



SEPTEMBER EPISTLE

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

SEPTEMBER 2026



Dispatches from The Office

Rev. Lance Armstrong O'Donnell, Senior Pastor

Sabbatical Reflections

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah" (Psalm 46:10-11, ESV)

The verse above is at the heart of Lutheran identity. It is part of the framework for the most recognizable Lutheran hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*. Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. The final sacrifice for sins is completed. God has worked salvation and life for us in Christ. The same Christ will come in the flesh, on the last day, to raise the living and the dead and to give eternal life to all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

The call of faith is to trust this promise in Christ, that is, to receive our rest of soul from that promise. This is why Luther explained the commandment, "Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy" in this way:

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

We are to "rest" in God's Word, hear and learn it, but we are also to labor faithfully and be good stewards of God's creation. Thus, Moses prays, *"Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!"* (Psalm 90:17, ESV) That prayer has been a regular part of my life for over three decades. I like the idea of God blessing my work, but—I suspect, like many of you—I struggle with the "be still" and "rest" part. I'm learning it, but it has been a harder lesson.

A pastoral sabbatical is an extended time of rest. At first, I tried to make my sabbatical an extended time of work, but The LORD made sure I learned what a sabbatical actually is. I'm eager to talk about it, and thank the congregation, during a Sunday School-hour "fireside chat" on September 20th. I pray that you'll join the conversation. Until then, I am...

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Lance O'Donnell

Commemoration of Bernard of Clairvaux, Hymnwriter & Theologian

19 August, A.D. 2026

YOU'RE INVITED!

Pastoral sabbatical de-brief and celebration. Sunday, September 20, 9:15-10:15 a.m.



Delivering a Firm Foundation

Jason A. Schockman, Associate Pastor

This year, every classroom at St. Paul's, from the 1 year-old room in the ECC through eighth grade and our Sunday School will study the same Bible narrative and the same section of Luther's Small Catechism each week. Whether your child is in the Early Childhood Center, in school, or in Sunday School, they are part of one unified curriculum built on God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions called "*How Firm a Foundation*". We are "upping our game" as it were, that we might be **Rooted and Built up in Christ**.



ROOTED IN CHRIST

"Rooted and built up in Him..."
- Colossians 2:6-7

How It Works

Every week our children's theology class follows two tracks that run side by side:

Bible Narratives	The biblical narrative from Genesis through Acts, is aligned to the church year. Old Testament in the fall, Advent and Christmas at their proper time, Lent and Easter in the spring, and the early Church through the end of the year. Each week the curriculum also makes the connection to Christ, showing how all the Scriptures point to Him.
Catechism by Heart	A sequential walk through the Small Catechism over 36 weeks of the academic year. Our children will be memorizing the six chief parts of catechism text and Luther's meanings, along with the Table of Duties. By the end of fifth grade the entire Small Catechism is memorized allowing grades 6-8 to focus on mastery of the concepts and applications to their life in faith.

What Makes This Theology Curriculum Different

One Building, One Story	Our toddlers, kindergartners, and eighth graders all hear the same Bible account the same week at the depth appropriate to their age. Families can talk about the same story at the dinner table. And it will be reinforced in Sunday School.
Catechism in Every Lesson	Time with the Small Catechism is part of every single class period, every day. The catechism is not an add-on, it is the doctrinal backbone of the curriculum.
Confessional Integrity	All content is faithful to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (Book of Concord). The distinction between Law and Gospel is highlighted throughout.
Church-Home Connection	Each week parents will receive a Take-Home Sheet with the Bible Narrative summary, the full catechism text with Luther's meanings, the memory verse, the hymn, and conversation starters for the family. The goal being a ongoing connection between the Church, School, and Home.



The Faith of a Child

Becca Zellmer – Assistant Director Early Childhood Center

There is something beautiful about the faith of a child.

In the Early Childhood Center, we have the privilege of watching little hearts discover, explore and grow in the world around them every day. As teachers, we see their excitement when they learn something new, their joy when they sing with their music mentor buddies, their compassion when they hug their reading buddies, and their trust when they reach for the hand of a teacher or parent. And sometimes, in the midst of teaching these little learners, we discover that they have so much to teach us.

Jesus placed a special value on children. In Matthew 19:14, He said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." What a beautiful reminder that children are not simply the future of the church - they are such an important part of the church right now!

Children have a remarkable ability to trust. They ask questions without hesitation. They wholeheartedly believe that prayer makes a difference. They can forgive quickly. They find joy in simple things. They are willing to take someone's hand and follow, even when they do not know exactly where they are going. Perhaps that is one of the reasons Jesus used children as an example of what our faith should look like.

As adults, our faith can sometimes become complicated. We carry responsibilities, worries, disappointments, anxiety, and questions. Perhaps, we've felt heartbreak. We may find ourselves trying to understand everything before we are willing to trust. Yet a child, so small, can remind us that faith is not always about having every answer. Sometimes faith is simply knowing WHO we can trust.

This brings me to one of the greatest privileges of working in the ECC. We are not only teaching letters, numbers, colors, shapes, and social skills. We are helping to cultivate little hearts.

Every morning prayer is an opportunity to plant a seed of faith. Every Bible story is an opportunity to introduce a child to the character of God. Every song about Jesus helps build a foundation. Every Theology lesson with Pastor about kindness, forgiveness, patience, and love gives children an opportunity to see God's character reflected in their everyday lives.

And those moments may seem small...but seeds are small too.

We may not always see immediately what those seeds will become. A child may not remember every lesson, every song, or every activity. But we pray each day that they will remember how it felt to be loved, welcomed, encouraged, prayed for, and taught about a God who loves them very much.

As we begin another school year, and we have the opportunity to welcome so many new families into St Paul's, I am reminded that we have been entrusted with something incredibly precious. Our children come to us with little hands, curious minds, and growing hearts. We have the opportunity to help them discover not only how to learn, but how to love; not only how to succeed, but how to serve; and not only what they can accomplish, but who they are in Christ.

My prayer for our ECC children this school year is that their faith will grow alongside their minds and their bodies. May they learn to pray boldly, love generously, forgive freely, and trust God wholeheartedly.

And maybe, just maybe, as we nurture their little hearts, we will allow them to nurture ours as well. May we never underestimate the faith of a child.

Their hands may be little, their voices may be small, but their faith can be strong and mighty. Little hearts, big faith, and a great God who is faithfully growing both.

As an Early Childhood Center, we are grateful. Thank you for your prayers, your support, and your commitment to helping our youngest members know that they are seen, valued, loved, and very most importantly, loved by God.

With Gratitude,

Becca Zellmer – Assistant Director, Early Childhood Center

Dear Friends of St. Paul's Lutheran School,

We invite you to become a sponsor of the **St. Paul's Lutheran School Fall Fundraising Gala** on Thursday, October 29th, at Dockhounds Stadium and help us reach our goal of raising \$50,000 to strengthen Christ-centered education for our students.

This year's gala will benefit the **Fred Boldt Fund-a-Family Scholarship Program**, providing tuition assistance to families who desire a Christ-centered education for their children, but need financial support to make it possible. Your sponsorship is an investment in the lives of students and helps ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive at St. Paul's Lutheran School.

This year's gala theme, Rooted in Christ, is inspired by Colossians 2:6-7:

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

At St. Paul's Lutheran School, we believe education is about far more than preparing students for the next grade level. We are preparing young people for lives of faith, service, leadership, and purpose. In every classroom, students are challenged to pursue academic excellence, while discovering their God-given gifts in a caring, Christ-centered community.

For generations, St. Paul's has partnered with families who desire an education grounded in biblical truth. Our students learn to think critically, serve compassionately, lead confidently, and live faithfully, knowing their identity is firmly rooted in Jesus Christ.

Your support makes this possible. By investing in the Fred Boldt Fund-a-Family Scholarship Program, you are opening the doors of a Christ-centered education to students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend St. Paul's. Together, we can continue equipping young people with a strong academic foundation, unwavering faith, and a heart for serving others.

We hope you will prayerfully consider becoming a sponsor of this year's gala. Thank you for investing in the mission and ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran School. Together, we will continue helping children grow deeply rooted in Christ and prepared to serve Him wherever He leads.

With gratitude,
The St. Paul's Lutheran School Gala Committee
Jennifer Adams
Stacey Balistreri
Jill George
Jill Jaeger
Mel Haeberlein
Codi Peschek
Megan Shanks



ROOTED IN CHRIST

"Rooted and built up in Him..."
- Colossians 2:6-7



ROOTED IN CHRIST

"Rooted and built up in Him..."
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ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL 2026 FALL FUNDRAISING GALA Sponsorship Commitment

Supporting Christ-centered education and the Fred Boldt Fund-a-Family Scholarship Program.
Tax Exempt ID: 008-0000364352-05

Level	Amount	Select
Mighty Oak	\$10,000 and higher	☐ Amount _____
Deep Roots	\$5,500	☐
Growing Branches	\$2,500	☐
Flourishing Leaves	\$1000	☐
Seedling	\$250	☐
Seed Sower Sponsor	\$100	☐

Sponsor Information

Business: _____

Contact: _____

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City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Website: _____

Payment

☐ Check Enclosed ☐ Please Invoice Me ☐ Pay Online (splco.org – Donate – Fund a Family)

September 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 JOSHUA* 20¢ LWML meets tonight	2 HANNAH* 20¢	3 GREGORY THE GREAT* Pastor 20¢	4 MOSES* 20¢	5 ZACHARIAH & ELIZABETH* 20¢
6 Attended worship today? Yes-25¢ No-\$1	7 LABOR DAY 25¢	8 5¢ for each pair of sandals you own.	9 10¢ for each glass of milk you drank today	10 Do you fly a flag? Yes-15¢ No-30¢	11 PATRIOT DAY 25¢	12 10¢ for each hug you gave today
13 5¢ for each person greeted in church today	14 HOLY CROSS DAY 50¢	15 MISSION POSSIBLE DAY LWML Giving Day Feed your Mite box!	16 CYPRIAN OF CATHAGE* Pastor & Martyr 20¢	17 15¢ for each cup of coffee today	18 10¢ for each scoop of ice cream you had this week	19 Rain today? Yes-15¢ No-10¢
20 Thank God for our Pastors 25¢	21 ST MATTHEW Apostle & Evangelist 25¢	22 JONAH* 20¢	23 Thank God for the seasons He provides us 30¢	24 Attending the LWML Fall Retreat? Yes-15¢ No-30¢	25 Sunny day? Yes-30¢ No-10¢	26 Had a garden this year? Yes-10¢ No-20¢
27 Thank God for our church 25¢	28 5¢ for each sweater you own	29 ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS DAY 50¢	30 JEROME* Translator of Holy Scripture 20¢			

SEPTEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 6:00 pm LWML	2	3 5:30 pm Sisters in Service 6:30 pm Praise Team Practice	4	5 8:00 am Women of Joy Bible Study 5:00 pm Divine Worship
6 8:00 am Divine Worship 9:15 am Blood Pressure Screening 9:15 am 7/8 Public School Confirmation Mtg. 9:15 am Adult Bible Study 10:30 am Divine Worship	7 NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED	8 5:30 pm Board of Operations Mtg. 6:00 pm Board of Elders Mtg.	9 6:30 pm Lutheran Basics	10 7:30 pm Praise Team Practice	11	12 7:30 am Journeyman 9:00 am Kids' Zone 5:00 pm Divine Worship
13 8:00 am Divine Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 9:15 am Confirmation Class 9:15 am Adult Bible Study 10:30 am Divine Worship	14 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru & Meal	15 6:30 pm Small Group Bible Study	16 6:30 pm Lutheran Basics	17 1:00 pm New Member Sponsor Committee Mtg. 6:30 pm Church Choir Practice 7:30 pm Praise Team Practice	18	19 8:00 am Women of Joy Bible Study 5:00 pm Divine Worship
20 8:00 am Divine Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 9:15 am Coffee Fellowship Hour 9:15 am Confirmation Class 9:15 am Sabbathical Recap w/ Ps. O'Donnell 10:30 am Divine Worship 5:00 pm Reformation Tap Society	14 5:30 pm Lord's Cupboard Drive-Thru & Meal	22 6:30 pm Small Group Bible Study	23 6:30 pm Lutheran Basics	24 6:30 pm Church Choir Practice 7:30 pm Praise Team Practice	25	26 7:30 am Journeyman 5:00 pm Divine Worship
27 8:00 am Divine Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 9:15 am Confirmation Class 9:15 am Adult Bible Study 10:30 am Divine Worship	28	29 6:30 pm Small Group Bible Study	30 6:30 pm Lutheran Basics			



St. Paul's

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DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

TIME: 6:00 - 7:30 PM

LOCATION: 210 E PLEASANT ST., OCONOMOWOC

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: Parents, Guardians,
Students & Church Families

Use this QR code to
register or online
with this link



PRESENTED BY: APRIL DE VALKENAERE,
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Registration is required so we
can plan seating and food.



September 11 is the registration deadline for the **LWML SWD Fall Retreat**, September 25-26 at the Holiday Inn Manitowoc. Speaker Sharla Fritz will address Hebrews 13:5 ENOUGH for NOW. Forms are available by the LWML bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall or online at www.lwml-swd.org.

September 15 is designated as a special Mite donation day. Please consider adding a special Mite offering to your box.

SWD Grant #1 for \$15,000 to Orphan Grain Train- Wisconsin Branch has been PAID in FULL!

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, September 1st, in room 219. Remember your Mites as we kick off our next biennium!



Attention women of St. Paul's!

It's time to get out the party favors because we've got something very special to celebrate. *Sister in Service*, formerly known as Ladies Aid and various other names, has been serving St. Paul's for 140 years! We'll be starting the celebration at our Sisters in Service's first meeting of the season on Thursday, September 3rd, at 5:30. **Remember this meeting is BEFORE Labor Day.** We invite you to join us to hear all about our plans for this exciting year of celebration. We

truly hope to see you on September 3rd, and become part of this momentous occasion!



2026-2027 School Year Theme Hymn: *The Tree of Life*

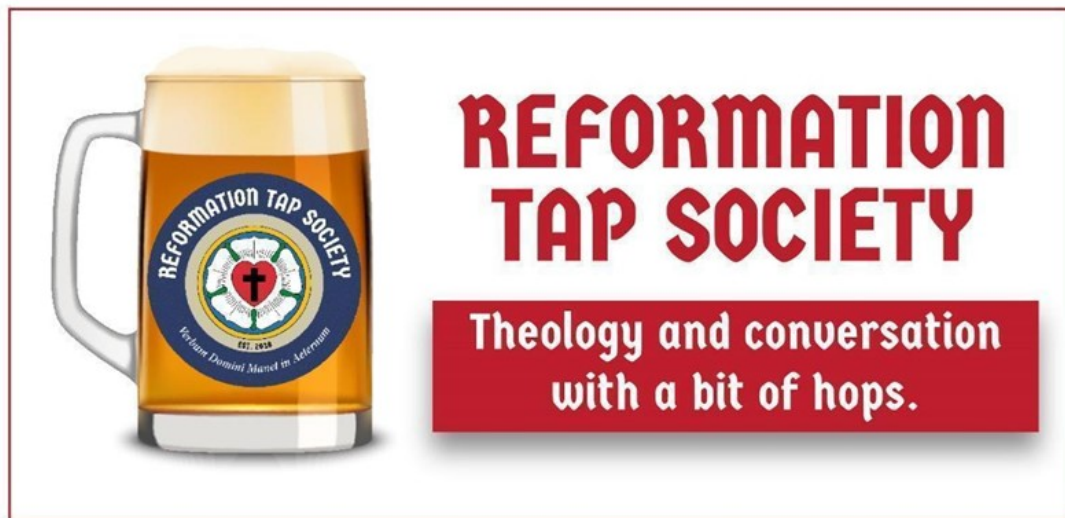
(number 561 in *Lutheran Service Book*)

Our theme is "Rooted in Christ," which comes from Colossians 2:6-7, "Therefore, as you received Jesus Christ the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

Our theme hymn builds on the idea of being "rooted" by telling the story of salvation beginning with the two trees in the Garden of Eden and moving to the tree of the cross.

The opening stanza describes the perfect Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve could eat freely from the tree of life. In the second stanza, the serpent breaks the perfection of the garden to tempt Adam and Eve away from God's commands, and the poison of sin enters the world. But hope was not lost, as the next stanza describes God's plan to give life to His people through the tree of the cross. The final stanza tells how God now invites everyone to eat of salvation's fruit in the Lord's Supper. Through Jesus's death and resurrection, we are no longer barred from the tree of life.

Throughout the school year, we will continue to grow in our faith by staying firmly rooted in the Gospel, where we learn how Jesus has saved us.



Reformation Tap Society talks are casual and thoughtful adult conversations about important things. *Under the theme, "Rooted in Christ," the 2026-2027 Reformation Tap Society season aims to help participants know Christ and grow in His teaching.* Though we welcome adults of any age, topics and language are aimed at those 18-35. Our speakers understand that RTS is a public event, so the conversations are not raw, but our speakers are encouraged to practice candor geared towards younger adults. Parents of children under high school age should collaborate on a babysitter, then come and enjoy the beverages, food, and conversation. RTS is an opportunity to hear perspectives not regularly heard in popular culture. All are welcome.

RTS is held on the 3rd Sundays, September through May. We gather at 5pm, have a "beer talk" from the brewmaster at about 5:25, and at about 5:30 our speaker takes the mic. The speaker will present on a topic of interest, then take questions until 6:15 or so. (BTW, you're welcome even if you're not a beer fan. Other beverages are available.).

Third Sundays
5-7pm

BrewFinity Brewery

N58W39800 Industrial Rd. Suite D. Oconomowoc, WI 53066
www.brewfinitybrewing.com

September 20, 2026

Christ for Broken People: Fiction and Evangelism

Speaker: Lance O'Donnell

St. Paul's Kid's Zone at Fall Fest!

Get ready to have some fun at the Kid's Zone Saturday, September 12th, in our parking lot. Volunteer shifts are about two hours long (but you're welcome to sign up for more than one). Set-up shifts start at 8:30am. The Kid's Zone closes at 4pm (cleaned up by 4:30). Scan the QR code or contact the church office to sign-up.

Thank you for participating as we engage our community right where we are!



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Jayne Roberts

September 2nd

Harlan Uttech

September 4th

Dorcas McMillan

September 5th

Carole Schmeda

September 6th

Judy Mueller

September 10th

Mimi Gebel

September 11th

Bill Scheuer

September 12th

Kathryn Wickersham

September 17th

Diana Radtke

September 18th

Audrey Martens

Joyce Simaras

September 22nd

Don Meyer

September 25th

Keith Pagenkopf

September 26th

Richard Engel

September 28th

For our members 70+ years



MEMORIALS

Joanne Abel \$3355

Donald Schmitt \$50

Shirley Smart \$90

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 DeWitt 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

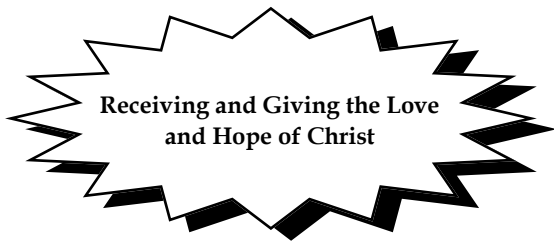
Newsletter deadline for articles,
announcements and features is the
2nd Wednesday of the month

PLEASE ADVISE THE CHURCH OFFICE OF
ANY ADDRESS CHANGES

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MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Received by baptism

Atlas William, son of Griffin & Chloe (Jostad) Wendt
Jonathan Matthias, son of Matthew & Leah (Shearer) Wawrzyn

Received by Profession of Faith

Kathleen Sellers
Connor Baucom
Eric & Shelley Allen
Krista Stewart

Deaths

Joanne Abel
Carol Lenz

Baptized 2054 Confirmed 1261