



March 2026 Newsletter



Palm Sunday

Join us for Palm Sunday, March 29 at 9 AM, where we commemorate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem with the blessing of palms. Worship will also be livestreamed at www.facebook.com/stpaulserie & available at www.youtube.com/user/stpaulslutheranerie.



Easter Flower Orders

As we prepare for Easter, we remember friends and loved ones with flowers for the sanctuary. Plants are \$9/ each.

To place an order, please return the completed order form with payment to the church office or offering plate by Sunday, March 22.

Order forms can be found at the information station in the entryway of St. Paul's.



Lenten Soup Supper & Study

Join us every Wednesday in March, as we gather in the gym from 6-7 PM for our Soup Suppers & Study- an hour of food, fellowship & faith-learning. We will be exploring "Rooted: Spiritual Disciplines for a life grounded in grace & growing in love" this Lenten season. Be sure to bring the whole family because we will also have a special Lenten children's study! Study themes for each week are Prayer & Meditation (March 4), Bible Reading & Study (March 11), Confession & Repentance (March 18), & Service & Generosity (March 25).

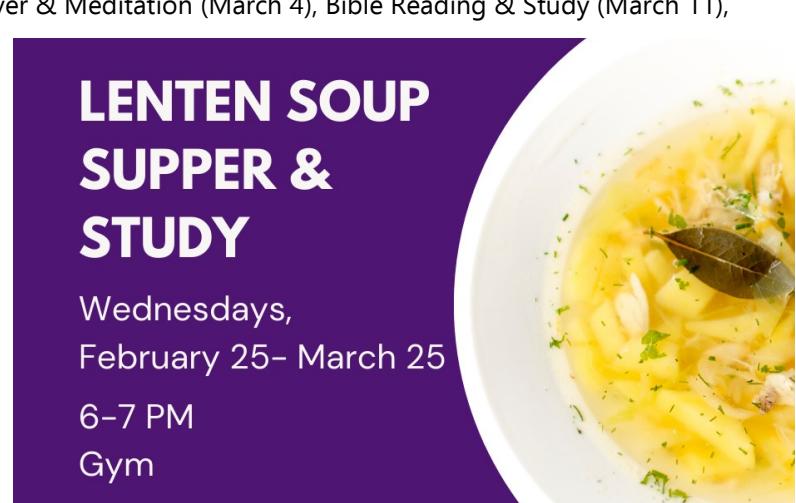
Thank you to the following teams for hosting the various soup suppers:

March 4– Worship Team

March 11– Community Care Team

March 18– Church Council

March 25– Property Team



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

3108 Sterrettania Road

Erie, PA 16506-2658

www.stpaulserie.org

Saturday Worship Service, 5 PM

Sunday Worship Service, 9 AM

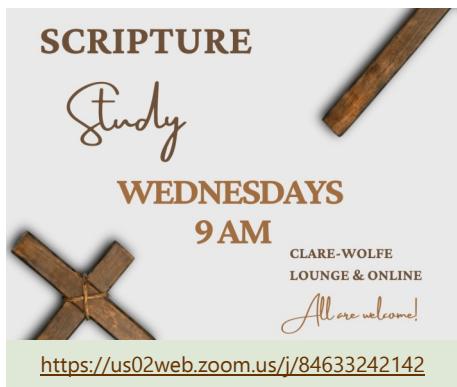
All Sunday worship videos are livestreamed at

www.facebook.com/stpaulserie

and available at

www.youtube.com/user/stpaulslutheranerie.

Wednesday Scripture Study, 9 AM



Office Hours:

Mon-Thu 9 AM-3 PM

814-833-1761

office@stpaulserie.org



**Pastor
Erik**

Pastor Erik Young

814-833-1761

Pastor@stpaulserie.org

Pastor's Office Hours: Mon-Wed 9 AM-1 PM

First Communion

Has your child had communion but is finally old enough to begin to understand it? Or is it time as parents/grandparents/sponsors that your child is interested in receiving it just like everyone else? Then please join us for our First Communion Classes during Lent!

We will meet Wednesday, March 4, 11 & 25, from 5-6 PM in the YAM room (where Children's Church happens every week). Over those three one-hour long sessions, we will cover the bread, the wine, and the words, and how they all fit together to make communion for us. (Oh, and since you are here already, you and your family might as well stay and eat at our Lenten Soup Supper, which begins at 6 PM in the gym)!

We are hoping to celebrate First Communion together on Maundy Thursday at our church's Seder Supper Potluck. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Erik at pastor@stpaulserie.org.

-Pastor Erik Young



Community Care Ministries

Food Pantry

In January, we served 10 households and 33 individuals. Those statistics are somewhat less than usual, but that is ok. All of the households were families that used the Pantry before. Our non-perishable goods are plentiful right now. Thank you for your donations!

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact us at FoodPantry@stpaulserie.org. We could use more help on the days we pick up food to carry items into the pantry.

Patchwork of Love Quilting & Knitting Ministry



Join our Patchwork of Love team of quilters & knitters! We meet on Tuesdays from 9-11 AM in Clare-Wolfe Lounge.

JAN 29	St. Paul's Food Pantry 4-6 PM @stpaulserie
FEB 26	MAR 26
APR 30	MAY 28

Sock Drive

St. Paul's Sock Drive continues through March! Please donate **NEW** pairs of men's socks in the bin located in the entryway of St. Paul's. Warm & dry socks are an important & much-needed clothing item. Thank you for your generosity!



World Hunger Campaign



Gabe Chiapa & Cindy Dohanic are co-chairing the World Hunger campaign this year. Thanks to Gabe for all his help & ideas. Gabe sold Good Gifts Valentines and will be distributing the coin boxes for Lent. Thank you to everyone who bought a Valentine; we made \$140 for ELCA

World Hunger! And thank you to Debbie Dravecz who designed and printed them for us.

Look for your Lenten coin box soon. If you are new to coin boxes, they are a way to help you save for those who are hungry or in need. Lent is a great time to do this as we are searching for ways to simplify our lives and our "needs." Coin boxes will be collected at Easter.

Security Team Ministry

The Security Team is developing emergency plans for the congregation for events such as a medical emergency, fire, weather emergency and an intruder. We are currently looking for members who are CPR and/or EMS certified or otherwise medically training that would be willing to be called upon in an actual emergency. We could also use help from anyone trained in security and fire response. If you are interested in being included as part of the emergency response team, please email your name, qualifications or certification(s) and contact information to Security@stpaulserie.org.

Once a team is formed, we will hold an emergency response team meeting to review the plans. The next Security Team meeting will be held on Monday, March 9 at 5:30 PM. All are welcome to attend.

WE NEED YOU!

We are currently looking for members who are CPR and/or EMS certified or otherwise medically training that would be willing to be called upon in an actual emergency.

Email us at Security@stpaulserie.org

@stpaulserie



Congregational Care Ministries

Congregational Prayers

Please keep our siblings in Christ in your daily prayers: **Kris Balinski, Vanessa Baran, Liz & Ted Davis, Dan DeCoursey, Betty Farver, Vicki Fischer, Charlotte Haggerty, Rick Hetrick, Christa & Ron Kaffka, Judy Matthews, Becke Moniot, Terry Moyer, Michael Wright, & Gary.** Pray for those who are dealing with cancer, financial hardships, & facing illness or surgery.

Continue to pray for those who are homebound or in nursing homes: **Ann Anderson, Vince Balinski, Debi Firment, Noni Gardner, Dottie Johnson, & Sandy Pamin.** Wrap your hearts around those who are alone, broken-hearted, grieving, or anxious.

Bless our teachers everywhere & pray for St. Paul's **Children's Church, Child Development Center, & Preschool teachers.**

We continue to pray for those who are close to us who serve in the military, including their families: **Dylan Green**, as well as friends of St. Paul's- **Samuel Arthur, Luke Goodwin, Brennan Madara, Natalie Ramish-Long, Benjamin Sperring, Brody Swab, Jordan Swab, Christopher Tinsman, Allison Ward, & Zachary Zehner.**

We keep our college students in prayer as they study and prepare for their future vocations: **Corinne Bechtold, Megan Bechtold, Sophie Beilharz, Stella Beilharz, Andrew Collins, Jacob Gross, Sebastien Jones, Xavier Jones, Drew Kwiatkowski, Ethan Leopold, Ellie Schau, & Hannah Schmidt.**

Anniversaries

Mar 2- Al & Linda Swab
 Mar 28- Steve & Lisa Thelin
 Mar 31- Dale & Kathy Ebner

Birthdays

Mar 3- Bill Gross, Gary Nuber
 Mar 6- Emma Cunningham
 Mar 7- Mark Holcomb, Sue Lang
 Mar 11- Naomi Jacobitz, Joe Lang, Andrew Rainbow
 Mar 12- Jennifer Douglas, Carter Jones
 Mar 13- Andrew Collins
 Mar 15- Barb Davies, Becky Jones, Jim Scott
 Mar 16- Nathan Burillo, Dale Ebner, Kayleigh Perrin
 Mar 20- Kevin Garben, June Kessler
 Mar 21- Peggy Fuhrman
 Mar 22- Ellen Cooper
 Mar 23- Melissa Collins, Mary Alice Miller
 Mar 24- Gabe Chiapa
 Mar 25- Amy Chiapa
 Mar 26- Drew Kwiatkowski
 Mar 27- Lucas Burillo
 Mar 29- Quinn Gould
 Mar 31- Paul Wojciechowski

Directory Update

Elaine Dively
 2323 Edinboro Rd, Apt 303D
 Erie, PA 16509

Congregational Thank You Notes

Please accept the sincere thanks from Bethesda Lutheran Services Board of Directors and staff for your generous support during our Christmas season.

Every time we ask for support for the kids with whom we work, I am astonished by the response. Thank you so much for helping to ensure that these kids know that there are people who care and who are willing to help! The blankets you provided helps make each youth we work with feel as though they have something of their own. So, I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

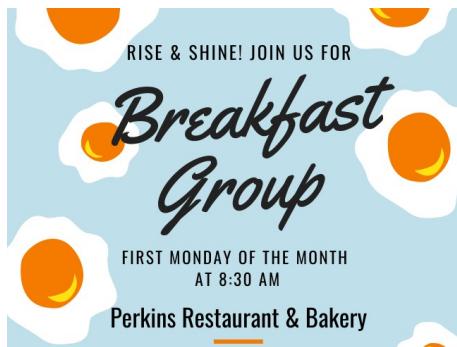
*Best always,
 Marci Dickson*

Administrative Assistant

Congregational Fellowship

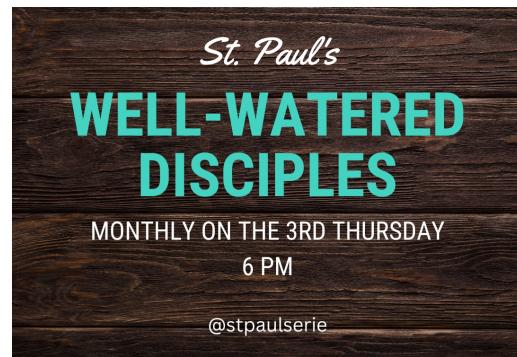
Breakfast Group

Breakfast Group meets on Monday, March 2 at 8:30 AM at Perkins at 4403 Peach St. in Erie. All are welcome & responsible for their own meals.



Well-Watered Disciples Men's Fellowship Group

Well-Watered Disciples meets next on Thursday, March 19 at 6 PM. The location is to be announced.



Church Council Highlights

From the February 2026 meeting:

-Pastor and Council wish to acknowledge and thank staff for outstanding work: Debbie Dravecz, Director of Communications and Administration; Nick Barber, Business Manager; Andrew Rainbow, Director of Music and Worship. We thank them for sharing their time and talents with all of us at St. Paul's and making our place of worship run efficiently.

-Pastor, Council, and all of us at St. Paul's wish to thank Greg Zimmerman for preaching on Sunday, February 22. He shared an amazing message that was wonderfully received by all.

-The Lenten Soup Suppers will be starting on February 25 and continue through Lent. They will also include a brief study session.

-We have a good, strong theme planned for Lent that is rooted in faith. The goal is to help our roots grow deeper. Holy Week will include a Tenebrae Service, a Seder meal, and a funeral for Jesus. On Easter Sunday, we will celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 17 at 6:15 PM in Clare-Wolfe Lounge.

Attendance & Finances

By The Numbers:	January 2026
Avg. Saturday Attendance	19 in-person
Avg. Sunday Attendance	82 in-person 29 online views
January Income	\$33,211
January Expenses	\$33,589
January Difference	-\$378
January Budget Income	\$30,083
January Budget Expenses	\$33,005
January Budget Difference	-\$2,922
Year-to-Date Budget Income	\$347,632
Year-to-Date Budget Expenses	\$382,086
Year-to-Date Budget Difference	-\$34,454

Child Development Center (CDC) Ministries

Thank you to all of you who voted for us for the Erie Reader Best of Erie 2025 best Daycare! We aim to provide the best care for children in our area and we feel very appreciative of your support.

We are already working on setting up our summer program for this year. We currently have a waiting list for our school-age summer program! We are looking forward to warmer weather and getting back outside!

We are also enrolling for fall. We currently have a few openings left in our 3-year-old classroom. If you know anyone who is still looking for preschool in the fall, please have them reach out to Nancy or Bridget. Contact us at CDCDirector@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 1004.

Child Development Center @stpaulserie PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

ENROLL NOW FOR
FALL 2026

814-833-1761, x1004

www.stpaulserie.org



Faith Formation Ministries

Children's Ministry with Bridget



Children's Church is open to all children in pre-K through grade 5.

The Lenten Soup Suppers and Study will include a meal and study for children, as well as adults, again this year. I have lots of fun activities planned for our young learners this

Lenten season to learn more about what the season is all about. I am looking forward to seeing lots of little faces on Wednesday evenings! Questions? Contact Bridget at CDCAssistant@stpaulserie.org.

Confirmation Youth Group with Pastor Erik



Join us every Monday in the gym & youth room from 6-7:30 PM for youth group!

We will gather for fun & games, Bible & faith studies, & solid hang out time.

Youth Ministry Fundraiser

Save the date for our Rummage Sale on Saturday, April 11 from 8 AM-noon in the gym. All proceeds to benefit our Youth Ministry.

We are accepting almost anything to sell other than computer equipment and TVs (unless good working flat screen models). Youth will be there Friday, April 10 from 6-9 PM to help you unload.

Questions? Contact Pastor Erik at Pastor@stpaulserie.org.



Preschool Ministries

Preschool is very busy this month. We are learning about arctic animals, syllables, rhyming words, and everything green. We will have a special visitor on the 16th.



We are doing assessments and scheduling parent conferences.

We are currently enrolling for fall 2026. Our Pre-K class for 2026-27 is full, but our traditional AM & PM classes for our 3 & 4-year-olds still have room. More information & registration forms are on our website at www.stpaulserie.org/pre-school.

Questions? Contact Melissa Collins at PSDirector@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 1002.

Worship Ministries

What is a Tenebrae Service?

Tenebrae comes from Latin, meaning shadows or darkness. In ninth century monastic practices Tenebrae was a service of prayer, psalms, and scripture readings. This service is a powerful visual and spiritual experience of darkness and loss, but we will not be left in the darkness because of the hope of Easter. These solemn services often occur during the Triduum - Maundy Thursday, Good Friday or Holy Saturday. The focus of this service is scripture. During Holy Week this year, on Good Friday at noon and 7 PM, we will have an opportunity to experience this service symbolizing Christ's suffering and death.

Most commonly 15 candles and the Christ candle (the big candle on the altar) will be lit and passages from Jesus' passion, the Last Supper, the betrayal, and the crucifixion will be read. After each reading, a candle will be extinguished, leaving only the light from the Christ candle. Then this candle will be removed symbolizing Christ's burial. This will put all in darkness representing the abandonment and death of Jesus. Then we will hear a loud noise (a *strepitus*) representing the earthquake at Christ's death and the rolling of the stone. In total silence we are able to meditate on the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice.

We will then depart the sanctuary silently.

This service is intentionally left unfinished because we will joyfully celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

-Submitted by Marsha Szymanowicz.



March Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church 9:00am Worship	2 8:30am Breakfast Group 9:45am Children's Chapel 1:45pm Children's Chapel 6:00pm Confirmation Youth Group 6:30pm Property Team Meeting	3 9:00am Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 6:15pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting	4 9:00am Scripture Study 10:00am Staff Meeting 5:00pm First Communion Class 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper & Study	5 8:00pm Basketball	6 World Day of Prayer 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	7 5:00pm Worship
8 Daylight-Saving Time Begins 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church 9:00am Worship	9 9:45am Children's Chapel 5:30pm Security Team Meeting 6:00pm Confirmation Youth Group 6:30pm Worship Team Meeting	10 9:00am Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 5:30pm Faith Formation Team Meeting 6:15pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting	11 9:00am Scripture Study 5:00pm First Communion Class 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper & Study	12 8:00pm Basketball	13 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	14 5:00pm Worship
15 Newsletter Articles Due 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church 9:00am Worship	16	17 St. Patrick's Day 9:00am Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 6:15pm Church Council Meeting 6:15pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting	18 9:00am Scripture Study 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper & Study	19 6:00pm Well-Watered Disciples Men's Fellowship Group 8:00pm Basketball	20 First Day of Spring 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	21 5:00pm Worship
22 Easter Flower Orders Due 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church 9:00am Worship	23	24 9:00am Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 6:00pm ECE Board Meeting 6:15pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting	25 9:00am Scripture Study 5:00pm First Communion Class 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper & Study	26 4:00pm Food Pantry Distribution 8:00pm Basketball	27 Preschool Easter Party 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	28 5:00pm Worship
29 Palm Sunday 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church 9:00am Worship	30	31 Preschool Closed 9:45am Children's Chapel 1:45pm Children's Chapel 6:00pm Confirmation Youth Group				

Worship Assistants

Date	Event	Ushers	Assist Minister/ Reader
Mar 1	2 Lent	Wright Team	Joe Ulrich
Mar 8	3 Lent	Zech/Chiapa Team	Greg Zimmerman
Mar 15	4 Lent	Curtis Team	Erich Zech
Mar 22	5 Lent	Gardner/Marzka Team	TBA
Mar 29	Palm Sunday	Wright Team	Larry Kessler