

Epistle February 2024

We, as members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church have come to faith by God's grace and have seen that Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins. We are compelled to grow spiritually and to share this good news with each other, through the Word and Sacraments. We, as our loving response, will present Christ crucified to the world. We apply these truths in our daily lives all to the glory of God!



For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.

Ephesians 5:8

When I was a child, our basement had a section that I rarely entered. I don't think it had a light. If it did, I'm certain I would have turned it on. It was dark and damp. The only reason to go in there was potatoes were stored there. So, it's dark, it's damp, and the potatoes have every opportunity to start growing sprouts. It's dark, it's damp. I really dreaded that room. I couldn't wait to get what I needed and scamper up the steps (likely panting a bit.) The light at the top of the stairs was a welcome sight!

This side of heaven, life can be like that corner of our basement. It can feel like the darkness is all around us. I think of so many people who are without the comfort and peace that comes from knowing about Jesus, their Savior. As they struggle with life, they have need for God's grace and may not know it. They work to find peace and happiness only to come up short time after time. Or they think that life can't get any better than its current allotment of joys and sorrows. For some, they hear the message of God's grace and it's as if a light comes on. They have a totally new perspective on life knowing how dearly they are loved by Jesus, their Savior. (continued on the following page)

For believers, difficult things seem to come from all directions as well. Sometimes the struggles are with relationships and the impact of Satan's cunning. We hear about challenges in our cities, in our country, all over the world. Peace, craved by all, can seem unattainable.

The worst of the darkness is our constant, relentless battle against sin. It's part of every day. The impact of sin and the guilt that we carry can be overwhelming. The world can feel like someone shut off the lights and we're stuck in the basement.

Jesus. There he is. He is our Light. A Light so much better than the light at the top of my childhood stairs. He's the Light that is never turned off. He is the Light that brings us, through faith, out of the darkness of sin. As that Light, he shows us the grace he has won for us. We have the Light but notice what the passage says, "Now you are light in the Lord." Because of all that God has done for us, we reflect his Light, his grace, his love for others. God doesn't say, "Now go try hard to be the light." He says, "You are light." As God's dearly loved children, we are lights to others since Jesus' light shines through us.

Jesus is your Light. He has done everything needed to remove your sin and be the Light to show us the way to heaven. Today, as you go about your daily tasks, you can reflect that Light out of gratitude for all that Jesus has done. Your joy, your loving care for others, your forgiving heart all reflect Jesus, the Light of the world to those around us. "This little light of mine—I'm gonna let it shine!"

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, I need your Light of forgiveness and grace every day. All those around me do as well. Help me to be a light to others, reflecting your love and grace for them. It's in your name I pray. Amen.

Daily Devotions are brought to you by WELS and www.WhatAboutJesus.com.



Barbara I. Tesch, age 76, of Norfolk, NE, passed away on Monday, January 15, 2024 in Norfolk.

Barb was born on September 15, 1947, in Watertown, SD, to Johnnie and Doris (Lauseng) Winge. She was a graduate of South Shore High School and confirmed at St. Martin's Lutheran Church.

On October 9, 1966, Barb was united in marriage to Hal Tesch in Watertown. The couple farmed, raised dairy and founded "Team Tesch" with seven children south of Watertown. In 1997 the couple moved to Waco, NE, where their two youngest attended high school. Barb worked at Nebraska Lutheran as a cook, custodian, yearbook coordinator, and dorm mother.

She was a friend to all, and a stand-in parent at every game, concert, and track meet. Barb was a creative and imaginative person who loved gardening, painting, bowling, sewing, and traveling but her greatest joy was her family. She was very proud of her seven children and seventeen grandchildren and could often be found driving miles to watch a game or help in any way needed. She let her love for Jesus shine in the way she treated everyone she met.

Barb is survived by her seven children, Boyd (Rachel) Tesch of Kenosha, WI, Shannon (Miles) Spreeman of Norfolk, NE, Veronica (Jim) Strand of Bloomer, WI, Lloyd (Jennifer) Tesch of Anchorage, AK, Wiatt (Juliet) Tesch of Lesterville, SD, Ryan Tesch of Mankato, MN, Estelle (Michael) Vlieger of Mankato, MN; seventeen grandchildren, Rebekah Giller, Christina Giller, Garth (Paige) Spreeman, Hallie Spreeman, Hazel Spreeman, Jack Strand, Zeke Strand, Sophie Strand, Eric Strand, Kia (Luis) Berrios, Bristol Tesch, Laramie Tesch, Tenlie Tesch, Rebekah Vlieger, Elliott Vlieger, Westley Vlieger, Wendell Vlieger; five sisters, Alice (Clayton) Moyer, Joyce (Ed) Heim, Darlene (Vic) Sauer, Susan (Bill) Welder, Becky (Royal) Sprung; three brothers, Clayton (Dorothy) Winge, Larry (Brenda) Winge, Jerry (Eileen) Winge; two step-sisters, Dala (Lonnie) Mandel, Kari (Ray) Bealer; one step-brother, Bren (Kelly) Busing; two sisters-in-law, Geri (Jim) Winge, Sandy (Hank) Albrecht; two brothers-in-law, Bill (Louise) Pieper, Burton (Ronae) Tesch; and many nieces, nephews, friends, and neighbors.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 52 years, Hal; father, Johnnie Winge; mother, Doris Winge Busing; step-father, Dale Busing; brothers, LaVern Winge and Jim Winge.

Barb believed in and loved Christian education. Memorials given will be used to help support Lutheran Schools.

Arrangements by Crawford-Osthus Funeral Chapel www.crawfordosthus.com Watertown, Hayti De Smet, Bryant

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Executive Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Executive Council Chairman: Ron Kraemer

Executive Council Recording Secretary: Joel Wiedeman

Council members present: Joel Wiedeman, Ron Kraemer, Pastor Paul Hirsch, Gary Bretschneider, Ron Johnson, Gary Tiedgen, and Aaron Markgraf.

Meeting was called to order. (6:40PM)

Opening Devotion: Council read prayer from Elders Report.

Agenda: See attachment #1.

Minutes from Previous Meeting: Presented by Joel Wiedeman.

1. Motion was to: "Accept minutes from December Executive Council as presented via email."
 - a. Motion was seconded with no discussion.
 - b. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

Pastors/Elders Report: Presented by Gary Tiedgen/Pastor Hirsch (See attachments #3 and #4) (6:41PM)

1. Hard time to find nominees. Dave Nelson will be returning for another term. John Kouba may return if needed.
2. Looking to get some gals to work on making phone calls.
3. Elder/Usher transition.
4. BIC with four couples.
5. Pastors Conference in Lincoln on January 30th and 31st.
6. Lent schedule.
7. Lenten suppers sign-up sheet coming out.

Board of Trustees Report: Presented by Ron Johnson. (No official report) (6:50PM)

1. Leaks in school roof. Downspouts are cleared out.
2. Gordy Winter- yes for nomination. Josh Calhoon and Fred Dederman as well.
3. Aaron Geary is hoping to get started on the Church roof soon.

Board of Education Report: Presented by Aaron Markgraf. (See attachment #5) (6:56PM)

1. Staffing for next year. There are currently 8 options. Might be calling a preschool teacher.
2. 74 students for next year. Preschool numbers look good.
3. LB753. Discussed the program.
4. Philanthropy Council. "Big Give". Might be good for us to take part in. Would there be a member that would fit this role?
5. Accreditation. November 6-8, 2024.
6. Nominees? Chris Price, Scott Uecker, and Jeff Jensen.
7. Open House on 1-24-24.

Cemetery Report: No official report.

Board of Finance Report: No official report tonight.

1. Karen Nielsen has made it known that she is interested in helping.
2. Finance Chairman position is empty.

Vision Traction Organizer: Presented by Aaron Markgraf. (See attachment #6) (7:26PM)

1. Reviewed the VTO.
2. Review of Rocks.
3. Reviewed issues list.
 - a. Added #6. Regular offerings are below need. This can be addressed. #2 should get some action in the next month or so with the building project and Hadar pastor call.

Building Committee: Presented by Aaron Markgraf. No official report.

1. Meeting tomorrow, 1-24-24, with BC Builders.

Old Business:

New Business:

1. Nomination Committee.
2. Playground Garage.
3. Open forum results. Did both services. Need to ask Hadar some more questions.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

1. Annual Voters Meeting January 28th @ 10:30AM
2. Board Meetings February 6th @ 6:00PM
3. Executive Council Meeting February 20th @ 6:00PM **Closing:**

1. Motion was made to: "Adjourn Executive Council meeting." (8:08PM)
 - a. Motion was seconded with no discussion.
 - b. Motion was carried with unanimous vote.

Meeting was closed with The Lord's Prayer.

AMEN. Length of meeting: 1 hour 35 minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Wiedeman

St. Paul's Executive Council Recording Secretary



Feb. 1st Ron Nielsen, Feb. 3rd Carol Bohn, Feb. 4th Laura Norris, Feb. 5th Damon Weinrich, Feb. 6th Larry Schoenfeldt, Feb. 8th Alex Nunnenkamp, Feb. 14th Rosemary Bohn, Noah Doescher, Andrew Schlieve, Ron Wachter, Rod Wachter, Feb. 16th Brittany Lindahl, Feb. 17th Marv Eckman, Scott Uecker, Feb. 19th Beckham Kruse, Feb. 20th Burt Austin, Alecia Neidig, Feb. 24th Molly Meysenburg, Leland Moyer Feb. 25th Curt Dinkel, Ky Kenny Feb. 26th Connie Broders, Feb. 27th Carolyn Harmeier, Molly Papstein Feb. 28th Tristan Prokopec, Scott Radenz



Feb. 3rd Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Hebb, Feb. 7th Mr. & Mrs. Mohlke, Feb. 27th Mr. & Mrs. Huddle

Memorials Given for the Month of January to the Building Fund

In Memory of Barb Tesch \$55.00

Church Attendance: Jan. 6th/7th **162** Jan. 13th/14th **Cancelled due to weather**
Jan. 20th/21st **223** Jan. 27th/28th **199**

Communion Attendance: Jan. 6th/7th **123** Jan. 20th/21st **112**

Blessings on your Lenten Season!