



Happy New Year Fellow Ministers in Christ,

The year 2023 is now complete. Nothing can change what happened last year so we move forward after a few reflections on the year. There were high notes during this 2023 challenging year a time to returning to the way many things were pre-Covid while still being caution. The budget for 2024 was approved as the people of St. Paul continue with their generosity as we continue to have the resources for the new year to carry out our main mission in the community to feed the community where a dedicated faithful cadre of volunteers while many others offer donations. On a sad note we lost Bev Dirkin, who had a brilliant mind and a special affinity for the less fortunate, after a long home bound illness. She joined worship weekly and other activities via zoom. Also, I presided at a funeral for Tim Trim in Freeland this year as we keep wife Kristie and family in our prayers.

We are pleased that Kassy L. became our new Office Manager. She has been excellent in her position and is well liked by the Food Pantry clients, myself and volunteers. We are truly blessed to have her and her expertise.

Other high notes were the budget for 2023 was approved as the people of St. Paul continues with their generosity so we can continue to have the resources for the new year to carry out our mission in the community while our healthy balance sheet aids us in our stainability. Sadly, we saw a few congregations in the Lansing area close due to not having the finances to continue so the financial decisions and the faith community member's generosity in the past and currently have served the congregation well. The fact the church building and Mission House at St. Paul are mortgage free, a remarkable feat in today's environment, and speak well for the future. Chuck N. who has been excellent as Council President. Per St. Paul he will leave the Council. Kathy G. has been elected our new Council President. We also offer a hearty thanks to Vicki K. term has also expired. Jon K. has been elected to the Council and has agreed to serve as Vice President. Both Kathy and Jon continue to be a gift to St. Paul.

Joyfully Elene V. entered the Doctorate program at MSU. We also had three youth confirmed - Charlotte C., Daphne M. and Sara W, and hope they will take what they have learned with them their whole lives. We thank Bev J. and Kristin H. for leading the youth in Sunday School and an amazing Christmas play that means so much to the congregation. We also had the Fife wedding at the end of December.

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.

The 12 days of Christmas are in our rearview mirror. On January 7th, we celebrate the baptism of Jesus. Mark 1:4-11 (NRSV) tells us:

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

At Jesus' baptism, we hear from John the Baptist and how we are baptized with not only water but with the Spirit, Our Christian baptism, are adopted as children by the name of the triune God. When we die in Christ we live in Christ. Mark includes

As we go about the new year we should have no fear since God gives us hope. That is why the Holy Spirit calls us to worship whenever possible where we can listen to God through scripture, preaching, and song and he Holy Spirit then sends us out to the words to love and serve others The Christ candle is lit as a light to the world in this unprecedented time of darkness as we are reminded of our baptism and we take Jesus into our bodies through the bread and wine to strengthen us in this quest and including loving one another as Jesus loved us.

Mary and I thank you for your faithful work to bring light to the world and for you generosity. We look forward to working with you this next year.

Blessings to all on your New Year!

Pr. Carl

Social Outreach & Ministry



St. Paul Pantry

Food Pantry Report for January 2024 Newsletter

A total of 139 clients were served in November, 2023, which meant 45 families were helped. So far since January 1, 2023, we have served 1606 clients which means 494 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 January 26, 2023, and November 25, 6887.6 pounds of food was donated for the Food Pantry from members of the congregation, as well as outside donors from the community. During the month of November, we received 588.11 pounds of food. We are very grateful for these donations.

The Food Pantry is currently seeking volunteers who could work at pantry distribution on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings of the month or the 2nd and 4th Thursday afternoons. We are also looking for volunteers who might be able to assist on the 3rd Monday morning of each month to unload the Food Bank Delivery. We generally meet around 8:30-8:45a.m. and are finished by 10:00 a.m., depending on the number of volunteers that we have. Anyone who is interested in helping can contact Bev Johnson or Tracy Collins.



During January, 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:

TOMATO PASTE	TOMATO SAUCE	SALT	MANDARIN ORANGES
CAKE AND BROWNIE MIXES	CRACKERS	CATSUP	MUSTARD
LAUNDRY DETERGENT	HAND SOAP	DISH SOAP	BODY LOTION

Upcoming Events

2024 Synod Assembly - May 11

Jesus names us “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world,” and compares the kingdom of heaven or reign of God to “leaven” (Matthew 5:13–16; 13:33).

At the 2024 Synod Assembly, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod will celebrate ways our congregations are “salt of the earth,” “light of the world,” and “leaven” of the kingdom in ways large and small as we prayerfully participate in Jesus’s own work of reconciling the world to God’s very self.

The 2024 Synod Assembly will be held virtually via Zoom on May 11, 2024.

ELCA Youth Gathering 2024 - July 16 - July 20

The ELCA is jazzed to announce that we’re heading to New Orleans for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering, MYLE and the tAble! The Big Easy is filled with rich history, friendly locals, amazing food and great music, and we just can’t wait to go back.

Mark your calendars for July 16-20, 2024, to join us for this transformational faith formation event. MYLE and the tAble will take place immediately before on July 13-16.

Learn more at <https://www.elca.org/youthgathering>

Dates to Remember:

- **Wednesday, January 3** - Food Pantry Distribution @ 5:30pm
- **Sunday, January 7** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am
- **Monday, January 8** - Worship Committee meeting @ 6:30pm
- **Wednesday, January 10** - Women's Bible Study @ 11am
- **Thursday, January 11** - Food Pantry Distribution @ 1pm
- **Sunday, January 14** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am
- **Wednesday, January 17** - Food Pantry Distribution @ 5:30pm
- **Thursday, January 18** - Council meeting @ 7pm
- **Sunday, January 21** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am
- **Thursday, January 25** - Food Pantry Distribution @ 1pm
- **Sunday, January 28** - Adult Bible Study @ 9am, Worship @ 10am

January Birthday Celebrations

1/20 - Kelly A.

1/23 - Daniel O.



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

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Food Pantry 5:30-7	4	5	6
7 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship	8 Worship Committee meeting 6:30pm	9	10 Women's Bible Study 11am	11 Food Pantry 1-4	12	13
14 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship	15	16	17 Food Pantry 5:30-7	18 Council meeting 7pm	19	20
21 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship	22 Newsletter Deadline	23	24	25 Food Pantry 1-4	26	27
28 Adult Bible Study 9am Worship	29	30				



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