

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

Grace to you, and peace from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who guides us along paths of newness and change. I am writing to you this month to bring two important items to your attention: changes in service order and the process St. Paul will be going through to update our mission and vision statements.

The worship and music committee met and discussed the lengths of our two services. We are aware that the service can be longer on Communion Sundays than noncommunion Sundays. The group agreed that it would be good for the whole to have an even amount of time for both services. We have decided on the following updates:

- We will be doing God Sightings on noncommunion Sundays only.
- The prayer for those suffering with addiction will be on noncommunion Sundays.
- We will be shifting the announcements to the beginning of the service.
- The Kyrie will be done on noncommunion Sundays. The Hymn of Praise will be on both Sundays.
- We hope to work toward having two communion lines at second service in order to keep things moving smoothly.
- We will move toward having an Old Testament, Psalm and Gospel lesson as the readings on Sunday.

These updates will take place starting the Sunday after Easter, April 7th. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me. We thank you for your commitment to St. Paul as we strive to figure out how to be a church together.

This leads me to the second important item. The council has discussed and agreed that it is time to look at our mission and vision statements and think about where God is taking us. We want to be very specific about the purpose of St. Paul here in the Port Huron community and how that is reflected in our mission. Starting on Palm Sunday, we will begin a two-to-three-month visioning process. This will include surveying the congregation and partners of the congregation, then having a workshop with the whole congregation on a Saturday in late April or early May.

The first step in the visioning process is determining our values as a church. This is where you all come in. In this newsletter or at the church, we have a survey to fill out. As part of this survey, we ask you to write down what you think are the top four values of St. Paul. Examples of values are:

- Worship
- Music
- Food insecurity
- Education
- Outreach
- Evangelism

These are just a few examples of values. Feel free to use Google for more examples. It is important to be clear that values represent who we are at St. Paul, not who we want to be. That is critical to the success of our visioning. The responses to the survey will be the basis for our work moving forward.

Please take time to fill out the survey and return it to the church office by April 7th. You can mail in the survey or drop it off on Sunday or during the week. The council will evaluate all the data received and have some ideas ready to go for our churchwide workshop at the end of April/early May.

It is an honor to live out the mission of Christ with you all, and I look forward to continuing the work for years to come.

Peace,

Rev. Branden Hunt

To My Dear Sisters and Brothers
in Christ,

I have had the opportunity to attend a number of meetings with our church membership in the past few weeks. There is no doubt that everyone is committed to getting things done. The Worship and Music Committee headed by Ann Preimesberger was busy planning with Pastor the sacred liturgy for Holy Week, which is the most solemn and eventful time of our church year. The Stewardship Committee members coordinated the cooking and delivery of a beef stew meal for the homeless at BWARM. Twelve church members attended the Properties and Management Committee meeting to discuss strategies for handling a long list of repairs and maintenance. Some of these projects are not only complicated, but will be costly. Priorities included roof repair and the acquisition of a new electronic sign as approved by the congregation.

At our church council meeting, a decision was made to begin the summer service schedule on June 2nd with a 9:00 AM service at St. Paul and a 10:30 AM service at St. Martin. This schedule will continue up until September 8th. Pastor Branden gave a presentation to council members on strategic planning and how we may engage in such planning here at St. Paul. We will begin this process by asking the congregation to fill out a survey on specific questions that pertain to mission, values and strategies. The council also gave its support for presenting the "Good Time Petition" to the congregation. If enough signatures are obtained, this petition would go on the November election ballot. Its approval would bring state prisons in line with both County and Federal prisons that give prisoners lesser sentences for good behavior. Mark Smith is leading this effort. So contact him if you feel you want to sign the petition. Many have signed already.

In addition to all of the above activity, two other task forces are in the making. One group is interested in resuming the "Corn Roast Event", possibly in August, the Saturday after Vacation Bible School. Also, some of the women of our Church want to plan for a retreat. You will hear more on these two events soon.

Finally, I would like to invite anyone who may be interested to attend a

Saturday morning breakfast meeting at St. Paul on April 13th with members from St. Martin and Our Saviour to discuss some common projects. Call me if you plan to come.

We are blessed in many ways!

Thank you,
Jim Fortushniak
Council President

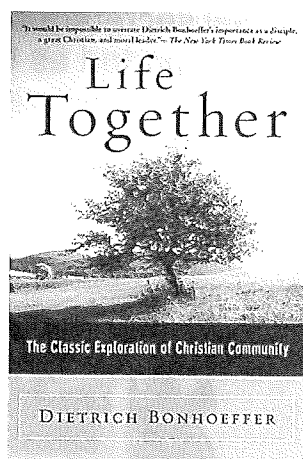


President's Report

United
in Service

Beyond the Bible

In late February, Beyond the Bible discussed the Introduction and Chapter 1 of "Life Together" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. It's not too late to join the discussion for the next section in April. If you are interested, reach out to Pastor Branden or Lisa Schleicher for a copy of the book. The next gathering will be April 7 at 12:15 PM. Chapter 2 will be discussed.



Happy Reading!



Thank you for your ideas!

The post-it note suggestions received at the celebration dinner in February have been divided into two groups and given to the council for consideration.

Ideas addressing the anticipated GWIP excess funds:

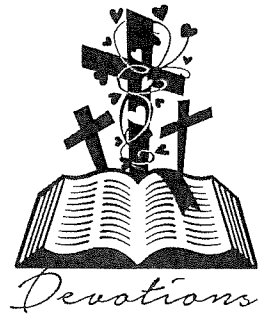
1. Support the construction and operation of the homeless shelter.
2. Year-round gathering of items for Operation Christmas Child Shoebox.
3. Men's/Women's encounter retreats to equip people to work with community groups addressing urgently needed help.
4. Work with a new St Clair County group – Kind Humans 4 Human Kind collecting and distributing used items to people in need.
5. United Way Care Kits.
6. Concern for students experiencing food insecurity over weekends and school breaks.
7. Living Waters
8. Lutheran Immigration & Refugee service
9. Samaritas
10. Bonus checks issued to currently selected groups addressing homeless and food insecure persons.

Each of these would need leadership. Funds are available.

Other ideas suggested which would need congregational support and funding:

- A. Fixing the sign is a main priority. UNDERWAY
- B. Fixing the roof leak. SCHEDULED FOR SPRING
- C. Electric car charging station CURRENT ELECTRICAL SERVICE CANNOT SUPPORT THIS, A NEW LARGER SERVICE WOULD BE NEEDED
- D. A pole barn for gathering & storing garden equipment
- E. A federal grant to implement solar panels RESEARCH NEEDED TO DETERMINE LOCATION AND COST
- F. A telephone network for information distribution IN PLACE FOR ALL WHO OPT TO USE THE CELL PHONE CONNECTION; NEW DIRECTORY TO BE COMPLETED BY SUMMER

Our Daily Bread



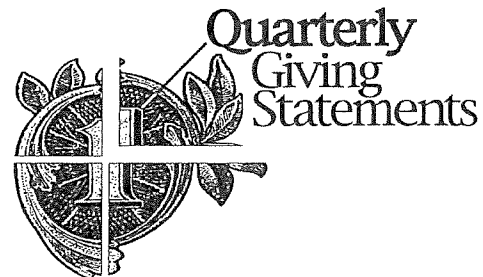
Devotions

The March/April/May edition of "Our Daily Bread Devotion" is available for you to pick up. They are in the church office hallway. Please feel free to stop by and pick up a copy.

Planning a Fundraiser?



Present the idea to the Council for approval. Request the fundraiser form and a manila envelope in which to collect money during the event. Store the money envelope in the safe. At the end of the event, count the donations. Give the financial secretaries the envelope so it can be reported as income. Checks are issued every two weeks. Let the treasurer know the amount of the check, contact person's name and the address for mailing.



The first quarter contribution statements will be emailed/mailed in April. If you do not receive yours or would like a hard copy, please email or call the office and let us know if you would like it mailed or placed in your box.



Please join us at Heart Works on Tuesday, April 2, for a couple hours of fellowship as we knit, crochet or loom items to share with those in need. We will be in the Activity Room from 10:00 AM until noon. I hope you can join us.



The Church Council has approved having 3 Food Trucks this year. Many volunteers are needed. Be there by at least 10:00 AM with distribution starting at 11:00 AM.

Thursday
Thursday
Wednesday

May 16, 2024
July 25, 2024
September 18, 2024



Save the Date! V.B.S. is coming.

August 5-8, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

for ages 4-adult.

Please join us for a planning meeting on Tuesday, April 30th at 6:00 PM

Many hands make this happen. Looking for song and worship leaders, decorators, crafters, cooks and snack leaders, recreation leaders and general helpers.

Questions or concerns:

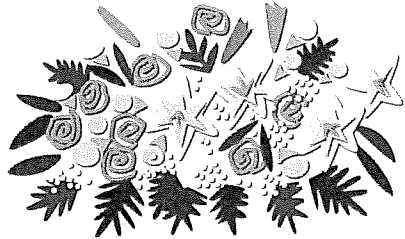
Contact Leann Smith at (810) 488-5829 or leannsmith121@gmail.com



Did you get rid of your land line?

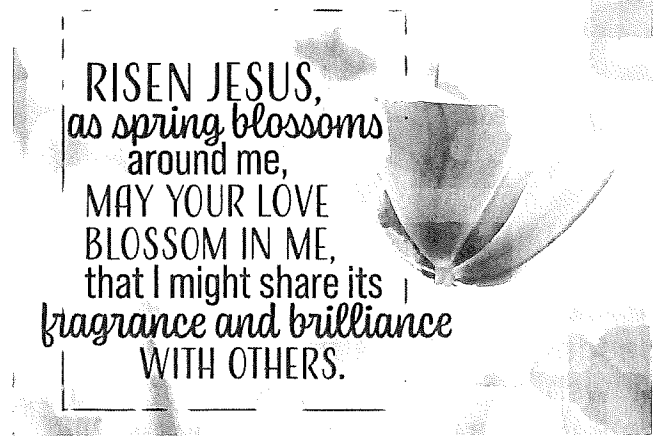
Change your cell phone number or email address?

The directory is in the process of being updated. If you have any changes to your address, phone number or email address, please contact the office so we can have the most up-to-date information printed.



Altar Flowers

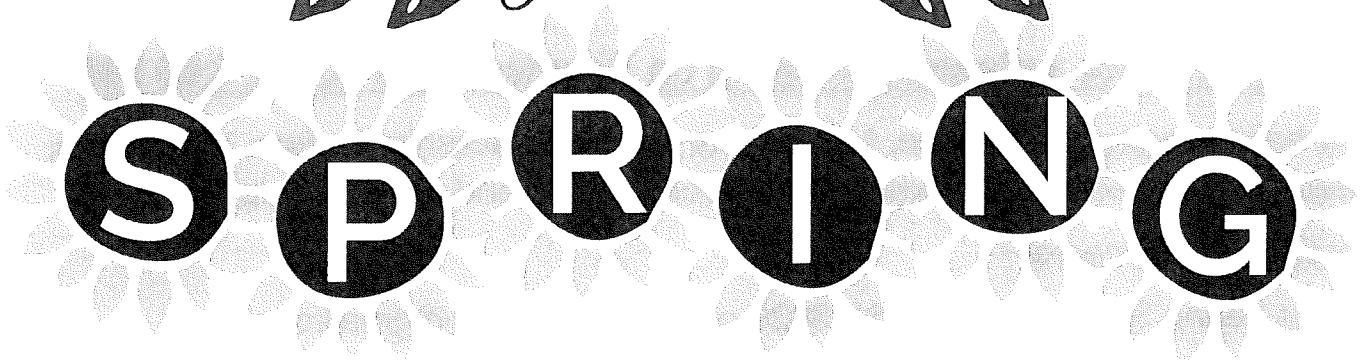
We are now signing up to **sponsor Altar Flowers for 2024**. Sign-up sheets are currently posted in the Narthex. Please consider signing up to sponsor Altar Flowers in honor/memory of a loved one. The cost is \$25 per Sunday sponsored.



Church COUNCIL

- Jim Fortushniak, Council President
- James White, President-Elect
- Marcia Conard, Council Secretary
- Diane Merkau, Treasurer
- Susan Koglin, Financial Secretary
- Margaret Hanselman, Asst. Financial Secretary
- John Middleton, Financial Rep.
- Leanne Fortushniak, Evangelism Rep.
- Leann Smith, Parish Ed. Rep.
- Jacques Merkau, Properties Rep.
- Diane Welsh, Stewardship Rep.
- Ann Preimesberger, Worship Rep.

Hello



St Paul Lutheran Church – Strategic Plan Survey

1. Values are what's important to a church. Values are what you are, not who you want to be. Examples of values are:

Worship

Outreach

Dignity

Music

Social Justice

Tradition

Food Justice

Prayer

Evangelism

What would you say are the top four values of St Paul Lutheran Church? (You do not have to use what is on the list.)

2. What are some things that you think St Paul is good at?

3. What do you think the purpose of St Paul is here in Port Huron?

4. What would you say are the three biggest needs in our community?

Return to the church office by April 7, 2024.

Kroger Community Rewards Program

From **November 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024**, St. Paul Lutheran Church received \$59.85 from 28 families' rewards on purchases at Kroger. To use the rewards program, you can register online at krogercommunityrewards.com. All **current participants** in the Kroger Community Rewards Program **do not** need to re-enroll this year to earn funds for St. Paul. The rewards program runs from May 2023 to May 2024. Our NPO number is RK460. **Registration is online only.**

Newsletter: The newsletter deadline for the May Ray is Tuesday, April 23, 2024. Articles may be submitted via e-mail (stpaulww@comcast.net), on a flash drive or in writing.



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. Please join us at 11 AM on our Facebook page for our livestream service.



Prayer List



Prayer requests are welcomed and can be made on our Facebook page, by emailing the church office at stpaulww@comcast.net or with our connection cards. To keep the list current, please make your request each week you wish to have your loved one's name included in the prayers.

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9:30-1:30
Tuesday & Thursday 9:30- 11:30

OFFICE
HOURS



Sunday Services

1st service begins at 8 AM

2nd service begins at 11 AM

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
3790 WEST WATER ST
PORT HURON, MI 48060
(810) 982-9853
stpaulww@comcast.net
Sunday Worship 8 and 11 AM
Livestream at 11 AM on Facebook,
our YouTube channel
or watch from the link on our website
www.stpaullutheranph.com
Pastor Branden Hunt
stpaulpastorelca@gmail.com

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #660
PORT HURON, MI 48060

The Ray

Gather, Grace, Grow, Go

April
2024

