



St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church Aberdeen, SD Sept/Oct 2026

"To progress is always to begin always to begin again"

Greetings St Paul's Members,

Often Laura and I lament that we are starting over. We try to set good habits, devotions, bible study, prayers, etc. and then life gets in the way. We restart often much to our chagrin. The calendar seems to do the same thing. Lots of moments throughout the year where we restart our thinking, Advent, New Years, start of the School Year, etc. It is a time for us to put behind us what has transpired and make plans and begin anew.

This is not new. We see it in our catechism, *What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.* Luther is encouraging us to see our lives rightly. We will sin after the day we were baptized. What do we do? Remember the gift of justification accomplished by Jesus on the cross. He paid our debts and set us free, and we are connected to that gift through water and word; through our baptisms. Our sanctification is something that is accomplished, we have been made holy and yet we continue to deal with sin, when will we be holy? We are holy now and not yet. It will be made complete on that last day when sin is put away forever. So, we live this strange life of starting over or as Luther says, "to begin again." I think Luther viewed the Christian life, the walk of sanctification, the willingness to be salt and light in the world to purify it and brighten the darkest places as a **cyclical process** not a straight line forward.

We yo-yo on diets, or reading our bible, or sticking to habits and this annoys us. We should be better. Do better. There is nothing wrong with trying to conform our lives to be like Jesus. In fact, he calls us to do that very thing. But it's hard to conform our lives to Jesus without constantly looking at him. So perhaps our first step ought to be to listen to him and then conform ourselves to his image. He offers to find us. He promises he will never leave us. He tells us that he is willing to die for us. He feeds us and fills us with his word. Maybe progress is leaving behind all the human goals and measurements and instead we rise with Jesus on our hearts and fall asleep in his loving arms. Beginning new every morning.

So, with the school year we begin anew in terms of our education programs at St Paul's. Laura has already kicked off a great year of K4C. Our youth have been spending time together in bible study and fellowship. Our Sunday School will kick off on Rally Day September 13th. We will have the same grade groups as last year with some teachers from last year and some new. If you have a chance, please thank these teachers as it is not an easy job. Confirmation will also be beginning, and we will be taking a deep dive into the New Testament and the Catechism. Rev. Smith and I will be leading a Bible Study in the Fall on the book of Hebrews. It will be a first for both of us and we are looking forward to it. So many helpful theological truths come out of this book but perhaps the most important is the second office of Jesus; that of Priest (prophet, priest and king). As well as wonderful teachings about how the Old Testament foreshadows Christ.

Along with our teaching ministries, we will soon be printing our budget and mission and vision focus for the year. One thing that has been on my mind is volunteering. My hope is that everyone in the congregation will be able to turn their eyes outward and find a small area of service in the community. I would love for our congregation to be recognized some day as, "oh yeah, you're that church where everyone volunteers". More on this to come.

Rally Day approaches and we will begin again. It may seem boring or cyclical but in reality it is life and how life is shaped. We get to go around again with Jesus and live with him, experience his life and teachings and watch him go to the cross for us because of his great love for us. We begin anew in hope for what is to come.

With Great Love,

Rev. Drevlow

¹ Martin Luther, Commentary on Romans

Funerals or Celebrations of Life

One of the rising trends in the last ten or fifteen years is choosing to have celebrations of life over funerals. At the very least, even those who have funerals for loved ones choose to call it a celebration of life or want to think of it that way instead of a funeral. On the one hand, I can understand that trend especially for Christians. We want to remember the person who we love, all the wonderful memories we have of them, all that they did in their lives, and we want it to be a joyful occasion because especially if that's what the person wanted it to be. I have often heard people say that at their funeral they don't want people to cry or be sad but to laugh and to remember all the good times they had together. In a lot of ways, it makes sense and I understand the thinking.

However, notice what is missing in all of this, it is Christ. It is what God has done for them. It is why, even amid death, we as God's people can have hope and joy because we know that we will see them again. We know that Christ has called them by name through the waters of baptism to be His beloved child, went to that cross to die for all their sins, and three days later rose defeating the grave itself. It's why even at funerals we can look forward knowing one day it will get better because one day we will be reunited. Funerals then help us focus back on what Christ did for that person. It helps us to remember that amid mourning and sorrow that we have hope because of all that Jesus has done for us and for that person. For without Jesus then we truly would have no hope. Without Him we would simply drown in our sorrow, but instead we can look forward in hope. That doesn't mean there aren't tough days. That doesn't mean we don't feel the sting of death. But what it does mean is that we can bring all of that and lay it at the foot of the cross because on the cross we see our salvation and the love that God has not just for us but for that person He called to be with Him forever.

Now, that doesn't mean we don't talk about the person. We do that in our sermons, but funerals are to remind us of what God has done for us and for that person. It is to remind us of the resurrection. Not just about all the good times we had with that person but about all the good times we will have with them in the future and for all eternity. This is then why the visitation and prayer service is so important because at that time it gives us an opportunity to share stories, to laugh and cry, to just focus on the good times we had with that person. In many ways, a prayer service is a celebration of life because the primary focus is on that sharing about that person and its lighter in tone. This is why we encourage families to have both a prayers service and a funeral because each serves its purpose.

I can hear the argument already, "Yes, pastor I understand that, but why does it matter what we call it or what we put on the pamphlet if we do what we usually do?". I am reminded of Romans 12:2 which we read in church a little bit ago. Paul tells us, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind". We are called not be transformed by this world. In other words, to not act, speak, and think like the world. The world around us has shifted away from funerals to celebrations of life because we, as a society, have shifted away from Christ and from the resurrection. Thus, for them there is no purpose in a funeral for there is no hope in Christ. That is why they must celebrate the life of the one who passed away because that is all there is for them. This life and nothing else. Take for example this quote about celebrations of life taken from a funeral home webpage, "Author Barbara Kingsolver once wrote, "To live is to be marked. To live is to change, to acquire the words of a story, and that is the only celebration we mortals really know." This thought beautifully captures the spirit of a celebration of life." Notice Barbara Kingsolver says the only celebration we know is the words of a story or the story of our lives. That is the only celebration we know, and this then is the justification for having a celebration of life! We, and you, should vehemently disagree with her! We know of a greater celebration. We have a greater celebration every time we come to the Lord's Supper as we partake of

Christ's body and blood. During that time, it is literally heaven on earth. This is why Pastor and I are opposed to using the term "celebration of life" because it is used now because people no longer believe in the resurrection and the life that is to come and so all they can do is celebrate the life for they have nothing else. There is no life everlasting for them. We should then not conform to the world around us but continue to proclaim Christ in how we even talk about a funeral and what the purpose of a funeral is, to focus on what Christ has done for us and for that person.

I want to make it clear again, I have no problem about talking about the person during the funeral or at the prayer service, but our focus should always be on Christ and what He has done for us and for that person. For there we find our hope and joy amid sorrow and tears. We find it in the empty tomb. That since it could not hold Him it cannot hold us nor that person we love. That is where we place our faith and our emphasis. On the one who has done all things for us.

May He who has done all this for you continue to bless you especially amid sorrow and tears,
Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Smith



Youth Group 2026 (Grades 6-12) meets on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month from 5-7pm.

Kids for Christ (Grades K-5) meets on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month from 5:30-7:30pm.

Rally Day! Sunday School starts on Sunday, September 13th from 9:30am-10:30am.



Lighthouse Preschool News

Teaching God's children about their Creator, Savior, and Friend while preparing them for a lifetime of wonder, learning, and service.

August 2026

Ready, Set, Go!

We are off and rolling on another school year! We are excited to say that we have 12 students this year for our full-day Jr. Kindergarten program! Over the summer we installed new flooring to better accommodate the needs of our school. We are excited for a new school year and getting to know our new friends!

As we look toward the next year, there are several ways you can help us!

-Consider donating grocery gift cards or snack items to the school. (Please make sure they are not expired already.)

-Begin saving receipts from Ken's and Kessler's. We receive 1 or 2% back from every purchase!

-Save your pop tabs! We are collecting pop tabs to donate to the Ronald McDonald house to help families with sick children.

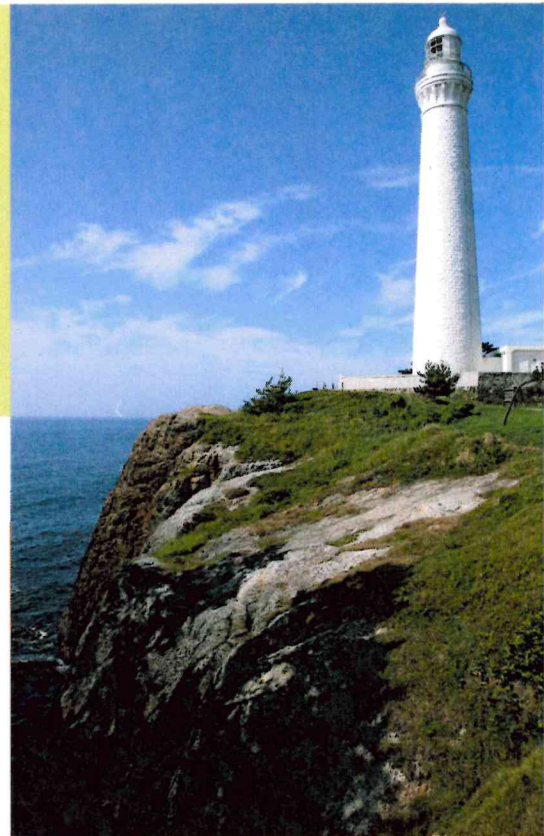
-Consider purchasing items from our Amazon wish list! Any items purchased from our list would be greatly appreciated by our students!

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/BL15FKXJH2M3?ref_=wl_share

-Please consider donating to our tuition assistance fund. We have several families request assistance this year and we would love to continue to be able to help them send their child to Jr. Kindergarten and spread God's Word!

-Pray for our students and parents that their hearts may be accepting to the working of the Lord in their lives, as He deems appropriate in His divine will.

****Thank you to everyone who has purchased snacks for our school!** Our students greatly appreciate having full tummies so the learning never stops! Throughout the school year we will continue to take snack donations, especially perishable items like milk, yogurt, cheese, fruit, etc.



Upcoming Dates:

September 7- No School/Labor Day

September 22- Picture Day!

September 26th – Northern's Homecoming Parade!

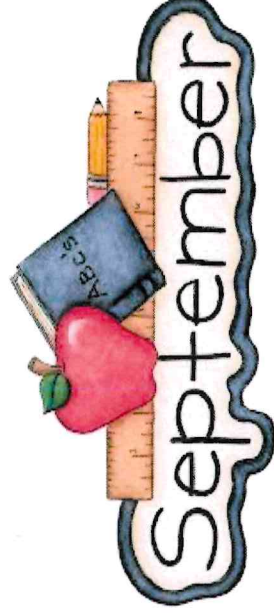
(Please consider donating candy for us to toss at this event!)



St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church (LCMS)
& Lighthouse Preschool

Rev. Ryan Drevlow (605) 251-5243

Rev. Jacob Smith (586) 556-6077



Every Sunday
Divine Service @ 8am
Bible Study/Sunday School @ 9:30 am
Divine Service @ 10:45 am

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1 7:00pm Elder Meeting	2 10:00am Bible Study 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm Confirmation	3 9:00am Quilting	4 Youth for Christ 5:30-7:30pm	5
6 2-4pm Sally Kushman's 100th birthday party	7 Labor Day Church Office Closed No Preschool	8 6:00pm Men's Club Bible Study	9 10:00am Bible Study 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm Confirmation	10 9:00am LWML Meeting 6:00pm Preschool Meeting	11	12 9am – 12pm Jesus Door to Door
13 Sunday School starts 12:30 Prayer Service 5:00 Youth Group	14	15	16 10:00am Bible Study 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm Confirmation	17 9:00am Quilting 7:00pm RGI Meeting	18	19 8am-12pm All Boards Retreat
20 1:00 Gathering God's Flock	21	22 7:00pm Church Council Meeting	23 10:00am Bible Study 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm Confirmation	24 9:00am Quilting 11:30am Pizza w/ the Pastors	25 Youth for Christ 5:30-7:30pm	26
27 5:00pm Youth Group	28	29	30 10:00am Bible Study 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm Confirmation			