



Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 8
September 15, 2021

Paying for Likes

If you are an author of some sort, the new marketplace for content is electronic. While books are obviously still written and published, gone is the image of a bald curmudgeon sifting through a stack of randomly mailed authorial submissions with a cigar in his teeth and a tumbler of bourbon in his hand. If you were a particularly skilled author, or caught him on a good day, he'd leap from his wooden swivel chair and yell for the bouncy-haired blonde secretary in the flowery dress to drop everything and get him an appointment with whoever this brilliant unknown author is. At least, that's how I imagine it from every old movie trope I have ever seen.

No, today the publishing game begins (and often ends) online. To peddle a book, you must sift through a myriad of publishing websites searching for their guidelines for book submissions. Each one is slightly different, but the gist is the same: send a proposal, a sample of the writing, and prove your platform.

A friend of mine explained the platform game to me as a cost-benefit analysis. Basically, enough people have to know who you are to prove to a publisher that they will actually buy your book. Otherwise, why would they go through the hassle and expense of editing, designing, and printing something people will walk by in the bookstore and say, "Who? No thanks."

Enter the social media marketplace of buying likes. Yes, that's a thing. There are sites that make their greenbacks by selling authors positive feedback on their platforms. The positive result is the rapid build of said marketability for individuals. The negative result is the fake security of your mom paying the kid down the street to play with you because you have no real friends.



The very idea makes my skin crawl, not just because it results in even more garbage flooding the marketplace, but because it fosters an attitude that precludes the hard work of slogging up the mountainous landscape. It's hard work to get good at a craft like writing, and gaining real fans or followers

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Saved by
Jesus
Sent to
Serve

Paying for Likes

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comes with an inherent risk of rejection and vitriol—especially if you write things that are intended to provoke strong emotions.

For my whole ministerial career I've seen the greater church in America proverbially trying to pay for likes. I've seen "seeker services" peddled to a generation that demanded a "non-church" church. I've purchased coffee from a professional grade coffee shop in the narthex. I've seen churches rebrand without their denominational label because they didn't want to "discourage anyone." I've seen programs and "strategic plans" rise and fall, start and stop, raising hopes that *this* is the thing that will make the church the next Billy Graham Crusade, all ending in the thunderous crash of oblivion and broken promises (Mars Hill, anyone?).

The opposite is bad too, of course: doing *nothing* and having *no* plans to expand and attract followers is as obsolete as blindly mailing a publisher a manuscript. Sure, you can sit back and say, "If people want the truth, they know where to find me." But if the shingles are falling off the roof, there's a thick layer of dust on the pews, and the pastor looks annoyed that there are actually people in the sanctuary, the populace will walk by with a "Who? No thanks."

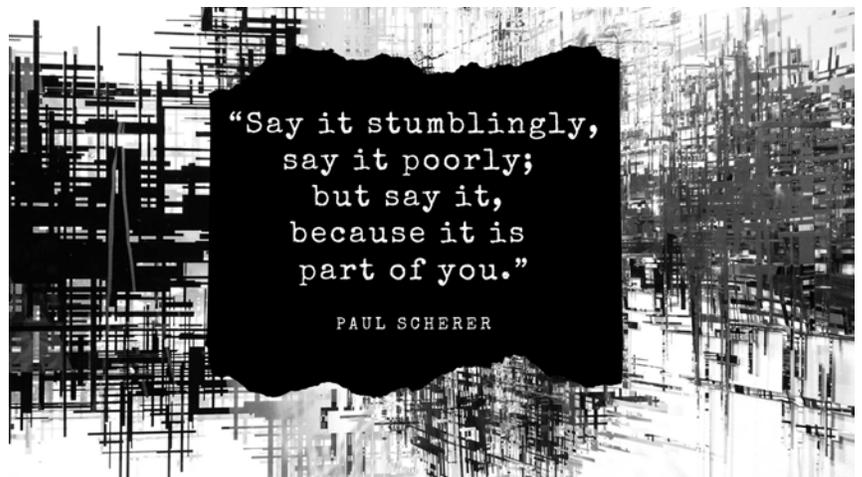
As expected, there's a middle ground. It comes from the ground floor of a proper goal. Is the church's goal to be the next Willow Creek? That's the wrong goal. Is the church's goal to maintain the status quo until the church closes? That's also the wrong goal.

The right goal is to live and proclaim the gospel in season and out of season, authentically communicating through your personality the awe-inspiring salvation Jesus gave you, and that you hope the same for others. Now you're on to something.

Being a disciple of Jesus is hard work, and it comes with the inherent risk of rejection and vitriol—precisely because it is intended to provoke strong emotions. But just like good writers write because it is in them, and good preachers preach because it is in them, Christians live out their faith because it is in them. As the late Paul Scherer (a Lutheran preacher) wrote, "Say it stumblingly, say it poorly; but say it, because it is part of you."

And woe to us if we ever become blinded or salivary by the number of "likes" we get. To God alone be all glory.

Pastor Matyas



Sr. High Youth Program Geared Up for Fall!

Many things were put on hold during the “lost year” that was the 2020-21 school year, and Sr. High Youth Ministry programming was among the things that had to push pause while the world figured out what the new normal would hold. But the easing of restrictions came at just the right time for us to make use of the new Youth Room in the Ministry Center. Combine that with increased interest in volunteer youth leading and you've got a recipe for a list of great programming for youth this fall. As Mr. Schultz prepares to tackle the course work for the Specific Ministry Pastor program, these volunteers have been an essential part of continuing to provide (and expand!) the programs for youth here at St. Paul.

SUNDAY MORNING SR. HIGH BIBLE CLASS – Valerie Matyas will once again be leading our teens in unique and interesting discussions on the day's Bible readings. Held in the Youth room during the Bible Class hour from 9:15-10:15 a.m., the study is open to all high school aged youth. This time is designed to lead teens into a deeper conversation about how the Bible readings impact teens personally, looking to open youth up to what the Bible has to say to them in their life as students, family members, team mates, and friends.

SUNDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUP – Meeting from 5-7 p.m. each week, the primary focus of this time is relationship! 9th -12th graders are invited to come together for food, games, and worship and conversation about how we can support each other as friends and family in Christ. Leaders are three young couples who have commitment to the programming, good organization, and a heart to meet young people where they are and build relationships with them. Sarah & Austin Gatza, Caleb & Mary Schultz, and Rachel & Logan Lightfoot have been working with teens on Sunday evenings, with the occasional visit from Mr. Schultz or Howard Harmon. They have developed a good routine of solid relational Youth Ministry which has been drawing a consistent group of teens that find acceptance and a place of belonging in the St. Paul family.

YOUTH EVENT PLANNING TEAM – The experienced hand of Howard Harmon will continue to lead a group of teen who are interested in taking on the task of planning several events during the school year for high school aged youth. Any teens that would enjoy the opportunity to be part of creating fun and meaningful events should talk to Howard or Mr. Schultz about being part of this group. Right now is the time to bring out the best ideas for special events that happen every month or two.

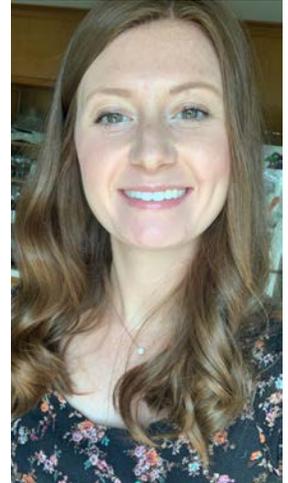
THE 2022 LCMS NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING, HOUSTON TEXAS – Next summer the National Youth Gathering returns! Every three years, LCMS young people from around the country – usually around 25,000 participants – gather for five days of learning and growing. This fall is when we need to form the group and register, so be on the look-out for more information about how to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime event. Leading the effort, Mr. Schultz has been to eight of these events (as well as multiple MI District Gatherings), but we'll need to have few more adult leaders for this effort as well.



Coming back this year will be events like the Pancake Breakfast, the Wild Game Potluck, Roll Call, the Christmas Eve Service and all the other typical stuff that our Youth Ministry has done, and we look forward to seeing how this crop of young people can engage their congregation and community as they learn and grow. Keep all these leaders in your prayers, both for strength and wisdom, but also in thanks for all that God is doing in and through them in the lives of young people here at St. Paul.

Welcome New Members!

Hi, my name is Kendra Strawn. I am a returning member to St Paul and am currently living in Gilbert, Arizona, as a Registered Nurse in the Interventional Radiology Department. My plan is to return to Michigan and be a travel nurse! In my free time, I enjoy exploring new hikes and exploring the outdoors in Arizona, meeting new friends, experiencing new cultures, keeping my kitty entertained (or should I say she keeps me entertained), teaching Arizonians how to drive a boat and experience some Midwestern fun and of course, coming home to visit my family!



Kendra Strawn



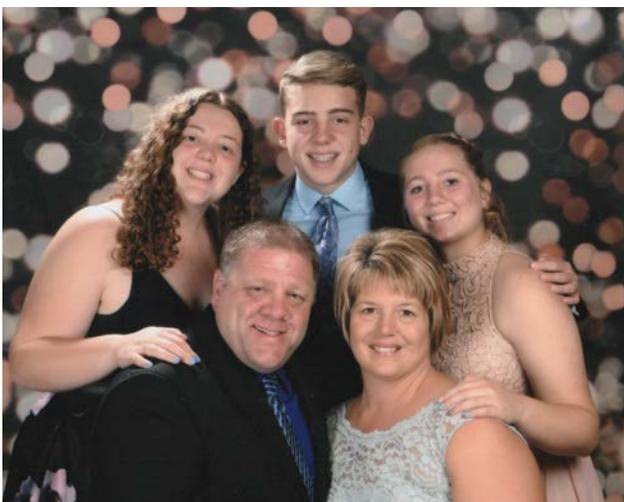
Brooke Strawn

Brooke Strawn currently attends Central Michigan University and is studying Communication Sciences and Disorders. She works at Paramount Children's Therapy Center with children with Autism. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, shopping, and watching movies.

Mason Strawn works in the IT dept. at COPOCO Credit Union and is currently attending SVSU to get a degree in Computer Science and Cyber Security.



Mason Strawn



**Eric & Heather Gengler
Morgan, Mason, & Haley**

Eric and Heather Gengler along with their children Morgan (21), Mason (20), and Haley (18) are very excited to join the ministry at St Paul. They were married in 1997. Eric is a furnace operator at Mersen. Heather is an RN at Covenant. Morgan is starting her last year at SVSU in nursing. Mason is doing an apprenticeship to become an electrician. Haley is starting at Delta for a career in nursing. As a family they enjoy traveling and camping.

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.

Continued on p. 5...

New Members

...Continued from p. 4

Judy Coulter wrote: I am from the Hazel Park, Ferndale, Royal Oak and Oak Park Areas. I was baptized, confirmed and married at the Epiphany Lutheran church in Detroit, and was a member there till around 1998. Then I transferred to St Paul Lutheran Church in Caro. We moved there in 1996 and then to Bay City in 2005. It took me a while to find a church that I was comfortable at; St Paul is the one for me. My husband and I do a lot, yes a lot, of gardening and reading. I also make cloth story books for craft shows that I do. I just retired from berry picking since 1996. I picked for different farms in the Vassar and Frankenmuth area; Miller Orchard was my last stop!



Judy Coulter

Increased enrollment!



St. Paul Lutheran School has been blessed with an enrollment increase over the past few years. God has graciously provided an opportunity for the teachers and staff to demonstrate God's love in the academic environment. While the public sector still struggles with health and social issues our Lord has promoted our school and other Lutheran schools as a safe haven for parents who desire to send their child to a Christian learning atmosphere. Through the dedicated efforts of the church and school staff God abundantly and faithfully continues to bless the work He has called them to do! Just a few

years ago the school enrollment was in the low 80's and now we are nearing 110 students! God truly has blessed our church growth as well through the guidance and leadership of Pastor Matyas and David Schultz. As a result of a growing church and its faithful and supportive members the school has also grown in the number of students attending. Let us praise and thank our Lord and Savior from whom all things flow!

ATTENTION WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS:

The next gathering will be
Thursday, September 23rd at 1:00 p.m.
No luncheon but plenty of fellowship, games, & snacks.

Trunk-or-Treat

It's back! Friday, October 29, from 6-7 p.m., at the school playground and ball diamond. Bring the kids for a bit of trick-or-treating, run around, and enjoy being together. The event will be all outdoors this year, light snacks, and cold drinks provided.

It's super fun to host a Treat Trunk! Call or text Katie at 989.225.3532 to register a trunk.

(Rain date, Saturday, October 30, 2-3 p.m.)



CEF Investment Rebate Program Pays Off

As a result of our congregational and individual investments in Church Extension Fund, we recently received a check in the amount of \$605.21 as a rebate on our loan.

You may recall hearing about this a year or so ago.

Here's how it works:

Eligible CEF loan customers (that's us) receive a cash rebate once a year, when the congregation's total investments (individual and congregational) meet one of three tiers. Each higher tier pays a higher percentage of the loan balance. So, the more we invest with CEF, the bigger our cash rebate will be.

Remember, all CEF investments are used to provide low-interest loans to Lutheran Congregations in Michigan. These loans help build new churches and schools (or Ministry Center additions). So, by investing in CEF, not only do we earn a competitive rate of return, we learn how our money can be used to bless others. Truly a terrific stewardship habit that can last a lifetime.

If you would like more information on CEF investment opportunities, visit their website at mi-cef.org – or – contact our St Paul CEF Rep, Luella Britton at 798-3156.



Church Extension Fund

Missionary Links



Rev. James and Deaconess Christel Neuendorf serve the Lord through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in Puerto Rico.

[Click here to read their August 2021 Newsletter.](#)

Matthew, Kali, Laurel, Eleanor, and Caroline Wood serve the Lord through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in Medan, Indonesia.

[Click here to read their Pentecost 2021 Newsletter.](#)



How to Pray for Afghanistan Today

"You have likely seen the news of the Taliban's rapid advance in Afghanistan, including its control of the nation's capital, Kabul. And you may have seen the video of Afghans clinging to departing planes, desperate to avoid the oppressive and violent abuses of radical Islam.

Followers of Jesus Christ — our brothers and sisters — live in every province of Afghanistan. They know that in the eyes of the Taliban they are infidels who deserve death.

Many Christians, upon seeing the Taliban's advance, have moved either to a neighboring country or to a larger city where they are less likely to be identified as Christians. Some, however, have told front-line workers that they felt called by God to stay where they are, despite the danger.

The Afghan members of our Christian family treasure our prayers during this time of trial. Here are some specific ways you can pray for them:

1. **PRAY FOR GOD'S PROTECTION.** The situation on the ground is fluid right now. Pray for God's protection over His people.
2. **PRAY FOR WISDOM.** Ask God to bless our brothers and sisters with discernment as they decide whether to stay or go and even with whom they should talk.
3. **PRAY FOR FELLOWSHIP.** Believers in Afghanistan often must keep their faith a secret — even from family members. Pray that God will help each Afghan believer to connect and fellowship with at least one other believer in person, by phone or through some other technology. Pray that God will remind them that they are not alone, but are part of the global body of Christ."
4. Pray also for those who were able to leave the evil forces inside Afghanistan but now must make their way in the confusing situation they find themselves in at the moment.
5. Pray that the Taliban, ISIS and others who rule by fear and violence inside Afghanistan will find The Lord Jesus Christ who brings true freedom and peace to all followers of His Way.

The points of prayer found above came from the August 17 Voice of the Martyrs article received very recently.

Remember that International Day Of Prayer is Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021. Dedicate a special time to remember all God's persecuted people around the world.

The verse given for these times is a pleading from Psalm 141:8~"But my eyes are toward you O God, my Lord, In you I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless!"



Acolyte and Reader Schedule for October 2021

Acolytes:	8:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Readers:	8:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
Sun., Oct. 3	Maura Zeilinger	Nathan Coyer	•	Jack Lustila	Terry Burkhard
Sun., Oct. 10	Lillian Bourdow	Jozelynn Begick	•	Scott Engelhardt	Jeremy Warren
Sun., Oct. 17	Kaleb Kusterer	Iva Bebow	•	Ken Van Cise	David Schultz
Sun., Oct. 24	Dolan Wills	Landon LaForest	•	Ben Helmreich	Howard McMullen
Sun., Oct. 31	Elise Helmreich	Rylie Garrett	•	Zachary Benkert	Pastor Matyas

Altar Guild, Elders, and Ushers in October 2021

Altar Guild:	Elders:	Usher Group #3:	Usher Group #6:
Cheryl Lepppek	Zac Benkert	Herb Matthes	Brian Appold
Margie Begick	Brian Appold	Bob Schlicker	Andy Weiss
	Roger Hendrick	Jason Schlicker	Scott Weiss
	Rich Doan	Art Zeilinger	Jeffrey Olson
		Peter Auernhammer	Eddie Switek

Family Elder List (June 2021-May 2022)

Family Name:	Elder:	Family Name:	Elder:
A-Az Abraham-Ayala	Brian Appold	K-L Kinney-Lutz	Howard McMullen
B-Bk Bach-Berger	Howard Helmreich	M-Pe MacLeod-Persons	Scott Weiss
Bl-Dij Blondin-Dijak	Jeremy Warren	Pf-Schl Pfau-Schlicker	Tom Appold
Dik-Gib Divo-Gibson	Roger Hendrick	Schm-Wag Schmidt-Wagner	Howard McMullen
Gic-J Gittins-Jezowski	Richard Doan	Wah-Z Wajer-Zielinski	Zac Benkert

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
 September 15, 2021
 Volume 26—Issue 8
 6100 Westside Saginaw Road
 Bay City, MI 48706
 Church Phone: 989.686.7140
 School Phone: 989.684.4450

Pastor:
 Rev. Dennis Matyas
Director of Family Life Ministries:
 Mr. David Schultz
School Principal:
 Mr. Jack Lustila
Secretary:
 Mrs. Ruth Schian

Newsletter articles for the next newsletter are due on Wednesday, October 13, 2021. 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 August 12, 2021**

(APPROVED)

Chairman John Schlicker called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Pastor Matyas opened the meeting with a prayer.

Council members in attendance include: John Schlicker, Rachel Appold, Jason Schlicker, Tom Appold, Pastor Matyas, Andy Weiss, Tom DePrekel, Josh Schlicker, Jean Begick, and David Schultz.

Acknowledgement of Blessings-John shared with Council how our thriving school is a blessing. Pastor mentioned that another baptism will occur in the next few weeks. Tom shared a personal story about how God and a pain in his back led him to intervene in the life of a stranger.

Minutes-The minutes from the July 8, 2021 meeting were approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report-Andy Weiss presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Andy Wiess. July ended with a deficit of \$33,934.14. A loss of \$15,249 was budgeted. School expenditures are up because new science and social studies textbooks were purchased for the upcoming school year. YTD we have a deficit of \$54,273.90. We budgeted a loss of \$68,991. Ministry Center giving was down. It is too early to determine if this is a trend or just a small hiccup. The Treasurer's Report will be filed for audit.

Committee Reports

Gifts & Memorials-No Report

BOARD REPORTS

Board of Elders-Tom Appold presented the Elder's Report on behalf of Chairman Jeremy Warren.

1. Membership Changes:
 - a. In:
 - i. Eric & Heather Gengler, Morgan, Mason and Haley-from Faith, Bay City
 - ii. Jon Dee and Judith Coulter-from St. Paul, Caro
 - b. Deaths: Lorna Ittner, Ferdinand Zeilinger, Nancy Appold, and Phyllis Rush.

Board of Trustees-Josh Schlicker presented the Trustee's Report on behalf of Chairman Weston Appold.

1. The carpets at school have been cleaned.
2. Updating the parking lot lights is still on their agenda.
3. The basement project is close to being finished. The cabinetry work needs to be completed. There's items in the hallway that will need to be moved soon. They will coordinate with Jack to get things relocated.

Board of Education-Rachel Appold updated Council on behalf of Chair Danielle Bach.

1. Registration was today. 112 children are registered at this point. Unfortunately, we have no 8th graders this year.
2. September 11th is the date for the St. Paul Family Fun Fest. At 9 a.m. the JME Memorial Race kicks off, followed by Food, Fellowship, and Fun from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
3. The staff retreat is scheduled for August 15th thru the 17th.
4. A Call Committee for a principal will be forming soon.

Board of Business Management-Chairman Andy Weiss shared the following business with Council:

1. They have received forgiveness for the PPP loan received last year.
2. Jack is following up on janitorial leads for the school and ministry center.
3. Andy Wiess will be investigating health insurance options for the staff.
4. They are in need of a candidate to replace Kathy Lustila on the Board. Please forward any names on to Andy.
5. September is budget prep time.

Board of Youth-David reported on the following Youth Board news on behalf of Chairman Matt List.

1. Midweek confirmation classes will be starting soon.
2. Sunday School starts September 12th.
3. Roll Call is on! Classes that should have been recognized in 2020 will be included with the classes scheduled to be recognized in 2021.
4. Volunteers in their 20's are needed to serve as volunteers for the National Youth Gathering next year.
5. The hybrid VBS program did not have a huge turnout, but the experience was extremely effective for the families that did participate this year.

Board of Evangelism-Chairman Tom DePrekel updated Council on the following:

1. The Camp Lu Lay Lea team has picked up Travis Grulke (Superintendent of LCMS Michigan schools).
2. Ron Reuther needs assistance at the camp helping with repairs and maintenance.
3. This summer, the camp focused on weekend family gatherings instead of a normal camp season. Hopefully, things can go back to normal next summer.
4. The Board is looking for young people over 18 to be involved in a Via de Cristo weekend and then to participate in the Lutheran TEC (Teens Encounter Christ) program.
5. The prison ministry will not be starting back up this fall.

Board of Stewardship-John presented the Stewardship Report on behalf of Chair Leeta Theiss. She is working on updating the Directory of Church Committees and Ministry Groups, and their committee will be meeting after Labor Day.

Unfinished Business

1. **Annual Appointments**-Appointments are still needed for the Mission Committee and for the Lutheran Hour Ministry Board.
2. **175th Anniversary Committee**-Sydra Krueger declined the request to join the committee. Julia Appold and Gail Schlicker are open to being involved.
3. **Keys**-Anyone in need of a key to the ministry center should contact Ruth.

New Business

1. **Church Sign**-The old church sign doesn't fit the aesthetics of the property after the addition of the ministry center. The Building Committee looked into the cost of a new sign. The cost for a new sign would be \$11,080. Discussion followed, and **a motion passed** approving the need for a new sign, and to use funds from Gifts & Memorials to pay for said sign.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m. Pastor closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Begick, Secretary

Next Council Meeting: Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Next Regular Voters Meeting: Sunday, January 16, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church Calendar

OCTOBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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