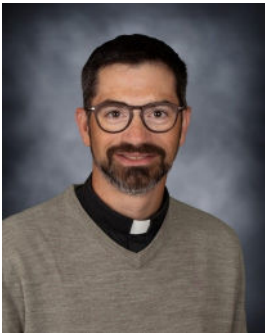


APRIL EPISTLE



ST. PAUL'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH, SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER (ECC)

APRIL 2025



Thank You!

Jason A. Schockman, Associate Pastor

I want to thank the you, Saints of the Lord here at St. Paul's for the commitment you've made as a congregation to support the Gospel work going on in the Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission (DRLM). It is inspiring to have a chance to see first-hand the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation being proclaimed in the name of Jesus.

In March we (Kim Stratil, Clayton Petersen, and I) went to Santo Domingo and met with the leadership, missionary pastors, and laity serving our sister churches there. We did have some time to explore a couple of the cultural sights (Christopher Columbus Lighthouse and the Cathedral of Santo Domingo which is the oldest existing in the Americas). We were extremely well fed, by both the laity of the congregations we visited and restaurants serving food from across Latin America.

The rapidly growing DRLM is the hub for mission work in the Latin America & Caribbean region (LAC). Church plants in the country's two largest cities (Santo Domingo and Santiago) are moving toward self-sufficiency as they identify lay leaders, reach out to local and immigrant communities, and sow daughter preaching stations despite the poverty level that some of our colleagues live under.

In one of the churches (Amigos de Cristo "The Friends of Christ"), the roof leaks, it gets very hot in the summer with no air conditioning, and noisy when it rains on the tin roof. I needed to use the facility and was advised by our host to use the restroom in the pastor's office because it was the best one at the church. The first thing I noticed was there was no handle on the faucet. Yet, this poverty didn't hinder the pastor (Lucas) to speak of the Gospel to the young people who come to play volleyball, basketball, and soccer, a ministry established by a layman we met named Victor.

Victor has started 5 area (mission fields) where they pour a slab of concrete. Paint it and use it for sports activities. "Chamos" ("kid" or "buddy" or "dude") is the name of the league that Victor has started. He named it this after the colloquial term that is used in his home country, Venezuela. Three years ago, when he began Chamos, there were only a handful of people involved and now he has more than 250. Our local pastors partner with the teams and are expanding devotions with the teams in Santiago to a full-blown Bible Study and are reaching over 100 people each time.

The church in Pueblo Nuevo (outside Santiago) continues to look for the right piece of land on which to build a church which reflects the sacramental center of our life together.

The church plant in Palma Ariba is adjacent to the group home for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The congregation wholeheartedly welcomes them into its midst, visibly demonstrating Christ's love for all people.

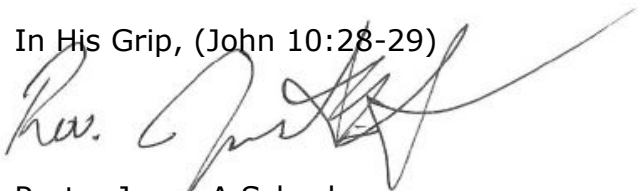
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The five congregations across the country continue to expand intentional outreach programs in their respective communities. To date, two schools have been established, as well as four preaching stations.

Concordia the Reformer Seminary and Mercy Center (CMSCR) cements the DRLM as the hub with her regional impact. Her international student body serves the DRLM churches, a group home and schools. In addition, her 31 graduates carry sound Lutheran doctrine to countries in the LAC region and beyond. There are currently 44 students from across the LAC region currently enrolled at Concordia the Reformer Seminary. When they graduate and are ordained, the Seminary will have trained 75 of the 107 or the Lutheran pastors in the LAC region.

The Mercy Center equips leaders and laity in LCMS missions and partner churches to be the hands, feet, and voice of the Church, providing conferences both online and in-person related to the Church's mercy arm. God is doing some wonderful things, and we are part of it.

In His Grip, (John 10:28-29)



Pastor Jason A Schockman

Ladies Aid

Please plan to join us at our next Ladies Aid meeting on Thursday, April 3rd, at 5:30 pm for an evening of fun, food and fellowship. And, as always, we'd love it if you'd bring a friend!

Save the date for our annual Mother/Daughter/Friend Banquet on Tuesday, May 13th. Stay tuned for more details.



Piggly Wiggly Receipt fundraiser

If you shop at Piggly Wiggly, please deposit your receipts in the designated box in Fellowship Hall. The money raised from your receipts helps to continue the programming for our youth.

April Events

- April 6th HS Youth Group 7-8:30 pm
- April 13th Deliver Easter Food Bags after the 10:30am service
- April 13th MS Youth Group 5:30-7pm; HS Youth Group 7-8:30pm
- April 19th Easter Breakfast Set-Up
- April 20th Easter Breakfast/NO YOUTH GROUP
- April 27th END OF THE YEAR FUN - MS & HS Bowling after 10:30 service



Dispatches from The Office

Rev. Lance Armstrong O'Donnell, Senior Pastor

A Time for Pilgrimage and for Thanksgiving

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" (Psalm 122:1, ESV)

Dear Friends,

A Time for Pilgrimage

"A Song of Ascents" is a heading given to psalms 120-134, which are associated together with "going up." In his book, *The Message of the Psalter*, David Mitchel notes that "The Songs of Ascents may have been used in the context of pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles," a.k.a., "The Feast of Booths," one of three great annual Old Testament festivals. This was a fall festival of the harvest, and the people dwelled in tents ("booths"). It is a seven-day festival, with a Sabbath rest on the first and eighth days. On the first day they took branches from palm trees and rejoiced before the Lord. Then they lived in tents for the week, remembering their years of wandering after Egyptian slavery. When Jesus says, "I AM the light of the world," (John 8.12) Mitchell notes, "the setting could be the last night of the feast when the celebrants stayed up all night in the temple courts."

I hope that you see the parallels with our Christian "Holy Week." On Palm Sunday we wave the palms and remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Weather-permitting, we will begin our Palm Sunday on April 13, 2025 on Oconomowoc's "Village Green." God-willing, about 7:45 a.m. we will begin singing our "songs of ascent" as we follow the cross "up to the house of the Lord" for the beginning of our Holy Week. And then, each day during Holy Week we will remember the price for our rescue from our slavery to sin: the death of Christ. And, after sun down on the beginning of the eighth day, as our forefathers did on the ultimate day of the Feast of Booths, we will begin our remembrance of the resurrection of the Son of God, "the light of the world" with the serene fireside and candle-lit "Easter Vigil."

Our forefathers who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths were confirmed in their faith through the daily ritual enactment of their wandering years and deliverance from slavery. If you have not done a deep participation in Holy Week before, I encourage you to join us for as much as possible. From Palm Sunday through Easter we have daily services, solemn and holy, leading up to great celebration of "The Resurrection of Our Lord" on April 20th. Through the ritual remembrance of Christ's passion in these daily services we are confirmed in ". . . the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9, ESV)

A Time for Thanksgiving

The Lord is doing some wonderful things at St. Paul's. I wish to highlight a couple, and offer a word of encouragement and admonition. In first four weekends of March 2019 (the last full March before the pandemic) we averaged 320 people in worship per weekend. In the first four

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weeks of March 2025 we averaged 421. (BTW, 2023 was 334; 2024 was 363) In the first quarter (Jan – Mar) of 2019 we averaged 354 per weekend. In 2025 it's 387. In addition, over the last year our Life Application Bible Study on Sunday has nearly doubled in size, and *that*—attendance in Sunday adult Bible study—is the *key metric* for congregational health in Ted Kober's *Built on the Rock: The Healthy Congregation*.

Here's my concern, and my pastoral admonition: **Though we are larger in the key metric for congregation health (adult Bible study attendance) and larger in weekly worship attendance, why are we significantly behind last year's offering totals?** (And 5% behind projections?) This is a big deal. Over the last few years, as a congregation we made a commitment to keep good benefits and work towards paying our excellent staff at the district scale. We made a commitment to wise stewardship of our beautiful facility and downtown location by doing regular maintenance and hiring a facilities manager. We made a commitment—as a congregation with operations of over \$3 Million—to wiser business practices by hiring accounting and human resources services.

Friends, we have much for which to be thankful, and we are *all* under inflationary pressure. The pastors and elders and Church Leadership Team are asking *all of us* to prayerfully consider our giving. If your life circumstances have changed, tell us. Our budget will be finalized at the 4/29/2025 CLT meeting. Realistically, that means we have between now and Easter to rally as a congregation. Otherwise, we will have to make some difficult adjustments.

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." (2 Cor 9:8, ESV)

Yours in Christ,



Pastor Lance O'Donnell
Wednesday of Lent 3
26 March, A.D. 2025

FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Baptisms

Mila Jacquelyn, daughter of Joshua & Valerie Peters
Abel Joshua, son of Joshua & Valerie Peters

Transfer from another LCMS Church

Rev. Matthew & Bonnie Thompson

Baptized 1996 Confirmed 1207



The Lenten meals will be served prior to our evening midweek Lenten Worship services. The meals will be served in the Fellowship Hall from 5:00-6:15pm. Below are the dates and menus of the remaining meals.

Wednesday, April 2nd: Sponsored by Women of Joy

Menu: Taco Bar

Wednesday, April 9th: Sponsored by the Board of Elders

Menu: Pork sandwiches, sides, desserts and beverages

APRIL 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8:00 am Divine Worship 8:15 am Blood Pressure Screening 9:15 am Sunday School 9:15 am Public School Confirmation 10:30 am Divine Worship 7:00 pm HS Youth Group	5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru	6:00 pm LWML 6:00 pm Board of Elders Meeting	12:15 pm Midweek Lenten Worship 5:00 pm Midweek Lenten Meal 6:30 pm Midweek Lenten Worship	5:30 pm Ladies Aid 6:30 pm Church Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Praise Team Rehearsal	8:00 am Women of Joy Bible Study 10:00 am Packing Easter Food Bags 5:00 pm Traditional Worship 8:30 pm AA Meeting	
8:00 am Divine Worship 8:15 am Sunday School 9:15 am Adult Bible Study 10:30 am Divine Worship 7:00 pm HS Youth Group	5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru	12:15 pm Holy Tuesday Worship 6:30 pm Holy Tuesday Worship 7:00 pm Praise Team Rehearsal	11:00 am Caring Thru Sharing 12:15 pm Midweek Lenten Worship 5:00 pm Midweek Lenten Meal 6:15 pm Midweek Lent Hymn Sing 6:30 pm Midweek Lenten Worship	6:30 pm Church Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Praise Team Rehearsal	7:30 am Journeymen 5:00 pm Traditional Worship 8:30 pm AA Meeting	
8:00 am Divine Worship 8:15 am Sunday School 9:15 am Public School Confirmation 10:30 am Divine Worship 11:45 am Youth Deliver EFB 5:30 pm Parent Partnership Workshop 5:30 pm MS Youth Group 7:00 pm HS Youth Group	12:15pm Holy Monday Worship 6:00 pm Lord's Lambs Giveaway 6:30 pm Holy Monday Worship	12:15 pm Holy Wednesday Worship 6:30 pm Holy Wednesday Worship	12:15 pm Holy Maundy Thursday Worship 6:30 pm Maundy Thursday Worship	8:00 am Women of Joy Bible Study 12:15 pm Holy Saturday Worship 3:00 pm YG Easter Breakfast Set-Up NO 5:00 pm WORSHIP 8:00 pm Easter Vigil 8:30 pm AA Meeting	8:00 am Women of Joy Bible Study 12:15 pm Holy Saturday Worship 3:00 pm YG Easter Breakfast Set-Up NO 5:00 pm WORSHIP 8:00 pm Easter Vigil 8:30 pm AA Meeting	
6:00 am Easter Divine Worship 7:00 am Easter Breakfast 8:00 am Easter Divine Worship 10:30 am Easter Divine Worship	NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru & Meal	NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru & Meal	NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru & Meal	NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru & Meal	NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru & Meal	7:30 am Journeymen 5:00 pm Traditional Worship 8:30 pm AA Meeting
8:00 am Divine Worship 9:15 am Coffee Fellowship Hour 9:15 am Sunday School 9:15 am Public School Confirmation 9:15 am Adult Bible Study 10:30 am Divine Worship 11:45 am MS & HS Youth Bowling 5:00 pm Reformation Tap Society	6:00 pm Lord's Lambs Giveaway	5:30 pm CLT Meeting				



stewardship

God's Instruments, God's Stewards

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)

Some pastors refer to these words as “the most forgotten words in the Scriptures.” They are forgotten because they follow the familiar and critical words before it. The preceding two verses that overshadow Ephesians 2:10 are words of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). These are words preached regularly. They are assigned as confirmation verses. They carry with them the very heart of what it means to be a redeemed child of God!

Precisely because the previous verses are so central to salvation, they often overpower our practice of stewardship! We have been saved by grace. This is certain and sure because of Jesus. Works play no role in our salvation. No credit taking for us! Grace is freely given. Faith is miraculously created by the Spirit and joyously received. This truth is so wonderful and so encompassing that we often miss out on WHY we are redeemed.

The grace of God revealed in Jesus calls us to faith. But St. Paul doesn't stop with grace and faith. He continues to the logical conclusion. Just like the creation declares the handiwork of God, the redemption of sinners like you and me declares His greatest handiwork! Redeemed stewards are created to reflect the grace and mercy God showers on us to others.

As Lutherans, we understand that good works flow from faith in Jesus Christ. They are the fruit of the tree of salvation into which we have been grafted by grace. Sanctification and stewardship are both on-going and active confessions of what the Lord has done in us. These works are not always spectacular. Many times, they are simply parents showing Jesus to their children. They are compassionate actions that live out the truth of the Gospel to co-workers and even complete strangers. While they can be grand endeavors, more likely they are simple, beautiful works which highlight what Jesus has done in us.

These works aren't random either. They have been planned by God. God planned to use you as a faithful steward as you walk the road that leads you through your daily life. There are no chance encounters or coincidences. They have been planned by the Lord of the universe for the benefit of His creation. Good works are what point to God's greatest work: Jesus!

He calls you and me to walk in this faith, which flows from this grace, which has been poured out on us in Jesus. But even this is not to our credit. We are simply called to be faithful stewards of God's grace so that we may share it with those who need it as much as we do. God's Spirit carries us along in this. We are just the steward — the instrument in His hand to accomplish His plan and glorify Him!

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 3rd

Deb Engel

April 5th

Richard Fredrick

Delores Schultz

April 9th

Gary Feldschneider

April 11th

Chris Dobratz

April 12th

Jim Steinberg

April 14th

Jim Arndt

April 15th

Grace Olson

April 18th

Albert Falstad

Kenneth Runyard

April 19th

Ruth Kern

April 20th

Butch Gartzke

April 22nd

Dale Jaeger

April 23rd

Virginia Meintz

April 26th

Arthur Schuck

April 29th

Pat Menden

April 30th

Lorna Gartzke

Chet Seffrood

For our members 70+ years



MEMORIALS

Jeanette Christian	\$25.00
Roger Rupnow	\$25.00

ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

(The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod)

210 E. Pleasant Street

Oconomowoc, WI 53066-3050

262-567-5001

WORSHIP & STUDY

Saturday Worship	5:00 pm
Sunday Worship	8:00 am & 10:30 am
Bible Class	9:15 am

Pastor Lance Armstrong O'Donnell 262.567.5001 x217

Pastor Jason Schockman 262.567.5001 x216

Director of Parish Music, Allison Mackie 262.567.5001 x214

Principal - Jill George 262.567.5001 x213

Website: www.splco.org

LIVE BROADCASTS:

8:00 am Sunday Worship
Live on WTKM 104.9 FM/1540 AM
& www.wtkm.com
Live-streamed at www.splco.org

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER (ECC)

Christian Pre-School & Day Care
Director Christine Flores 262.567.4881

Epistle Editor-Heather Scheuer

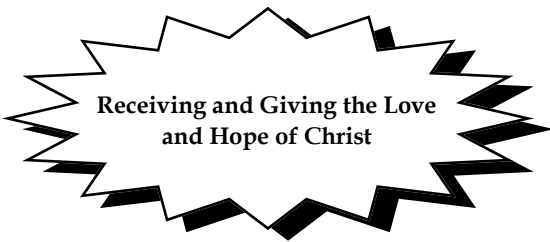
Newsletter deadline for articles,
announcements and features is the
2nd Wednesday of the month

PLEASE ADVISE THE CHURCH OFFICE OF
ANY ADDRESS CHANGES

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REFORMATION TAP SOCIETY

Theology and conversation with a bit of hops.



*ADULTS 18 AND OLDER

April 27

Joyfully Anxious:

How to Untangle Law, Gospel and Poor Mental Health

Presenter: Harrison Goodman

5:00-7:00 pm

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