



Resolute in 2025 ... and beyond



What is one of the best and worst things about a New Year? Resolutions. I try to make only 1 each year. I resolve, in the new year, to not make resolutions. I make that resolution, and I've already set myself up to succeed. The good part of a resolution? You've thought about it and determined that there is some part of you or your life in which you want to grow. A new year gives you a new chance to start that growth. The bad part of a resolution? There's a high likelihood that by February 1, that plan of growth is off track, or already left in the dust.

Don't get me wrong, thinking about you as a person or your life as a whole and wanting to grow in some area is admirable, noble. And I'm not saying all resolutions are discarded by February. I see in the whole resolution process human nature, both good and bad. Desiring to change & grow is good & healthy. But when desire meets human nature, it seems human nature wins out often. It makes us also confront a couple of biblical truths.

"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out" [Romans 7:18]

"The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak" [Jesus to disciples in Gethsemane]

Sorry, I have no inner Tony Robbins to channel, no great words of wisdom to motivate you to action. I'm not Hans or Frans from Saturday Night Live here to pump [clap] you up. In fact, our human nature shows us that resolutions can set us up to fail. The best humans fail to be totally resolute.

That truth makes it so much sweeter to hear this: God is totally resolute. He is resolute in wanting the best for you. He does not need to make a New Year's Resolution, where He resolves to be more present in your life in 2025. He

is present already. He has already given you His best present, the gift of a Savior born for you. His presence in your life won't fade away after 3-4 weeks. Where our resolve to grow, to be a better person crumbles, God's character shows Him to be steadfast, resolute.

Maybe a New Year's resolution can be to let go and let God. Want to know where to grow? Look to God, draw near to him again and let Him show you. Want to be a better person? Look to God, draw near to him again and let Him show you who He is. Let Him do in you the things you will never be to do on your own. Our flesh is most certainly weak. But God is steadfast and resolute. He wants for you and will give you what is best for you. Trust His good and gracious plans for 2025 ... and, if He wills, beyond.

In Christ

Pastor Sundborn

Inside this issue:

Message From Pastor	1
Our Great Heritage: Perpetua and Felicia	2
Life Quotes	5
Announcements	6
Council Meeting Minutes	7
Special Congregation Meeting	8
From the Preschool	9
Birthdays and Anniversaries	10
Those Who Serve	11
Weekly Scripture Readings	11
January Word Search	12



Our Great Heritage: Perpetua and Felicitas

By [Molly Lackey](#)

Perpetua and Felicitas

d. A.D. 203

These two women faced death on account of their faith, supporting one another in friendship and trusting always in the love of Christ.

In [this series](#), Lutheran historian Molly Lackey will trace the history of the church, from the time of the apostles through the twentieth century. As the Body of Christ, our history transcends time, country and citizenship: “God’s Word is our great heritage.”

Imagine you’re in a Roman amphitheater. Maybe you’re there as a spectator: a wealthy paterfamilias, a member of the imperial entourage, or just a day laborer with extra cash and time to kill. Maybe you work there — maybe you’re a guard, or you sell food (“Get your stuffed dormice here!”), or you’re a slave, cleaning or cooking. Maybe you’re a gladiator, an actor, a chariot racer — or an executioner. Whoever you are and whatever the reason you’re in the amphitheater today, you’re a good Roman citizen, through and through. You know to say “Ave Caesar” — he’s a son of a god, after all — and you know that it’s your lovely, traditional system of rites and sacrifices that keep the wheels of your diverse and metropolitan society turning smoothly. Cultists and rabble-rousers have no place in the Empire. So when you hear about the Christians who will be featured in the blood sport today, you understand why: they’re bad for society, so the Emperor is making an example of them and providing you some entertainment in the process. But as you watch these Christians being led out into the arena, something strikes you: Two of them are women, and both very young. Someone nearby mentions that one of them is leaving behind an infant son, and the other gave birth to a daughter while in prison. You watch as they say a prayer together while the guards below unsheathe their swords and prepare to release the wild beasts. You expect the women to panic, or faint, or crumple to the floor. But they don’t. You watch them trace a cross on their foreheads, kiss each other on the cheek, and turn to face their deaths with eyes like flint. These two women have so much to live for — why are they throwing it all away?

Perpetua and Felicitas were Christian women who lived in Roman-controlled Carthage in North Africa in the late second and early third centuries. Perpetua was a young, married noblewoman and new mother; Felicitas was a slave, who was pregnant when she was arrested. The two were catechumens, part of a group of newly converted Christians preparing for Baptism who were arrested for their illegal faith. Christianity was seen as anti-social by the



OUR GREAT HERITAGE: PERPETUA AND FELICITAS *continued*

Roman government, who enforced a polytheistic paganism that blended together lots of cultures' native religions, in an attempt to keep the peace across their huge empire.

Prisoners for their faith

What is special about these martyrs is that we have a [diary](#) that Perpetua kept while she was in prison, likely edited and shared after her death by the church father Tertullian. The diary is vivid, describing the emotional and physical pain Perpetua endured while separated from her baby, as well as the trials and strong faith of Felicitas and her other fellow-prisoners.

Perpetua's father, who was not a Christian, visited her in prison three times to convince her to renounce her faith and save her life. He tried violence to scare her, he tried asking her to think of him and of her infant son, he tried grieving and great shows of emotion. Perpetua was deeply upset, but she refused to change course: She confessed that she was a Christian, prayed for and tried to comfort her father, and still refused to offer sacrifices to Caesar or renounce Jesus. For this, Felicitas and the others were condemned to the wild beasts in the amphitheater games held in honor of the emperor's birthday.

But their time spent awaiting execution was not without incident. Perpetua was baptized, and Felicitas gave birth while in prison. It was illegal to execute a pregnant woman, and Felicitas had been worried that she would not be able to face martyrdom with her friends. She went into labor a month early, and so faced death alongside her brothers and sisters in Christ.

'And take they our life'

The Christians went to their deaths with quiet joy and courage, in sure hope of Christ's love and His promise of resurrection. While facing down the wild animals, Perpetua stopped to fix her hair, so that she would not appear disheveled or in mourning, and helped Felicitas back on her feet after she was trampled. They ultimately died by the gladiator's sword. The editor of Perpetua's prison diary describes the Christians' deaths, noting that, before they died, they kissed one another with the kiss of peace.

When we sing Martin Luther's famous Reformation hymn "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," we sing:

And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth (*LSB* 656: 4)

Perpetua and Felicitas surely provide a stark example of this, being separated from their families, their children, and even their lives for the sake of Christ: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. ... Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:28, 32).

You will likely not be called to make the same martyr's sacrifice in your life — though around the world there are many who suffer violence, prosecution, loss of livelihood and even death for confessing Christ. But almost certainly you will find yourself in awkward situations with friends, family members or people you know, called on to share

OUR GREAT HERITAGE: PERPETUA AND FELICITAS *continued*

about God's plan for how people ought to live and how Jesus saves us from our sins. Whether you face a martyr's death or a death glare from somebody who thinks Christianity is a joke, the example set by Perpetua and Felicitas is an inspiring one.

May God give us faith, courage and love like Perpetua and Felicitas', that in the face of evil we would find comfort in Christ's own words, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 10:39).

Editor's Note: The next installment of [this series](#), on the church father Augustine, will be posted two weeks from today. Check back then or [follow us on social media](#) to catch it!

Image: St. Perpetua & St. Felicity, mosaic, National Shrine in Washington, D.C. Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P., 2014; alterations made.

About The Author

[Molly Lackey](#)

Molly Lackey is a wife, writer, and the social media and special projects assistant at Concordia Historical Institute.

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LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE

Life Quotes for January

January 5 “Let the peace of Christ change how you live—clothing yourself with godly virtues reflecting a thankful heart. Carry this peace that the angels proclaimed and Simeon saw. It sets the tone for the coming year, another year you get to live as God’s child in the peace of Jesus.” *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

January 12 “From the moment you were being knitted together in your mother’s womb (Psalm 139:13), God’s began His careful construction of His chosen jewel of redemption.” *Rev. Adam Osier, Dean, Free Lutheran Bible College, Plymouth, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

January 19 “No amount of scientific progress can defeat death. No political ruler can promise eternal life. Only Jesus can make and keep that promise. The promise of hope and life is ours to proclaim. It is the promise that a world without hope needs to hear. In Jesus we have hope for the future, the living hope of life in His presence forever.” *Dr. Carol Geisler, Lutheran Hour Ministries – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

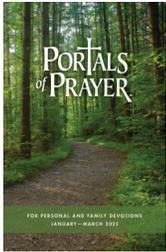
January 26 “Babies are born into the world wrapped in surprising packaging like disabilities or poverty, but even so, God has a perfect plan for each one of them. Abortion is a tragic end to the countless blessings in store for those who would have surrounded these children.” *Brad Mattes, Life Issues Institute – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*



Announcements

January–March 2025

Portals of Prayer Now Available



The January–March 2025 Portals of Prayer daily devotions is now available. Copies can be found at the back of the sanctuary by the double doors, or on the resource area table.

Zion Food Bank

For January, Zion Food Pantry is requesting syrup, bar soap, toilet paper, spaghetti sauce, spaghetti noodles and bagged rice. For those in need, the Food Bank is open on the last two Tuesdays of the month from 5:30-7:00pm. (November 19 & 26).



Women’s Bible Study Resumes in 2025



You are encouraged to be a part of the women’s Bible study group which meets at the church 6:30-8:00 on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month (not during Lent). Mark these dates on your calendar:

- January 22
- February 12 & 26
- April 23
- May 14 & 28

All studies come from the LWML Quarterly. We hope to see you there!

2025 Altar Flower Chart

A new year and a new flower chart! This is a great way to remember a special occasion or person. The 2025 Altar Flower Chart has been posted on the double doors at the back of the Sanctuary. Just sign up next to the appropriate weekend. Clearly print the occasion being remembered, who the flowers are for and who they’re from. Altar flowers are \$40.00. Please place the monies in an envelope labeled “Altar Flowers” with the date of the weekend and put it in the collection plate.





December Meeting Notes

Pastor's Report. (Pastor)

- a. Christmas Eve services with Communion to be held at 3:30pm and 7:30pm
- b. 15 Contacts, 1 Shut-in visit

President's Report. (Dennis Concooby)

- a. Amy is working with other early childhood centers to raise concerns about the lack of communication from law enforcement during and after the lock down event at Riverview school.
- b. Update on recording services: Dennis made contact with Shorehaven to get information about the equipment they use and how they post recordings.
- c. Security updates: repositioned security cameras to improve visibility; system configured to record with assistance from an outside resource.
- d. November electric bill cost was lower than last November; it appears that the efforts to reduce energy consumption have had the desired effect.

Vice President's Report. (Eric Drake – no report)

Treasurer's Report. (Russ Walton – no report)

Education Report. (Jenn Drake)

- a. Average 6-10 students in adult class, Average 4-8 students in the kids' class

Preschool Report. (Starshine Graziadei – no report)

Elder's Report. (Dale Kerver – no report)

Stewardship Report. (Diane Wayner)

- a. Many items are being placed under the Giving Tree
- b. Fellowship gathering planned in December.
- c. Awaiting the last of the Time and Talents surveys.

Financial Secretary's Report. (Terry Wakelee)

- a. Sign-up sheet will be hung up in sanctuary this month

Outreach Report. (Ken Chaffe – no report)

Building & Grounds Report. (Craig McConnell)

- a. Inserting LED lights.
- b. Fixed leaking sinks in the boys' bathroom.
- c. Parsonage repairs to be continued.

Contribution Secretary's Report. (Billie Lelle)

- a. Renumbered and distributed offering boxes for 2025.
- b. Completed 3 year comparison. November held steady.

Old Business

Alarm system phone line issues-no reported issues this month

Parsonage fence repairs pending

- a. Recommendation made to have someone look into the trees around the parsonage

New Business

Congregational vote on approval of the sale of Eddy Kujala's house

DECEMBER MEETING NOTES continued

- a. Purchase and sale of real estate requires approval of congregation per bylaws.
- b. Accordingly, a special vote will be held 12/7 and 12/8.
- c. Insurance, mortgage, and taxes will be reviewed with Aaron Lindrose, estate executor.

Delegate for annual convention

- a. No one has indicated interest in participating
- b. Need to be selected prior to January 12 for the circuit forum
- c. A notice will be added to the bulletin to look for interested parties

Council approved bonuses for church personnel.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 @ 6:30pm

Special Congregation Meeting

December 7&8 2024

Purpose of Meeting

Ed Kujala passed away on June 19th. As part of his last wishes, he has donated his home in Mentor-on-the-Lake to St. Paul's. As a congregation we now own this property.

In order to meet the requirements of our bylaws, this meeting and its purpose have been announced for the previous two weeks in the weekly bulletin and as part of each service's announcements.

Your Council has determined and voted that it would be in the best interest of the congregation to sell this property. However, our bylaws state that council does not have the right to purchase, mortgage, or sell property of the congregation or make commitments binding the congregation, unless the congregation has specifically authorized them to do so in a legal meeting of the congregation. That is why we are here.

Council recommends that we sell this property to close out the mortgage and settle any other outstanding obligations. Aaron Lindrose has been the executor for Ed's estate and has been maintaining the property. We propose that he also oversee the sale of the property.

Motion from SPLC Council: St. Paul's Lutheran Church will sell the property donated by Ed Kujala to close out the mortgage and settle any other obligations, under the oversight of Aaron Lindrose.

Saturday 12/7/2024

Discussion

Result For 13

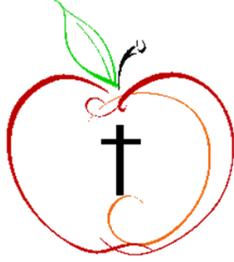
Against 0

Sunday 12/8/2024

Discussion

Result For 33

Against 0



From the Preschool

PRESCHOOL

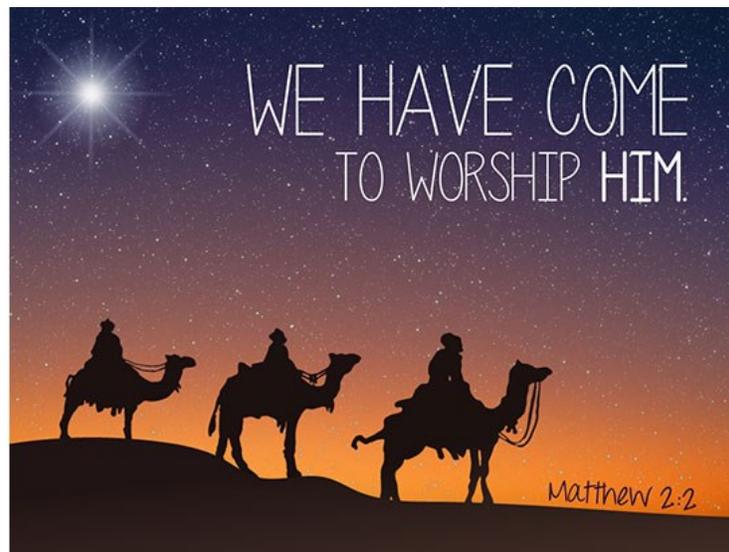


Registration

2025-2026 Preschool Registration

It's that time of year again. St. Paul's Preschool will be planning the 2025-2026 school year. We will begin registering students in February and new brochures will be available soon.

As we start our planning we will be looking for assistant teachers for the fall. If you or someone you know may be interested in being a part of our program please contact Amy Marizek in the Preschool Office (440)354-3000.



January Birthdays

Star Graziadei	Jan 02	Bernie Michalak	Jan 22
Kevin Kiel	Jan 03	Dennis Concoby	Jan 24
Marisa Szoradi	Jan 07	Nathan Lelle	Jan 25
Julie Greig	Jan 17	Matthew Chaffe	Jan 28
Annikki Tompkins	Jan 18	Lia Graziadei	Jan 28
Terry Wakelee	Jan 21	Sue Snodgrass	Jan 29
Valarie Sullivan	Jan 21	MacKenzi Dewit	Jan 30
Lauren Michalak	Jan 22		



January Anniversaries

Dennis and Connie Concoby
49 years on Jan 17



Altar Flowers



A great way to remember any occasion is with Altar Flowers. The Altar Flower Chart is located on the double doors at the back of the Sanctuary. Just sign up next to the appropriate weekend. Clearly print the occasion being remembered, who the flowers are for and who they're from. Altar flowers are \$40.00. Please place the money in an envelope labeled "Altar Flowers" with the date of the weekend and put it in the collection plate.



Those Who Serve: January 2025

ELDERS:

6:00 P Saturday Dale Kerver
9:30 A Sunday Jeff Troutman

COUNTERS:

Tom Cardina, Kelly Hines, Billie Lelle

LECTORS:

01-04-25	6:00 P	Saturday	Dave Murphy
01-05-25	9:30 A	Sunday	Terry Wakelee
01-11-25	6:00 P	Saturday	Pastor Sundbom
01-12-25	9:30 A	Sunday	Jennifer Drake
01-18-25	6:00 P	Saturday	Dave Murphy
01-19-25	9:30 A	Sunday	Eric West
01-25-25	6:00 P	Saturday	Dale Kerver
01-26-25	9:30 A	Sunday	Dennis Concoby



Scripture Readings for January

Jan 4/5 [Epiphany Observed]

Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

Jan 11/12

Isaiah 43:1-7
Romans 6:1-11
Luke 3:15-22

Jan 18/19

Isaiah 62:1-5
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

Jan 25/26

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
1 Corinthians 12:12-31
Luke 4:16-30



January Word Search—Winter Words

S	A	O	H	O	C	K	E	Y	N	K	L	L	R
I	Y	T	S	O	R	F	N	U	I	I	C	Y	R
N	W	O	R	E	Z	W	O	L	E	B	L	N	A
N	F	G	N	I	D	R	A	O	B	W	O	N	S
E	W	E	C	A	L	P	E	R	I	F	S	O	B
R	O	E	F	W	G	R	L	S	R	A	L	O	P
T	O	S	R	W	N	E	S	T	F	S	Y	L	M
U	D	N	E	I	I	T	E	E	L	N	P	A	I
B	S	O	E	N	L	T	V	K	A	O	A	M	T
I	T	W	Z	D	R	I	O	N	N	W	R	R	T
N	O	B	I	Y	U	B	L	A	N	M	K	E	E
G	V	A	N	N	C	E	G	L	E	A	A	H	N
I	E	L	G	S	A	T	S	B	L	N	N	T	S
I	M	L	G	I	C	E	S	K	A	T	I	N	G

FREEZING
SNOWBOARDING
ICE SKATING
FROSTY
GLOVES
SNOWBALL
ICY
FIREPLACE
THERMAL
POLAR
BELOW ZERO
BITTER
INNER TUBING
WOOD STOVE
HOCKEY
BLANKETS
SNOWMAN
PARKA
MITTENS
CURLING
FLANNEL
WINDY

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/7824738/>

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St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Preschool
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440-354-3000 | www.splcpainesville.org | office@splcpainesville.org

"I was glad when they said to me 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" Psalm 122:1

Staff

Paul D. Sundbom, Pastor
Matt Chaffe, Organist
Peggy McDonnell, Admin Assistant

Worship Services

Saturday 6:00 pm
Sunday 9:30 am

Sunday Bible Study

Adult 8:30am & 10:45 am
Children 10:45 am

St. Paul's Preschool

Amy Marizek, Director
preschool@splcpainesville.org
www.stpaulspainesville.com

Also Supporting



St. Paul's Preschool



January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
 <p>COMMUNION SERVICE</p>		<p>WORSHIP SCHEDULE</p> <p>Saturdays - 6:00pm Sundays - 9:30am Sunday School - 10:45am Adult Bible Study—8:30am & 10:45am</p>		<p>1 No Preschool— Christmas Break</p> 	<p>2 No Preschool— Christmas Break</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 National Braille Day</p>
<p>January Birthstone Garnet</p>	<p>January Flower Carnation</p>						
<p>5 National Bird Day</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>Epiphany</p> <p>No Preschool— Christmas Break</p>	<p>7 No Preschool— Christmas Break</p>	<p>8 Preschool—Pre-K and 4's Classes Resume</p> <p>6:30 pm Council Meeting</p>	<p>9 Preschool—3's Class Resumes</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>Church Undecorating 10:00 am</p>	
<p>12</p> 	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Preschool Chapel</p>	<p>15 6:30 pm Safety Committee Meeting</p>	<p>16 6:30 pm Elder's Meeting</p>	<p>17</p>  <p>February Newsletter Articles and Announcements Due</p>	<p>18 Winnie the Pooh Day</p>	
<p>19 National Popcorn Day</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</p> <p>No Preschool Inauguration Day</p>	<p>21 No Preschool— Teacher's in Service</p>	<p>22 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>23 National Pie Day</p>	<p>24 National Peanut Butter Day</p>	<p>25</p> 	
<p>26</p> 	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 Chinese New Year</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 National Hot Chocolate Day</p>	<p>Office Hours Monday-Friday 9:00am-12:00pm</p> <p>Bulletin Announcements Due Wednesdays</p>	