THE Epistle from St. Paul

DECEMBER 2026

Advent Services Begin Dec. 2

Midweek Advent services begin Wednesday, December 2. You can choose the Noon or 7:00pm service. The Noon service will include communion and is perfect for those of you who do not like to drive after dark.

Advent season invites us to deeply reflect on the advent, or arrival of God in Jesus of Nazareth, as well as his promised return.



Encouraging the Next Generation of Leaders

As the Board of Elders, we recognize the importance of encouraging and equipping St. Paul's young people to use their God-given gifts in service to Christ and their neighbors.

This spring, through the generous support of Iowa District West, we have an opportunity to send a small group of high school students in grades 9–11 to LCMS YouthLead, March 13–16, 2027, in St. Louis. Five student spaces have been reserved specifically for St. Paul.

For more than 40 years, YouthLead has helped young Lutherans develop leadership skills, encourage their peers, and discover opportunities to serve within their congregations and communities. This year's training will focus on how our identity in Christ shapes our relationships with others.

Our interest in YouthLead extends well beyond the four days of training. Upon their return, we look forward to encouraging our young people here at St. Paul by connecting them with adults throughout our congregation who can mentor them, serve alongside them, and help them discover opportunities to use their gifts.

Given the unique nature of this training opportunity and the number of spaces available

Continued on page seven

October Treasurer's Report

October was a month of important investment in our church facilities. Total income for the month was $57,458, while expenses were $71,812, resulting in a net loss of $14,066 after investment gains. While a monthly deficit is never ideal, nearly all of the difference was attributable to planned property improvement projects, including parking lot repairs, striping, door improvements, and security system upgrades.

Despite these one-time expenses, the congregation remains in a very healthy financial position. Through October 31, year-to-date revenue totals $634,475, expenditures total $568,117, and net income stands at $72,116. Revenue continues to exceed budget expectations, while overall expenses remain well below budget across most ministry areas.

The church's financial foundation remains strong, with total assets of more than $1.07 million and nearly $265,000 held in designated reserve funds supporting future ministry, building maintenance, youth ministries, outreach efforts, and other mission-focused purposes.

We thank God for His continued provision and for the faithful generosity of our congregation. Your gifts support the ministries of St. Paul and help ensure the church remains well-positioned to serve our community and share the Gospel for years to come.

In Faith and Service,
Jon Clark
Treasurer

Nursing Home Ministry

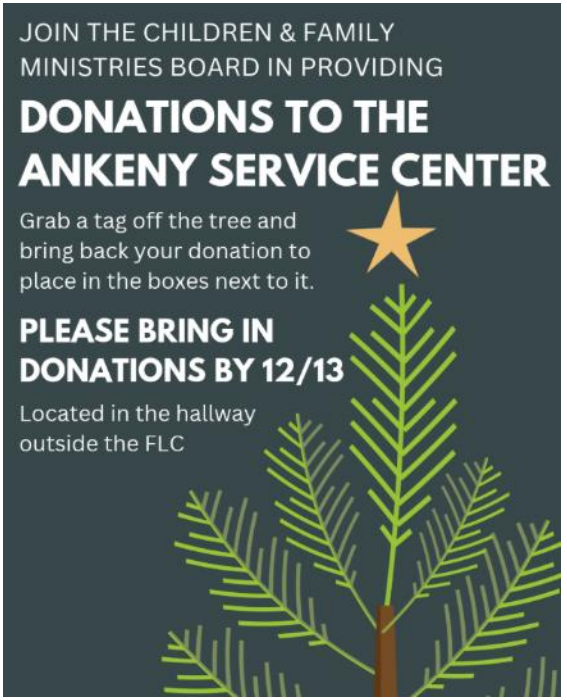
St. Paul provides services to local nursing homes once a month. Members are always welcome to attend the services and help residents with singing and turning pages in the book.

- Rock Creek at 2:00pm on December 15
- Sunny View at 2:30pm on December 20
- Mill Pond at 2:00pm on December 27

Lady Diners Meet December 1

Lady diners will meet at 11:30am on Tuesday, December 1 at Main Street Cafe.

Lady Diners is for all single ladies of St. Paul! If you have any questions contact Betty Berlau or Donna Stoelk.



December Bible Studies at St. Paul

BASIC (Brothers and Sisters in Christ) Bible Study
Thursday, December 10 at 10:00am. Men and women, join us for the BASIC Bible study the second, fourth and fifth Thursdays of each month for an in-depth study of Holy Scripture. Pastor Kottlowski leads us in a study of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

Homebuilders
Sunday, December 6, 4:00-5:30pm. This group is for those interested in following Jesus as a household.



Midweek Bible Studies
Wednesdays 6:00pm-7:00pm. Adults meet in the Sanctuary with Pastor Newton. Youth meet in their respective youth rooms. No Midweek or study on December 23 or 30.

Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study
Sundays at 9:30am. Grab your coffee (in a reusable cup of course) and head into the FLC for *Showing Up Where Jesus Shows Up.* When we were children, Mom and Dad nearby helped us know we're safe. A friend who stuck close brought some familiarity to us even in new experiences. In the present chaos, full of sharp edges and a cloudy future, so much slides farther away as life spins ever faster. Can the Church hold the center as the whirling gets wider and wider? Is there any way to slow it down? The Scriptures point us to Christ, our Friend who has drawn near in history and promises to draw near to us too. No study on December 13 or 27.

Sunday Morning Youth Bible Studies
Sundays 9:30-10:30am. Junior youth are invited to join Eddie Bell and Rochelle Sandvick, while senior youth gather with Laura Nelson, for an engaging journey through God's Word. Each Sunday we'll dig into the lectionary readings—the same readings heard in the Divine Service—and see how they point us to Jesus, what He has done for us, and who we are in Him. Through conversation, questions, and time together in Scripture, we'll hear again and again the Good News of Christ and rejoice in God's abundant grace. No study on December 13 or 27.

Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Study
Thursdays, December 3 and 17 at 10:00am. Ladies, join us for morning Bible study on the first and third Thursdays. This coming year we'll study the work by Pastor Christopher M. Kennedy entitled *Jesus Said WHAT?* Throughout the Gospels, our Lord Jesus said a number of hard things which often offend today's cultural sensitivities. Join us in exploring the truth and the love of Jesus in these hard but necessary words.

Thursday Night Men's Fellowship & Bible Study
Thursdays at 7:00pm. All men are invited! No study on December 24 or 31.

December Youth Calendar

Dec 2, Midweek 5-7:30pm (Supper, Advent Service Practice/Study, and Service)
Dec 6, JR & SR Youth Bible Study/Youth Christmas Service Practice 9:30-10:30
Dec 6, Combined JR and SR Youth + Parents Sunday Funday 12-2pm
Dec 9, Midweek 5-7:30pm (Supper, Advent Service Practice/Study, and Service)
Dec 12, Advent Service Practice 9-12:15
Dec 13, Youth and Children's Advent Services 8 & 10:45
Dec 13, Coffee, Donuts, AND Hot Cocoa Bar Hospitality between services
Dec 13, Mercy Project: Soup Meal Kits between services
Dec 16, Midweek 5-7:30pm (Supper, Study and Service)
Dec 20, Sunday School & Youth Bible Study Christmas Parties during Christian Ed. Hour
Dec 20, Rite of Enrollment • 8th & 9th Grade Confirmation Students
Dec 20, Sunny View Service & Sunday Sips, 2:10-3:30ish must rsvp
Dec 23, Service of Lament 7pm (NO Supper, NO Study, and YES Service)
Dec 27, Service 9:30am only (no Sunday school or Bible studies)
Dec 30, Midweek 7:30pm (NO Supper, NO Study, and YES Service)

JR + SR Youth + Parents = Sunday Funday Showdown

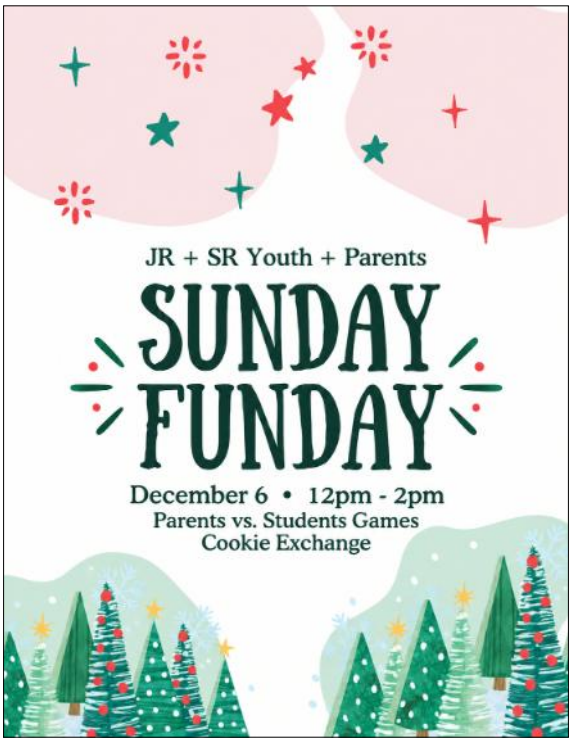
Alright, youth — it's time to settle this once and for all. On Sunday, December 6 from Noon–2pm, junior and senior youth are teaming up for a Christmas Sunday Funday with a twist… your parents are joining the competition!

Parents versus students holiday games. Bragging rights are on the line!

Cookie exchange. Bring your best batch and see whose cookies reign supreme.

Food, fun, and fierce (but friendly) competition.

Think you've got what it takes to outsmart, outplay, and out-cookie your parents? Game on!





Mark your calendars! The Board of Christian Education is excited to invite you to the Youth and Children's Advent Service on Sunday, December 13 at both services. Enjoy a hot cocoa bar, and delicious donuts between services!

We ask your youth and children to attend both services in order to share a joyful celebration of the birth of our Savior. We have lots of fun activities and yummy hospitality planned for them – including a coffee and hot cocoa bar, and donuts between services!

Here are the remaining practice dates/times:

Wednesday December 2, 6-7:00pm

Sunday December 6, 9:15am-10:15am

Wednesday December 9, 6-7:00pm

Saturday Dec. 12 (light lunch provided)
5th grade and younger: 10am-12:15pm
6th grade and older: 9am-12:15pm

This is a wonderful opportunity for our youth and children to serve their congregation, proclaim God's Word, and celebrate the gift of Christmas together.

With Joyful Anticipation,
The Board of Christian Education, Pastor Newton, Jon Jero, and Laura Nelson

A Sweet Thank You!

What a yummy November it was at St. Paul. Throughout November, our youth and their families have had the opportunity to host coffee and donut Sundays, sharing smiles, conversations, and a little something sweet with our church family between services.

To our congregation: thank you for stopping by, visiting with our young people, enjoying a donut (or two!), and generously supporting our free-will fundraiser. Your gifts will help support youth gatherings and conferences, where our young people will gather around God's Word, receive His gifts, and grow alongside fellow Christians.

To our youth and parents: thank you for showing up together. From pouring coffee and passing out donuts to greeting familiar faces and getting to know new ones, you've helped make Sunday mornings a wonderful opportunity for connection across generations.

And a special thank you to our Youth Board members for coordinating the Sundays, preparing everything, and taking care of setup and cleanup!

The donuts may disappear quickly, but the conversations, connections, and friendships are what make these Sundays so sweet! Thank you, St. Paul, for a wonderful November!



LWML Collecting Winter Wear

The ladies of LWML will gather on Tuesday, December 8 at 5:00pm in the Fellowship Hall for our Christmas party. All women of St. Paul are welcome! We will be ordering from Smoky D's. Cost per person is $15. There will be a sign up sheet on the LWML table in the Narthex for those wanting a meal. In addition we will have a gift exchange if you want to participate with a $15-$20 limit.

Our December mission project is gathering winter wear for students and families of Capitol View Elementary in Des Moines. Please drop off winter coats, hats, gloves and socks for kids and adults, plus diapers (sizes 3,4,5) and wipes. Items for older kids are especially needed. In December they have a festival for the families where they can "shop" for gifts, supplies and clothing. You can drop off donations by the LWML table near the church office until December 7 (not the boxes in the FLC hallways). If you need additional time to get your items to church contact Kathy.



Many thanks to all who baked and volunteered to make our craft and vendor show a success. Money raised will help to support future mission projects.

Christmas blessings to all at St. Paul,
Sue Stoll, Sarah Kroemer, Betty Berlau, and Vickie Sickels
LWML Board

Join the St. Paul Babysitter List

With Christmas, New Year's Eve, and holiday gatherings just around the corner, families may be looking for an extra set of helping hands.

The babysitter list includes tweens and teens who enjoy spending time with children and have babysitting experience. This list is shared with families in our congregation who are looking for someone to contact when they need a sitter. Would you like your name added to the list? Contact Laura Nelson.

Prayer List Refresh

Just like the start of every new year, on January 1 the bulletin prayer list will have a fresh beginning. All names will be cleared from the list and we start from scratch. On Sunday, January 3 you can submit names for the prayer list on your attendance card. You can also email or call the church office. Please include the person's name, relation to you and the reason for the prayer.

Also beginning on January 3 prayers will remain on the list for two weeks. After that you will need to submit the prayer request weekly. We're going to try that out and see how it goes. Adjustments may be made.

Continued from front page

to us, we will be inviting interested students to complete a brief application. The Board of Elders will be sharing more information and the application process in the coming weeks.

We are grateful for this opportunity to partner with IDW and YouthLead and look forward to seeing how it may benefit not only the participating students but also the life of our congregation.

St. Paul Lutheran Church Board of Elders



Higher Things 2027

SPLC youth are heading back to Higher Things in Summer 2027! June 21–25, 2027, St. Paul high school youth and chaperones are heading to Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon for the Higher Things Conference, *TORAH*! Higher Things brings Lutheran youth together from across the country for a week centered on Christ and His gifts, daily worship, rich biblical teaching, fellowship, and plenty of fun. This year's theme, *TORAH*, explores Jesus' words in Matthew 5:17. Plans are underway, and there is much more to come. Watch upcoming bulletins for updates and ways to be part of the excitement.

November Elders Meeting Minutes

Present at the November 10 meeting were Eric Bradley, Steve Bradley, Jeff Bull, Kaleb Grev, Gary Hauge, Jon Jero, Ken Kise, Hans Schaeffer, and Pastor Newton.

The meeting opened with prayer and devotion led by Pastor Newton: 1 Peter 3, Psalm 4. Laura Nelson joined us for the beginning of the meeting and provided an update on her current roles as Director of Youth Ministry. A discussion followed on how we can support her in this role. In addition to normal items, other items of discussion included: supporting an educational opportunity through the IDW called Youth Lead; Elder support at 8am service as well as the upcoming Advent and Christmas services; an opportunity for attending an elder workshop in Cherokee on January 9 through IDW.

Official acts
Baptism
(accidentally omitted from October report)
Gordon Ralph von Qualen, September 27

Funeral
Ken Wehmas, October 19

Average October Attendance
Average Sunday Attendance:
2026 - 282 2025 – 278
Average Year-to-date Sunday Attendance:
2026 - 295 2025 – 273
Average Sunday School (preK-12) – 28
Average Midweek Service – 73
Average Midweek (preK-12) – 56
Average Midweek Adult Bible Study – 36

October Membership
Baptized – 697 Confirmed – 595
Households – 294

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Bradley

October Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting October 20, 2026, 6:30pm. In attendance were: Stacia Bradley, Eric Bradley (for Steve Bradley), Jon Clark, Tim Davies, Julie Krehbiel, Tim Krehbiel, Dewayne McGohan, Laura Nelson, Josh Remington, Mike Sickels, Duane Suhr, Jennifer Thompson, and Chris Wood. Absent: Pastor Joel Newton. Devotion led by Laura Nelson on Matthew 12:15-21 with excerpts from *To Live with Christ*.

September 15 meeting minutes
Motion to approve: Tim Krehbiel, seconded: Mike Sickels. Motion approved

Staff reports - from Laura Nelson
Motion to approve: Dewayne McGohan, seconded: Jon Clark. Motion approved.

Financial Report – Jon Clark
Motion to approve: Tim Krehbiel, seconded: Mike Sickels. Motion approved.

Board Reports (provided by the following members)
Youth – Jennifer Thompson
Financial Secretary - Dewayne McGohan
Stewardship – Chris Wood
Elders – Steve Bradley / Eric Bradley
Education – Julie Krehbiel
Property – Mike Sickels
Children & Family – Stacia Bradley
Evangelism – Josh Remington

Dewayne submitted the following members to the finance committee for approval: Kaaren Eide, Jeff Strothcamp, and Wanda Stave. Seconded: Tim Davies. Motion approved
Motion to approve board reports: Tim Davies, seconded: Julie Krehbiel. Motion approved

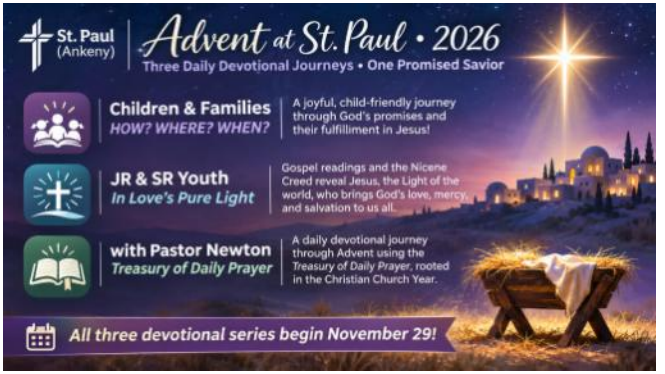
Old Business
Construction Committee: Preliminary construction drawings have been sent to subcontractors for review.
Officer Handbook: Council president set a tentative deadline of March 2027 to have the handbook updated.
2027 Budget: Most board budgets have been submitted with any remaining to be sent to Tim Krehbiel. A review meeting will be held next week with the budget committee.

New Business
Signer: Tim Krehbiel made an amended motion to make Kathy Olson a signatory on checks with exception of signing checks for herself or any family relation. Mike Sickels seconded. Motion approved.

Beneficiary funds: with a recent large unidentified offering, council president asked how funds should be treated. There was no designation from the donor, so it was decided to keep the cash in the general fund.

Motion to adjourn: Mike Sickels, seconded: Stacia Bradley, Approval: unanimously approved
Lord's Prayer recited to end the meeting. Next meeting is Monday, November 17, 2026, 6:30pm.

Advent at St. Paul • 2026



Three Daily Devotional Journeys • One Promised Savior

Beginning Sunday, November 29, you're invited to journey through the season of Advent with daily video devotions from St. Paul! Whether you're a child, a teen, a parent, or simply someone looking to spend time in God's Word each day, we have something for you. Amid the busyness of the season, what a joy it is to receive again and again the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ!

Advent with Our Children & Families
HOW? WHERE? WHEN?

Adverbs are simply amazing words! Throughout Advent, children and their families will discover HOW God planned to save all people, WHERE to look expectantly for the promised Savior, and WHEN to be ready for His coming. Join us for a joyful, child-friendly journey through God's promises and their fulfillment in Jesus!

© Creative Communications for the Parish, 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. 800-325-9414. creativecommunications.com. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Advent with Our Junior and Senior Youth
In Love's Pure Light

Through Gospel readings and selections from the Nicene Creed, this year's Advent devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries point us to Jesus, the Light of the world. In Christ, we see the Father's love in the flesh—a Savior who comes into our darkness, gives Himself for sinners, and brings us the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Join us daily as we receive the comfort and encouragement of God's Word and share that hope with others.

Advent with Pastor Newton
Treasury of Daily Prayer

Join Pastor Newton for a daily devotional journey through Advent using the *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. Rooted in the rhythm of the Christian Church Year, these devotions offer opportunities for individuals, families, and small groups to receive God's Word, pray, and rejoice in the coming of our Savior.

All three devotional series begin November 29. Click on the QR code to directly to the devotions. Subscribe to the St. Paul YouTube channel and join us throughout Advent as we rejoice in Christ, who has come, who comes to us now, and who will come again!

December 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 11:30am Lady Diners	**2** 10:00am Moms Group Noon Advent Service 5:00-6:00pm Meal 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 7:00pm Advent Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	**3** 9:30am Chapel 10:00am Ladies Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	**4**	**5**
6 8:00am Worship Service 9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Bible Studies 10:45am Worship Service Noon Youth Sunday Funday 4:00-5:30pm Homebuilders	**7** 9:00am Staff Meeting	**8** 5:00pm LWML Christmas Party 6:30pm Elders Meeting	**9** 10:00am Moms Group Noon Advent Service 5:00-6:00pm Meal 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 7:00pm Advent Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	**10** 9:30am Chapel 10:00am BASIC Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	**11**	**12** 9:00am-12:15pm Children & Youth Service Practice
13 8:00am Children & Youth Advent Service 9:15am Fellowship & Mission Project 10:45am Children & Youth Advent Service	**14** 9:00am Staff Meeting	**15** 2:00pm Rock Creek Service 6:30pm Council Meeting	**16** 10:00am Moms Group Noon Advent Service 5:00-6:00pm Meal 5:15pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:00-7:00pm Midweek 7:00pm Advent Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	**17** 9:30am Chapel 10:00am Ladies Bible Study 7:00pm Men's Fellowship & Bible Study	**18**	**19**
20 8:00am Worship Service 9:15am Sunday School 9:30am Bible Studies 10:45am Worship Service Noon Sacristan Meeting 2:30pm Sunny View Service	**21** 9:00am Staff Meeting	**22**	**23** Noon Advent Service 7:00pm Service of Lament	**24** *Offices Closed* CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 5:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm	**25** *Offices Closed* 9:30am Christmas Day Service MERRY CHRISTMAS	**26**
27 ***9:30am Worship Service*** 2:00pm Mill Pond Service	**28**	**29**	**30** 7:00pm Service	**31** *Offices Closed*	1 *Offices Closed*	***Only one service on December 27**

Larger printed calendars are available under the church mailboxes.

DECEMBER 2026

ELDER OF THE WEEK
06: Steve Bradley
13: Jon Jero
20: Kaleb Grev
27: Eric Bradley

ALTAR COMMITTEE
06: Karen Dozler, Sue Crawford
13: Karen Kisker, Jane & David Thompson
20: Jane & David Thompson
27: Alise Sunderman, Sue Crawford

OFFERING COUNTERS
December 6
Rod Silvey, Doyle Witt

December 13 & 20
Jon Gerths, David Reddel

December 27 & January 3
Jennifer Dorfler, Marilyn Sharar

USHERS
December 6
8:00am — Tim Davies, Eric Forde
10:45am — Rod Silvey, Matt Hayden

December 13 & 20
8:00am — Jon Gerths, Don Halbur
10:45am — Jason, Jaydon, Jordan, & Jalen Buls

December 27
9:30am — Gary Hauge, Mike Hayden

December 24 - Christmas Eve Services
5:00pm — Les Stave, Jeff Fahrmann, Colby Fahrmann
7:00pm — Ray Marvin, Randy Sunderman
9:00pm — Dewayne McGohan, Mike KoesterCraig

December 25 - Christmas Day Service
9:30am —Tim Krehbiel, Steve Bradley

December Birthdays

01: Abby Pinkerton
Beth Snyder
Del Wesack
02: Jon Jero
Anthony Rosing
03: Eddie Bell
04: Don Halbur
05: Dwain Swanson
06: Char Shaw
07: Rylan Rohlfsen
12: Justin Hopp
13: Ben Piepho
14: Barb Lauthen
Mike Sickels
15: Kim Rasler
Brian Thompson
16: Mollie Fahrmann
17: Joanne Currey
Josiah Kisker
18: Nadine Sturtz
19: Karen Gerths
Gary Vesely
20: Becky Haase
21: Jason Buls
Amanda Hayden
Don Nemitz
22: Dakota Allen
Jenni Madsen
Linda Nordstrom
26: Brian Johnson
Ruth KoesterCraig
29: Becky Behrens
30: Dan Pottratz
31: Kevin Wesack

November Wedding Anniversaries

05: Karen & Terry Whipple
10: Lindsey & Tyler Irlmeier
13: Janet & Maceo Anderson
15: Ann & Darwin Rohlfsen
16: Marcia & Curt Hora
20: Carol & Terry Moehnke
23: Barb & Mark Lauthen
Mary & Duane Suhr
28: Stacia & Eric Bradley
31: Jennifer & David Reddel