairs as printed, Hannah Austman 2nd. MC.

E: Jerry Austman made the motion to increase paid staff- Pastor Dave \$1500, church secretary \$17 to \$18, Church organist \$80 to \$84, and cleaning from \$25 to \$26. 2nd by Art Lehmann. MC.

F: Jerry Austman made a motion to retain the same level of support to the outreach programs-Madagasascar Seminarians \$1200 (from 2nd Century), Prairieview and Fairview Haven \$1500 each (from local benevelance), Steidinger Family in Amazon, Bachtold Family in Ireland, and Hope Albania (Hall family) \$2500 each (from the Vision Fund). 2nd by Brent Crane. MC.

G: Paul's Place- Brochures and letters have been sent to approximately 40 churches in the surrounding area.

Neal Harms thanked Paula Crane for her dedicated service as our 2023 Church President.

Tom Kilgus made a motion to. Adjourn. Ed Harms 2nd. MC.
Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peg Austman".

Peg Austman, Secretary

YEAR END CASH SUMMARY REPORT

(Bank account and credit transactions)

	<u>Units</u>	<u>TOTAL THRU DEC</u>
<u>ASSETS (non-cash) Net Chg</u>		<u>0.00</u>
<u>LIABILITIES Net Change</u>		<u>0.00</u>

***** INCOME AND EXPENSE *****

CHURCH INCOME

300 Current	0	123,925.87
301 Local Benevolence	0	1,500.00
302 Memorial	0	235.00
303 Capital	0	915.00
305 Vision	0	7,000.00
306 2nd Century	0	1,240.00
307 Synod	0	950.00
308 Paul's Place	0	1,866.20
309 Fellowship	0	1,006.56
310 Lent	0	432.00
311 Cleaning	0	830.00
313 Shoebox	0	1,100.00
314 Fat Tuesday	0	1,354.00
351 Check Acct Interest	0	4,686.55
353 Miscellaneous Income	0	5,647.00
<u>CHURCH INCOME Total</u>		<u>152,688.18</u>

CHURCH EXPENSE

401 Local Benevolence	0	3,592.00
402 Memorial	0	1,081.55
404 Piecemakers	0	225.81
405 Vision	0	11,396.73
406 2nd Century	0	2,200.00
407 Synod	0	850.00
408 Paul's Place	0	1,985.13
409 Fellowship	0	2,422.27
413 Shoebox	0	1,100.00
420 Church Telephone	0	598.94
421 Church Electric	0	5,613.60
422 Church Water	0	406.75

	<u>Units</u>	<u>TOTAL THRU DEC</u>
CHURCH EXPENSE (continued)		
423 Church Natural Gas	0	3,350.48
424 Parsonage Natural Gas	0	944.73
425 Parsonage Water	0	400.39
426 Parsonage Electric	0	608.36
428 Insurance	0	11,635.00
430 Repairs	0	90.00
431 Worship supplies	0	55.29
432 Maintenance	0	953.53
433 Cleaning	0	2,729.60
434 Church Internet	0	348.00
435 Exterminating	0	720.00
436 Miscellaneous Expense	0	8,099.23
437 Copier expenses	0	5,422.02
440 Christian Education	0	289.00
444 Organist	0	4,104.00
450 Membership Support	0	954.27
463 Portico	0	14,212.97
464 Pastor Mileage	0	7,037.93
471 Worship Materials	0	387.35
473 Lay Pastor	0	400.00
474 Music	0	350.00
480 health insurance reimburs	0	8,466.00
481 Housing Allowance	0	39,999.84
482 Pastor Base pay	0	12,375.14
483 Employee share Portico	0	(8,576.62)
484 Pastor other Expencc	0	402.88
491 Miscellaneous Expense	0	165.11
510 Federal Labor Deposits	0	1,610.50
511 State Labor Deposits	0	811.72
541 Secretary Salary	787.5	12,326.70
597 Real Estate Taxes	0	15.00
<u>CHURCH EXPENSE Total</u>		<u>162,161.20</u>
<u>INCOME MINUS EXPENSE</u>		<u>(9,473.02)</u>
<u>CHUR CASH NET</u>		<u>(9,473.02)</u>

BANK AND LOAN BALANCE REPORT

<u>Chur Banking Accounts</u>	<u>Beg. Yr. Bal.</u>	<u>Inflows</u>	<u>Outflows</u>	<u>End Mon. Bal.</u>
100 Operating Account	41,884.71	137,214.57	143,875.11	35,224.17
101 Local Benevolence	10,998.81	1,500.00	3,092.00	9,406.81
102 Memorial	30,263.27	235.00	1,231.55	29,266.72
103 Capital Fund	14,847.98	905.00	0.00	15,752.98
104 Piecemakers	1,764.39	0.00	225.81	1,538.58
105 Vision	9,125.66	7,019.27	11,536.73	4,608.20
106 2nd Century	8,013.17	1,259.27	2,200.00	7,072.44
Total Chur Bank Accts	118,897.99	148,133.11	162,161.20	102,869.90
 <u>Chur Asset Accounts</u>	 <u>Beg. Yr. Bal.</u>	 <u>Inflows</u>	 <u>Outflows</u>	 <u>End Mon. Bal.</u>
110 CD at FSB	150,000.00	4,529.00	0.00	154,529.00
Total Chur Bank & Assets	268,897.99	152,662.11	162,161.20	257,398.90
 <u>Non-Chur Accounts</u>	 <u>Beg. Yr. Bal.</u>	 <u>Inflows</u>	 <u>Outflows</u>	 <u>End Mon. Bal.</u>
700 LYO Account	10,447.55	28.07	0.00	10,473.62
Total All Bank & Assets	277,345.54	152,688.18	162,161.20	267,872.52

Giving Units---35

Above - \$8,000 ...4	\$2,000 - \$2,999...2
\$6,000 - \$7,999...3	\$1,000 - \$1,999 ...7
\$4,000 - \$5,999...6	\$ 500 - \$ 999 ...5
\$3,000 - \$3,999...2	\$ 1 ---- \$ 499 ...6

2024 Statistical Parish Report

Baptized members as of December 31, 2023	242
Baptized during 2024	2
By Transfer	5
Members removed in 2024	
By death	2
By transfer	5
Total baptized members December 31, 2024	242

Total number of confirmed members as of December 31, 2023	242
Members received in 2024	
By Affirmation of Faith (Confirmation)	0
By Transfer (Affirmation of Baptism)	5
Members removed in 2024	
By death	5
By transfer	2
Total number of confirmed members as of December 31, 2024	240

Total number of people actively participating	60

	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Communion</u>
Average weekly attendance	42	41
<i>Special Services</i>		
Ash Wednesday	26	26
Lent Midweek Average	25	
Maunday Thursday	28	27
Good Friday	28	
Easter Sunday	27	62
Advent Midweek Average	28	
Christmas Eve	50	44

2024 Church Member Activity

Baptized: 2

Braylynn Nicole Humphrey	August 4, 2024
Duncan Micheal Allen	September 22, 2024

Confirmed: 0

Affirmation of Baptism: 0

Deaths: 5

Ruth Luttrell – Died May 13, 2024
Nathan Farris – Died June 18, 2024
John Weakman – Died August 5, 2024
Rita Dunn – Died October 10, 2024
Diane Rieger – Died November 6, 2024

Weddings: 0

Transferred In: 5

Calvin F. Strahm	September 29, 2024
Todd Ronald Scheel	September 29, 2024
Sheila Marie Davies	September 29, 2024
Monica Markley	September 29, 2024
Gabby Zeedyk	September 29, 2024

Transferred Out: 2

March 17, 2024	Debbie Steidinger to	First Baptist Church of Fairbury
March 20, 2024	Patricia (Weakman) Ulitzsch to	St. Paul Evangelical Church of Chatsworth

Prepared by Beverly Koerner, secretary

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have wound up another year and am starting another, and just when I got used to writing 2024 on documents. I am also approaching a year and a half with you, and I could not be happier. I am truly blessed to be here, and I cannot express what an honor it is to be a part of this family.

It is exciting to be a small part of St Paul's because we have so much going on. I feel a sense of gaining momentum and people are hearing about us. We are an active and dynamic church that has grown by seven adults and one baptism. That is eight people! Do you realize how significant that is in a town of 1,100? And we're just getting started.

We do fun outings together every fall like we did recently to Raider Family Farm. In addition, we have youth LYO getting started, bible studies, confirmation, and other ministries planned for the future. We have had the Madrigals sing in worship, Dr. Mike Lockett give a presentation in worship, and missionary Evan Bachtold talk to us about his family's work in Ireland. I would say we have a lot going on and that is exciting.

We are so blessed to have such great and unselfish leadership in our church as well. We have a strong and healthy council that I am proud to say only desires to serve God and their community. Our cup truly runs over when we consider all we have happening here.

As we continue to move forward the excitement for the future is almost palpable. There is no limit to our potential, and I am glad I can be part of such a loving and dynamic church family.

Keep the faith and if we continue to work for the glory of Jesus, we can't help but be successful! As Colossians 3:17 says, *"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

Blessings,

Pastor Dave

2024 Memorial fund report

Balance on hand, January 1, 2024-----\$ 30,263.27

Memorial Income -----\$ 235.00

Ruth Luttrell, Dave Waibel

Expenses

Funeral expense-----\$ 682.68

New Lights front of sanctuary & Paint Paul's Place-----\$ 548.87

Total-----\$ 1,231.55

Balance on Hand, December 31, 2024-----\$ 29,266.72

Respectively Submitted

Tom Kilgus

Evangelism/Stewardship Annual Report 2024

The Evangelism/Stewardship Committee looks for ways to engage our church family in activities to help others and to strengthen our ties with each other. Some of the things that we do are:

*Comfort meals are taken to a person/family that is in need during an illness, etc. Judy Bachtold is the contact person 815 848 3898.

*Sunshine Bags/Holiday Bags are given to persons in a nursing home/sick. Julie Harms is the contact person. 815 867 7569.

*Helping Hands are persons who are willing to help with a specific need, such as a wheelchair ramp, etc. Jerry Austman is the contact 815 848 8491.

ALL OF THE ABOVE THINGS CAN ONLY BE DONE IF THE NEED IS KNOWN.

If you know someone who would benefit from any of the above things, please contact the appropriate person.

Events that happened in 2024:

*2/24 Six boxes were packed and shipped to college students and those serving in the military.

*2/13/24 Fat Tuesday Pancake and Sausage Supper raised \$1,334 for the Shoebox Program and Forrest Food Pantry. THRIVENT sponsored.

*2/18/24 Family Game nite with pizza.

*February 21, 28, March 6, 13, 20, 27 Lenten Wednesday nite soup supper/worship.

*3/31/24 Easter Breakfast hosted by the Ladies Bible Study Group.

*5/5/24 Bowling at Gibson. 15 attended

*5/12/24 Carnation given to woman in honor of Mother's Day

*6/16/24 Ties/candy given to men in honor of Father's Day

* 6/26/24 Midwest Food Bank Volunteer Evening with 27 helping.

*7/24 Christmas in July to raise money for Shoebox shipping. THRIVENT sponsored.

*8/25/24 Praise at the Pavilion. Combined worship service with Lutherans from Fairbury/Chatsworth with a potluck following.

*9/08/24 God's Work Our Hands. We worked at the Food Pantry and got items ready for Shoebox packing.

*9/29/24 Game nite at the church

*10/27/24 Family Fun Fest to Rader Farm

*11/10/24 Operation Christmas Child/Shoebox packing. A total of 70 boxes were packed.

*11/24/24 Hanging of Greens.

*12/01/24 Advent Dinner.

*12/2/24 Rang the bell for the Salvation Army at Dave's.

*12/4/24 Super Soup Supper with Methodist Church (open to public) to raise funds for Hurricane Relief. THRIVENT sponsored. \$5,000 raised

*December 11 and 18 Advent Soup Supper/Worship.

*Cookie exchange after worship

*12/24 Eight Holiday Gift Bags were given. Julie Harms headed this project.

A heartfelt THANK YOU to all who helped with these projects. This committee is open to anyone who wants to join us. Your presence would be a blessing!

Submitted by

Jerry and Peg Austman
Gene and Carolyn Riha

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SECOND CENTURY COMMITTEE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose of the Fund

Primary: To encourage members of St. Paul's to prepare for becoming Lutheran pastors and to provide funds and support to help make this a reality.

Secondary: To encourage members of St. Paul's to be open to any full time Christian Ministry and to provide funds and support for helping prepare for such calls.

If there are funds and no candidates from St. Paul's in need, income will be used to fund training or materials for others who are preparing for Ministry.

Please contact a member of the committee with the name, address and reason for the request.

We continue to pray that other members of our congregation will respond to a call to serve in Ministry.

Balance on Hand 1/1/2024	\$ 8,013.17
Contributions by St. Paul's members	\$ 240.00
Interest earned	\$ 19.27
Grants paid--- Central/Southern IL Synod---Madagascar seminarians	\$ 1,200.00

Balance on Hand 12/31/2024 \$7,072.44

Respectfully submitted,

Committee members:

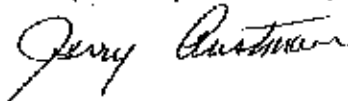
Art Lehmann, Terry Bachtold,

Neal Harms, Jim Gerber

St. Paul's Lutheran Vision Fund

Checking Account	1/1/24	9,125.66
Interest on Checking	2024	18.15
Money Received from Cambridge account		7,000.00
Funds available for Mission Work.	1/1/2024	5,180.35
Donations designated for Mission work		0
Funds spent on Mission Work		3638.38
Funds available for Mission Work	12/31/2024	1,541.97
Money Available in General Fund	1/1/2024	3,945.31
Donations Designated to General Fund		7018.15
Money Disbursed From General Fund		
Hope Albania		2,500.00
Amazon Salt and Light		2,500.00
AWBE		2,500.00
Mission trip		500.00
Fat Tuesday		398.35
Funds available in General Fund	12/31/24	2,565.11
Checking account balance.	12/31/2024	4107.08
Cambridge Investment Account.	11/30/2023	198,377.98
Cambridge Investment Account.	11/30/2024	235,940.02

Respectfully Submitted,



St. Paul's 2024 LYO Annual Report

1/1/24 Balance	\$10,447.55
Interest for year	\$26.07
12/31/24 Balance	\$10,473.62

With so small numbers our activities are limited. Serving fellowship once a month and helping at Midwest Food Bank were our activities. We have started to try meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

God's Blessings,
Jeff & Kate Austman

Christian Education

My goal for religious education this ministry has been twofold: to nurture the Biblical upbringing of the youth of St. Paul's, and to encourage them to reach out to family and friends with God's word and through a Godly lifestyle.

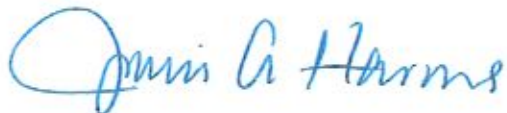
There is currently one Sunday school class; Pre-k through sixth grade. Attendance fluctuates between 1-3 children per week. Unfortunately, many weeks we have no kids. Thanks to Sue Strong for continuing to volunteer and to teach this class. Although our numbers are small, we will continue to offer children religious education on a weekly basis, for fear of losing the program altogether if we do not.

Our curriculum this year is from Grow Kids. Most lessons have been on classic bible stories from the Old Testament. Class structure includes learning and reading about books from the bible, video representations of the bible stories, in addition to wonderful crafts, puzzles and activities.

We also have started back up a Confirmation class with 2 students. This class is being taught by Pastor.

Thank you for your support.

- Faithfully submitted,



Julie Harms

St. Paul's Lutheran Lady's Bible Study

St. Paul's Lutheran Lady's Bible study met weekly through spring and summer this year. We began our meetings by attending the Lenten services at church and serving the Easter Breakfast. After Easter, we met on Wednesdays at Lisa Heiser's home, from 6:30 to 8:00 P.M. We worked our way through a study of the Book of Revelation, following Charles Swindoll's "Livings Insights, New Testament Commentary." We also used some of the books on Revelation from our church library. One week, we gave ourselves a break by having a group dinner at Dos Fuentes, a Mexican restaurant in Fairbury.

When we reached the end of the book, at the end of September, everyone agreed it had been a heavy study. We didn't fully understand some of the figurative language but came away with the knowledge that "God has revealed enough details about the future to instill hope". We finished our year with a viewing of the movie "I Can Only Imagine", the true story behind the hit song of the same name.

Thanks to Lisa Heiser for opening her home to us each week, and on the few times when she has not been available, thanks to Peg and Sandy for inviting us to use their homes. Just before Christmas, Paula graciously hosted a fun Christmas gathering at her house. We may not meet all year long, but we want to stay connected, because everyone knows—women are better together.

In this new year, we plan to start our meetings during the Lenten services and continue with "Life Lessons from Psalms" by Max Lucado. Our group is open to anyone interested in joining and if you have questions, you can ask any one of us.

Peg Austman	Lisa Heiser
Judy Bachtold	Pam Kilgus
Paula Crane	Jana Lehmann
Jean Doran	Sandy Schrof
Julie Harms	Teresa Strahm
Norma Harms	Kimberly Yoder

Submitted by Judy Bachtold

Paul's Place:

During the past year, Paul's Place has continued to serve missionary families from all over the world. The mission of Paul's Place is to provide accommodations for missionary families while they are on furlough here in the US. Four missionary families were welcomed to Paul's Place, a service offered at no cost to them. In total, Paul's Place was occupied by missionary families twelve weeks throughout the year. It is the goal of the church to continue this service and increase the number of missionary families served.

Respectfully Submitted by Paula Crane

PIECEMAKERS 2025

The Piecemakers continue to meet every Tuesday afternoon. In 2025 we will have four graduating seniors. We are currently working on those quilts.

Piecemakers meet every Tuesday from 2:00 to approximately 4:30. Our group is small, and we'd be happy to increase our numbers. All are welcome to join us. Quilting or sewing skills are not necessary. Come visit with us, and share the fellowship. You may discover a new hobby.

The Piecemakers: Judy Gerber, Norma Harms, Deb Sanders, Sandy Schrof, and Carolyn Riha

Submitted by Carolyn Riha

