

## From the Pastor's Desk

So, how's it going with your Star Word so far this year? At this point we've only had them for about 2 ½ weeks and I'm already struggling with mine. My Star word this year is "thoughtfulness". When I drew it I *thought*, "I'm already pretty thoughtful, aren't I? What does God need to reveal to me through this word?" Now, if you ask some people they might not agree that I am very thoughtful (especially my kids when they were younger). This got me *thinking* even more.

When I think about my ministry and the gifts that I have from God, at the top of the list is relationship. Being present with people in their suffering, in their joy, in their everyday life is something I am pretty good at doing. I love visiting with people and hearing their stories much more than writing sermons or creating agendas for meetings. But I wonder if each of you know this about me – especially those of you who I don't see every week. I would love the opportunity to come to your home for a cup of coffee (no cookies or sweets are necessary), or meet at a coffee shop or my office and hear your stories, just chat, and get to know you on an even deeper level. So, here's the thing...my mother raised me to never go to someone's house without an invitation. I won't just show up on your doorstep or even call you to invite myself to your home. If you would like a visit, please call me or text me at 608-397-1975. You can also email me at [pastorbonniek@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbonniek@gmail.com).

Grace and peace,

*Pastor Bonnie*

## Valentine's Day Spaghetti Supper Fundraiser

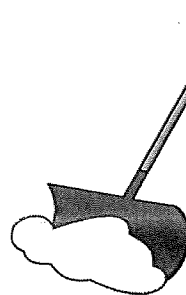
Come enjoy a dinner of spaghetti, salad, garlic bread and desserts on Friday, Feb. 14 from 5:30-7pm. Money raised will support our youth and adults going to the National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis next summer. Tickets are on sale Sunday mornings or can also be purchased in the church office during the week 9am-1pm. Pre-sale price is \$8 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. At the door price is \$9 for adults and \$6 for children under 12. Children 5 and under are free! Invite a friend to join you for supper!

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### Attention eligible

#### Thrivent Financial members

2019 Thrivent Choice Dollars remaining in your account from last year can still be directed until March 31, 2020. As many of you know, an eligible Thrivent benefit member can direct Choice Dollars to their church or favorite nonprofit organization. Keep in mind 2019 Choice Dollars will expire on March 31, 2020. To direct remaining 2019 Choice Dollars call 800-847-4836 and state "Choice Dollars" or visit [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice). If you require assistance please contact your local Thrivent Financial representative.



Please share your gift of shoveling by signing up with a partner for a week this winter. There are lots of activities here at church and groups using our building during the week so our sidewalks need to be shoveled and salted each time it snows! There is a snow blower available for a heavier snowfall. Please sign up in the narthex.



**HEART WORKS** is inviting you to come KNIT, CROCHET, or LOOM with us!!!

In addition to our regular first Tuesday of the month knitting day, Heart Works will be meeting on SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd. Bring your knitting needles, crochet hook, or loom, and join us. Dig out that project you tucked away before the holidays, or come start something new. If you are working on a project for your own home or family, that's fine. If you are working on a project to donate to Heart Works, that's fine as well. We will have patterns and samples available to show what Heart Works members create and share with the community. We will also have yarn and a limited number of needles or looms for you to use. Our intent is for you to enjoy FELLOWSHIP and share ideas with others who enjoy knitting, crocheting, or looming. We will meet from 10am until 3pm, with a light lunch served at noon. A sign-up sheet is available in the Narthex, so please let us know that you are coming by February 16<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to seeing you on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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 **Ash Wednesday – February 26<sup>th</sup>**

We begin our Lenten journey with Ash Wednesday. Join us for worship at 7:00 as we receive the imposition of ashes and communion. There will NOT be a supper served on Ash Wednesday.



“A smile is the light in your window that tells others that there is a caring, sharing person inside.”  
—Denis Waitley

## Mission Trip Update

### Are you being called to mission work?

The Blue Water Global Mission Team trip to Haiti that was scheduled for March 2020 has been postponed indefinitely due to safety concerns related to current civil and political unrest in Haiti. Please pray for the people of Haiti, their government, and Living Hope Ministries.

The team has been called to organize a mission trip to Anchorage, Alaska. The trip will consist of a variety of ministry opportunities, such as service projects (building), mercy ministry (working at a soup kitchen or visiting a senior care center), and youth ministry (hosting VBS or youth night). There will be opportunities for a variety of spiritual gifts to be used. The dates of the trip are July 11-17, 2020 and the cost is \$695 per person, plus airfare. Scholarships are available. An application is required to participate. Adults and youth are welcome. Youth under 14 must have an accompanying parent. There will be an informational meeting at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 3790 West Water, Port Huron at 6:00pm on Feb 23. Deadline for sign up is March 1. If you have additional questions or are unable to attend the meeting contact Megan Hargrave at 810-531-8833 or [meghargrave@yahoo.com](mailto:meghargrave@yahoo.com).

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### Giving credit where due?

Running late for a meeting, a man circled the block, looking for a place to park. Desperately, he raised his eyes toward heaven and prayed, “Lord, if you’ll find me a parking spot, I promise I’ll start going to church again.”

Just then, a car pulled out of a space right in front of the man. “Never mind,” he said to God. “I found one!”

**End of the Year Financial Report**

What an incredible year. You were challenged to raise an additional \$30,000 to fund four specific goals:

- \$10,000 Tune In Outreach Ministries
- \$ 5,000 Improved Technology
- \$ 5,000 Begin a Building Feasibility Study
- \$10,000 Sustain Ministry Excellence

Below is information showing the income and expenses for 2019 compared to the previous year. It certainly is a time to celebrate God at work in the people of St. Paul. You met the challenge!

<b>Donations:</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
General Offering	\$ 167,111.96	\$ 182,008.81
Special Benevolent Offering	2,751.50	3,841.22
GWIP Donations	21,795.00	27,492.00
Memorials	310.00	6,032.00
Restricted Offerings	5,674.36	9,188.23
Thrivent Choice \$	2,799.00	3,824.00
Interest	82.25	92.35
Other	2,874.13	5,181.98
<b>Total Offerings</b>	<b>\$ 203,398.20</b>	<b>\$ 237,660.59</b>

<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Benevolence	\$ 18,384.99	\$18,488.74
Ministry	9,417.09	10,157.52
GWIP	21,795.00	27,615.00
Operations	24,251.72	28,713.49
Payroll/Benefits	119,139.62	126,235.66
Miscellaneous	2,903.38	2,136.96
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 195,891.80</b>	<b>213,347.37</b>

The congregation continues to be truly generous which makes possible opportunities most congregations only dream to implement.

Benevolent gifts exceeded the tithe by \$1045.01 which emphasizes your generous response to any need that comes to your attention.

In January 2018, individuals pledged generously to support the Synod's Rise-Up Campaign and continue to complete those pledges in 2020. Please mail your donation directly to the synod office.

The ministry grows through worship, education, and outreach to the community. The implementation of the Tune-In findings, the upgrade of the technology and the building expansion are possible because of your increased giving.

As ministry, programs, and events increase, the operation costs are met monthly and kept low through conscientious use of the building.

Raises are proposed for the staff who continue to serve faithfully, providing a powerful ministry at the local level. At Christmas, the staff received additional gifts through your generosity in the amount of \$1,930.

The mortgage, once \$340,000, has been reduced to \$66,125.93. Generosity also extends in efforts to reduce the mortgage. While the required mortgage payments for 2019 were \$14,986.68, your donations to GWIP allowed payments totaling \$29,860.

Even beyond the things mentioned so far, you chose to participate in a special fund raiser that allowed the purchase of a third octave of hand bells.

It has been a powerful & truly blessed year! If you have questions concerning the finances, please ask.

Grateful to have had the privilege of serving as your treasurer,

Diane Merkau



**Epiphany Star Words**

During my sermon the first Sunday in Epiphany I passed out "Star" words to everyone. Each card was different. I encouraged folks to let the words speak to them, to imagine how God might be working through this simple word to speak to them during the coming year. At our council meeting in January the council choose a "Star" word. The word they choose was "Sympathy". I can't wait to see how God will use this word through us! The Evangelism team also choose a word this year - "Spirituality". WELCA will also choose a star word to guide them at their annual meeting. The word I received was "Thoughtfulness". If you didn't receive a "Star" word and would still like one, please let me know - I have a few left. ~Pastor Bonnie

## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH!

We are still **collecting** and returning **pop cans and bottles** to raise money to support our high school youth. Please place any cans or bottles in the designated box in the entryway of the church, and the youth will return them regularly.

**Thank you for supporting youth ministry!**

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### 2020 Church Council

Linda Barker, Council President

Rich Cochrell, President Elect

Cathy Stuewer, Council Secretary

Julie Lusk, Treasurer

Donna Sanderson, Financial Secretary

Susan Koglin, Asst. Financial Secretary

Ruth Reim, Financial Representative

Laurie Morris, Evangelism Rep

Danielle Golubinski, Parish Ed Rep

Chris Matts, Properties Rep

Ann Preimesberger, Stewardship Rep

Sue Wilson, Worship Rep

Olivia Rousey, Youth Rep

Heather Rousey, Youth Team Rep

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## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

### January 13, 2020

New council members were welcomed at our first meeting of 2020.

For our devotion, Julie Lusk spoke about the Five Finger Prayer Method. Ask Julie about this, it is very interesting.

Our star word for 2020 is sympathy.

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*Thank  
You*

Many thanks to the council and congregation for the gracious and generous Christmas gift. Serving as choir director has been great fun and a blessing as we make our "joyful noise." God bless.

John Lusk

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Thank you all for your kind & generous Christmas gift. I have enjoyed working with people who have such a deep commitment to serve. Having another octave of bells is truly amazing, & we are learning new things every week. Come join us sometime! I hope that our music warms your hearts. ❤️ Thank you again.

Sandy Oswell

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*With sincere gratitude and appreciation, I thank you for the very generous gift I received at Christmas. I am blessed to serve this congregation as secretary.*

*Diane Biskner*

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Dear St. Paul family,

Thank you so much for your generous Christmas gift. Being able to play services at St. Paul is truly a gift for me, as well as your unending kindness and support of both Lucy and I. Thank you so much.

Amy

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## A Note from the Treasurer

Bills and payroll are scheduled to be paid February 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>. Please submit paperwork at least one day prior to these dates in order for checks to be issued.

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### 1) Kroger Community Rewards

**Program.** St. Paul will receive rewards from your purchases at Kroger. To use the rewards program you can register online at [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com). All **current participants** in the Kroger Community Rewards Program **do not** need to re-enroll this year in order to earn funds for St. Paul. The rewards program runs from May 2019 to May 2020. Our NPO number is RK460. **Registration is online only.** Last quarter 32 households earned \$102.15 in rewards for St. Paul.

**2) Newsletter:** The newsletter deadline for the March Ray is Sunday, February 16, 2020. Articles may be submitted via e-mail ([stpaulww@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulww@comcast.net)), on a disk (IBM Format) or in writing.

**3)** Please make sure that if you need to borrow something from the church that you check the rental book and make sure no one else has reserved that item. If it is available, it needs to be signed out with the church office. The rental book is on top of the filing cabinet in the church office.

**WHEN DROPPING ITEMS OFF IN THE CHURCH OFFICE: PLEASE** leave a note indicating for whom the items are intended. Thank you!

*Church Secretary Hours:*  
*Monday – Friday 9am to 1 pm*

Diane,  
Church  
Secretary

