



# The Pilot

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran

**"JESUS, SAVIOR, PILOT ME  
OVER LIFE'S TEMPESTUOUS SEA ...  
CHART AND COMPASS COME FROM THEE:  
JESUS, SAVIOR, PILOT ME."**

Volume 1, No. 8

January 2016

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**Long-range Planning**  
(Part of Stewardship)

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**Pastor**  
Dennis K. Strong

**Office Manager**  
Ms. Danyelle Wright



## From the Pastor:

*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Acts 16:31*

(From WELS DAILY DEVOTION – January 9, 2016)

## In Pursuit of your Soul

Some years ago there was a fierce manhunt in California. A thief had stolen a VW Bug. The authorities were so determined to get him that they unleashed all kinds of resources to find that one car and the thief who was driving it. They even resorted to broadcasting their message over local radio stations in order to find the thief and stop him.

Why such hot pursuit over this VW Bug? Here's why. On the front seat of the stolen car was a box of crackers. But, unknown to the thief, the crackers were laced with poison. The car owner had intended to use the crackers to kill rats. The authorities, therefore, were in hot pursuit of this thief because they wanted to save his life.

*(Continued on page 2) In pursuit of your soul*

## Lenten Services/Soup Supper

Lent will be starting up soon. Ash Wednesday worship will be on Wednesday, February 10, 2016. The theme for the Lenten series will be, "The Last Names of Jesus" taken from the last chapters of the book of Matthew. Pastor Frey from Montrose is working on this series and he and Pastor Strong will exchange pulpits 3 times during the Lenten season. Plan on attending these worship services that will start at 7 PM. You will be enlightened by the Holy Spirit as we once again follow Jesus to the cross where he suffered on our behalf.

We will once again have soup suppers. The suppers will begin at 6:00 PM. If you would like to supply some soup or crackers or other meal items, you may sign up on the sheet that will be on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

## Annual Meeting Highlights

The 2016 budget was adopted with a change in amount that we will provide to the WELS for our Congregational Mission Offerings. We lowered it from \$15,000 to \$11,000. Our overall budget will be slightly lower than the budget from 2015. But we hope and pray that members will continue to support our work as well as the building project that we plan to start in the spring. The church's lawn mower has been reconditioned and is ready for another season of mowing. If you would be interested in helping out with the lawn mowing, you can talk to Tom Bargsten or Rod Christ about how it all works.

Congregational statistics:

99 members; 74 communicants, Median age is 49 (26 individuals unknown at this time), youngest member is 4 years old, oldest is 94 years old, 15 Sunday School aged children, 20 members 70 years old and older, 5 high school aged, average Sunday attendance 35,

*Annual Meeting (Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1) ***In pursuit of your soul***

Jesus has been in pursuit of your soul. Many times, in our sinful, confused thinking, we assume he's after us because he wants us to pull over and behave better, to give up our freedom, to give up our fun.

When you and I think that way, we've got it all wrong. Jesus pursues us because he wants to save us. He pursues us because, if he doesn't, the poison of our sin will consume us. He pursues us because he wants to give us life, peace, joy, and forgiveness. He died to purchase that forgiveness. And now he lives to pursue us through his gospel.

Believe in the One who has pursued you. Trust his promises. Savor his rescue of your soul. And let him continue his pursuit of others through you.

Prayer: Dearest Jesus, thank you for pursuing my soul through your gospel. In you I have life. Use me to pursue others by sharing your message of salvation. Amen.

(This and other devotions are available online at: [WhatAboutJesus.com](http://WhatAboutJesus.com). You can subscribe and get devotions brought to your inbox on a daily basis. You can also subscribe to daily devotions at this website. And there is a wealth of other materials to be found there.)

## Why does the pastor and Elders keep bugging our straying members?

What is a soul worth? Jesus talked about going after the one lost sheep. It isn't about warm bodies in the pew... though it is good for the morale of the those who do attend.

(Continued from page 1) ***Annual Meeting***

6 shut ins (5 members and 1 non-member).

The membership pictorial directories should arrive within the next few weeks.

We sent out 5,000 postcards advertising our Kidz Korner, Christmas for Kids and Christmas Eve worship services. We have had 4 families that attended one of the events as a result of the post cards. We expect that many more are now aware of our

## Building Addition update

The Architectural drawings should be done by the end of the month. Then we can start the bidding process. When that is complete, then we will know the cost of the work. Stay tuned!

## Pray for our mission churches

Remember to Pray for .... Illumine Church is situated just south of Charlotte in suburban Rock Hill, South Carolina. Since our organization meeting in the summer of 2013, through our worship launch in a movie theater on April 14, 2014, and now while we are moving into and renovating a 24/7 ministry facility, our goal has been to advance the gospel by trusting that God, through his Word, will make a difference in the lives of his people, their relationships, and their communities. The name Illumine was chosen because the metaphor of light is so prominent throughout the Bible. Genesis 1, Isaiah 60, John 1, Ephesians 5—these Bible chapters and many more Bible verses speak of the light of God and the way it reflects off his people. Since one of the dictionary definitions of illumine is to give light indirectly, we thought it was a great description of what our congregations hopes to do. Illumine strives to connect people to worship that rejuvenates them, education that strengthens them, and opportunities to serve their community that exhaust them so they are ready to be rejuvenated again. We pray that more people will be brought into t kind of relationships Christ came to give them. Whatever his will is, we are excited to see what he does thorough his people at Illumine, and we are grateful for the prayers of our family in faith around the world. Please pray for the members of Illumine Church to reflect Jesus, the Light of the world.

Pastor Kent A. Reeder

church and location. We planted the seed, the Lord will provide the results.

We want to encourage our parents to bring their children to church and Sunday School. When we have visitors with children, they do take notice of the attendance of our children. They are more likely to return when they see our parents are faithfully bringing their children every Sunday. Thanks to Bob

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The Pilot is a monthly newsletter of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church. Articles are to be submitted to the editor by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Pastor Strong serves as editor. The Pilot serves to inform St. Paul members of the events that are taking place in our congregation. Keeping the communication lines open is very important. Your comments are welcomed. St. Paul Web Page location is [www.stpaulgj.org](http://www.stpaulgj.org). You may e-mail at [pastorstrong@stpaulgj.org](mailto:pastorstrong@stpaulgj.org) or [church@stpaulgj.org](mailto:church@stpaulgj.org)



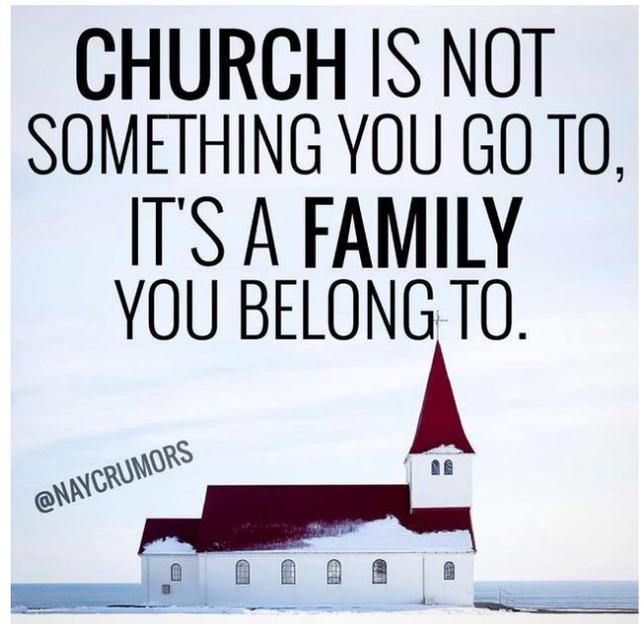
St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church  
 632 26 1/2 Road  
 Grand Junction CO 81506-1928  
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We have begun this bi-weekly program for kids (18 months to 5 years old) and their accompanying adult. Storytelling, projects, activities, music and snacks are part of the hour.

It is held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 9 AM to 10 AM. No preregistration needed. No cost. Free to participate. If you know of someone who has a child that age and they are looking for interactions with other children and adults, invite them.

*(Continued from page 2) Annual Meeting*

Grafe for his service as the president of the congregation. He will now serve on the Board of Elders. Rod Christ will be our new president. We welcome Al Ledebur as our congregational secretary and thank Mike Radeck for his years of service as past secretary. Thanks to Carol Rice for her years of service as our office secretary. We are looking forward to Danyelle Wright's work as the new office manager. The Stewardship Committee continues to work on ways in which we can encourage our members to be good stewards with what God has entrusted. We will also be doing some long range planning and identifying our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to our work for the Lord. Minutes from the Annual meeting will be posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.



**ST. PAUL IS A PART OF THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD.**  
 www.wels.net



## Why I Would Never Force my Kids to go to Church

(By Ruth Meyer in Church Press Newsletter)

My parents forced me to eat three times a day growing up. No joke. Three times. Every. Single. Day. And it wasn't always stuff I liked, either. Matter of fact, I complained a lot about what my mom made. "Ewww, gross! Sautéed zucchini? Seriously? Mom, you know we hate this stuff!" So as I approached adulthood I made an important decision. Since my parents forced me to eat while I was growing up, I decided I was done with meals. Oh, here and there I'll eat out of obligation. I mean, family traditions like Thanksgiving and Christmas, yeah, I'm there. But daily eating? No way. I'm done. Set in any other context, excuses people make for not going to church sound completely ridiculous. But set in the context of Christianity, people say these things in all seriousness while others nod sagely in somber agreement. My son told me a few weeks into school that he didn't like the teacher. He wasn't getting excited enough about learning, and he didn't really feel connected to the other kids in his class, so I told him he never had to go back to school again. Who wants to waste their time going somewhere where they aren't being fulfilled?

We've never forced our daughter to stay off the road when playing. We don't want to restrict her imagination. We allow her the freedom to make her own choices in life.

Okay, Ruth. Come on. That one was just ridiculous. No loving parent would ever say that. That's a safety issue- a matter of life and death. Exactly. And that's just my point.

Church isn't a place you go to get pumped up about life. It isn't entertainment like a movie or concert. It is literally a life and death matter. Eternal life. Just as a loving parent wouldn't allow their child to wander in the road or to quit school, a loving Christian parent also does not give the option to their children about going to church, learning Bible stories at home, and praying together. Do your kids always jump for joy when they hear you say, "Time to get up! Let's get ready for church!" No. They won't. Do they get excited for school every morning? Hardly. But you still make them go. Why? Because you are the parent and you know what's best. Even when they complain, you serve them healthful meals and limit their junk food intake. You set boundaries for their own safety when playing outside. You insist they go to school because you're looking at the long term picture. And you are right to do those things. How much more so are you responsible for doing all you can to secure their eternal well being?

Yes, kids can be brought up in a loving Christian home and still turn away later. That's on them. But you, parents, have a task of the utmost importance. God has placed these precious children into your homes for such a brief while. You have them with you for perhaps 1/5

of their lives. Set a strong foundation while they are under your roof. Take them to church. Make sure they understand that they are sinners and that Jesus is their Savior. They are never too young to learn this. My one-and-a-half year old sees a cross and excitedly shouts, "Jesus!" Don't use the excuse that "they wouldn't understand this." Try them. I don't understand it all myself, but I still believe. And you'd better believe that the Holy Spirit works in their hearts effectively. My children sometime amaze me with the insights they pick up during devotions or Bible readings. The strength of their faith often humbles me. Once when I was having a terrible day, my oldest asked, "Can I pray with you?" He was nine at the time. He knows there is power in prayer. He perceives that sometimes there's nothing he can say that will make it better, so he'll just go straight to the One who does have that power. Do my own kids complain about church? Yes. Do they tell me it's boring? Sometimes, yes. They say the same things about school. But church and school are different environments for a reason. School is centered around learning and thus has its own schedule and structure. Church is a hospital for sinners. That would be all of us, mind you. You, me, the drug dealer a few streets away- all of us are sinners in need of a Savior. So what do we do at church? We confess our sins. Why do we do this at the start? To "wipe our feet" before entering God's house, so to speak. Then we are assured of forgiveness. We hear God's Word. We sing hymns proclaiming what Christ has done for us. We hear sermons where our pastors preach Christ. We don't go to church to hear what we have to do to gain heaven. No, Christ did it all. 100%. We can't do one thing to merit salvation for ourselves. That's why we hear sermons about Jesus and not about us. We take the body and blood of Jesus in Holy Communion for the strength of our souls. And we depart refreshed to serve God by serving our families, friends, and neighbors in Christian love.

So parents, don't give in to outside pressures telling you not to force your kids to go to church. Don't give in to them, either, when they complain about it. Because at some point an amazing thing happens- that kid who complains about church grows up and takes his or her own kids to church every Sunday. Going back to my opening analogy, believe it or not, there came a point in my own life where I realized I actually liked sautéed zucchini (although I never would have admitted that to my mother). Keep at it, parents. Just as we need three meals a day for physical strength and nourishment, so do we need regular worship to refresh and strengthen our souls. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go make breakfast.

Address Service Requested

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 St. Paul Evangelical  
Lutheran Church

Located on the corner of  
26 1/2 Road and Horizon Drive

Church Office: 970-243-3626  
Pastor's Cell: 612-709-4772  
Website: [www.stpaulgj.org](http://www.stpaulgj.org)  
Email: [church@stpaulgj.org](mailto:church@stpaulgj.org)

**Worship Services:**  
Sunday mornings 9:00 AM  
Fellowship: 10:00 AM  
Sunday School: 10:15 AM  
Bible Study: 10:30 AM

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