

# Epistle

JANUARY 2024

**St Paul Lutheran Church**

4167 Juddville Rd  
Fish Creek, WI 54212

920-868-2826

[stpauljuddville.com](http://stpauljuddville.com)

## What's in this month's issue:

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### **Thank You!**

To all our wonderful volunteers, we thank you!  
Without your talents and time church life would  
lose its luster. We are grateful!

Bless you!

## Congregation Council:

Pastor Frank Kauzlarich: 920-217-0204

Cathy Mestek: 262-470-9754  
Congregation President & Worship & Music Co-Chair

Pam Davis: 920-559-9806  
Fellowship Ministry Co-Chair

Greg Ehlke: 920-868-1092  
Congregation Treasurer

Jeff Kuchenbecker: 608-770-0755  
Congregation Vice President & Worship & Music Co-Chair

Peder Nelson: 920-854-0136  
Secretary

Karen Peterson: 920-868-2928  
Local Benevolence Chair

Renee Schwaller: 920-868-9608  
Fellowship Ministry Co-Chair

Steve Stringer: 815-670-5754  
Property & Maintenance Chair

Shawn Mathys: 920-819-6553  
Financial Secretary



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

 **PASTOR'S MESSAGE**

Dear Sister and Brothers in Christ,

A blessed season of Christmas to you all as we await the Epiphany of our Lord, celebrated on January 6.

I thank God for the ministry we have shared this past year, and I look forward to what the Spirit will do with us this coming year. Thank you to all who have and continue to offer their gifts in so many ways.

Worship is the center of the lives of this community, and I am gladdened each time we gather for the many who share their gifts, and those who equip and encourage them. After our four worship services in 25 hours, I must admit, I was exhausted following that last "Joy to World". Looking around, I was reminded that others had been leading and serving for all of those worship services as well. What a privilege it always is to worship in community.

As the year ends, may we be open to new ways God will use each of us and the community of faith to share the Good News. We have a Savior given to and for us— in Him we are gifted light and truth and life.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

*Pastor Frank Kauzlarich*

**LOCAL BENEVOLENCE UPDATE****St. Paul Lutheran Church  
12/06/23 Benevolence Ministry - FYTD****Local Benevolence**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
11/05/2023	Diapers from Target for Diaper Drive	\$ 109.13
11/05/2023	Diapers from Walmart for Diaper Drive	506.57
11/17/2023	15 kids' Christmas gifts for Door County Boys & Girls Club	<u>1,500.00</u>

Total Benevolence Ministry **\$2,115.70**

**ALWAYS THANKFUL FOR FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS**

Over Thanksgiving we did a food drive. *Feed My People* in Sturgeon Bay was very grateful for our donation. We as a congregation are very thankful for our blessings with the amount of food donated. Please keep in mind when purchasing for the food pantry the portion size of the donation. Many of these people are older or single. The food pantries also can use toothpaste, toothbrushes, band aids, and other health items.

Thank you.

*Mary Anne & Clarence Scherer*



## CALENDAR / SPECIAL EVENTS

**SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES - 8 and 9:30 A.M.**

**KIDNITS -TUESDAY, JANUARY 2** at 1:15 P.M. in the Conference Room

Calling all knitters and crocheters, join us for conversation as we minister to those who need through what God creates through us. All are welcome!

**LOCAL BENEVOLENCE TASK FORCE – WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 10 A.M.**

**WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY - TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 10 A.M.**

**COUNCIL EXECUTIVE TEAM – WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1:00P.M.**

**CHURCH COUNCIL– WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 1:00P.M.**, in the basement. Our leadership gathers to do the work you called them to do as they lead and give guidance to our ministry. You are always welcome to attend.

**FELLOWSHIP TIME ON SUNDAYS** Please sign up on the bulletin board in the Narthex to host a Sunday.



## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS – December 13, 2023

*Council began with a devotion based on facing death with faith. The topic sounds grim until we remember our sure hope of the resurrection, a hope that brightens the picture, always.*

*Since the last meeting, Council electronically approved the purchase of a white parament for the altar, a topic discussed for years. We're looking forward to seeing the parament in use.*

*Council celebrated all that went on the weekend of December 9th/10. Members came together to decorate the church, address cards and gifts for those in need, and almost 60 stayed after worship on the 10th for a potluck to better get to know each other. None of this was possible without many hands and hearts sharing their gifts. Pastor proposed another potluck on February 3rd. Plans and details to follow.*

*Council considered two applications for the St. Paul scholarships and decided to go with grace and award \$1000 to both of the St. Paul college students who applied. Members discussed the possibility of moving that scholarship to support a seminary student in the future.*

*Council celebrated that our new Administrative Assistant, Megan Williamson, is getting rave reviews from those who have come into her circle, both those training her and those working alongside her. We have prayed that God would send just the right person, and though His answer was delayed for 8 months, as usual, all things work together for good. We are grateful.*

Council heard that the new membership directory will come to members early in 2024. Those who have not submitted a photo are encouraged to do so. It helps greatly to be able to put a face to a name.

Council expressed thanks for all our staff, Pastor, office, custodian and musicians, who work diligently all year, but especially during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Staff will receive a Christmas gift from the congregation as a token of our thanks.

Council will consider a bid for a new copier lease, as our current lease has expired and the copier we now have has become outdated. Newer models have capabilities and security features that our current model lacks.

Council members spoke to our desire to have our Synod Bishop visit St. Paul as a way to strengthen our relationship with Synod staff and the resources available there.

The next Council meeting will be on Wednesday, January 17, 1:00pm. Complete, approved minutes of the December Council meeting will be published in the February Epistle.

Council closed as always with prayers for those in need and prayers of gratitude for each of you and your ministry among us.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Mestek, Council President



## VOLUNTEER SCHEDULES

### **MUSICIANS FOR JANUARY**

Jan 7 — Jacob Beranek      *Women's ensemble sings*

Jan 14 — Praise Team

Jan 21 — Doreen Holt

Jan 28 — Doreen Holt

### **USHERS FOR JANUARY**

January 7th	8:00 Indoor - Frank Paul	9:30 Indoor - Jana Raines
	Outdoor - Terri Back	Outdoor - Tom Beranek

January 14th	8:00 Indoor - Jerry Lecy	9:30 Indoor - Cathy Mestek
	Outdoor - Clarence Scherer	Outdoor - TBD

January 21st	8:00 Indoor - Jerry Lecy	9:30 Indoor - TBD
	Outdoor - Andrea Esau	Outdoor - TBD

January 28th	8:00 Indoor - Mary Anne Scherer	9:30 Indoor - TBD
	Outdoor - Andrea Esau	Outdoor - TBD

## **ASSISTING MINISTERS FOR JANUARY**

January 8, 8:00 - Jane Decock                      9:30 - Cathy Mestek  
January 14, 8:00 - Dwight Zeller                9:30 - Debbie Jones  
January 21, 8:00 - Frank Paul                    9:30 - Cathy Mestek  
January 28, 8:00 - Dwight Zeller                9:30 - Debbie Jones

## **ALTAR GUILD FOR JANUARY**

January 7 - Terri Back                              January 28 - Jill Dew  
January 14 - Jill Dew  
January 21 - Jill Dew



**CHURCH LIFE**

**THE LUTHERAN MAGAZINE** - Available in the narthex or from the outdoor usher. Be informed concerning the ministry we share as part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**CHRIST IN OUR HOME DEVOTIONS** - Available in the narthex and from the outdoor usher. Enter into the daily discipline of reading the word, reflection and prayer.



**HELP IS NEEDED! SIGN UP ON THE NARTHEX BULLETIN BOARD . . .**

- *to volunteer to shovel the entrance areas and sidewalks,*
- *to provide refreshments following Sunday worship.*

## **PRAYER SHAWLS**

Thank you to all who have been distributing prayer shawls. If you are aware of someone in need of one, please pick one up from the credenza in the narthex or from the table outside on Sunday before or after worship or call the office during the week. For those of you who knit or crochet, we are always grateful for any contributions you make of these gifts of care and concern. For additional information, contact Debbie Jones at 651-328-1261 or [debbie.jones.pmp@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.jones.pmp@gmail.com).



## **WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUP – WINTER 2024 SESSION**

The Women's Spiritual Growth Group will begin its winter study on **Thursday, January 4 and continue through Thursday, February 8**. We will be meeting via ZOOM sessions each Thursday morning from 8:45-10:00 AM using Max Luccado's study on the book of **Philippians**, [Life Lessons with Max Lucado: Philippians](#). Each week we will discuss 2 lessons including background on the culture and historical setting, the assigned scripture (NIV and NKJV included in the book), thoughts from Max Lucado, and exploration questions as we apply the scripture to our lives.



If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Debbie Jones (651-328-1261 or [debbie.jones.pmp@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.jones.pmp@gmail.com)). All are welcome!

### **ST PAUL MEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP meets on Fridays at 8:30am**

with the opportunity to meet via Zoom or in person at Julie's Café in Fish Creek.

For more information about the Zoom session or to receive a copy of the readings and questions, please contact Gary Jones at [gary.jones09@gmail.com](mailto:gary.jones09@gmail.com). To learn about the in-person meeting, please contact John Hermann at [john.c.hermann@gmail.com](mailto:john.c.hermann@gmail.com).



### **REFLECTIONS OF A DOOR COUNTY CHRISTMAS 2023**

My wife, Char, and I just celebrated our very first Christmas in Door County. In fact, this was our first Christmas by ourselves. Christmas Days had always been filled with dutiful visits to each set of parents, then years of celebrations at home with our two sons, then girlfriends, then wives, and grandchildren were all added over the years. This year the family will celebrate Christmas on New Year's Eve back in Madison.

I'll remember the Christmas of 2023, our first Door Christmas, as something very special. But it was truly a year-long project.

Church is about community and connection. Making connections outside of the weekly church services is a necessary part to having a thriving church foundation. In my case, plugging myself into a church music program has always been a key part of my foundation. The music programs at St. Paul saw a huge jump in 2023 because of many dedicated people. These people know that a church community benefits from a flourishing music ministry. It has been exciting to see an increasing number of people get involved in the music ministry at St Paul during 2023.

And in 2023, I took a stab at leading a multi-session adult education program by utilizing the videos from The Chosen television series. The series brings the Bible, particularly Jesus and disciples, and that time-period to us in living color. We also see the crucial role of the women who followed Jesus. I have participated in many church groups over the years. I love men's bible study groups. Yet, I have never seen such a close sense of community and fellowship as I see in this small group of people. We pray, we share a meal, we watch, we talk, and we pray some more. And we continue this sense of connection and community outside the scheduled sessions too. We are brothers and sisters in Jesus. We are family.

I truly believe that it takes only a small investment, a little bit of your time, to begin making close connections with other church members. If your gifts are not in music or leading a study, or any of the other activities already going on at church, I hope that you will explore or create some new activity in 2024. You will soon find that giving a little will reap huge benefits for you and the entire community.

*Merry Christmas, from Door County.*

*Your brother in Christ,  
Jeff Kuchenbecker*

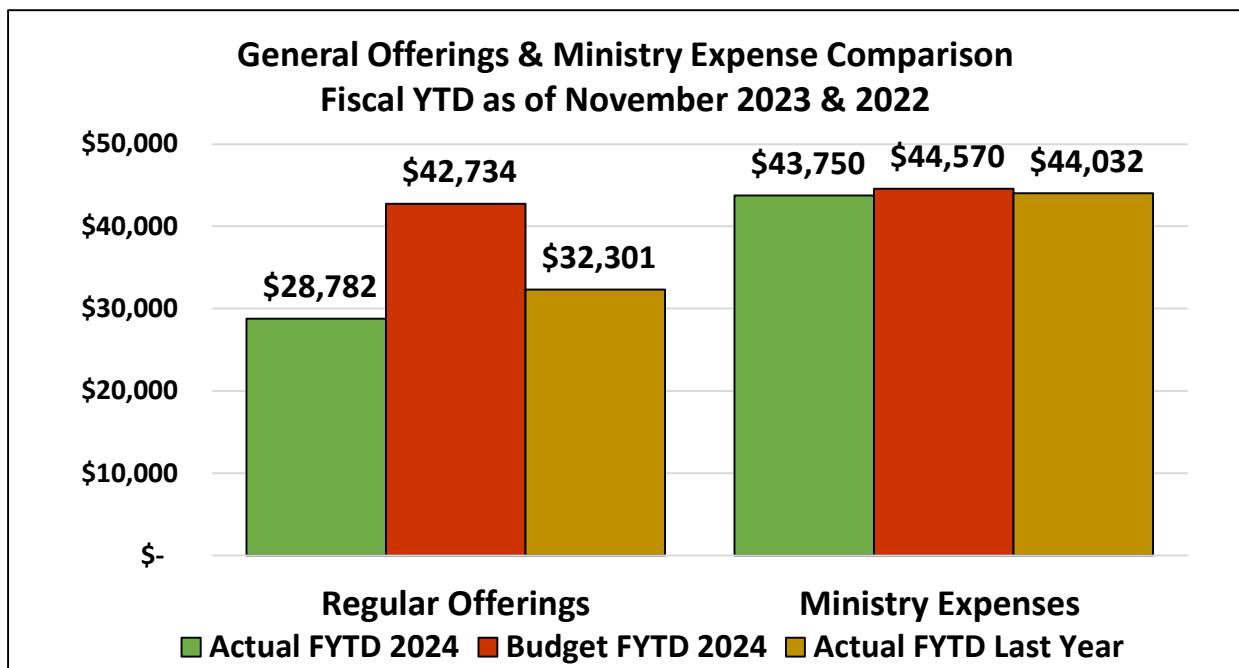


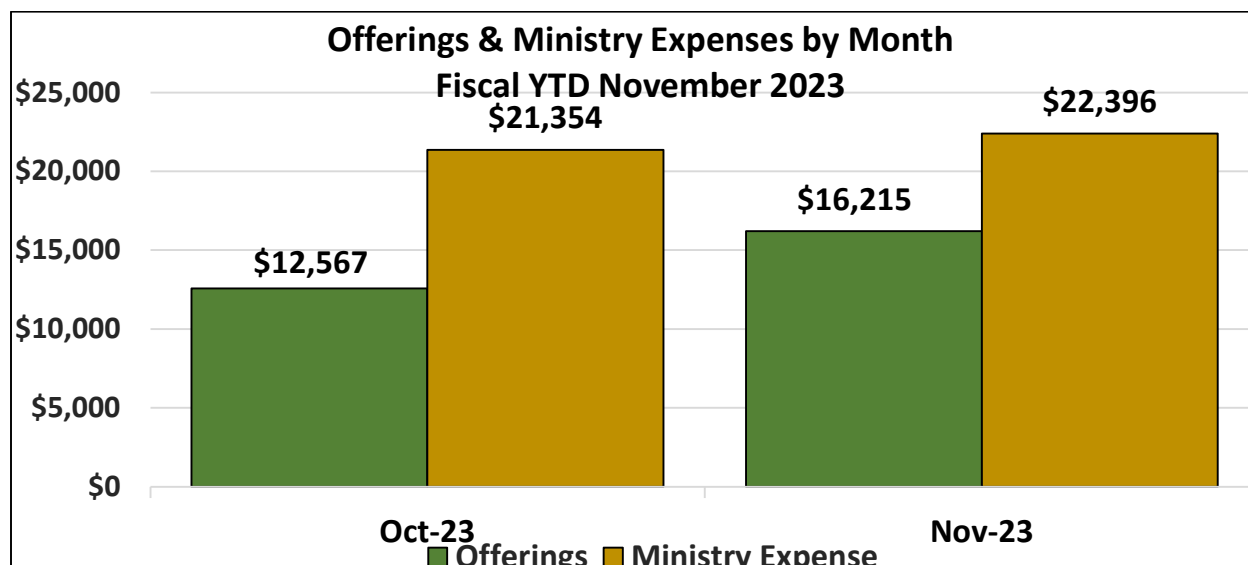
## FINANCIAL UPDATE

*Gregory Ehlke, Treasurer*

### Fiscal Year-to-Date Financial Summary

- ▶ **Regular Offerings (i.e., excluding Urgent Need and Memorial donations) in the first two months of the current fiscal year period (Oct'23 – Nov'23) totaled \$28,800, or approximately \$3,500 lower than last year**
  - On a constant monthly budgeted basis of \$21,400 per month, 2022-23 fiscal year Regular Offerings were \$14,000 lower than budgeted
- ▶ **Total Ministry Expenses (i.e., excluding Dedicated Funds and Endowment-related expenses) totaled \$43,800, which was about \$300 lower than the prior fiscal year**
  - Benevolence Expenses of \$2,100 were \$900 higher than in the prior fiscal year
  - Insurance and Communications costs were \$500 and \$300 higher, respectively, while Total Staff Ministry Expenses were \$1,800 lower
- ▶ **The fiscal year Ordinary Net Loss (excluding Dedicated Funds and Endowment-related activity) was approximately \$14,800**
  - The 2023-24 current year-to-date Ordinary Net Loss was approximately \$3,100 worse than the \$11,700 Ordinary Net Loss recorded last year
- ▶ *Note: All amounts rounded to the nearest \$100.*





## COUNCIL MINUTES – October 18, 2023

**Mission:** *St. Paul Lutheran Church is a welcoming family bringing Christ into people's lives by developing, nurturing and supporting disciples.*

**Council Members Present:** Pastor Frank, Greg Ehlke, Steve Stringer, Jeff Kuckenbecker, Renee Schwaller, Cathy Mestek, Betty Eisenhauer, attending as guest **Excused:** Karen Peterson, Peder Nelson, Pam Davis

**Meeting Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Cathy Mestek at 5:47pm.

**Devotion:** Pastor led devotions centered on the importance of "showing up" in all ways for those around us in need.

**Agenda Approval:** The previously circulated agenda was approved by all.

**Administrative Assistant Position** - The first order of business was a presentation by Betty Eisenhauer concerning an applicant for the Administration Assistant position, vacant since March 31. Betty has deep experience in personnel and human resources and has been assisting Council in the hiring process. Betty outlined terms of employment for the Council to consider and also shared her thoughts regarding the candidate based on the interview and written professional recommendations. After discussion and fine-tuning of the terms, Betty recommended that we extend an offer to this candidate, with employment to begin on December 4th and a 6-month orientation/probationary period. Jeff moved that Council authorize Betty to offer this candidate the position with the terms of employment outlined; Steve second. Motion was unanimously approved. Council thanked Betty for sharing her many gifts, these included, with St. Paul.

**Approval of October Minutes** - Minutes of the October 18 Council meeting, previously distributed, were unanimously approved, after Steve so moved; Renee second.

**Council Reorganization** - The next order of business was for Council to reorganize for the coming year. Following are Council offices and ministry liaisons:



- Cathy Mestek, President and Co-Chair, Worship & Music Ministry
- Jeff Kuchenbecker, Vice-President and Co-Chair, Worship & Ministry
- Greg Ehlke, Treasurer
- Peder Nelson, Secretary
- Renee Schwaller, Co-Chair, Fellowship
- Pam Davis, Co-Chair, Fellowship
- Steve Stringer, Chair, Property and Maintenance
- Karen Peterson, Chair, Local Benevolence
- Shawn Mathys, Financial Secretary

**Community of Faith** - Council members shared various thoughts. Of note, was that "The Chosen" study group has completed this season and will resume their study in the spring, with all welcome to join. Council thanked Jeff and others who have led this group, bringing those involved into a close-knit community.

**Treasurer's Report** - Greg Ehlke, Treasurer, presented his financial report, as summarized below. Council received complete documentation to support the findings.

Following are the key takeaways from the Financial Summary for October:

(i) Financially speaking, October was a relatively weak month as Total Offerings were about \$13.0K, which was about \$2.5K lower than the prior year month and \$9.7K lower than budget;

(ii) October's Total Ministry Expenses were \$21.4K or \$1.4K lower than in October 2022 – we paid the full year's premium for our liability insurance and Workman's Compensation insurance policies from Church Mutual (total cost of \$5.3K) and there were no Benevolence outlays;

(iii) We had about \$66.2K of undesignated available liquidity in Nicolet Bank accounts plus petty cash and about \$52.2K of brokerage account assets (virtually all UST bills and notes) – together this liquidity would cover about 5.5 months of Ministry Expenses without receiving any additional Offerings - our liquidity position was a little weaker than in October 2022.

Steve moved to accept Greg's report, Pastor Frank, second, unanimously approved.

**Pastor's Report** - Pastor Frank has been working ahead to prepare for Thanksgiving, Christ the King, Advent and Christmas worship. The Advent worship theme will be based on, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." Pastor has also been diligent in his visitation of the homebound and those in need. He shared the good news that another couple has asked to join St. Paul. Pastor moved, Jeff second to accept and welcome Dennis and Connie Stiegenberger as members. Motion was unanimously approved. Dennis and Connie will be publicly received during an upcoming worship service.

**Property** - Steve reported that the cemetery survey has been delayed, but is to be completed in the coming months. Chris Kuhn, custodian, will be painting the kitchen in the new year. A group of volunteers worked outdoors to prepare the grounds for the winter season. Yet another group will be gathering on Friday to put up the outdoor Christmas lights. We are grateful.

**Worship & Music Ministry** - Jeff reported that the ministry met and welcomed the energy a new St. Paul member brought to the team. He noted that the music ministry at St. Paul has come out of covid as a strong part of worship once again. Many worshippers have commented as to how grateful they are to have a choir, praise team and special music as a part of worship. December worship services will continue at 8am and 9:30am, indoors and out, with the exception of Christmas Eve and Day. On Sunday, December 24, worship will be held at 9:00am, 5:30pm and 7:30pm, indoors and parking lot. On Monday, December 25, worship will be offered as a single 9:00am service, indoors and parking lot.

**Local Benevolence** - The ministry has requested approval of a \$1,500 gift to the Boys and Girls Club of Door County to purchase gifts for those in need. This amount would cover gifts for 15 children. Steve so moved, Greg seconded. After discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

**Volunteer Recruitment Follow-up** - Bev Prohl has compiled and provided to Council members and other ministry leaders a list of those who would like to volunteer at St. Paul in various areas. We discussed the importance of following up with those who have offered to share their gifts. Cathy will be in charge of updating the list and sharing updates as

members ask to be added to the list. We are very grateful for all those who have already added their names in many ministry areas.

**Sanctuary Lighting** - Council had previously discussed the possibility of upgrading the sanctuary lighting and perhaps changing out some of the fixtures. Karen and Steve had both looked at options. However, Council has heard widely differing opinions from St. Paul members regarding the lighting and fixtures. (As Karen aptly pointed out, "There is less consensus than there was in picking a Speaker of the House.") Council agreed the new light bulbs have made a big difference and these coming months with evening services will give us a better handle on how the lighting affects worshippers. We are in agreement to go no further with this project at this time.

**Church Directory** - Volunteers in the office have been diligently working to ensure we have one accurate membership directory, not an easy task. Members have been asked to either submit a directory photo or to have their picture taken on a Sunday morning by our own Steve Stringer, who is only joking (we think) when he offers 8 x 10 glossies for sale. The goal is to have a directory to distribute in print and online to members in the very near future, so that we can at last put a face to a name.

**Streaming Proposal Update** - Funds were approved at the Annual Meeting for equipment to allow us to live stream worship services. Council agreed that December is not a good time to undertake the effort to install equipment and provide necessary training to those using it. The streaming proposal will be revisited in January.

**2023 Scholarship Applications** - Council has received 2 applications for the \$500 scholarship given to college students who are part of the St. Paul congregation. Council members are conflicted about the matter. At issue is that the first line of the qualifications states that a recipient is to be an, "Active member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Juddville (active is defined as attending worship and receiving Holy Communion)." Council members expressed some doubts that applicants may qualify on this point, though we also discussed whether a measure of grace could apply. We agreed that at a minimum it would be good if we had a chance to meet the recipients at a worship service and to offer them our best wishes and prayers. As the night was getting long, and we didn't have the two completed applications in front of us, Pastor suggested that he email Council members the completed forms so that we can vote electronically.

**Adjournment** - There being no other business, nor the energy to pursue it, the meeting adjourned at 8:10pm. The meeting concluded, as always, with the Lord's Prayer, because no matter how tired we are, there is always room in our lives for prayer.

**Next Council Meeting:** The next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 13, 1pm at St. Paul; Cathy Mestek doing devotions.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Mestek, Acting Secretary*

