



Grace! This month, we will look at grace. And what an amazing thing grace is!

Tattooed on my arm, I have the words "Sola Gratia" which is Latin for "Grace Alone". Sola Gratia is one of the major Lutheran Doctrines that came from the reformation in the 16th Century. I look at this tattoo when I get overwhelmed with everything to be done or when I feel like I'm not good enough. It is a reminder that God has done all the work with Jesus on the cross and that grace covers all my worries and my insecurities.

In our world, we can be overwhelmed with everything to be done. There will always be one more task or one more edit to make. No matter how hard we try, there will be mistakes. But grace is right there saying "It's okay, just try your best".

There is a fascinating quote from Martin Luther that says

"We find no rest for our weary bones unless we cling to the word of grace".

This resonates with me because grace tells us that we don't have to be perfect. Nor do we have to have everything all put together. Our Lutheran belief is that God does that saving, God

is the hero, and God just wants us to accept the grace. And definitely not try to earn it.

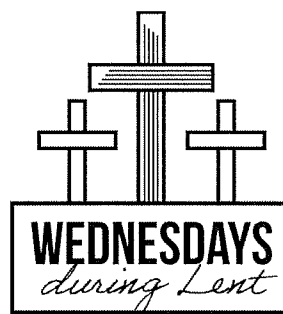
When we know that God's grace is with us, we can rest easy knowing that we are not alone,

but rather God is right there holding and protecting us. That is grace. Amazing grace. Where have you seen grace this past month?

Pastor Branden

## Return to In-Sanctuary Services

- Our new in-person worship service times at St. Paul Lutheran will be 8 am and 11 am separately; Pastor Branden Hunt will lead a 9:30 am worship service at St. Martin Lutheran Church under our pastoral sharing arrangement.
- St. Paul continues to worship under a mask mandate regardless of vaccination status to protect the most vulnerable among us. As communicated at recent worship services, please accept our apologies as the December newsletter inadvertently did not run the final version of the approved protocols for our "Return to In-Sanctuary Worship Services".
- Given our sanctuary's size, we must limit the number of attendees per service to provide adequate social distancing. Thus, to manage attendance, please continue to preregister by calling or e-mailing the church: Leave your name, number of people attending, the desired 8 am or 11 am service time and a contact phone number.



Each Wednesday during Lent we'll gather for worship and small groups at 7:00pm. The theme for Lent this year is "Good Enough: Embracing the Imperfection of Life and Faith."

Please join us as we dive into this theme together.

## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

February 14, 2022

New Mission and Vision Statements were adopted as follows:

### *Vision:*

*A non-judgmental world where all are acknowledged and accepted.*

### *Mission:*

*Together, we gather in worship, experience Christ's love and grace and grow in faith. We go out, encouraging everyone to practice justice and compassion in service to all people.*

Committees continue to be re-animated and encouraged to find new, different, and innovative ways to be the church and do the work of the church whether or not we are inside the building. We want our imaginations and visions of God's Kingdom on earth to fly! If you wish to serve on, submit comments to, or just attend a few meetings to assess your "fit", please call any council member and we will get you hooked up with the date and time of the next meeting. **We are especially looking to fill a spot for someone to attend the next Synod Assembly to be held in Port Huron and for someone to fill a spot on the Audit Committee.** We thank Ruth Reim and Judy Forstner for their past service in these positions.

Council welcomed Sonja Markwart, Secretary, Executive Committee of SEMI Synod Council and Synod Gift and Estate Planner to speak to us regarding establishment of an **Endowment** fund to receive, invest, and distribute gifts. She will also assist in updating our gift policy in the constitution.

With the increase of vaccinations and the decline in **COVID**, the Stewardship Committee is reviewing our current protocol for in-sanctuary worship and will make a recommendation at the March meeting.

**Sunday School** will resume in person from 9:45 to 10:45 twice a month On March 13 & 27,

April 10 & 24, May 8 & 22. Preschoolers will meet March 13, 27 and April 10. Ideas for VBS, middle school and high school are wanted and appreciated!

The **Technology** Committee added Andrew Barnes and council approved a request to purchase a refurbished computer and monitor to better accomplish live streaming of worship.

Council will gather for a half-day retreat to **brainstorm** around our new Vision and Mission statements. It's very energizing to imagine how things can be different and better on the "other side" of COVID lockdowns.

In an effort to know and be more fully and authentically known as brothers and sisters in Christ to one another, each council member shares their devotion and relates it to a personal experience.

For this year, prior to monthly council meetings at 6 p.m., council members will have the opportunity to participate in discernment and discussion led by Marilyn and centering on The Universe in 57 words - Seven Days Inside the Lord's Prayer by Carolyn Arends.

Next council meeting is March 14 at 6:30. Guests are welcome; please join us!



**HEART WORKS** is meeting at church again and I am so excited!!! Join us on March 1st, from 10am until 12 noon, to knit,

crochet, or loom...and chat!! We will continue to work on prayer shawls, hats, and scarves to share with others. We will meet in the Activity Room. Call me if you have any questions. Oh, and don't forget to wear your mask. Hope to see you on March 1st . Kathy Strauss, 810-985-5361

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**Don't forget to direct  
Choice Dollars®**

Remember that if you are a Thrivent member you may have "Thrivent Choice Dollars" to direct. St. Paul is one of the many potential recipients of your choice dollars, but your direction needs to be made each year. See Thrivent's website for more information.

You can also call 800-847-4836 and Thrivent will assist you.

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Our Church congregation's success depends as much on members' sharing of their time and talents as it does on their tithing. That said, as we continue to transition back to in-sanctuary worship services, we are looking for members to share in the duties and tasks associated with worship services, specifically serving as ushers and lectors at this time. The Stewardship Committee will be placing sign-ups on the Church bulletin board for volunteers for these duties, or you can call or e-mail the Church office, Diane Welsh (Stewardship Committee Chair) or Karen Lee (who representing Church Council has been leading this initial return to in-sanctuary worship.

As we build this list of volunteers, we plan to work toward having a calendar reflecting an assigned rotation of those duties, similar to how it was handled pre-pandemic. Those of us who have been handling the tasks will share notes and work with you on what duties are involved...Like the saying goes, "Many hands make for lighter work" so thanks in advance for sharing your time, talents to help our Church be successful!

## 2022 Church Council

Marilyn Knak, Council President  
Marcus Middleton, President Elect  
Marcia Conard, Council Secretary  
Julie Lusk, Treasurer  
Jane Dennis, Financial Secretary  
Kathy Strauss, Asst. Financial Secretary  
Karen Lee, Financial Representative  
Leanne Fortushniak, Evangelism Rep  
Leann Smith, Parish Ed Rep  
Ivan Smith, Properties Rep  
Diane Welsh, Stewardship Rep  
Sue Wilson, Worship Rep  
Lucy Fabick, Youth Rep  
Cathy Stuewer, Youth Team Rep

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### **BOTTLE & CAN DRIVE FOR YOUTH WILL BE DISCONTINUED**

Due to youth lack of time to return bottles and cans, we will no longer be accepting them. Thank you to those who helped return the bottles and cans that we had accumulated. If you wish to make a donation to the youth, every 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Loose Change Collection will go to youth.

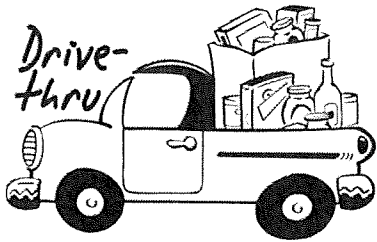
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### **ALTAR FLOWERS**

If you wish to sponsor altar flowers, there are signup sheets on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

Cost of the flowers is \$25 per Sunday sponsored. Please include your payment with your regular offering with the amount listed under the "other" line and "flowers" written on the line. If you don't have offering envelopes, put payment in an envelope indicating your name and that the payment is for altar flowers.



## Food Truck

### SAVE THE DATES

Foods trucks are scheduled on  
May 19<sup>th</sup> and August 25<sup>th</sup> .  
Be there by 10:00 with distribution  
Starting about 11:00.



### WE'RE BACK!

Sunday School will begin meeting face-to-face on  
March 13 from 9:45-10:45.

We will begin in the Narthex and then head to our  
classrooms. We will meet on the following  
Sundays; March 13, 27, April 10, 24, May 8, 22.  
This is for school-age children. Mrs. Merkau will  
also meet with pre-school aged children on March  
13, 27, and April 10<sup>th</sup>. We can't wait to see you.  
Spread the word, bring a friend. If you have any  
questions or concerns contact: Leann Smith via  
email: leann57@iwarp.net, or phone: 810-488-  
5829.

### Great escapes

The goal of authentic Christianity is a love  
[that] escapes from a closed circle of spiritual  
self-indulgence, or even self-improvement, to  
become absorbed in the love of God and other  
[people].

—Richard Lovelace

## SOUP KITCHEN

MID-CITY NUTRITION PROGRAM

### Luncheon and Fashion Show

Featuring door prizes, raffle baskets, and  
lottery board.

### Proceeds to benefit Mid-City Nutrition.

Woman's Life Insurance Society will  
match a portion of the proceeds.

Saturday March 19, 2022 1-3:00PM  
Port Huron Lanes  
1718 Hancock St.  
Port Huron, MI 48060

Tickets are \$25.00

Contact Suzanne at 810-364-5522 or  
Alice at 810-982-9535 for tickets.

### SPAR - ST. PAUL ANTIRACISM

Topic: SPAR Meeting

Time: Mar 7, 2022 03:15 PM Eastern  
Time (US and Canada)

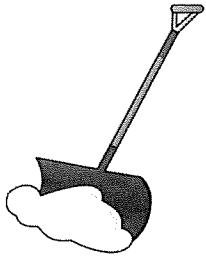
Join Zoom Meeting

Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting

Meeting ID: 636 493 0129

Passcode: kbjsF1

Our current book is **Why Are All the  
Black Kids Sitting Together in the  
Cafeteria?** by Beverly Daniel Tatum,  
PhD. We will be reading and discussing  
the Introduction and chapters 1, 2, and  
3, about 57 pages. Drop in anytime to  
eavesdrop or participate!



Please share your gift of shoveling by volunteering with a partner for a week this winter. Our sidewalks need to be shoveled and salted each time it snows! There is a snow blower available for a heavier snowfall. Please call Marcus, 810-434-9673, or the church office, 810-982-9853, to volunteer.

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**Just a reminder** that we've launched online giving at **St. Paul Lutheran Church** through Tithe.ly, a safe and secure giving platform that allows you to give one-time or recurring gifts!

To make an online contribution go to our website, [stpaulslutheranph.com](http://stpaulslutheranph.com), and click on the green "Give" button in the middle of the page, select where your contribution will go (current expenses, GWIP, memorial, etc.) and whether you want it to be recurring or one time. You can use a credit card or bank account. Please consider "Cover Fees" when making your contribution. This covers the nominal fee for processing your contribution. Thank you for supporting our ministry!

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### **Our Daily Bread Devotionals**

The March/April/May edition of "Our Daily Bread Devotion" is available in the Neighborhood Box outside the office door. It is located next to our Prayer Box. Please feel free to stop by and pick up a copy. Large print editions are also available in the Neighborhood Box.

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**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 2021 to May 2022. Our NPO number is RK460. **Registration is online only.** Last quarter 35 households earned \$83.82 rewards for St. Paul.

**Newsletter:** The newsletter deadline for March Ray is Sunday, February 20, 2022. Articles may be submitted via e-mail ([stpaulww@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulww@comcast.net)), on a flash drive or in writing.



Melba Bartley  
Connie Ganger  
Lavina Kodet  
MaryAnn Meyer



*Prayer requests are welcomed and can be made on our Facebook page or by emailing the church office, [stpaulww@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulww@comcast.net).*

*To keep the list current, please make your request each week you wish to have your loved one's name included in the prayers.*



### **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES**

8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

### **ASH WEDNESDAY - MARCH 2ND**

7:00 p.m. Worship

### **WEDNESDAYS IN LENT**

7:00 p.m. Worship and small groups

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### **On-line worship opportunities**

While all are not able to be face to face in worship in our sanctuary there are still opportunities to gather to hear God's word, to pray, to sing and to be encouraged. Each Sunday at 9:30am on our Facebook page worship is posted for us to gather in our homes at the same time to view worship.

The service is also posted on our website [stpaulwlutheranph.com](http://stpaulwlutheranph.com) under the "Worship services" tab.

Watch the mid-week email updates for information on the virtual social hour once we return to in person services.