Our Saviour's
Lutheran Church
2502 S. Jefferson Ave.
Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 423-3363
oursavioursmc@msn.com

Council President:
Mike Olson

We are the "Body of Christ" at work in God's beloved world. Because of Christ's love, there is always a place for you here.

Office Hours:
Monday:
9 am-3 pm
Thursday:
9 am -11 am

Together in Christ

Ministry Administrator: Valerie Hasbrouck
Organist: Mary Groh

Worship: Sundays at 9:30 a.m.
St. Paul: 1st and 3rd and 5th Sundays
Our Saviour's: 2nd and 4th Sundays

St. Paul
Lutheran Church
329 East State St.
Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 423-7749
secretary@stpaulmc.com

Council President:
Mary Beyerhelm
Huey

Share God's Love;
Serve all People

Office Hours:
Monday, Wednesday,
Thursday
7:15 am-10:15 am
Tuesday
10:45 am-1:45 pm

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

October 7, 14, 21, 28 & November 18 Bible Study "By Heart" SP

Thursday, October 8 — **4:30– 6:30 pm Spaghetti Drive Thru Supper OS**

Saturday, October 18 — **All Day Fall Field Trip to Cedar Falls**

Monday, October 19 — **4:00– 6 pm Chili Drive Thru Supper SP**

Saturday, October 31 — **Trunk or Treat OS**

Sunday, November 1st — **Potluck to welcome Becky Elsbernd**

Wednesday, November 25 — **6:30 pm Thanksgiving Worship Service, Pie & Coffee OS**

Dear friends in Christ,

The book of Ezra takes place during a very important time in the history of the people of Israel. A few hundred years earlier, they had been living in the Promised Land, and had built a beautiful temple to God, but the Babylonian people invaded their land, destroyed their temple, and took them to Babylon to live in exile. At the beginning of the book of Ezra, the Persians invade Babylon, and the Persian king lets the Israelites return to the Promised Land. The rest of the book of Ezra tells the story of that return, and of the rebuilding of the temple.

There's a powerful scene in chapter 3 when the people hold a sort of groundbreaking ceremony for the new temple. All the priests and other religious leaders gather in their fanciest vestments and play instruments as they lead all the gathered people in a song praising God. And during the singing, the builders lay the new foundation of the new temple. And the people let out a great shout of joy.

But verses 12 and 13 point out, "Many of the priests and Levites and heads of families, old people who had seen the first house on its foundations, wept with a loud voice when they saw this house, though many shouted aloud for joy, *so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping*, for the people shouted so loudly that the sound was heard far away."

I think that scene shows a powerful example of how two things can be true at the same time—we can be excited for a new thing at the same time as we grieve the loss of an old thing. In Ezra 3, the sound of the joyful shouts mixed with the sound of the weeping.

I think this is a really powerful story to reflect on when thinking about congregational mergers and consolidations. These are times when we are excited about the new ministry to which God is calling us, while at the same time mourning the loss of the congregations and ministries that won't ever be the same again. And we might even feel the emotions of joy and grief at the same time. But that's okay. When we feel that way, we can remember this story, and know that we are in good company.

People of Our Saviour's and St. Paul's, I applaud your willingness to step out in faith and pursue merger or consolidation for your congregations. I am enjoying getting to know you and walking with you in this process.

There are, of course, a lot of logistics to consider. Legal merger or legal consolidation? (For legal purposes, *merger* happens when one congregation closes and all its assets and members become part of another congregation. *Consolidation* happens when two (or more) congregations close, and all of their assets and members come together and create a new congregation.) Utilize one of the current buildings, or find a new location altogether? Especially if a new congregation is formed, what will its name be and how will its committees and ministries be structured? What all legal and financial paperwork needs to happen as part of this process, and what deadlines might exist? What other things need to be figured out that I am not even remembering right now?

It would be easy, maybe even tempting, to get bogged down or overwhelmed by those details. But your two congregations are made up of joy-filled people who enjoy spending time together, and doing ministry together. You are people who experience the love of God, and who desire to share God's love with the world.

There is not a large amount of research about congregations involved in various types of shared ministry, and even less research about congregations that have pursued merger and/or consolidation. But the research that does exist says that the most successful of these ministries are those that are guided by their sense of the Holy Spirit's call, and how they might best do the ministry God is calling them to do. This sense of vision of seeking to

follow God's call in THIS time and THIS place brings a shared purpose and a renewed energy.

Another indicator of successful shared ministry is strong relationships, and I think this is a wonderful strength of your congregations. You have already been nurturing your relationships with each other for quite a while, and when I have been there, it is obvious to me that you enjoy being together—worshipping together, spending time in fellowship together, and doing ministry together. You recognize that God has called you together, and you want to continue to follow God's call into merger or consolidation or whatever comes next.

You have a strong foundation of good relationships with each other and reliance on God, who is the firmest foundation for us all. I am grateful for the ministries of your congregations, and I'm excited for the possibilities that the future holds. If you have questions that I might be able to help with, please reach out to me at rodk@neiasynod.org. It is a privilege to accompany you in this work.

Peace,
Rev. Kristen Corr Rod, Director for Evangelical Mission,
Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA

Our Saviour's Council Minutes

August 9, 2026

Present: President Mike Olson, Vice-Pres. Gale Loveless, Secretary Nancy Nielsen, Martha Koch, Jerry Koch, Art Martell, Ron Rachut, and Dave VanDeventer. Absent: Treasurer Dale Karsjens

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Olson.

Approval of Minutes: Motion made to approve June 14, 2026, Council Meeting minutes. Motion/Second, Art/Martha, motion carried.

Financial Report: Motion made to approve June and July 2026, financial report, Motion/ Second, Martha/Gale, motion carried.

President's Report: Cody and Mike replaced two LED lights in the Quilts of Valor supply room. A motion made by
Martha/Ron to replace all the lights in the Quilts of Valor rooms with LED lights, motion carried.

Old Business: Thank you to Dave and Jerry for replacing two lights in the Fireside room. Mike and John are still working on a new vacuum cleaner decision to purchase.

New Business: A motion was made by Dave/Martha to give Mark Lovik, who mows the grass, an increase of $10.00 per job, motion carried. A motion was made by Dave/Gale to a $2.00 increase in John Harbacheck, the custodian's hourly wage, motion carried.

Our next meeting is Sunday, September 20, 2026, at St. Paul following the Joint Council meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Nielsen, Secretary

OUR SAVIOUR'S-ST. PAUL JOINT COUNCIL MEETING

August 9, 2026

Members present: Sue Aves, Mary Beyerhelm Huey, Diana Black, LaVern Dahl, Martha Koch, Jerry Koch, Linda Koopman, Gale Loveless, Ron Lundblad, Nancy Marsh, Art Martell, Nancy Nielsen, Mike Olson, Ron Rachut, and Dave VanDeventer. Absent:
Mary B-H called the meeting to order. Martha K had opening prayer with *sometimes we don't know how to* but you hold us, speak to us, and guide us, Thank you Lord!

Motion was made to approve July 12, 2026, Joint Council Meeting minutes. Motion/Second, Diana B/Sue A, motion carried.

Pastoral Report: none

Call Committee Report: (Lori Angell, Martha Koch, Ron Lundblad, Art Martell, Jan Nelson, Micah Stockberger) The committee will meet with Becky Elsbernd August 10th to discuss the possibility of leading us as a lay pastor beginning November 1st, preaching three Sundays per month and being in the office 20 hours per week. Then in April being our Intern Pastor for two years. (Becky is attending seminary part time so it will take approximately two years) She will be paid the Synod guidelines for a ½ time pastor with benefits.

Exploratory Committee Report: (Lori Angell, Jerry Koch, Art Martell, Lee Olson, Megan Slocum, Deb Stockberger) The survey results were that most people will attend worship at either building.

Worship Schedule: Pulpit supply is full through September and working on October. Kristen Corr-Rod will lead worship and the merger/consolidation discussion on August 23. Please try to attend these meetings to keep informed. We will have a Bible Study/discussion group in the fall.

Community Involvement: Our Saviour's *spaghetti drive through supper and bake sale* is Thursday, **October 8th** and St. Paul's *chili drive through supper* is Monday, **October 19th.**

Monthly local/global giving: Please keep bringing your change for the "noisy pot" and *Thank You* for these donations! The "noisy pot" August donations are for the ELCA Youth Leadership Gathering for additional housing costs. A motion was made by Diana/Dave for the September donations to be for Lutheran World Relief shipping costs of the School Kits, motion carried. June's "noisy pot" donations for the House were $282.00. July's "noisy pot" for local veterans through the Veteran Affairs Office at the Court House was $290.00. It was suggested that the "noisy pot" donation amounts be reported in the bulletins on the second Sunday of the following month.

Newsletter Articles: Kristen Corr-Rod will write the October/November article. We would like volunteers to write each article, please contact Mary B-H if you are interested.

Our next meeting is September 20th at St. Paul following the worship service. Mike O will give the opening prayer/devotion.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Nielsen, Secretary

St Paul Lutheran Church Minutes

August 9, 2026.

1. Call to Order. President Beyerhelm Huey called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m. Members present: Beyerhelm Huey, Dahl, Black, Koopman, Aves, Marsh, Lundblad.

2. March Minutes: Motion, Marsh; 2nd, Lundblad that the July Minutes be approved. AYES: All (Motion carried.)

3. Treasurer's Report: Lundblad provided a review of the finances which included disbursements and a notation that weekly offerings were down, adding it might be necessary to take money out in August.

5. Old Business: Properties Committee Report: Aves stated nothing was broken or needed fixing.

WELCA: Aves stated the next event would be the chili supper on October 19th.

6. New Business: As no one has volunteered for the position of Vice President it would remain vacant at this time.

Beyerhelm Huey stated the suggestion for rental space was no longer necessary (they found someplace else).

Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to hold off on any further discussion of rental space until a decision was made regarding the churches.

Council Person of the month for September is Beyerhelm Huey.

Adjourn: Motion, Dahl; 2nd, Lundblad to adjourn the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

St Paul Lutheran Church
Special Minutes of September 13, 2026.

Call to Order. President Beyerhelm Huey called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. There were 24 voting members present. Council Members present were: Beyerhelm Huey, Dahl, Black, Koopman, Aves, Marsh, Lundblad.

Proceed with a Vote: Motion, Jim Murphy; 2nd, Micah Stockberger to proceed with voting on the Lay Ministry Agreement.

Beyerhelm Huey passed out the ballots which read as follows:

Congregational Ballot

I approve the Lay Ministry Agreement between Our Saviour's/St. Paul and Becky Elsbernd

Please circle your response
Yes *No*

The ballots were then collected and reviewed and counted by the Call Committee consisting of Lori Cornick- Angell, Ron Lundblad, and Micah Stockberger.

It was confirmed that there were 24 ballots.

The Committee announced vote was unanimous, with 24 "Yes" votes.

Adjourn: Motion, Jim Murphy; 2nd, Micah Stockberger that the meeting adjourn the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Join us in welcoming Becky Elsbernd with a potluck following the November 1st church service at St Paul.
Please bring a dish to share.

St Paul Lutheran Church and Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Joint Congregational Informational Minutes of September 13, 2026

Call to Order: President Beyerhelm Huey called the joint congregational meeting of St Paul Lutheran Church and Our Saviour's Lutheran Church to order at 10:34 a.m. She stated the purpose of the meeting was to outline the Lay Ministry Agreement and then to split up and vote separately on approval of Becky Elsbernd as the Lay Minister and Synod Authorized Minister.

Beyerhelm Huey introduced Pastor Brackett who opened with prayer.

Pastor Brackett referred to the handout provided to both congregations. He provided an overview of an Embedded Seminary Learning Program, the role of the congregation, the cost and the scholarships. He emphasized the one thing Ms. Elsbernd could not do was preside over weddings.

In addition, he stressed the role of the congregations, emphasizing they should not have the same expectations of Ms. Elsbernd as they would of an ordained minister and should not look to her to spearhead or drive the merger or consolidation.

Comments and questions followed his presentation.

President Beyerhelm Huey pointed out a few specifics from the agreement, advising Ms. Elsbernd would work 20 hours a week and preach 3 Sundays a month. The total cost including benefits would be roughly $38,000 which would be split between the two congregations.

Adjourn: The joint congregational informational meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am with the two congregations splitting up to vote.

The combined Prayer Chain Ministry continues with approximately 20 people from both churches. **Anyone** who has a prayer concern can email oursavioursmc@msn.com or contact Marilyn Martell at 641-425-9048 or email her at iowamartells@gmail.com with your request.
**If you want to be a part of this ministry with prayer requests emailed or texted to you, contact Marilyn Martell or a member of the prayer chain.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Council Minutes

September 20. 2026

Present: President Mike Olson, Vice-Pres. Gale Loveless, Secretary Nancy Nielsen, Martha Koch, Jerry Koch, Art Martell, Ron Rachut, and Dave VanDeventer. Absent: Treasurer Dale Karsjens

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Olson at 10:23 a.m..
Approval of Minutes: Motion made to approve June 14, 2026, Council Meeting minutes. Motion/Second, Art/Martha, motion carried.

Financial Report: Motion made to approve June and July 2026, financial report, Motion/ Second, Dave/Gale,
motion carried.

President's Report: North Iowa Impact Team asked if they could use Our Saviour's for a possible host site for refrigeration. It was decided that all would bring questions that need to be answered to the October meeting before a decision could be made. Jerry and crew will patch the fellowship hall roof as a preventive maintenance repair.

Old Business:

New Business: A request was made to use a room for a Girl Scout meeting place. A motion was made by Martha/Jerry to give a church key to the Leader and allow them to meet at Our Saviour's monthly, motion carried. We discussed the possibility of cutting a pew to make space available for a wheelchair.

Our next meeting is Sunday, October 11, 2026, at Our Saviour's following the Joint Council meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Nielsen, Secretary

The Special Offering collected at our services in October will again go to cover the shipping costs of the over 500 school kits we put together for Lutheran World Relief! Thanks to all for supporting this mission!

Thank you seems so inadequate for all the gifts, food, flowers, cards, phone calls, love and support given to me and to Kirk these past months. We are especially grateful for all the prayers. I learned years ago that though I may be by myself, I am never alone. My sincere thank you from Carlyn Schriver & Kirk. p.s., my beautiful Viking purple prayer shawl is always near me and is being well used!

OUR SAVIOUR'S-ST. Paul JOINT COUNCIL MEETING

September 20, 2026

Members present: Sue Aves, Mary Beyerhelm Huey, Diana Black, LaVern Dahl, Martha Koch, Jerry Koch, Linda
Koopman, Gale Loveless, Ron Lundblad, Nancy Marsh, Art Martell, Nancy Nielsen, Mike Olson, Ron Rachut,
and Dave VanDeventer. Absent:
Mike O called the meeting to order with opening prayer at 10:40 am.
Motion was made to approve August 9, 2026, Joint Council Meeting minutes. Motion/Second, Ron L/Diana B motion carried.
Pastoral Report: none

Call Committee Report: (Lori Angell, Martha Koch, Ron Lundblad, Art Martell, Jan Nelson, Micah Stockberger) Thank you – Job completed! The Call Committee now becomes the Site Committee to provide support for Becky and to keep good communications open. Becky Elsbernd begins November 1 st . Ron L and Mike O will show Becky around both churches before November 1 to help her familiarize her with both buildings and give her keys. We are encouraged to wear our name tags for her benefit. There will be a potluck at St. Paul that Sunday to welcome Becky. A motion was made by Martha K/Dave V to pay Becky the pulpit supply fee for November 1 st Worship Service as she had to prepare her sermon, motion carried.

Exploratory Committee Report: (Lori Angell, Jerry Koch, Art Martell, Lee Olson, Megan Slocum, Deb Stockberger) Deb S is contacting a church in the Mpls/St. Paul area to gather information on how they handled their congregations coming together. The committee would like our congregation to divide into small groups to discuss feelings on the merger/consolidation and answer questions, during the coffee hour one of these Sundays. We would like to keep the congregation more informed.

Worship Schedule: Pulpit supply is full through November. When there are five Sundays in the month, have a supply pastor for one Sunday and one of our lay people preaching the other Sunday. Art M will lead a Bible study/discussion group beginning September 30 th at St. Paul, 6:30 pm, in the fellowship area focusing on Luther's Small Catechism. Art is looking for books for us to follow, the video is short, so should be about an hour long. Come join us!

Community Involvement: Our Saviour's spaghetti drive through supper and bake sale is Thursday, October 8th serving 4:30-6:30 pm. St. Paul's chili drive through supper is Monday, October 19th , serving 4:00-6:30 pm. Joint Trunk or Treat at Our Saviour's parking lot, Saturday Oct. 31, from 5:00-6:30 pm.

Monthly local/global giving: Please keep bringing your change for the "noisy pot" and Thank You for these donations! The "noisy pot" August donations were for the ELCA Youth Leadership Gathering for additional housing costs – St. Paul $167.07 and Our Saviour's $126.25. September and October donations will be for Lutheran World Relief shipping costs of the over 500 School Kits.

Other: Yard clean-up will be together sometime in later October. When the 2027 budget is considered, the Portico insurance for Becky will increase 15%.

Newsletter Articles: Gale L has written the article for December/January. We will ask Becky her thoughts on this after she is settled into the routine.

Our next meeting is October 11th at Our Saviour's Fireside room following the worship service. Jerry K will give the opening prayer/devotion.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Nielsen, Secretary

Thank You

We joyfully welcome Becky Elsbernd to the church families of Our Saviour's and St. Paul. Becky will begin Nov. 1 as part-time lay minister for both churches. Thank you Becky, for being a part of our ministries.

Together St. Paul and Our Saviour's made more than 75 quilts and 535 school kits for the mission and ministry of Lutheran World Relief. We thank you all for your hard work and generosity.

We so appreciate the willingness and work of all the lay leaders and worship assistants who have led worship, read lessons, ushered, and helped with communion in our worship services. Special thanks to all lay members who have done the hard work of preparing and giving the sermons.

Music as praise brings our hearts closer to God. Thank you Chris VanD and the members of the Bell Choir for giving praise and thanksgiving to God through your music.

A Peep from the Pantry

We want to begin with a sincere THANKS to anyone who supports the Little Free Pantry in any way. We couldn't do it without you and it is much appreciated by those who are served by this ministry. These two congregations are so generous and we are also blessed by many neighbors who help keep the LFP stocked. As we change seasons , some suggested items are instant oatmeal, cereal , granola bars , peanut butter and boxed dinners Thanks again for all your support . Please continue to keep the Little Free Pantry in your hearts, in your prayers ,and on your grocery list .

Our Saviour's will be holding Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 31st in the parking lot from 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Our Saviour's Spaghetti Drive Thru Dinner

Themed Baskets Raffle

Thursday, Oct 8, 4:30-6:30 pm (or until food runs out)

Free will donation

St Paul Lutheran Church Chili Drive Thru

Monday, October 19th

4-6 p.m. (or until gone)

Free will donation

Includes-a 2 cup serving of chili, cinnamon roll & crackers

Bring own container for family size order

OCTOBER

10/4 Valerie Hasbrouck

10/12 Keith Morphew, Ken Truka

10/13 Annabelle Janssen, Ed Kobliska

10/19 Mason Walters

10/24 Amelia Slocum

10/25 Art Martell

10/26 Donna Vosburgh

10/28 Madison Stockberger

10/31 Dawn Truka

NOVEMBER

11/2 Micah Stockberger

11/4 Marilyn Martell

11/6 Jim Wallace

11/7 Delmar Austinson

11/8 Jeanine Jamtgaard

11/9 Sue Aves

11/10 Carol Rye

11/16 Vicki Wolfe

11/18 Riley Ruiz

11/19 Brenda Simon, Liam Stockberger

11/21 Nathan Gelner

11/22 Jerry Koch, Steve Wolfe

11/25 Ed Davies

11/27 Ron Lundblad, Michelle Sanders

11/29 Diane Murphy

11/30 Megan Slocum

October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 9:30 Worship SP	5 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP	6	7 9:30 M&M's SP 5 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study SP	8 4:30-6:30 Spaghetti Supper	9	10 7-11 LWR In-Gathering Albert Lea
11 9:30 Worship OS 10:30 Joint Council	12 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP	13	14 9 Comm Kit OS 9:30 M&M's SP 5 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study SP	15 4 Comm Kit SP	16	17
18 9:30 Worship SP	19 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP 4:30-6 Chili Drive Thru	20	21 9:30 M&M's SP 5 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study SP	22	23	24
25 9:30 Worship OS	26 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP 10:45 Meals on Wheels OS	27	28 9:30 M&M's SP 5 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study SP	29	30	31 5-6:30 Trunk or Treat OS

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 Worship SP 10:30 Potluck Welcome Becky	2 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP	3	4 9:30 M&M's SP 5 Bell Choir No Bible Study	5	6 9 Comm. Kit OS	7
8 9:30 Worship OS 10:30 Joint Council	9 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP	10	11 9 Comm Kit OS 9:30 M&M's SP 5 Bell Choir No Bible Study	12	13	14
15 9:30 Worship SP 10:30 Potluck	16 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP	17	18 9:30 M&M's SP 5 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study SP	19 4 Comm Kit SP	20	21
22 9:30 Worship OS	23 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP	24	25 9:30 M&M's SP 5 Bell Choir 7 Thanksgiving Eve Service OS	26 HAPPY THANKSGIVING	27	28
29 9:30 Worship SP	30 9 Quilters OS 9:30 Quilter SP					