St. Paul Lutheran Church & School

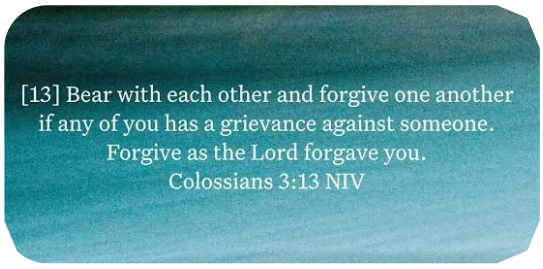
Newsletter

Volume 31 Issue 9
October 21, 2026

Matthew 18

If you are a part of the church in any capacity for long enough, you will doubtless hear references to Matthew 18 as one of the key clarion calls for dealing with conflict. In The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the frequency of its referral ranks up there with the 8th Commandment, often referred to colloquially as a reminder to "put the best construction on everything." I wonder, however, if we have largely misplaced its purpose within the context of Matthew itself, and thus often swing and miss at what Jesus himself is actually telling us.

Consider the broader context of the chapter, which is split up in the 3-year lectionary. When we get to the so-called Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt. 18:21–35) in Proper 21, we find an obvious application set off by the typically hyperbolic story-telling of our Lord. A servant owes 10,000 talents to the King (an absurdly infinitesimal amount). He pleads for patience, and the King forgives the debt. The servant then goes and demands a 100 denarius payment from a fellow servant (no small chunk of change, but obviously not 10,000 talents). He actually seizes him and begins to *choke* him. The other servant pleads for patience, which is refused, and when the King gets wind of the scenario, he replaces the debt on the first servant, locks him up, and throws away the key. The meaning is obvious (and Jesus states it): forgive as you have been forgiven, remembering that the sins forgiven you are far greater in number than the sins committed against you by a fellow servant.



That is all well and good, and seems to apply most readily to a one-on-one situation of sin and forgiveness. But the parable is set off with a "therefore," begging us to remember the question that prompted it to begin with: Peter asks Jesus how many times he needs to forgive his brother, and Jesus (again hyperbolically) says, "Seven times seventy times." That meaning is also clear. How often am I to forgive? All of the time. After all, that's what Jesus does for you.

Now back up even farther, and we see the pericope that is literally enshrined into church policy (Matt. 18:15–20): step one, go to the sinner one-on-one. Step two, bring some witnesses (a call-back to Deuteronomy 19:15; cf. 2 Cor. 13:1). Step three, bring in the whole church. If there is no repentance through all these steps, then and *only* then are you to write off the sinner as a lost cause. The pericope even seals the deal with our common referral of the church's authority to declare excommunication, which flavors the following parable with the salty taste of church discipline.

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SAVED
by Jesus,
SENT
to serve.

Matthew 18

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It seems clear by mere proximity (to say nothing of the "then" in Matt. 18:21 and the "therefore" in verse 23), that Jesus' words do not just indicate *how* we are to approach a call for a sinner to repent, but *what* and *why*. Given the severity of excommunication, and the unforgiving servant being tossed into prison, the *what* refers to unrepentant sin that leads to damnation. These are not mere schoolyard insults or differences of opinion on man-made church governance. The *why*, consistent with the Office of the Keys in verses 18–20, is the church's heart and soul of declaring forgiveness through Christ. In other words, the whole point of going to a brother who sins [against you] is *reconciliation* (to "gain your brother").

My main concern is that we are far too quick to toss out our grievances under the shield of Matthew 18, both in personal relationships and in broader churchly actions, *absent the desire to reconcile with our brother*. Rather, we tend to treat the text as if Jesus is saying, "If your brother hurts your feelings, go and complain to him personally. Then post something on social media. Finally, concoct a resolution that demands he repent." Following Jesus into the parable, this does not seem much different than the unforgiving servant who seizes his fellow servant, *chokes* him, and says, "You owe me an apology!"

The nail in the coffin for this assessment is the fact that we never follow up on the ultimate conclusion of excommunication. I might be wrong, but the LCMS in convention has never declared it about anyone directly. Notwithstanding complications surrounding church fellowship and the de-rostering of individuals, Synod does not really have the ecclesial authority to excommunicate—it is not really a "congregation," though it is the "church." Our own polity backs us into a corner to follow *most* of Matthew 18, and rest on our laurels that we followed the instructions of Christ while missing the point entirely. It's complicated, but we can really only air our grievances and hope that the other party feels humiliated enough to admit they were wrong—and we do this with regularity and alacrity.



But again, the main point is *why* would we call someone to repentance. Is it because the sinner is persisting to the point of being rejected by Christ himself? Then we should hasten to follow Matthew 18 (cf. 1 Cor. 5) *in order that* your brother is regained like the lost sheep (the parable in Matthew 18 that precedes the policy!). However, we should really pause and determine whether the wrongs we suffer from each other are indicative of the road to hell. So, did someone make an administrative, district, or synodical decision that hurt you? That hurt may be very real, very destructive, and you may even be justified in your pain. But if your motivation to call them out is not motivated by and geared towards reconciliation, then you need to remove your hands from around his neck lest you find that 10,000 talents takes an awfully long time to pay off.

To be sure, everyone should examine themselves to reconcile if their actions have caused hurt, and act in humility and repentance. Saying, "We are sorry there is hurt," is very different than saying, "We are sorry we hurt you." Nevertheless, it is a plague on our churchly fellowship that we are so quick to point out the faults and failures of others because we are so allergic to being wronged (cf. 1 Cor. 6; 1 Peter 3).

If you need to go to someone, or speak up against something, do so with the motivation and desire to forgive them. But if all you really want is for the person who hurt you to suffer, then Matthew 18 has just backfired on you. Either way, if your motivation is not reconciliation, but just to point out faults, then keep it to yourself. Take it like Christ, who suffered without a word. Whether the debt is 100 denarii or $60 million, 7 times 77 (or about 39 lashes) should cover it.

-Pastor Matyas

From the Principal's Office

I had the opportunity to coach B-Volleyball this past season. Admittedly, I was hesitant to volunteer to coach. I was initially concerned about the time commitment. Thankfully, God blessed me with a number of encouraging friends, mentors, and colleagues who encouraged me to volunteer.

I am glad I did. It was a positive experience.

The team had seven athletes: two sixth graders and five fifth graders. We started practicing in August and had our last game on Wednesday, October 7. At the B-level, the team who has the strongest servers will be the most successful. We were blessed with many strong servers.

In the end, we won more than they lost, skills were improved, and knowledge of the game was increased. More importantly, and more encouragingly for me, the highlight of the B season was just how consistently encouraging each of the girls were to each other every time we played. There were no "Queen Bees" or "Divas" on the team. Every athlete worked hard to do her best, and when she made a mistake her teammates encouraged her. When she was successful in her serve or volley, her teammates encouraged her. There were oodles of high fives given throughout each match. It was a joy to watch.

I was also extremely encouraged by the network of people surrounding the volleyball season. Terry Gehrman did a fantastic job navigating the home games as Athletic Director and working behind the scenes to make the season run smoothly. A-Team Coach Patrick Rohde was a joy to work with as we communicated about practices, jerseys, book, and schedules. Parent Jeremy Begick was a lifesaver as he willingly and cheerfully learned to keep book for B-Team. When I was out of town for a game in early October, Miss Katie Fehn willingly stepped in to take my spot as coach. The family members of the B-Team faithfully showed up, encouraged, and cheered throughout the season.

It was a joy to work with both the young athletes and the adults.

My favorite time was before and after each game when we prayed together as a team. The opening prayer went something like this: Lord, thank you for volleyball, thank you for my teammates. Please keep me focused, a good encourager, and safe from injury. In Your Name we pray, Amen. The closing prayer sounded more like this: Lord, thank you for volleyball, thank you for my teammates, thank you for a successful win, keep us safe, bring us back. Amen. As we prayed, we would stand in a circle, pinkies locked to one another. The girls would repeat the words I said. When we got to Amen, we would squeeze pinkies twice.

The prayer, encouragement, and relationship building were soul-filling. The memories we made will last for a long time. I share this story with you to encourage you to step out in faith to help with something at the school or at the church. Be willing to spend your time and talents investing in relationships, people, and ministry. St. Paul School and Church are only as strong as the people who are walking the sanctified life together.



There is already a large number of helpful encouraging people who are willing to work in front of and behind the scenes to make St. Paul a great place to learn, serve, and grow. When I volunteered to coach, I knew that it would be good for the athletes, I didn't realize how good it would be for me. God has a way of blessing us when we choose to bless others. I am grateful for the opportunity. I encourage you to join in the blessings.

-Principal Mrs. Valerie Matyas

CONSIDERGING IRAN



Iran is a restricted nation with governmental estimates of 97% of the population to be Muslim. However, many Iranians have quietly and privately left that faith and are truly questioning Islamic practices which are so harsh. The "quietly and privately" aspect is necessary because the Shiite theocracy forbids all Christian practices such as gathering for worship, teaching children about Jesus Christ and introducing others to Christianity. If the government, family members and others in a community believe someone has become Christian that person will be questioned intensively, imprisoned, lose homes, income/jobs, and educational opportunities. Many Iranians have begun to leave their country for safer, freer places.

Disillusionment with harsh, angry, hate-filled Islamic practices have caused many to seek for explanations into Christianity. Thankfully, media and emboldened evangelists are able to provide more Christian materials and worship opportunities for desperate Iranians. Praise God for His working amongst these Iranians. The Muslim clerics are being challenged by these outside influences. This challenge intensifies the clerics' efforts to squelch Christian influences in the Iranian population. The freedoms of the Christian faith are seen as threatening to such oppressive rule.

Please keep all Iranian people in your prayers that God will protect, provide and extend His kingdom amongst them. The distractions of the current conflict are providing "cover" for Christians working inside Iran. All is not terrible, God is at work and He sends His workers into the harvest in such times as these.

The information provided above was taken from articles appearing in the Voice of The Martyrs 2026 Global Prayer Guide and the monthly VOM October newsletter.

Remember always Whose you are. You are called by His name… CHRISTIAN.

In addendum; I mentioned that we know a Nepalese doctor who has relatives in Nepal. He had been in that area effected by the natural disaster. We are so thankful that Dr. Adakhari's people are safe..

Submitted by Sydra Krueger advocating for the persecuted church worldwide.

Blood Drive - October 22



The next blood drive at St. Paul will be on Thursday, October 22 from 2:00-6:30 p.m. in the Ministry Center. If you would like to sign up to donate, you can click the link **here**.

Roll Call Sunday - October 25, 2026

Our annual Roll Call Sunday celebration will be October 25, 2026! Anyone celebrating an "every 10th Year" anniversary in 2026 is invited to come to the Roll Call Service and Banquet at the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, October 25, 2026. If you were confirmed in one of those years at St. Paul or a sister congregation, you should receive a letter with details and a registration form. If you think this is you (or someone you know) and you haven't gotten a letter, it is possible that our records need updating, so please contact the church office to bring us up to speed.

To register yourself for Roll Call you can click **here**.

JOY Group



The November JOY meeting will be on Thursday, November 19th at 12 noon in the Ministry Center. We will start with a potluck. Please let us know if you will be attending as we will supply the meat. If you would like to bring something, please bring a salad, vegetable or dessert. Come and enjoy lunch, fellowship and some laughs. Thank you to Bill Snelenberger for sharing at our October meeting, his glasses that read to or tells him what he is looking at and now he can follow the songs in church. Hope to see you in November.

Welcome New Members



Jason and Tami Sivy, along with their son Jonas, are excited to be new members of St. Paul. After living all around the USA for many years, they settled in Bay City and were recently members of another Bay City church, but felt called to make a switch. Jason is a nurse informaticist at the VA, Tami is a professor at SVSU, and Jonas is a freshman at Valley. They enjoy music, sports, reading, working on their >100 year old house, and spending time up north, especially during ski season. They also have a daughter, Sabine, who is a sophomore at SVSU

Upcoming Events

TRUNK OR TREAT

FRIDAY, OCT 30 6-7PM

Use the Google Form in the emailed bulletin or email Janelle Wiess at jwhitneywiess@gmail.com if you have any questions.



RAIN DATE: SAT, OCT 31, 1-2 PM



Book Fair

SAVE THE DATE!

OCT. 26-30

St. Paul friends and family can shop in the school gym at dismissal on Thursday, Oct. 29 and during VIP Day on Friday, Oct. 30.

- **In-person sales earn 50% for our school.**
- **Online sales earn 25%.**



Thank you for supporting the Book Fair! Every purchase earns FREE BOOKS and resources for our classrooms and library!

If you are available to volunteer any amount of time, please contact Kristen Glasser: 989-529-2962.

Upcoming Events

FRESH WREATH FUNDRAISER

TO BENEFIT

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN SCHOOL
6094 W.S. Saginaw Road - Bay City

$25

24 INCH FRASER FIR WREATH WITH DECORATIVE BOW

DELIVERED TO ST. PAUL BEFORE THANKSGIVING

Contact Kristen Glasser by November 6th to order & pay: 989-529-2962

Submit cash or check payment to Kristen Glasser or the St. Paul Office.
Make checks out to Artisians Landscaping.

Youth

Nov. 8th
8:30-11:00 am
Fellowship Hall

Pancake Breakfast

Pancakes with toppings, breakfast meat & coffee too! Free will offering to support the Youth Program.



ST. PAUL LADIES AID

BAKE SALE

DECEMBER 5, 2026

Fresh homemade donuts, Homemade German Goodies, Sauerkraut, Jam, Cookies and Breads

Coffee & Donut Hour 8:30-9:30

Bake Sale 9:30-11

6094 West Side Saginaw Rd
Bay City 48706

Acolyte and Reader Schedule for November 2026

Acolytes:	*8:00 a.m.*	*10:30 a.m.*	*Readers:*	*8:00 a.m.*	*10:30 a.m.*
Sun., Nov. 1	Brynlee Kolberg	Ally Begick		John Schlicker	Richard Doan
Sun., Nov. 8	Bently Raquepaw	Jacob King *(Choir Grades 5-8 Sing)*		——	——
Sun., Nov. 15	David Dent	Aisnley Wiess		——	Brian Appold
Sun., Nov. 22	Abigail Matyas	Amelia Jose		Sam Britton	——
Wed., Nov. 25 *Thanksgiving Worship*	——	Tye Riley *(6:30 p.m.)*		——	——
Thurs., Nov. 26 *Thanksgiving Worship*	Isaac Matyas *(9:00 a.m.)*	——		——	——
Sun., Nov. 29	Gatlin Duffey	Brenna King		——	——

Altar Guild and Ushers in November 2026

Altar Guild:
Joanne Behmlander
Melissa Appold
Jean Begick

8 a.m. Ushers: Group #3
ART ZEILINGER 280-8090
Jason Schlicker
Peter Auernhammer
Dan Bebow
Sawyer Bebow
Noah Helmreich
Eli Bebow

10:30 a.m. Ushers: Group #6
BRIAN APPOLD 293-0195
Scott Weiss
Jeffrey Olson
Eddie Switek
Mike Meyers

Head Usher:
Dale Jezowski (327-7613)

Family Elder List

	Family Name:	***Elder:***		***Family Name:***	***Elder:***
A - Ba	Anderson-Bass	Brian Appold	Ki - L	King-Lutz	DJ Bourdow
Bb - Bz	Bebow-Bush	Mike Appold	M - N	MacLeod-Newsham	Scott Weiss
Ca - E	Campbell-Engelhardt	Jeremy Begick	O - Sb	Olson-Sawicki	Jeremy Warren
F - G	Fehn-Gwizdala	Ben Burnison	Sc - T	Schaefer-Trogan	Howard McMullen
H - Kh	Haas-Kernstock	Billy Cmeyla	U - Z	Ulbricht-Zimmer	Eddie Switek

Your elder should be able to answer any church related questions you may have, or they can find the person who can answer your question.

St. Paul Lutheran Church Newsletter
October 21, 2026
Volume 31—Issue 9

6100 Westside Saginaw Road
Bay City, MI 48706
Church Phone: 989.686.7140
School Phone: 989.684.4450

Pastor:
Rev. Dr. Dennis Matyas
Pastor:
Rev. David Schultz
Principal:
Mrs. Valerie Matyas
Office Manager:
Mrs. Nicole Burnison

Newsletter articles for the next newsletter are due on Wednesday, November 11, 2026. You may submit articles to the email address below or drop them off in the office.
Website: www.stpaulbaycity.org
Email: office@stpaulbaycity.org

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes of September 10, 2026
(APPROVED)

Chairman Weston Appold called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Pastor Matyas led us in an opening prayer.

Council Members in attendance include Weston Appold, Judy Spielhaupter, DJ Bourdow, Greg Behmlander, Jason Kusterer, Pastor Schultz, Valerie Matyas, Pastor Matyas, Roger Hendrick, Jean Begick, and Leeta Theiss.

Acknowledgement of Blessings - Council acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the good progress Judy's sister is making with her neurologist, for the good start to the new men's Bible study, for the good start to the school year, for the new bleachers, and that Katie Fehn has started her colloquy.

Minutes - A motion passed approving the minutes from the August 13, 2026 Council Meeting as corrected.

Treasurer's Report - The Board of Business Management has not met since August so we do not have any updated financials at this time.

Committee Reports

Gifts and Memorials - The new communion ware was dedicated and used Sunday, and the Pastors, Elders, and Altar Guild members present shared their thoughts and observations.

BOARD REPORTS

Board of Elders - DJ Bourdow reported on the following:

1. Membership Changes
    a. Deaths: Bonnie Berger
    b. Transfers in: Sherry Sutton from St. John, Amelith
    c. Peaceful release: Rebecca, James, and Joseph Neumeyer
2. The new mailboxes will be set up with a number system. This project is still under progress.
3. Roll Call preparation is in motion.
4. The conference monitor has been updated.

Board of Trustees - Chairman Greg Behmlander shared the following updates:

1. They have been investigating the gym and hallway entrance mystery leak.
2. The barn is coming down quickly.
3. They are getting bids to deal with the drainage downstairs at church.
4. They have not forgotten about looking at the storm windows at the Schultz home.

Board of Education - Chair Judy Spielhaupter shared the following:

1. Jennifer Grew was interviewed and hired as the new Bookkeeper. She has a student in the 5th grade. The Board of Business Management will work out the details.

2. LEAPShop will be offering a BofE training workshop on Thursday, October 29, at Trinity Monitor. This will be led by Travis Grulke from the Michigan District Office. This will address our School Action Plan. More information will be forthcoming.
3. Upcoming Conferences:
    a. Mrs. Matyas will be attending the All-Pastor's Conference October 4-6 in Boyne Mountain.
    b. Mrs. Matyas and 6 teachers will be attending the Unity Conference 2026 October 15-16 in Grand Rapids.
4. As part of her yearly evaluation, Mrs. Matyas presented her 2026-2027 goals (1 personal and 2 professional) to the Board. The Board gave its approval.
5. Parent Handbook-the BofE reviewed and made changes to the "Student Services" section. The Board will move into the "Parent Information" section at its October meeting.
6. Reminder for Saturday, September 12
    a. JME Run/Walk - 9:00 am.
    b. Family Fun Fest - 10 am in the Church parking lot.
7. Sunday, September 27th - NLSA Celebration Church Potluck. Superintendent Travis Grulke will present St. Paul our 2026 National Lutheran School Accreditation certificate at both the 8am and 10:30 am services. Following the 10:30 am service, please join us in the Ministry Center for a potluck. Bring a dish to pass.

Board of Business Management - No Report.

Board of Youth - Chairman Jason Kusterer reported on the following:

1. The Jr High Youth Bible study and Sunday School are starting back up again this Sunday.
2. The SNYG will be starting up again Sunday night. The Schultz, Matyas, and Cmeyla families will be mapping out meeting plans for the new school year.
3. 4 students will be confirmed this year.

Board of Discipleship - Chair Leeta Theiss made a suggestion that when new adults are being confirmed that every effort should be made to have their information shared in that Sunday's bulletin so that everyone can put the new face and name together.

Unfinished Business - We began the process of reviewing and monitoring sections of the Constitution and By Laws. We reviewed the Duties of Members, Amendments, Discipleship and Recreation Committee. Some items were noted for clarification under the Rec Committee and Discipleship sections. We monitored the Board of Youth section and ensured its fulfillment.

New Business - None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m. and Pastor Schultz closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Begick, Secretary

Next Council Meeting - Thursday October 8, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

St. Paul Lutheran Church & School Calendar

November 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 All Saints' Day Daylight Savings Time (Fall Back) 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Bible Class & Sunday School & Junior High Youth Group 10:30 AM Celebration & Praise with Communion	**2** 6:30 PM Ladies Aid	**3** 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM Elders Meeting	**4** 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study	**5** 6:00 PM Board of Education	**6**	**7**
8 8:00 AM Worship with Communion **8:30 a.m. Youth Pancake Breakfast** 10:30 AM Worship with Communion - **Choir Grades 5-8 Sing**	**9** 6:30 p.m. Board of Business Management	**10** **Veterans Day -** Event at St. Paul School 7:45 a.m. 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Bell Choir	**11** 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study Newsletter Articles Due	**12** 6:30 PM Church Council	**13**	**14**
15 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Bible Class & Sunday School & Junior High Youth Group 10:30 AM Worship with Communion	**16**	**17** 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Bell Choir	**18** 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study	**19** 12:00 PM JOY Group 6:00 PM Women in Mission	**20**	**21**
22 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Bible Class & Sunday School & Junior High Youth Group 10:30 AM Worship with Communion	**23**	**24** 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Bell Choir	**25** 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Thanksgiving Worship **[- - Thanksgiving Recess - No School - Office Closed - -]**	**26** 9:00 a.m. Thanksgiving Worship	**27**	**28**
29 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Bible Class 10:30 AM Worship with Communion	**30**	1				

OCTOBER

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DECEMBER

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