

THE EPISTLE

JANUARY - 2019

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!

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church & School (WELS) -- Norfolk, Nebraska

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It's Time for a Fill Up

...(Make) the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil ... understand what the Lord's will is ... be filled with the Spirit. -- Ephesians 5:16-18

Time is a gift of God as old as creation itself. From the moment God created light, each day has been marked by evening and morning. On average, human beings will witness about 28,000 evenings and mornings during their earthly existence. As God continues to bless us with the gift of time, his unending kindness presents opportunities to serve him in our daily lives as we journey toward eternal life in heaven.

How do we utilize the precious hours God has given us? Our conscience can convict us when time is misspent. Have the blessings of the digital age become a destructive distraction that weaken both our faith and our relationships? Do hours of mindless television take precedence over the tasks on our "to-do" lists? Do social media sites seize our attention, causing us to lose sight of our God-given priorities in our church, family, or work?

Burdened by the weighty guilt of our sins, we repent. For the Lord provides refuge and relief in his timeless grace. At just the right time in human history, God fulfilled his promise to send a Savior from sin. Jesus Christ's entire earthly life was unstained by sin. He made the most of every opportunity as he proclaimed the promises of God and provided the only way for mankind's salvation.

Undistracted by the evil of his day and unmoved by the devil's empty lies, Jesus fulfilled the heavenly Father's will. One dark Friday, Jesus gave his life on the cross to pay for the sins of all our misspent days. There is never a day in our lives where we need to doubt his boundless love.

The limitless love of the Lord strengthens us to serve him as we strive to make the most of every opportunity he presents us to serve him. If we are tempted by evil, God encourages us to daily seek the clear will of his Word. The timeless truths of the Bible remain a constant light for our path of life.

If the rapid tempo of our daily schedules and demanding deadlines imperil our precious hope in God, we draw strength from the life-giving gospel. The Holy Spirit fills us with a fervent faith to meet the opportunities of each new day. We aim to make the most of the opportunities the Lord provides here on earth. We do so with a Spirit-driven zeal, and a heaven-focused faith.

Prayer: Gracious Lord, I rejoice in the many opportunities you place before me to serve you. When the stress of obligations threatens to overshadow my joy, fill me again through the quiet rest your Spirit brings through the Word. Amen.

This devotion brought to you by WELS and www.WhatAboutJesus.com.

December RADIO BROADCASTS (94.7 FM -- Sunday at 9:00 AM)

December 2 - St. Paul's Radio Broadcast Fund

December 9 - St. Paul's Radio Broadcast Fund

December 16 - In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Klug, Mr. & Mrs. Al Baker, & Delbert Retzlaff,
from Don & Diane Kahler.

December 23 - St. Paul's Radio Broadcast Fund

December 25 (Christmas Day) - St. Paul's Radio Broadcast Fund

December 30 - St. Paul's Radio Broadcast Fund

MEMORIALS GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD

ST. PAUL'S RADIO BROADCAST:

- In memory of Darlene Aaberg (\$15)

OTHER DONATIONS TO THE GLORY OF GOD

- In honor of Ruth Uecker's 100th Birthday, \$100 given to St. Paul's Technology Update Fund.

- For St. Paul's Radio Broadcast Fund (\$50)(\$100)

Church Attendance:

Thanksgiving Eve (100), Nov. 24 (69), Nov. 25 (118) = 287 (65%)

Nov. 28 (18), Dec. 1 (13), Dec. 2 (76) = 107 (24%)

Dec. 8 (61), Dec. 9 (165) = 226 (51%)

Dec. 12 (11), Dec. 15 (62), Dec. 16 (168) = 241 (55%)

Communion Attendance:

Nov. 14, 17 & 18 = 171 (45%)

Nov. 28, Dec. 1 & 2 = 78 (21%)

Dec. 12, 15 & 16 = 133 (35%)

Weddings: None

Baptisms: None

Funerals: None

Monthly Calendars may be picked up in your mailslots at church.