

St. Paul Lutheran Ministries
2916 N. McKee Rd.
Merced CA 95340



“Connecting people to Jesus”

[www.stpaul
merced.com](http://www.stpaulmerced.com)

PAID

PERMIT #590
MERCED, CA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

Mission: “Connecting People to Jesus”

MINISTRY STAFF

Senior Pastor
Rev. Jonathan Lange

HMong Ministries
Rev. Kou Seying

Deacon: Matt Cone

Children & Youth Min. Dir.
Christie Elliott

School Principal
Ben Elliott

Pre-School Director

MISSION & MINISTRY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Mary Rahn
Treasurer: Paul Smith
Secretary: Kathy Hogston
Linda Cone, Jeff George,
Keri Good, Gary Mortensen,
Jack Van Loan

Elders: Dave Bultena, George
Morton, Larry Sorge, Gary
Hogston

How to reach us:

2916 N. McKee Rd
Merced CA 95340

Phone:

Church: 209-383-3301

Pre-School: 209-383-5672

School: 209-383-3302

FAX: 209-383-3642

E-mail:

pastorjlange@stpaulmerced.com

pastorkou@stpaulmerced.com

churchoffice@stpaulmerced.com

belliott@stpaulmerced.com

celliott@stpaulmerced.com

MARCH

2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 3:15 Bell Choir 7pm Bible Study – Cone’s Home 6 pm Upward Parish Hall	4	5 9am Upward 10an –noon Habitat for Humanity
6 10:15 am Combined Worship Services	7 Noon - TCL 7pm Elder Board - Library	8 1pm Bible Study– David 3:15 pm Child. Choir 6 pm Upward	9 10:30 am Senior Bible Class ASH WEDNESDAY 7pm Service	10 3:15 Bell Choir 7pm Bible Study – Cone’s Home 6 pm Upward Parish Hall	11	12 9am Upward Youth Rock Worship Roadshow Sacramento
13 8 am & 10:15 am Worship Services Daylight Savings Time	14 9:30 am Chat’n Chew—OMC	15 1pm Bible Study– David 3:15 Child. Choir	16 10:30 am Senior Bible Class Lent 6pm Soup Supper & Service	17 3:15 Bell Choir 7pm Bible Study – Cone’s Home	18	19 LWML Spring Workshop
20 8 am & 10:15 am- Worship Services	21 Noon—LWML Library 6:30 M & M Board Mtg.	22 3:15 Child. Choir	23 10:30 am Senior Bible Class Lent 6pm Soup Supper & Service	24 3:15 Bell Choir 7pm Bible Study – Cone’s Home	25 6pm Elementary Game Night Parish Hall	26 7:00 pm Jr./Sr. High- Game Night Parish Hall
27 8 am & 10:15am Worship Services	28	29 3:15 Child. Choir	30 10:30 am Senior Bible Class Lent 6pm Soup Supper & Service	31 3:15 Bell Choir 7pm Bible Study – Cone’sHome		

WORSHIP SEVICES:
8:00 A.M. HERITAGE WORSHIP
 Communion 2nd & 4th Sundays



BIRTHDAYS

- March 3 Lonn Boyer
Sean Parker
- March 6 Seth Seying
- March 9 Rhonda Prothro
- March 10 Karen Elliott
Ryan Randall
- March 13 Matt Cone
- March 14 Phil Rahn
- March 18 Christopher Clement
- March 19 Karen Kelleher
Jeff Christensen
- March 20 Greg Bishop
- March 21 Heidi Hayes
Olivia Blaylock
- March 24 Maryln Tessmer
Jake Mognis
- March 25 Sarah Chavez
- March 26 Elaine Kock
Carolyn Daberkow
Malissa Blaylock
- March 27 Karen Wagner
- March 29 Lauren Elliott
Audrey Lo
- March 31 Barbara Hayes
Lexi Thompson

ANNIVERSARIES

- March 4 Tim & Linda Clement
- March 18 Kent & Lori Harstad
- March 23 Matt & Linda Cone
- March 24 John & Betty Hale

*Brighten someone's day -
send a birthday or anniversary card*

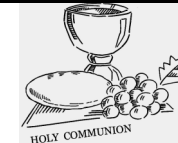
GREETERS



- 8:00 A.M.
- March 6 John & Betty Hale
- March 13 Ed & Darlene Mentz
- March 20 Bill & Lucille Hiller
- March 27 Sally Smith

- 10:15 A.M.
- March 6 Maribelle Roduner
- March 13 Kent & Lori Harstad
- March 20 Ben & Christie Elliott
- March 27 Deanna Morgan

COMMUNION SET UP



- 8:00 A.M.
- Ralph & Rosie Martin
- 10:15 A.M.
- Jan Seilnacht & Marion West
- COMMUNION SERVERS**
- 8:00 A.M.
- Syl Braa & Dave Bultena
- 10:15 A.M.
- Hershel West & Larry Sorge

READERS

- 8:00 A.M.
- March 6 Karan McKenzie
- March 13 Betty Jo Rodgers
- March 20 Melinda Price
- March 27 Sandy Braa



- 10:15 A.M.
- March 6 Samantha Thompson
- March 13 Irene Pearson
- March 20 Sandy Bishop
- March 27 Kent Christensen

ACOLYTE

- March 6
- March 13
- March 20





WHAT IS LWML??
LUTHERAN WOMEN'S
MISSIONARY LEAGUE

also called Lutheran Women in Mission. . . .
Lutheran Women work together to accomplish many things for our church, our community and our world!

Our own Joy of Harvest Radio Ministry project HAS BEEN FUNDED!!!! PRAISE THE LORD!! It is AMAZING what our mites can do – they add up and together accomplish wonderful projects for our Lord! The next project is to renovate the pantry at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Hawaii. They serve an average of 50 families every Saturday, many of them homeless. They have provided food for the homeless for the past 12 years.

KEEP FILLING UP THOSE MITE BOXES -



Bring and transfer or simply drop a donation into the large Mite Box in the Narthex...

EVERY PENNY COUNTS!



St. Paul Lutheran Ministries Cookbook has arrived! Cost is \$10 each; make checks payable to LWML. Proceeds will be used to purchase round light-weight tables for the church parish hall and the school will use their funds for technology equipment. Cookbooks are available after every worship service or in the church or school office Monday through Friday.

“Be Joyful in Hope”

Saturday, March 5 – Grace Lutheran Church
617 W. Orangeburg, Modesto
Ruth Koch, Inspirational speaker, \$30.00 includes lunch – registration opens at 9 a.m.
Pre-register to avoid a line – registration forms on the bulletin board.

Hosted by Region IV – Zone 3, 5, 9, 15 & 16



IN MISSION

OUR NEXT MEETING will be on Monday, March 21st from noon until 1:30 p.m. Bring a sack lunch and enjoy devotions “The Cup that Talked” and a short Bible study “The God of Details” from the Lutheran

Women’s Quarterly, our Prayer Shawl Ministry update, Visitation report, Cookbook update, Prayer chain report, Fellowship Hour report, Altar comm., Lenten Soup suppers, all combined under Lutheran Women.

ZONE 3 LUTHERAN WOMEN will meet at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1495 Underwood, Atwater, on Saturday, March 19th starting at 9 a.m. for continental breakfast, and the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

- Missionary Speaker Valerie from Good Shepherd, Turlock will share her mission experience in Togo in Africa in the morning
- Pastor Kou will share his missionary challenges with us after lunch
- A short business meeting
- Devotions
- An ingathering for the food bank at Holy Cross will complete a mission filled day! (A list of suggested items on the bulletin board)
- Registration is \$12 by March 10th, \$15 at the door.

Registration form on the bulletin board by the office.



LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS BEGIN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16TH at 6 p.m.

Sign up sheets and recipes will be on the table in the Narthex starting Sunday, March 6th. Directions for set up, serving and clean up will also be available. Meet new people, learn new recipes, and enjoy fellowship and good

here's why!

1 - Last Wednesday our growing Golden Valley team did their first night of contact work at the Golden Valley v. Merced basketball game. They met kids, coaches, teachers, parents ... it was wild! **They need prayer as this ministry gets started!**

2 - Our Delhi team took a group of students on an afternoon outing on Saturday. At our Region-wide training, they were introduced to some new concepts in how to reach more kids, and they're doing some planning that may result in change. **They need wisdom and God's lead as they reach kids today and as they plan for their future!**

3 - Our Young Lives team came back from our Region-wide training fired up to reach more teen parents with the gospel. Contact work with teen parents is a challenge all it's own. **They need prayer for new ideas, windows of opportunity, and creative child-care!**

4 - Our finances are in good shape at the moment, but our vision takes us into every high school and middle school in Merced County. That's over 20 different schools! We need to build our resources so that this can happen. **We need prayer for new supporters, generous gifts, and wise spending.**

5 - Our enemy, Satan, does not like any of the above! He wants to stop ministry at Delhi and Golden Valley. He wants to prevent Young Lives from reaching teen moms for Christ. And he wants our resources to dry up. Jesus tells us to pray, to take our stand against the enemy. And we will! **Join us and pray that the gospel would go forward among teens throughout our county!**

Please pray for Young Life Merced County. If you have not 'officially' joined our prayer team (7 people praying every day, 7 days a week), **I am asking everyone who receives this e-mail to commit to pray for Young Life Merced County at least one day a week.** You don't have to attend a meeting or go to a training. Just pray on your day, whenever God gives you opportunity! To join the team, **simply reply to this e-mail** and say, "I want to join the YL prayer team, and I will pray on ____day". Thanks!



If to share your time and talents, we have several opportunities just for you:

Information booth at local community events:

Volunteers on this committee will help set up the canopy, table & brochures, plus share information with those who stop by about Habitat and how they can volunteer or donate.

Newsletter Committee: Volunteers on this committee will write articles, help with layout, and gather news articles & pictures.

Publicity: Volunteers on this committee will contact local newspapers, radio and TV stations to publicize events such as our upcoming house dedication, fundraisers and Annual meeting

Fundraising: Volunteers on this committee will organize fundraisers which will enable the next two houses to be built in a timely manner

House dedication: Volunteers will organize flyers to distribute in the neighborhood, design invitations to local government officials, other Habitat homeowners, and food for this very special day.

These committees will all meet on Tuesday, March 8th at 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 2916 N. McKee Rd. Call Jan Sorge, 769-1884 or 722-6101 to select the Committee you would like to serve on.

***** Do you have a Youth Group or Bible Class that would like to donate \$400 to put a dishwasher in our current house that is under construction? This can be a family project, a church project or an organization project – how rewarding to provide a dishwasher for this new homeowner! If you would like to volunteer at the house site -the address is 512 W. 11th, stop by to volunteer on Tuesdays, Thursdays or Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon.

Jan Sorge, Church Relations Chair, 769-1884 cell, 722-6101 home.

Email: merced-hostel@juno.com

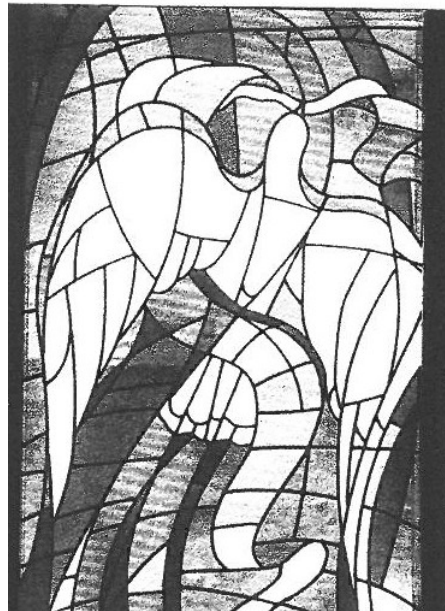
CROSS and LILLIES - This window reminds us that God purchased our salvation by the blood sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. God's love is expressed through the Cross. But death was defeated and Christ arose from the grave on Easter. The Lilly trumpets the resurrection.

HOLY COMMUNION - God has provided us with the Bible, from which we learn of His plan for our salvation. The grapes, bread and chalice remind us of the Holy Sacrament which Jesus instituted on Maundy Thursday. The dove and red ribbon was the promise Christ told His disciples to expect in John 16.

THE RESURRECTION - The butterfly has long been a Christian symbol for the resurrection. Even though the Christian must face the last enemy, death, God has promised that "we shall be changed" and possess a new glorified resurrected body (Philippians 3:20, 21 & 1 Corinthians 15).

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT - This window is the fulfillment of Christ's promise to the disciples and the church. In Acts 2 the spirit came to empower the disciples to be witnesses to the resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul talks about the variety of fits the Spirit of God brings to equip the "church" for ministry.

All of these windows were subsequently moved to the McKee facility when it was built. If anyone can remember where these windows were placed in the old church, please contact me. We would like to document their original location. Also the dedication bulletin lists a total of nine windows, although the news clipping says eight.





Eight stained glass windows were installed in the church at 23rd and P Streets, on September 8, 1984. Donated by various families as memorials, they were designed and made by Pat Halger of Hogan Glass Studio in Jan Jose, California. Bill Hiller, Property Chairman and Larry Sorge, Carpenter, completed the framework for the windows. The largest window was placed behind the Altar and was a congregational effort. Pieces of glass were \$5 each. Individuals chose what piece they wanted to purchase. Even Sunday School children were able to participate. Some collected cans, did chores at home and a few even sold fruit at their own roadside stand. The windows were dedicated at the 10 a.m. Worship service on September 9.

The altar window was called "The Promise" based on Christ's Word in the Book of Revelation. The central focus is the cross with the crown symbolizing the resurrected, reigning Christ. The crown of victory has seven jewels, the number seven representing perfection and completion. Most of the themes displayed in this window are from the Book of Revelation (Chapter 1,4,21, and 22). Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are displayed, the tree of life, the rainbow, the clouds, the river of life, the holy city, the new Jerusalem and three angels with trumpets at the return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16). There are other Biblical themes expressed and as your knowledge of God's promises increase so will the joy of your discovery in glass. Contributors could easily identify the mountain or angel etc. That they had purchased. (Altar window in both old and new church)

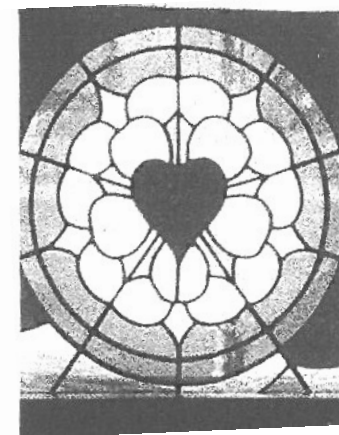


As you exited the sanctuary on 23rd and P street, your eyes were lifted up to a round window. Originally plain glass, the "Crown of Life" stained glass window was placed here. This window is now in the library.

LUTHER'S ROSE the black cross set in a heart of natural color reminds that faith in the Crucified One saves us. The white rose show that faith brings joy, comfort and peace. . . The sky colored fields shows that joy and faith is the beginning of the heavenly joy to come Martin Luther

THE SYMBOL FOR ST. PAUL - The words SPIRITUS GLADIUS means the Word of the Spirit. This is the symbol for Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles and is based on Ephesians 6:17.

BAPTISM - The shell is often the symbol for Baptism, three drops of water indicate the Trinity. The colors remind us of the golden promise of our eternal home and that we are God's people by virtue of our baptism.





St. Paul Lutheran School Annual Auction April 2, 2011

Tax ID# 77-0199108



We are accepting both corporate and individual sponsorships in the following categories:

Elite Sponsor-\$5000+

Elite sponsors will receive recognition in The Merced Sun-Star, a full color page ad in the auction program (8 1/2 x 11), a display with your company name, and your choice:

- ___ 8 guests will enjoy limo transportation to and from the auction, a reserved table with hors d'oeuvre platter, and 8 Big Raffle tickets
- ___ 16 Big Raffle tickets for your chance to win an all-inclusive trip to Jamaica with air fare

Diamond Sponsor-\$2500

Diamond sponsors will receive recognition in The Merced Sun-Star, a full page ad in the auction program, a display with your company name, and your choice:

- ___ a reserved table with hors d'oeuvre platter for 8 guests plus 8 Big Raffle tickets
- ___ 16 Big Raffle tickets for your chance to win an all-inclusive trip to Jamaica with air fare

Platinum Sponsor-\$1000

Platinum sponsors will receive a 1/2 page ad in the auction program, a display with your company name, and your choice:

- ___ a reserved table with hors d'oeuvre platter for 8 guests
- ___ 8 Big Raffle tickets for your chance to win an all-inclusive trip to Jamaica with air fare

Gold Sponsor-\$750

Gold sponsors will receive a 1/4 page ad in the auction program, a table display with your company name, and your choice:

- ___ a reserved table with hors d'oeuvre platter for 8 guests
- ___ 8 Big Raffle tickets for your chance to win an all-inclusive trip to Jamaica with air fare

Bronze Sponsor-\$500

Bronze sponsors will receive a business card ad in the auction program, a display with your company name, and your choice:

- ___ a reserved table with hors d'oeuvre platter for 8 guests
- ___ 6 Big Raffle tickets for your chance to win an all-inclusive trip to Jamaica with air fare

Event Sponsor-\$300

Event Sponsors will have their name listed in the auction program, a display with your company name and your choice:

- ___ a reserved table for 8 guests
- ___ 4 Big Raffle tickets for your chance to win an all-inclusive trip to Jamaica with air fare

Please check sponsorship level above and mail or fax to, St. Paul Lutheran School,
2916 N. McKee Rd., Merced, CA 95340, Phone (209)383-3302, Fax (209)383-3642

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Regretfully, we cannot attend this year's event. Please accept our tax-deductible gift of \$_____ in support of St. Paul Lutheran School.

Pennies for Teddies is a St. Paul Lutheran School 5th grade service project that raises money to buy teddy bears for kids in crisis. We give the teddy bears to The Valley Children's Hospital. Did you know that the nurses give a teddy bear to every child that has to have surgery? Valley Children's does over one hundred surgeries every month. They need a lot of teddy bears! In addition we give teddy bears to the Merced fire Department. Firemen keep teddy bears in the trucks for kids who need to be calmed down after a fire, severe accidents and emergencies.

It does not matter if you donate paper bills, nickels, dimes, and quarters. We started collecting pennies because everyone has pennies they want to get rid of, so Pennies for Teddies just stuck. Every month we will collect all the money, from March to May. You can help turn Pennies for Teddies into a valley wide effort. All proceeds go to buy teddy bears. We are grateful for all your donations to help the kids in crisis.

If you would like to collect Pennies for Teddies at your business, contact kmorgner@stpaulmerced.com.

Sincerely,

Maddi Hernandez and Annamarie Sofranek

St. Paul Lutheran School

2011 5th grade class



PRESCHOOL

March is here and so is the sun! God has been blessing us with beautiful weather and we are enjoying our outside time. Our almond tree has blossomed and lends itself to great science conversations with the kids. We have been talking about the bees and the job they are doing to help the almonds grow. We have also talked about how each blossom with potentially grow into an almond if we don't pick it. And soon we will get to watch the almonds start to grow.

The preschoolers once again had a fun time raising money for St. Jude Children's Research hospital by taking part in a Trike-A-Thon fundraiser. Not only did we raise money for a good cause but we also learned trike safety as well as had our trikes at school practicing what we have learned.

Our classes are busy with Farm themes, Dr. Seuss and learning about the Planets. Miss Kathy's Busy Bears are working on creating their own solar system by making paper mache planets. They also have a rocket ship in their room! Learning is so much fun, especially with our wonderful teachers.

St. Paul Preview Night is coming on Thursday, March 10 at 6:00p.m. This a wonderful opportunity for anyone looking for a wonderful Christian school for their child to come in and take a look around as well as meet with our teachers.

God Bless,
Miss Angelique

ST. PAUL LLUTHERAN SCHOOL ANNUAL AUCTION is coming April 2nd at 5:30 p.m. It will be held at the Senior Center. There are many ways you can get involved to help ensure the success of the auction. 1) buy tickets or a table for you and your friends to come have a fantastic and fun evening; 2) bring action items for the school to auction at the event; 3) sell raffle tickets for a chance to win a 5 night/6 day all expense paid vacation to Jamaica; 4) be an event sponsor or ask your employer to sponsor the event (sponsor forms are available in the church office). Any of these ways will significantly affect the outcome of this event. See Ben Elliott (202-282-2202) or Tamara Lopez



ASH WEDNESDAY - -Wednesday, March 9, 7 p.m.
 LENT Service & Soup Supper - Wed., March 16, 6pm/6:45pm
 LENT Service & Soup Supper - Wed., March 23 6pm/6:45pm
 LENT Service & Soup Supper - Wed., March 30 6pm/6:45pm
 LENT Service & Soup Supper - Wed., April 6 6pm/6:45pm
 LENT Service & Soup Supper - Wed., April 13 6pm/6:45pm
 PALM SUNDAY Services April 17, 8 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.



MAUNDY THURSDAY Service - Thurs. April 21, 6 PM
 GOOD FRIDAY Service - Friday, April 22, 7 PM
EASTER SUNDAY Services April 24:
 SUNRISE SERVICE: 6:30 A.M.
 EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE: 10:15 A.M.

Youth Sponsored Easter Breakfast Sunday, April 29
 7:00a.m. to 9:00 a.m.



COMMUNION SET-UP

There is a need for another couple to help with the set up for Communion. If you can help with this need, please contact Marj Hoffmann at 383-3268 or call the Church office at 383-3301.



BIBLE CLASSES AND SUNDAY SCHOOL



Sundays:
 Adult Bible Study
 9:15 a.m.
 Topic: Revelation

Sunday School
 Children's Sunday School
 (for children through 5th grade)
 9:15-10:00A.M.
 Room 3
 Child care available in room 2
 Jr. High & High School Bible Class:
 9:15 A.M. OMC
 Confirmation Class 5th-8th Grades
 6:30 - 8:00

Tuesday 1 p.m.
 Women's Bible Study
Wednesday 10:30 A.M.
 Senior Bible Study
 Pastor Lange
Thursday 7 to 8 P.M.
 Old Testament Study
 Cone's Home





ST. PAUL YOUTH GAME NIGHT
SATURDAY, MARCH 26 – 6:30 – 9:30 P.M.
ONLY JUNIOR HIGH, HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE
(NO ONE YOUNGER WILL BE ADMITTED)

- +VOLLEYBALL
- +PING PONG
- +BOARD GAMES
- +DEVOTIONS
- +GET ACQUAINTED GAMES

BRING YOUR FRIENDS –

EACH FAMILY IS ASKED TO BRING SOMETHING FOR SNACKS
NO COST

***FAMILY GAME
NIGHT***

For Elementary age children

Friday, March 25

6:00P.M.

Parish Hall



JR. & SR. HIGH SCHOOL

Sunday School - 9:15 a.m. In OMC

Confirmation - Sunday 6-7:30 p.m. - OMC



**YOUTH
GROUP**



St. Paul Lutheran Church and Friends will be hosting a camp-out **April 27-30th** at Montana De Oro state park. This beautiful location is just south of Moro Bay. We have reserved a camp spot right near the beach that can accommodate up to 50 people and 25 horses. The corrals and camping are wonderful! Some of the best beach riding you can ask for, as well as Ocean View Trails from the surrounding mountains (the Lange's are willing to share their horses). Let me know if you are interested. The cost for camping will be \$30 per night (per family) and only \$25 per night (per family) if you can stay all three nights (\$75 total). Meals not included in this price. Let me know if you are interested in reserving the camp site through Sunday. Right now we only have it through Saturday because that is when the Lange's need to leave. But if you wish to stay longer and can get a few others to do so, then let me know. This camp site is usually full for the year starting in mid January. Both trailer campers (up to 31 ft) and tents are welcome at this site. It is the Oak site at the campgrounds. You can go to reserveamerica.com for more information. Look under horse camping.

The site has been prepaid. As soon as you know you can make it write a check to Tami Lange and place in the memo the days you will be camping with us. We always have a great time at our camp-outs. Hope you can make this years!!!!





JOY OF HARVEST EGG ROLL SALES WERE A GREAT SUCCESS! Thanks to all of you who helped on Thursday and again on Friday! You were the **SECRET** to our **SUCCESS!** Thanks to each of you who ordered egg rolls – without you we could not have reached our goal of making at least \$2000.00 – we did it together!!!! In this financial crisis – this has been a wonderful blessing! Pastor Kou & Maykou

ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE JOY OF HARVEST MINISTRIES

Saturday, April 16th
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Bring items to the Parish Hall
On Friday, April 15th 6-9 p.m.

Volunteers needed to:
sort and set up Friday 6-9 p.m.
Saturday 8 am-10am, 10 am.-noon, noon– 2pm

Call Maykou at 628-1586 or Jan at 769-1884



THANK YOU to the cooks and servers for the Merced Rescue Mission dinner last Sunday. Lorry & Dolores Hutton, Don & Elaine Kock, Galen & Karen Chastain, Michael Werlin, Christine Randall, Larry & Jan Sorge cooked and served the approximately 60 people (women and men) that were there, fried chicken, real mashed potatoes & gravy, buttered corn, tossed salad and all the breads & cookies that had been thawed out from the freezer and needed to be used. They appreciated a home cooked meal very much. They all learned the Johnny Appleseed song before they ate. It was a great outreach mission experience!



Sabbatical Update

By Pastor Lange

In January 2010, I shared with the leadership and members of St. Paul my desire to request a sabbatical. As of last September, I have served seven years in ministry at St. Paul and fifteen years of pastoral ministry in total. These have been years marked with great joys as well as profound sadness.

A sabbatical provides an opportunity for reflection upon the ministry of the past and of the future. It is an opportunity to draw closer to God and to seek His direction and will. Pastors who are offered a sabbatical by the congregation they serve tend to serve with a renewed sense of mission and purpose, and are protected from burnout.

It is my continued hope, Lord willing, to pursue the rejuvenation offered during a sabbatical. My desire is to participate with my family in a cross-cultural mission training and service program during the sabbatical period. Much prayer and thought has gone into this request over the course of the past several years.

Due to circumstances, I would like to request that my sabbatical would begin in April of 2012, more than a year away. The mission training and service program in which I hope to participate would run from April through October. I have already begun to speak with our congregational leaders about the various options available to provide pastoral care to the members of St. Paul during this time.

Please join me and my family in continuing to pray for God's guidance in regard to this request for a sabbatical. Thank you for your continued support, expressed in so many ways. May God's will be done.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS NEEDED. IN ORDER TO CONTINUE FELLOWSHIP HOUR. . .

Sign-up sheets are on the table in the Narthex –

Please volunteer to enable guests and members to have an opportunity for fellowship. If there NO signups – NO refreshments will be served.

People are needed to help with after worship service, serving, set up, clean up and providing cookies, please contact Karen Kelleher for after the 8 a.m. worship and Irene Barbour Pearson at 383-3213 for after the 10:15 a.m. worship.

Coffee Hour


Revitalizing “Revitalization”

By Pastor Lange

Over a year ago, on January 13, 2010, Rev. Ted Hartman, mission counselor for the CNH District, visited with members of St. Paul in a town hall meeting to share information about a process called “Revitalization.”

This process for congregational renewal involves a partnership with a team from the CNH District. This team meets with congregation members and staff to develop a comprehensive picture of the strengths of a church and the areas that need to be strengthened. The team provides ongoing support, coaching and accountability if the congregation agrees to the team’s recommendations.

The decision to begin Revitalization at St. Paul was brought to the voters meeting for discussion and approval later that month. At the meeting, the voters decided not to pursue the Revitalization process at that time. Some members felt they didn’t have enough information, perhaps others thought the cost was too high.

A year has passed, and in the meantime our elders have contacted four congregations to find out what the Revitalization process has done for them. The congregations have expressed that the Revitalization process has helped them accomplish specific goals, and has helped their congregation become more outward focused.

The Revitalization process is a process that is being used by congregations and districts throughout our synod, to help churches become centers of mission outreach in their community. I believe this process would be helpful for our congregation to become all that God wants us to be, and to help us pursue our stated purpose: “Connecting People to Jesus.”

Please pray that God will continue to use St. Paul Lutheran Ministries to reach souls who need him. Pray that God would reawaken our fervor and rekindle our zeal to make His truth known in Merced and throughout the world. Please prayerfully consider whether the Revitalization process offered through our district might be just the resource God wishes to use to increase our awareness of the mission field surrounding us and to strengthen our hands and hearts for the harvest.



Men's

MEN'S BREAKFAST BIBLE CLASS

Has been cancelled
due to a lack of participation

Mission Insight Moment

As many of you may have heard and or seen on the news, the funeral of General Vang Pao was last month in Fresno where many thousands came from across the country and around the world to witness HMong history. General Vang was the premier HMong leader in modern time. We thank God for using him to lead the HMong people through one of the most difficult periods of HMong history, the Vietnam War.

As we witnessed the six days funeral activities through personal visits, HMong Satellite TV's continuous coverage, and listening to the comments and reactions of the visitors, a profound sadness overcame us. The funeral reaffirmed how thick the darkness is that Satan places over our HMong people. The syncretistic nature of the funeral dominated by animism, Buddhism, and Christianity clearly indicated the hopelessness of the state of HMong spirituality. The intense idolatry expressed through the veneration of the dead was beyond comprehension.

At a glance the funeral was impressive as a massive group of people squeezed their way in and out of the convention center. However as one took a close look at the funeral festivities, the impressiveness began to fade away. Speeches after speeches by different individuals and groups revealed a very self centered, self serving and full of pride taking full advantage of the public event to gain notoriety. Even the Christian groups that took part in the festivities comprised the Christian faith to another degree.

One positive thing that came out of this event is that we are very encouraged once again to work diligently to bring the Gospel to the HMong people. It is only the good news of Jesus that will give hope to the HMong people. Only the light of Jesus will penetrate this thick darkness that Satan places over the HMong people. Please join us in prayers asking the Lord of harvest to grant us the bold witness according to His will.

Live by Faith Not by Sight

Through the financial uncertainty of our ministry, we have learned to live by faith and not by sight more so than in recent years. As Christians, we should learn to live by faith always. However the reality of our sinful human nature, we want to live by sight.

Prior to December 17, 2010 we did not even know if financially our ministry can make it to January of 2011. As we celebrate each little good news to get us from one month to the next, an insightful statement came out of one of our children. One evening we were trying to explain our ministry's financial situation to our children. Through one great news from our treasurer that we have enough fund to cover one more month. One of the children asked, "What does that mean?" We attempted to explain that we are now living month by month financially. Immediately another child said, "That seems to work!"

Yes indeed, that seems to work! Thank you all for being God's instruments in providing for our daily needs. We are grateful for the District grant, the LWML grant, and many individual donations as well to keep us going month by month.

Ministry News

Through our vicars and lay leaders all our local ministries are moving ahead in this new year with plans for outreach and trainings. We have finished the translation work for A Child's Garden of Bible Stories and currently it is being printed in Bangkok by Lutheran Heritage Foundation. We are now working on a new translation of Luther's Small Catechism into both the Blue and White HMong dialects. Keep all these works in your prayers.

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“In Like a Lamb...Out Like a Lion”

Did you ever hear that saying about March, “In like a lion and out like a lamb?” That’s how it was growing up in Missouri. March began with fierce, winter weather and by the end of the month we were enjoying warmer days.

Spring arrives a little earlier in Merced. Flowers are already blooming and almond trees are blossoming away. Yet a recent cold snap reminded us just who’s in charge of the weather. The “lion” of March can bite us here in Merced, too.

As Christians, we know that God is in charge of earth’s climate. More importantly, we realize the Lord is in charge of our salvation. The upcoming weeks before Easter are a time for us to reflect on this truth.

This month marks the start of a new church season. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 9, the season of Lent is a time for us to focus on Jesus’ long road to Jerusalem and His sacrifice on Calvary’s cross.

One name in the Bible for Jesus is the “Lion of Judah.” Like a lion, Jesus is stronger than any opponent. At the same time, John the Baptist called Jesus the “Lamb of God.” Like a lamb, Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice to cover our sinfulness.

During this season, we thank God that Jesus didn’t come first as a Lion devouring His foes, but as a Lamb, humbly offering His life. Obedient to His Father, Jesus went to be slaughtered, without complaint. He did it for us. He died for all mankind. **He gave His life for you.**

Jesus came in as a Lamb, but He will return like a Lion. Jesus will judge the earth. He will condemn all who continue unrepentant in their sins, all who reject His salvation. Jesus will cast Satan and all his evil followers into hell, described also as the lake of fire, where “their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” (Rv. 20:11-14, 21:8; Mk. 9:48, Mt. 25:46).

With this in mind, I encourage and exhort you to make the most of these days. We must turn from our sin, and turn to our Savior. Make Christ central to your life. Recommit yourself to follow Him. Do not stop coming to worship, instead renew your zeal.

To help us focus our attention on Christ and the miracle of His saving actions for us, the following special services are offered on Wednesday evenings beginning at 6:45 pm in the sanctuary.

Ash Wednesday	March 9	The Miraculous Darkness
	March 16	The Miraculous Tearing of the Temple Curtain
	March 23	The Miraculous Earthquake
	March 30	The Miracle of the Splitting Rocks
	April 6	The Miraculous Raising of the Saints
	April 13	The Miraculous Faith of the Roman Soldiers
Maundy Thursday	April 21	The Miracle in Holy Communion (Seder)
Good Friday	April 22	The Miracle of Good Friday
Easter Sunday	April 24	The Miracle of Easter

I hope you will take advantage of these services. They offer you a time to renew your focus

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