

O Tannenbaum!

It's a widely held belief that Martin Luther invented the Christmas tree. As the apocryphal legend goes, he was walking home on a dark, snow-laded road and noticed the beauty of the stars and moonlight shining through the pines. Captured by the sight, he installed one of these trees in the house, fixed candles to it by wires, and voila! The symbolism grew from there: evergreen like the eternal living promises of God; lights in darkness that enrapture our eyes and imaginations; the gifts underneath like the gift of Christ under the star; etc. etc. etc...

I grew up with an artificial tree that got carefully packed away until next year. It wasn't until after seminary that I experienced a live one. So I am by no means a Christmas tree purist like some, and I clearly see the benefits and blessings of each type. Do what you want, it's your tree. But I personally prefer the live tree for its ... well, for its *life*. The symbolism of a live tree is just more powerful than an artificial one for my Christmas devotion. Moreover, I can support a church family's business by buying a new one from them every year. But it is harder to manage, and that's part of its charm. But what do you do with the tree after Christmas?



Putting it up is one thing: pick out the tree, cut the end, shave enough twigs so it fits in the stand, vacuum for three hours and still step on a needle in your bare feet. Then keep watering it in a feeble attempt to make it last long enough. Just like your Christmas devotion, it's a lot of work that goes underappreciated if you don't slow down to watch, and it's all for naught to a world that doesn't understand the Christocentric nature of the season.

Taking it down is another thing altogether, and the disposal of the now-dead tree is always bittersweet to me. Christmas is always fun and meaningful, but then the dead branches only serve to remind me that my hum-drum life is back in full force like the deep freeze of winter. And just like my life, I've disposed of the tree in many different ways:

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SAVED

by Jesus,

SENT

to serve.

A Sign and Token of Something Greater

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One year I dragged it out to the brush pile to break it down. As I was stomping on it, I turned to find three tiny faces in the window with sad looks of horror. (Whoops.) So the tiny faces got bundled up against the cold, and the tree got moved deeper into the woods so the forest critters could enjoy it. Thus our Christmas joy spread to the wildlife.

One year the creek was frozen enough, so I hacked a small hole with a hatchet and "replanted" the tree in the middle of the ice. We watched for weeks as it slowly sagged and turned brown. But one day in the spring it suddenly disappeared into the creek bed, revealing a steady stream of flowing water.

One year I made inch-thick ornaments out of the trunk intended for the following Advent. They were then painted, strung, and used the next year. The tree lives on.

The symbolism of the tree continues to reflect our natures even after Christmas is over, when it's time to get "back to normal." We had our little fun, we sang songs for Jesus, now we pack him away until we need him again. In fact, we can lean toward that behavior all year in church: it's Sunday, so here's forgiveness, here's a sermon, here's the sacrament, here's the benediction, and I pack Jesus away until next Sunday.

It doesn't have to be this way, though, if we remember the tree and its symbolism all year: just like the tree is born, lives, and dies for my joy, so Jesus Christ is born, lives, and died for my peace. Just like we don't leave Christ in the tomb to rot, so we celebrate his resurrection and our hope for the same. Even after Christmas, Easter is around the corner. Even after Sunday, another Sunday comes. In short, there will be a new and living tree to remind us of the life and hope we have in Christ. Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.

-Pastor Matyas



From the Principal's Office

Since the beginning of the school year, St. Paul's Chapel offerings have been designated toward the 2022-2023 Heart for Jesus program facilitated by the Michigan District. This year, Hearts for Jesus chose an organization called World Mission to inspire students to give from their heart to share the Gospel with the world.

World Mission is focused on sharing the Good News of Jesus to extremely remote places of the world through a Treasure—a solar-powered, hand-held audio player containing the gospel message in their own language. Each Treasure delivers the Word of God to unreached people groups throughout the world. People need not be literate or have a written translation of their language in order to hear the Word of God. World Mission supplied St. Paul with a Treasure so that our students could hold the very device for which they were raising funds.

As our Chapel offerings began to accumulate, we used oversized paper cut outs of a Treasure to help us visually see how many Treasures our offerings had earned. It was with glad and grateful hearts that the students and teachers of St. Paul brought their humble offerings to the Lord. He can and will do great things with what we had to give!

At our final Chapel before Christmas Break, St. Paul had reached \$390.49. In the New Year, this money will be given to World Mission, and with it, their organization will be able to purchase 7 Treasures (one Treasure costs roughly \$50). Each Treasure has the potential to reach 144 people for Christ. Our contribution will allow 1,008 people to hear the saving message of Jesus Christ! What an incredible witness!

To learn more about World Mission please visit: <https://worldmission.cc/>



Welcome New Members!



Hi, I am Shannon Martin, and I have four children: Madison (16), William (15), Preston (13), and Meredith (11). I was born and raised in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. I attended Lutheran grade school and then graduated from Michigan Lutheran Seminary. I am a full-time sonographer at Valley OB in Saginaw. I worked previously at Beacon of Hope Pregnancy Care Center. I am incredibly passionate about mamas and their unborn babies. In my free time, you can find me at sporting events for my kids (volleyball, baseball, hockey, soccer, basketball, football, and track), hiking through the woods, enjoying a campfire, or on a beach. Life for me may look busy and chaotic at times, but I live my life simply. Ephesians 5:2 teaches me to walk a life of love and Isaiah 43 shows me that God will be with me through it all. I was drawn to St. Paul after I moved to 4-mile road in Bay City. I started attending at the end of 2019 and now I am so grateful to be a part of the St. Paul family.

Al and Cathy Romig have recently transferred to St Paul from Redeemer Lutheran in Salt Lake City, UT. Both grew up in the thumb from Cass City, MI. They have been married since 2004. They have three adult children, Brian - Bay City, Brittany - Lansing, and Katie - Salt Lake City. Cathy retired in 2020 from Ascension Health IT (remote for St Mary's Saginaw/ Genesys) and Al, a mechanical engineer, retired from BioFire in SLC this past March. After retiring, they decided to come back home to be near family. Someone in SLC told them, "everyone who comes from Michigan always moves back!". In addition to spending time with family, Al and Cathy enjoy golf, Al likes to shoot competitively and Cathy has joined the choir. After deciding in May to move back, they attended St. Paul last summer and began getting to know St Paul through the live stream services and bible classes until they moved back at the end of October. They are staying with family in Sanford and will be moving to Frankenlust Township in 2023.



Welcome New Members!



Beckem
Cora
Abel

October 2022

Clarrissa Carroll

Hi, I am Clarissa Carroll, and I am glad to be a new member of St. Paul Lutheran church. My children Beckem, Cora, and Abel are excited to be here as well. My girls attend St. Paul School and are loving it there.

I have two associate degrees and two advanced certificates. I currently work part-time with a local agency in the foster care system. I also run local vendor/craft events working with local non-profit agencies. It is my way of giving back to the community.

My children and I keep busy with all three of them doing dance at Tracy's Dance studio. We attend many different activities together at the local libraries in the area and more. You will find us outside most days when the weather is nice. We enjoy our family time and with our beloved pets.

Thank you for welcoming us into your church family.

Allison and Michael Carr are excited to join the St. Paul family! They met at Concordia Ann Arbor and were married in 2015. Michael is an IT Analyst and Allison served as the Director of Children's and Family Life Ministry at Trinity Utica before resigning to stay home and transferring their membership to St. Paul, helping them focus on raising their children closer to family. They have two children, Levi (3 years-old) and newborn Noel, born in November. Allison is also the younger sister of 1st and 2nd grade teacher, Andrea Dent.



Levi
&
Noel

November 2022

Michael & Allison Carr

Contact information for new members received since the latest directory was published is provided in the blue photo album at the bottom of the case where new member pictures are displayed in the church entry. Pictures removed to make room for new ones are stored in the photo album until those recently received members are pictured in a new directory.

The Real Santa Claus from the Past

The Life and the Legend of the Saint Who Became Santa Claus

By Scott P. Richert

Updated now for Dec. 2022

The thought behind this article is to help children and their parents understand that there truly was a St. Nick. He wasn't a false creation or cute character, but lived and served others because of his faith in our dear Lord so long ago.

"There are few saints better known than Saint Nicholas of Myra, and yet there is remarkably little that we can say for certain about his life. His birthdate is lost to history; even his birthplace (Parara of Lycia, in Asia Minor) is first recorded in the tenth century, though it was drawn from traditional legends and may be correct. (No one has ever suggested that Saint Nicholas was born anywhere else.)

The Life of Saint Nicholas

What seems most certain is that, sometime after becoming Bishop of Myra, Saint Nicholas was imprisoned during the Christian persecution under the Roman Emperor Diocletian (245-313). When Constantine the Great became emperor and issued the Edict of Milan (313), extending official tolerance to Christianity, Saint Nicholas was released.

Defender of Orthodoxy

Tradition places him at the Council of Nicea (325), though the oldest lists of bishops in attendance do not include his name. It is said that, during one of the most heated moments of the council, he walked across the room to the heretic Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ, and slapped him in the face. Certainly, by all accounts, Saint Nicholas combined a firm orthodoxy with a gentleness toward those in his flock, and Arius's false teaching threatened the souls of Christians.

Saint Nicholas died on December 6, but accounts of the year of his death vary; the two most common dates are 345 and 352.

In 1087, while the Christians of Asia Minor were under assault by Muslims, Italian merchants obtained the relics of Saint Nicholas, which had been held in a church at Myra, and brought them to the city of Bari, in southern Italy. There, the relics were placed in a great basilica consecrated by Pope Urban II, where they have remained.

Saint Nicholas is called "Wonder-Worker" because of the number of miracles attributed to him, particularly after his death. Like all of those who earn the name "Wonder-Worker," Saint Nicholas lived a life of great charity, and the miracles after his death reflect that.

The Legend of Saint Nicholas

The traditional elements of the legend of Saint Nicholas include his becoming an orphan at a very young age. Though his family had been rich, Saint Nicholas decided to distribute all of his possessions to the poor and to dedicate himself to serving Christ. It is said that he would toss little pouches of coins through the windows of the poor, and that sometimes the pouches would land in stockings that had been washed and were hung on the windowsill to dry. Once, finding all the windows in a house shut, Saint Nicholas tossed the pouch up to the roof, where it went down the chimney.



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The Real Santa Claus from the Past

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The Miracle That Made Nicholas a Bishop

Saint Nicholas is said to have made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land as a young man, traveling by sea. When a storm arose, the sailors thought that they were doomed, but through Saint Nicholas's prayers, the waters were calmed. Returning to Myra, Saint Nicholas found that news of the miracle had already reached the city, and the bishops of Asia Minor chose him to replace the recently deceased bishop of Myra.

The Generosity of Nicholas

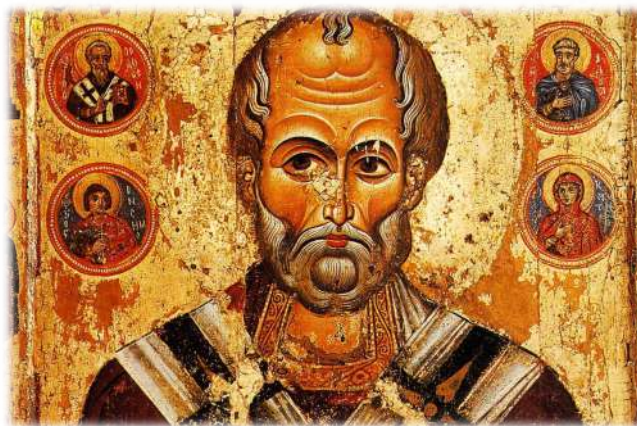
As bishop, Saint Nicholas remembered his own past as an orphan and held a special place in his heart for orphans (and all young children). He continued to give them small gifts and money (especially to the poor), and he provided dowries to three young women who could not afford to marry (and who were in danger, therefore, of entering into a life of prostitution).

Saint Nicholas Day, Past and Present

After Saint Nicholas's death, his fame continued to spread in both Eastern and Western Europe. Throughout Europe, there are many churches and even towns named after Saint Nicholas. By the late Middle Ages, Catholics in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands had begun to celebrate his feast day by giving small gifts to young children. On December 5, the children would leave their shoes by the fireplace, and the next morning, they would find small toys and coins in them.

In the East, after the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on his feast day, a member of the congregation dressed as Saint Nicholas would enter the church to bring children small gifts and to instruct them in the Faith. (In some areas in the West, this visit occurred on the evening of December 5, at the homes of children.)

In recent years in the United States, these customs (especially the placing of the shoes by the fireplace) have been revived. Such practices are a very good way of reminding our children of the life of this beloved saint, and encouraging them to imitate his charity, as Christmas approaches.



Quick Facts

- **Feast Day:** December 6
- **Type of Feast:** Optional Memorial
- **Readings:** Isaiah 40:1-11; Matthew 18:12-14
- **Dates:** Unknown (Parara, Lycia, Asia Minor)- December 6, 345 (or 352) (Myria, Lycia)
- **Patron of:** Children, mariners, pawnbrokers, merchants, bakers, travelers, the Byzantine Catholic Church
- **Canonization:** By popular acclamation
- **Prayers:** Invocation to Saint Nicholas; A Prayer of Impetration to Saint Nicholas



Ladies Aid

Our Ladies Aid Christmas party was held at Krzysiak's Restaurant. Vicar Schultz played his guitar and we sang beautiful Christmas songs. We had a great and delicious meal. President Ro Hardy led our meeting. It was reported that we had another successful Bake Sale. The committee thanked all who volunteered and donated baked items. We also welcomed new member Amanda Wilson.

Our Christmas committee passed out our secret pal gifts. We all had a great time. Our next meeting will be February 6th. Merry Christmas and have a blessed and safe New Year.



Altar Flowers

The Altar Flowers Calendar for 2023 is hanging on the wall in the cry room in the back of church. If you would like to put flowers in church in 2023, you may mark it down on the calendar. You order the flowers and the committee will make sure the information is published in the church bulletin.

Blood Drive

There will be a blood drive on December 29 from 2:00 p.m. - 6:25 p.m. in the Ministry Center. For information contact Darlene or Julia.



New Bible Study Next Year

There is a new Bible Study beginning next year on Tuesday mornings. The first weeks session we will be studying Leviticus. If you are interested contact Julia at 989-684-6089 or 989-225-1889 by December 25.

Voters Meeting January 8th at 12:00 p.m.

Attention all members of St. Paul: There will be a Voters Assembly in the sanctuary on Sunday, January 8, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. Below is the proposed budget summary. A detail budget is available in the office. Upon request.

St. Paul Lutheran Church 2023 Budget - Proposed

	Jan - Sept 22	Oct- Dec 22	2022 Proj	2022 Budget	2023 Budget
Church Home Revenue	488,547.00	199,380.00	687,927.00	669,325.00	703,989.75
School Revenue	126,111.00	(8,800.00)	117,311.00	126,050.00	169,080.00
Preschool Revenue	7,588.00	5,000.00	12,588.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
Extended Care Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Other Income	6,636.00	-	6,636.00	-	-
Total Revenue	628,882.00	195,580.00	824,462.00	810,375.00	888,069.75
Church salaries	113,758.00	39,434.00	153,192.00	152,356.00	160,401.60
Church Expenditures	129,662.28	3,339.00	133,001.28	171,210.00	190,267.80
Preschool expenditures	-	-	-	-	-
Extended Care expenditures	3,398.00	-	3,398.00	-	-
Hot Lunch expenditures	7,686.00	-	7,686.00	-	-
Salaries - School	243,678.00	85,586.00	329,264.00	327,209.00	365,832.20
School Expenditures - Church	118,405.94	33,900.00	152,305.94	138,950.00	151,956.70
School Expenditures - School	10,361.00	4,675.00	15,036.00	27,850.00	25,350.00
Ministry Center Operating	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	626,949.22	166,934.00	793,883.22	817,575.00	893,808.30
Net Income (Loss)	1,932.78	28,646.00	30,578.78	(7,200.00)	(5,738.55)

NOTES:

- School Salaries include reduction of Kindergarten salary budget line item due to Carrollton Schools covering 50% of salary
- Preschool income is forecasted based on current enrollment and expenses
- Tuition funds are forecasted based on current enrollment
- General tithes and offerings are forecasted, not budgeted. We can only budget and control expenses. Tithes and offerings are from the heart and from continued blessings from God.
- Budget includes base increase to staff.
- Includes \$6,000 to support Hot Lunch program.
- Tithes to District/Synod of 1.0% of Home Revenue
- School salaries include halftime second 1st & 2nd grade teacher for 2023-2024 school year.
- Ministry Center expenses are included in the normal budget line items
- SMP expenses included in Church expenditures

Acolyte and Reader Schedule for January 2023

Acolytes:	8:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Readers:	8:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
Sun., Jan. 1	Olivia Matyas	Rylie Garrett		John Sclicker	Richard Doan
Fri., Jan. 6	Epiphany Service 6:30 p.m.	Charles Begick		—	—
Sun., Jan. 8	Elaina Garcia	Hayden Kusterer		—	—
Sun., Jan. 15	Noah Helmreich	Sofia Glasser		—	Brian Appold
Sun., Jan. 22	(Y5-8 th Gr. sing both services) Eli Bebow	Daniel Haas		Sam Britton	Sam Britton
Sun., Jan. 29	Kaleb Kusterer	Iva Bebow		—	—

Altar Guild and Ushers in January 2023

Altar Guild:	8 a.m. Ushers: Group #2	10:30 a.m. Ushers: Group #5	Head Usher:
Lynn Strawn	Randy Appold (239-2072)	Bob Campbell (401-7766)	Dale Jezowski (327-7613)
Dorothy Helmreich	Weston Appold	Terry Burkhard	
Sally McMullen	Greg Behmlander	Rich Doan	
	Matt Appold	Wayne Stieve	
	Daryl Appold	Mike Myers	
	Rylan Appold		

Family Elder List (June-December 2022)

<u>Family Name:</u>	<u>Elder:</u>	<u>Family Name:</u>	<u>Elder:</u>
A-Bec Abraham-Beckers	Brian Appold	L-Na LaFontaine – Nagy	DJ Bourdow
Beg-Br Begick-Brown	Howard Helmreich	Ne-Schi Neuman– Schimm	Scott Weiss
Bu-E Buda – Engelhardt	Jeremy Begick	Schl – V Pfau-Schlicker	Tom Appold
F-He Finney - Hendrick	Ben Burnison	Wa – Z Schmidt-Wagner	Jerry Schlicker
Hi-Ku Hildebrant– Kusterer	Terry Burkard		

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

December 21, 2022
Volume 27—Issue 11

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

Pastor:

Rev. Dennis Matyas

Vicar:

Mr. David Schultz

Principal:

Mrs. Valerie Matyas

Office Manager:

Mrs. Nicole Burnison

Newsletter articles for the next newsletter are due on Wednesday, January 11, 2022. 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 November 10th, 2022
(Approved)**

Chairman Weston Appold called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Matyas led us in an opening prayer.

Council members in attendance include: Weston Appold, Pastor Matyas, Andy Weiss, Valerie Matyas, Tom Appold, Jim Marter, Tom Deprekel, Kayla Schlicker and Sharon Schlicker

Acknowledgement of Blessings - Jim is thankful that his grandson has recovered from being sick. Also thankful for the fall harvest and for Lutheran schools.

Minutes - *A motion passed* approving the minutes from October 13, 2022 council meeting.

Treasurer's Report - Andy Weiss presented the treasurer's report. Revenue is better than budgeted and we're in a good direction for the year. The Treasurer's Report will be filed for audit.

Committee Reports

Gifts and Memorials - No report

175th Anniversary Committee - No report

Planning Committee - Valerie Matyas presented the planning committee report for the locker room remodel. Spence Brothers and Case Architecture will be attending a meeting at school to create a floor plan and give an itemized budget. Chad Ayotte will be returning with an electrician to review the freezer area.

BOARD REPORTS

Board of Elders - Chairman Tom Appold presented the Elder's Report. Vicar Schultz will have the sermon on November 27th. The Elder's will be setting up the cornucopia on November 21st.

1. Membership changes

a. In:

- i. Ann Gurnee - by confirmation
- ii. Ben Gurnee & children - by affirmation
- iii. Mary Gettel - by confirmation
- iv. Bree King - by confirmation
- v. Clarissa Carroll & children - by confirmation
- vi. Shannon Martin - by confirmation
- vii. Laura Gehrman - by confirmation
- viii. Allison, Michael & Levi Carr - transfer from Trinity Lutheran, Utica, MI
- ix. Cathleen & Allan Romig - transfer from Utah
- x. Kurt Eichinger - transfer from St. John, Amelith

b. Out:

Makenzie Pickell - transferred to St. Lorenz

c. Deaths:

Loretta Eickmeyer and Irene Neumeyer

Board of Trustees - No report

Board of Education - Chairman Jim Marter reported that they are continuing to work on the classroom size policy. The children's Christmas Program is on December 21st. They will be giving treat bags to the kids and

refreshments will be served after the service. The school staff Christmas party will be at the Ministry Center and they are asking for approval to have alcoholic beverages, which was approved.

Board of Business Management - Chairman Andy Weiss reported that they are continuing to work on the budget and will present it to the church council when complete.

Board of Youth - Chairman Kayla Schlicker presented the report. A budget request was approved and Vicar sent it to the Board of Business Management. They are continuing to work on processes as Vicar transitions to his new role. Sunday School will not release students until parents come to pick them up from the classroom. The Roll Call ceremony and lunch was on October 30th. The event went well and the process was documented for future years. The pancake breakfast raised over \$800 for the Youth Group. The Youth Group will begin working on the Christmas Eve Vespers Service. They are still in need of a leader for the Youth Gathering in Mackinaw in June 2023.

Board of Evangelism - Chairman Tom Deprekel reported on the following:

1. Tom is trying to put together a men's group that would gather monthly.
2. Camp Lu Lay Lea is shutting down for the year. They are in need of more volunteers to include spring and fall needs. Fundraising efforts for the camp are underway.
3. The prison ministry has resumed. Planning on two more weekends in January & February.

Board of Stewardship - no report

Unfinished Business

1. AED for Ministry Center
 - a. Josh Schlicker to ask Vaughn Begick
2. By-Law change
 - a. Board eligibility for paid staff members
 - b. Board eligibility for staff's immediate family members
3. Frankenlust Twp Zoning gave us 3 options for the St Paul sign on Schwab Rd by I-75.
 - a. Remove the sign
 - b. Replace it to back to the prior state from 2018
 - c. Apply for a variance by the township board

After discussion, Pastor Matyas will send a letter to the township notifying them that the sign will be removed.

New Business

1. Valerie Matyas reported that the cleaning person for school gave her two week notice of employment. They will be seeking someone to fill that position.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. Pastor Matyas closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Schlicker, Secretary

Next Regular Voters Meeting-Sunday, January 8th, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. - Budget Approval
Next Council Meeting - Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church Calendar

JANUARY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:15 AM Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 AM Celebration & Praise with Communion 5:00 PM Youth Group	2 <div>No School</div>	3 7:00 PM Elders Mtg.	4	5 6:00 PM Board of Ed 7:00 PM Church Council	6 6:00 PM Epiphany Service	7
8 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:15 AM Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship with Communion 12:00 PM Voters Meeting 5:00 PM Youth Group	9 6:30 PM Board of Business Mgt Mtg.	10	11 <div>NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE</div>	12	13	14
15 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:15 AM Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship with Communion 5:00 PM Youth Group	16 No School VLHS In-service	17	18	19 12:00 PM JOY Gathering 6:00 PM Friendship Circle	20	21
22 8:00 AM Entire School NLSW Both Services 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:15 AM Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship with Communion 5:00 PM Youth Group	23	24	25	26 6:00 PM Youth Board Meeting	27	28
29 8:00 AM Worship with Communion 9:15 AM Bible Class & Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship with Communion 5:00 PM Youth Group	30	31	<div> <div> Dec 2022 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 </div> <div> Feb 2023 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 </div> </div>			