

# FROM THE PASTOR

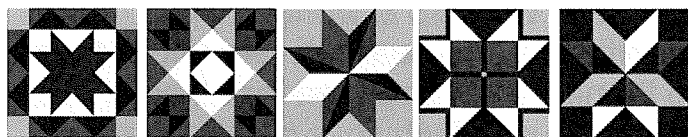
Dear friends,

As many of you know, I am not the best writer in the world, nor do I want to be. We all have different gifts. We all can't be great writers like John Lusk or Jim Ketchum. (Jim just celebrated 40 years as a journalist. Congrats Jim!) I am much better at getting words out verbally than in writing.

One thing I often talk about is our Heart Works group at the church and all the work they do. I would like to share a blog article written by Pastor Sarah Flatt about the importance of the quilting, looming, knitting and crocheting groups and how they support the community. Pastor Sarah puts this perspective in the written word far better than I ever can. It is a decently long read so grab your coffee or tea and a snack for the ride! Remember, you are invited to participate in Heart Works every first Tuesday of the month at 10 AM. Talk to Kathy Strauss if you have any questions.

Peace,

Pastor Branden



## Quilts of God

Over the years, I've been gifted a number of quilts -- large quilts, prayer quilts, old quilts passed down through my family. They've come from a variety of people and places, and they always come in useful this time of year.

My favorite quilt was a gift for our wedding. It's an absolute work of love and art. (Forgive me for not knowing my quilting terminology in the coming sentences.) The quilt is made with dozens of squares, which are made of triangles,

and those hold well-wishes from members at my first call church, St. John's Lutheran Church in Capac, MI. Every square has different types of fabric, from polka dots and floral patterns to scraps of color, and no two triangles that make up the squares are the same. Then, over the whole quilt, a sewn pattern of hearts weaves in and around every square.

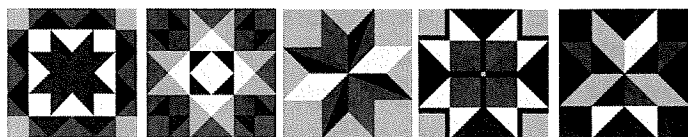
It's clear the quilt was made with love, but more than that, it was made in community. People came together to write their well-wishes, and others donated their time and energy in the construction of the quilt. This doesn't even take into account the larger contributing community: textile creators, fabric store owners and pattern-makers. Whenever I am wrapped up with this quilt, I am reminded just how wide the community that surrounds me actually is. Think of your own quilting (or knitting or prayer shawl making) ministries that you've been witness to throughout your time in the church. Maybe your congregation makes quilts for Lutheran World Relief, or for seniors who are graduating.

Maybe you have the holy privilege of delivering prayer shawls that have been prayed over specifically for health and wholeness for an individual within your larger community.

Maybe your textile ministry is made up of a few faithful remaining members, and they are wrestling with how to carry on this faithful and patient practice.

Regardless of how vibrant or scarce these ministries are in your current or previous settings, they offer opportunities for connection, fellowship, spiritual growth and creativity. What might happen if we tried to use quilting groups as a model for other ministries in our congregation? How might an outreach change if connection and creativity were

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just as important as fellowship and spiritual growth?

There are a number of poems that speak to all of this, and ultimately, they remind us that we -- the church -- are the quilts of God. We are called to form connections of compassion, to be creative in our sharing of God's love, to find ways to strengthen our faith and the faith of others, and to join together in fellowship as a reminder that we are never alone or forgotten by either God or our faith communities.

The gift of quilters in the church runs much deeper than the piles of fabric they have tucked away in a closet somewhere in your building. Wrapping others up in fabric stitched together with love is a practice I hope we don't soon let go.

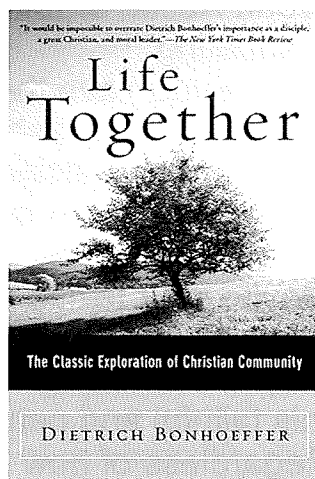
Shalom,

Pastor Sarah

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## 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 March. If you are interested, reach out to Pastor Branden or Lisa Schleicher for a copy of the book and details about the March gathering. **Happy reading!**



## President's Report

To My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As your newly elected Council president, I am more aware than ever of the hard work and dedication that many of you have displayed in making St. Paul such a vibrant church community. The stewardship luncheon held on Sunday, February 11th, was a good example of how "many hands at work" can bear fruit. A special thank you to Diane Welsh and Diane Merkau for making this event successful and enjoyed by all who attended. The GWIP report was so thorough - it should make us all proud of what we have accomplished this past year.

The list is long with the names of others that I am grateful to for being in our church. There are three that I would like to highlight. The first is Richard Cannon for his leadership and expertise in restoring our choir. His love for music and its role in worship is wonderfully manifested and heartfelt. Secondly, I want to thank Pastor Branden for all he is doing for us, much of which is behind the scenes with individuals from our church and within our community. His sermons and his Bible Studies, especially, have nurtured our spiritual growth. (I also have a whole new awareness of Doritos.) Finally, I am inspired by my friend, Marty, who said he loves coming to St Paul. I asked him why. He thought for a moment and said, "The People".

We are blessed in many ways! Thank you,

Jim Fortushniak Council President



Please be careful! There are more phishing attempts through emails as well as phone call scams. The church has been receiving notices of needing to pay for anti-virus software and Paypal requests. Phone calls have included missing jury duty and owing money. Please read your emails very carefully and check for the following:

- Requests for personal or sensitive information
  - Generic or impersonal greetings or lack of greetings
  - Grammar and spelling errors or odd phrases
  - Unofficial or mismatched email addresses, links or domain names
  - Unsolicited or suspicious attachments
  - Threats or a sense of urgency
  - Short and vague messages
  - Unusual or unexpected requests
- People are also receiving fake news report emails. Please just delete these emails without clicking on any links.



New Member Sunday will be on March 24, 2024. Let Pastor Branden know if you are interested in becoming a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church.



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

If you have not designated all of your Thrivent Choice dollars for 2023 yet, you can still do this until March 31, 2024. Just



Designate  
Your  
Thrivent  
Choice  
Dollars

call Thrivent at 800-847-4836 and tell them you want to direct your Choice Dollars. Or you can go online to Thrivent.com. You may have more Choice dollars available even if you already designated Choice dollars during the last year. Last year, our church received \$1460.00 in Choice dollars. If you have questions, call Don Strauss at 810-434-2380.



Please join us at Heart Works on Tuesday, March 5, 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 AM until noon. I hope you can join us.



### Property's Committee Meeting

An organizational meeting of the Property's Committee will be held on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the maintenance and repair projects that have been completed, inspect the building and grounds for a list of additional needed upgrades, review how to adjust settings, and plan regular maintenance for the year 2024.

Please indicate whether you will be able to attend by calling me at 810 679-3162.

Jacques Merkau, Property Representative

## Our Daily Bread



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.



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 May 16, 2024**  
**Thursday July 25, 2024**  
**Wednesday September 18, 2024**

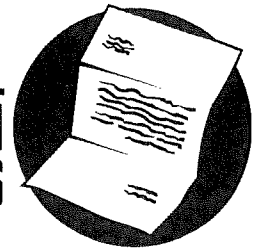
Harbor Impact Ministries will have a Food Truck on **Tuesday, March 12,** distribution starting at 10:00 AM.

## 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.



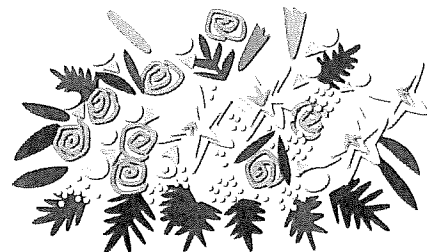
## ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS



The annual contribution statements were emailed/mailed in January. If you did 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.

## 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.



## 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.



## 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](http://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.**

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**Newsletter:** The newsletter deadline for the April Ray is Tuesday, March 19, 2024. Articles may be submitted via e-mail ([stpaulww@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulww@comcast.net)), on a flash drive or in writing.

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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.

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## Prayer List



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

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



## Sunday Services

1<sup>st</sup> service begins at 8 AM

2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://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*



# March 2024

