 *Spirit of St. Paul*

St. Paul Lutheran Church, East Lansing, MI

***February 2023***

 Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**Guiding Principles**

We are a people who:

* Listen for God's Call
* Believe and Trust in God's Call
* Answer God's Call
* Support each other in times of joy and sorrow
* Live out our faith in prayer and service
* Share food with the hungry
* Believe the gospel is for all, not just Christians.

 During February we move through Epiphany, which marks the end of the Christmas season one of the three oldest festival days (along with Christmas and Easter) where Jesus is revealed to the Gentiles. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism we are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

The time after Epiphany ends at the Transfiguration of Christ. Matthew 7:1-8 (NRSV) tells us:

 “1Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. 2And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. 3Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 5While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” 6When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. 7But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” 8And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.”

On a high mountain Jesus is revealed as God’s beloved Son with the same words at Jesus baptism. We use this vision of glory to sustain us as Jesus faces his impending death when he goes up to Jerusalem.

 Then we begin Lent, which starts on Ash Wednesday February 22nd. On Ash Wednesday we begin a forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. When our foreheads are marked with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. This dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.”

Following our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world. We will have a ZOOM gathering each Wednesday March 1 to the 29th. There are devotional booklets distributed to assist in having daily devotions throughout Lent.

 St. Paul is a place where the Holy Spirit continues to gather us together where we hear God’s Word, preaching and join in song. We come together to love one another and worship together, united as one as the body of Christ. During this time the body and blood of Jesus, which we receive weekly, strengthens us and keeps us in God’s grace. The Spirt nurtures us and helps us to work together using our unique gifts as we. Following our baptismal call, during this time we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

Ash Wednesday worship will be on February 22nd at 6:00PM. If you cannot make it and would like imposition of ashes, I will come to your home to do this. Simply send me an e-mail or give me a call. Sick and shut ins and others can continue to join us through the weekly recorded service and the ZOOM service on Sunday.

Continued thanks to the generosity and to those who volunteer to make things work.

Blessings,

Pr. Carl

**From the Green Team:**

Thanks to Bev D's grant request, St Paul has been approved and will receive a $750 Care for Creation Grant to begin to fund our energy upgrades. The check should be arriving soon.

The justification for the grant was based upon the suggestions by Consumers Power and their estimated costs.

Update, we have received the check for $750, Way To Go Bev D!

On Palm Sunday April 2, 2023, there will be a fish supper directly following the service to provide fellowship, welcome spring and support the St. Paul Food Pantry. All contributions from your free will offering will go to support those in our community who need nutritious food and personal care products. Your support is especially important as food availability from the Greater Lansing Food Bank has diminished and items that aren’t provided like soap, paper goods, etc. are increasing in price, yet remain vital to everyday life. The Lord has provided the fish, come and enjoy and support the food pantry.

 **Social Outreach & Ministry**

**Food Pantry Report for February 2023 Newsletter**

A total of 121 clients were served in December 2022, which meant 38 families were helped. The total clients served in 2022 was 1402. which means 472 families have been helped. We could not have accomplished this without the support of our congregation and the dedicated volunteers who work at the Food Pantry.

Between November 26, 2022, and December 23, 2022, 468.5 pounds of food was donated for the Food Pantry from members of the congregation, as well as outside donors from the community. This brings the total donated so far this year to 5,772.15 pounds. We are very grateful for these donations as they provide additional food that we are not always able to obtain from the GLFB or the grocery shelves.

The Food Pantry is still seeking volunteers who might be able to assist with the shopping for supplies at Meijer’s. There are still many staples that we have been unable to obtain from the Greater Lansing Food Bank in the past several months. We are able to obtain these supplies by using our Meijer’s Simply Giving cards and have been shopping there weekly. We also receive generous food donations from several families in our congregation each month. The Meijer’s cards can be used for food items only. If anyone would be interested in helping with the shopping on occasion, please contact Bev Johnson to obtain a list of needed items and a Simply Giving Gift card to use.

The Food Pantry is also still seeking volunteers who are able to work on Wednesday evenings and Thursday afternoon pantry distribution days. If you are available and would like to help, please contact Bev Johnson or Tracy Collins.

During February the Food Pantry is continuing to request donations of the following items, which are currently in short supply or unavailable from the Greater Lansing Food Bank. There will be a wagon in the Narthex each Sunday for collecting donations and they can be brought in at any time during the month.

TOMATO PASTE TOMATO SAUCE DICED TOMATOES

RICE CEREAL TUNA FISH PEANUT BUTTERJELLY

 **Upcoming Events**

**Family Sunday *FUNDAY!***

Sunday Fundays will be back and are starting in ***October!*** They will be the 3rd Sunday of the month and all ages are welcome. Questions? Contact Tracy C.

Here is a list of activities:

* ***February 26th*** – Ice Skating at Munn Ice Arena 3:30-5:30
* ***March 12th*** – Roller Skating at Edru Open Skate is from 1-4

($14 with skate rental)

* ***April 16th*** – Escape Room

 ($25 per person)

* ***May - TBD*** - Lugnuts Game

**February Birthday Celebrations**

 Betty W. 2nd

 Liza K. 3rd

 Lynne F. 18th

 Steve K. 13th

 Elene K. 19th

Barb P. 22nd

**Wedding Anniversary Celebrations**

 Stan & Judy S. 22nd

 Kelly & Grant B. 223rd

\*if you were accidentally omitted, please contact the church via voicemail or email.

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**Our Purpose: Feeding God’s people both inside and outside while listening to what the people need.**