

# Epistle

*A welcoming community  
sharing Christ's love  
in service  
through relationships.  
Welcome. Share. Serve.*

February 2023

## REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR AMY JO

As we look back on the year 2022, one of the things that Saint Paul's UMC has to celebrate is our generous support of mission work, both with our financial gifts and with the hours that we volunteered in service. While we gave toward a number of different mission efforts, I want to highlight two of the larger financial gifts.

**Ukrainian Refugee Relief through UMCOR.** The biblical tradition teaches us to show hospitality and care for those in need, with many specific references to the poor, orphan, widow, and resident aliens amongst us. (Leviticus 19:34, Deuteronomy 27:19) The people of Saint Paul's responded with great generosity, giving \$5,876 to Ukrainian refugee relief through this UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) Advance Special. Combined with giving from other United Methodists and their friends around the world, UMCOR has now received more than \$24 million designated for this mission. In addition to these financial gifts, we also gathered medical supplies, blankets, and handmade quilts to ship to Ukraine to help respond to these immediate, emergency needs.

Working together as a worldwide church, we are able to respond in big ways to big needs.

**New Restoring Waters Campus of Emma Norton Services.** The people of Saint Paul's UMC have been longtime partners in mission with Emma Norton Services, a mission of the United Methodist Church that provides transitional housing and supportive services in Saint Paul. The new Restoring

went toward the building of Restoring Waters. Thank you all for your generous gifts toward this effort!

We will continue our mission efforts with the new Restoring Waters campus during the month of February, as we collect supplies for the welcome baskets that will be present in each housing unit of Restoring Waters. If you would like to participate in these efforts, a list of the needed supplies can be



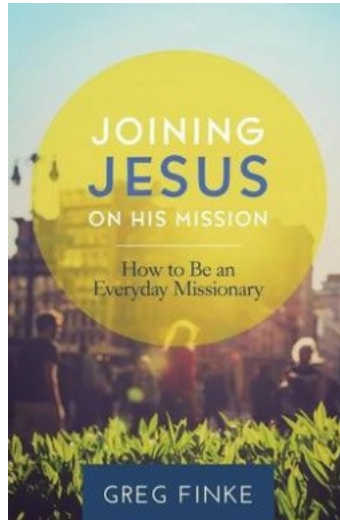
Waters campus of Emma Norton Services will provide transitional housing for sixty women with small families, as well as supportive services to help them find the help, hope, and healing that they need for the future. Half of the Saint Paul's UMC Christmas offering, \$5,230,

found on page 7 of this newsletter, and will also be printed in the weekly e-mail announcements. Thank you for your generosity as we prepare to welcome the future residents of Restoring Waters!

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Both of these large-scale mission efforts are important works of mercy in which the Church is providing leadership. I am honored to be the leader of a congregation who approaches mission with such energy, generosity, and enthusiasm. As we look to ways in which the people of Saint Paul's UMC can expand our mission work, we are also providing teaching on a different style of mission work during February and March. During February and March, we are teaching about the ways that we can be in mission individually, in our everyday lives, living each day as a faithful follower of Christ, and



missionary to our own neighborhood. The Adult Sunday School class is studying a

book on this idea, called *Joining Jesus on His Mission: How to Be an Everyday Missionary*, by Greg Finke, and I am preaching a companion sermon series on similar themes. Many of those singing in the choir or teaching children's Sunday School are not able to be present during the adult Sunday School class. So, we will begin a second adult education time for this book on Thursdays, from 10:30-11:30 am, beginning on February 9<sup>th</sup>. I hope that we are all able to grow in our walk with God as we focus on being missionaries of Christ in our everyday lives. ☚

## SMALL GROUPS

United with Purpose

### THURSDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION BOOK GROUP

Starting on **Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, from 10:30 – 11:30 am**, Pastor Amy Jo will lead a discussion of the book

*Joining Jesus on His Mission: How to Be an Everyday Missionary*, by Greg Finke.

Books are available on the narthex table for \$16 each.

## ASH WEDNESDAY

The beginning of Lent

### ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Wednesday, February 22, is Ash Wednesday. Our congregation will have an **Ash Wednesday Observance on February 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12:30-1:00 p.m.**, including time for quiet reflection on Scripture and imposition of ashes.

Ash Wednesday helps us to begin the Lenten season with repentance—turning away from those things that separate us from God and turning toward those life practices that draw us closer to God. May God bless you with a meaningful Lent.



# CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Helping families  
nurture lifelong  
disciples of Christ



## YOUTH GATHERING

St. Paul's UMC youth in 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade gather every fourth Wednesday from 5:00-8:00 pm for some guided faith, fellowship, and fun. Each youth gathering is focused on a combination of a faith topic, mission project, worship participation, fellowship building, and, of course, a fun activity.

In January our youth met for a special game night. They played a mix of new games and some old favorites and enjoyed a pizza dinner together. A GREAT time was had by all!

Our next youth gathering is going to be a day early next month. It will be on **Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>**, and we will be celebrating Shrove Tuesday/Fat Tuesday. We will be getting together to learn all about Shrove Tuesday/Fat Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, and Lent and why we celebrate them. We will be meeting in the fellowship hall to start off with a pancake feast, and end with a few games. There is no cost, but all are welcome to bring their favorite pancake toppings to share with the group!



## CONFIRMATION

In January our confirmation lesson was on "*Living a Holy Life*" and finding a balance in all that we do. God wants us to have a well-balanced life of family, friends, church and Christ. We discussed how it is important to not focus one hundred percent of your time on any one thing, even if it is something you love and how following Christ requires more than one hour on Sunday mornings. It is a way of life. It also means living a holy life, full of faith and good works made possible through God's grace.

- ♦ Through prevenient grace, God leads us to faith.
- ♦ Through justifying grace, God assures us that we are forgiven and restored to God's favor.
- ♦ Through sanctifying grace, God draws us toward Christian perfection.

Fortunately, Christian perfection is not about being flawless. It is about being completely in tune with God's will. John Wesley described perfection as being "*habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor.*" Through sanctifying grace, God changes our heart so that we desire to be like God. As a result, that change motivates us to "*go on toward perfection.*"

At the end of the class the youth had a Pool Noodle Hockey team building game.

Our next class is on **Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 pm** and we will be discussing "*Ways of Discipleship and Salvation*".



# Pool Noodle Hockey





# FINANCE

## Support of our church and its



### FINANCIALS AS OF 12/31/2022

The books have been closed on the 2022 year. Our gifts contributed significantly to our mission to share the love of Christ in our church home, our neighborhood, and the world at large. Some of the highlights this year include:

- ♦ All apportionments were paid to the MN Annual Conference for the year.
- ♦ December giving was over \$100,000 and made a true difference in the 2022 financial picture.
- ♦ Our benevolent giving for the year was \$14,857, including almost \$7000 to various UMCOR projects.
- ♦ Memorial funds totaling \$6,283 contributed to the replacement of the kitchen range, nursery and youth room furnishings and the TV monitor at the back of the sanctuary.
- ♦ We applied for and received \$49,810 in a COVID related employer tax credit in 2022. This check from the IRS allowed us to meet our obligations in 2022.
- ♦ The refresh of the sanctuary was completed without requesting additional gifts from the congregation. It was totally funded by our capital fund.
- ♦ Our annual giving for the year increased over 2020 and 2021 giving.

Thanks to all for the gifts you provided that supported the mission of our congregation this last year.

Below I've included a 5-year summary of gifts and expenses for our congregation. This gives us a look at our financial status pre-pandemic, during the pandemic and post-pandemic.

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	Five Year Giving				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
*Annual Giving	\$ 231,907	\$ 247,401	\$ 231,819	\$ 237,227	\$ 243,550
Annual Expenses	\$ 269,925	\$ 276,986	\$ 225,705	\$ 274,224	\$ 252,170
Balance	\$ (38,018)	\$ (29,585)	\$ 6,114	\$ (36,997)	\$ (8,620)
Apportionments	\$ (29,589)	\$ (32,241)	\$ (33,023)	\$ (30,015)	\$ (27,328)
Balance after apportionments	\$ (67,607)	\$ (61,826)	\$ (26,909)	\$ (67,012)	\$ (35,948)
Government funds			\$ 37,600	\$ 36,382	\$ 49,810
			\$ 10,691	\$ (30,630)	\$ 13,862

\*Does not include rent, advent, lent

# FINANCE

## Support of our church and its



(continued from page 5)

Looking at the above information, one wonders how we have managed the last five years. We are a very blessed congregation and have investment funds that allow us to partially close the gap. Government pandemic funds in 2020 – 2022 were critical in closing the gap. In addition, we have money sitting in the memorial fund, youth fund and missions team funds that we will use to meet short-term cash needs. Think of it as having a personal finance plan that includes a savings account to pay property taxes and other large expenses during the year. Sometimes, when you need cash, you borrow from those funds and then return the money when your finances are in a better position. That is how we've used money from funds other than the general fund to solve short-term cash issues. All of those monies have always been returned to the proper fund.

That being said, going into 2020, your Finance Team and Central Leadership Team were very concerned about our ability to continue our current programming level. We had developed plans for a church-wide campaign to raise funds to make ends meet. Of course, about that time, we went into shut-down due to the pandemic. That put all plans on hold.

During the pandemic we cut all possible costs, froze salaries for one year and were very blessed to be the recipient of government funds through various COVID programs. Going into 2023 our finances are in a stable position. But we are facing two major changes in 2023. The government programs to assist with expenses during the pandemic are over. We are also looking at a declining stock market. Our investments are responsibly managed by the MN United Methodist Foundation. And our investments, like everyone else's, have seen a decline in value this year.

That brings us to 2023. Our giving in 2023 will be important to our ability to continue and consider expansion of the programming and mission work of our congregation. Take this time to evaluate your ability to give in such a way that our congregation continues to be a vibrant church that spreads the teachings of Jesus to all with whom we come in contact.

As always, your finance team welcomes questions, comments and discussion of our finances. It is our goal to be transparent and provide you with the information you need so you understand the financial health of our congregation. Grace and Blessings, *Kae Lovaas Jewell, Finance Chair*

	<u>December 2022</u>	<u>2022 Year-to-Date</u>
General Fund Gifts	\$112,235	\$ 302,654
Balance	<u>\$ 64,119</u>	<u>\$ 50,484</u>
Less Unpaid Apportionments	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>0</u>
Balance After Unpaid Apportionments	<u>\$ 64,119</u>	<u>\$ 50,484</u>

# REACHING OUT

Living our faith  
and connecting  
with our  
neighbors



## EMMA NORTON WELCOME BASKETS

Emma Norton Housing provides housing for women and individuals who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless and managing mental illness and/or chemical dependency. They believe that housing provides the foundation for every human being to heal, recover, and build a more stable, harmonious life. St. Paul's UMC has decided to welcome the new residents and help them feel at home by providing welcome baskets filled with basic necessities to make their transition a warmer and easier process. Each week in February we will be collecting different items to fill these welcome baskets. Please join us in donating items each week and help make a home for all their new residents.

**Week #1 – Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>:** coffee mugs & journals

**Week #2 – Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>:** toiletries – toothbrush & toothpaste, deodorant & bar soap, shampoo & conditioner

**Week #3 – Sunday, February 19<sup>th</sup>:** towel & hand towel, pillow & pillowcase

**Week #4 – Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup>:** twin size sheets (fitted & flat), and a winter blanket (quilts, comforter)

## MN FOODSHARE MARCH CAMPAIGN

The Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign is almost here! Join us in collecting as much food and funds as we can during the month of March. This annual food and fund drive helps Neighbors Inc. stock the shelves for the busy summer months ahead. In addition, the amount they raise plays a role in how much FoodShare funding they receive later in the year. So a donation during March goes even further.

Most needed items currently include:

- ♦ Protein items- canned meat/fish, dried beans, lentils, nut butters
- ♦ Breakfast foods: pancake mix and syrup
- ♦ Canned fruit: mixed fruit, fruit cocktail, peaches, pears, etc.
- ♦ Peanut butter
- ♦ Cooking & Baking supplies: especially oil & flour
- ♦ Cans of soup & baked beans

## SUMMER 2023 MISSION TRIP MEETING

This June, members of St. Paul's UMC will be going on a mission trip to help serve in multiple communities around the US struggling with poverty. This will be an inter-generational mission trip for youth who have finished 6<sup>th</sup> grade through adults. If you are interested in joining us, or would like to find out more info, please join us for a short mission trip meeting on **Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>** in the fellowship hall during coffee hour after worship.

## EVENTS

What's  
happening and  
when



### ST. PATRICK'S POTLUCK MARCH 13<sup>th</sup>

Now that 2023 is upon us, get out that pencil and make notations in that new calendar.

On **Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm** we will have a St. Patrick's themed potluck, to have a little fun and to also get the scoop on our upcoming April 29<sup>th</sup> Rummage Sale.

After over 70 years of putting on Rummage Sales, our women are pretty much experts on what must be done to pull it off successfully. Now, thankfully, although we have relied on youth and our men to help us in the past, we are opening it up to the entire congregation, not only to supply items, but to pull up their sleeves and do a little work. We all have talents and Nancy Pierson and Barb Goin have broken down a variety of pre-sale, week of sale, sale day and after sale activities. Their presentation will take place at the dinner – where questions can be raised, and answers made.

In the meantime, think about enlisting your entire family, friends, whoever might enjoy a night out and celebrate St. Pat's Day in Methodist style. Food and Fun but with a dash of Service!!



### Limerick of the Month

There once was a church named St. Paul  
That yearly became a big mall  
Used items were brought,  
Things the public long sought  
And the church folks had a big ball.

### UPDATED DIRECTORY

A team is assembled who will be making calls to membership, asking for updates in addresses, phone numbers, texting abilities, etc. They will also let people know of upcoming events. This will lead to an updated directory that we can all enjoy. With any kind of luck, we might also be able to get a team of amateur photographers to take pictures of individuals and families to add to a future directory. This could be an addition that would help us all to connect names to faces. If you have photographic skills and/or computer skills and would like to work on this project, kindly call the office 651-452-5683 and let the staff know.





## SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Education Hour for All: 9:30 am  
 Worship: 10:30 am  
 Kidz 2gether Worship  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays of the month: 10:30 am  
 Communion: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays of the month

## VIDEO WORSHIP

Available on Facebook, YouTube (St. Paul's UMC Mendota Heights) and the church's website: [www.stpaulsmn.org](http://www.stpaulsmn.org)

## CENTRAL LEADERSHIP

**CHAIR:** Andrea Larson

## ST. PAUL'S STAFF:

**Pastor:** Rev. Amy Jo Bur,  
[pastor@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:pastor@stpaulsmn.org)

## Director of Children, Youth and Mission:

Lani Thompson Schrandt,  
[lani.thompson@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:lani.thompson@stpaulsmn.org)

## Director of Music Ministry:

Lane Skoglund-Anderson,  
[laneskoglundanderson@gmail.com](mailto:laneskoglundanderson@gmail.com)

## Administrative Assistant:

Diane Pelinka,  
[info@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:info@stpaulsmn.org)

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteer opportunities are available on Sign Up Genius. Go to [www.signupgenius.com](http://www.signupgenius.com), click on the magnifying glass in the upper right hand corner and type in the church email, [info@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:info@stpaulsmn.org) to find the following sign ups.

### ♦ ALTAR FLOWERS

Altar flowers are a beautiful addition to our service. Sign up sheets are also available on the narthex table.

### ♦ COFFEE HOUR

Volunteers are needed to host Sunday Coffee Hour. Sign up sheets are also available on the Fellowship Hall counter.



## Sharon Monroe

6997 80th St.. S. #244  
 Cottage Grove MN  
 55016

## Jessie & Cassie Ball

44830 Jess Ave.  
 Harris MN 55032

Thank You!

Dear Sisters in Christ,  
 Thank you for the 2083 MannaPack meals you provided in 2022. You fed 6 kids a daily meal for an entire year and gave them hope for the future. What an amazing gift. Hope is greater because of you! As you have been a blessing to so many in 2022, may you be richly blessed in 2023.

Until all are fed,  
*Tracie Peterson, Development Rep*  
*Feed My Starving Children.*



## Chuck Garr

King of Timber Hills!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> 6:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship w/ Communion 11:30 am Mission Team Meeting	<b>6</b> <i>9:30 am Music Class</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 6:00 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	<b>9</b> 10:30 am Adult Ed Book Group	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Kidz 2gether Worship w/Communion	<b>13</b> <i>9:30 am Music Class</i>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 6:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	<b>16</b> 10:30 am Adult Ed Book Group	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	<b>20</b> <i>4:45 pm 4H</i>	<b>21</b> 5:00—8:00 pm Youth Group: Fat Tuesday	<b>22</b> <b>12:30 pm Ash  Wednesday Worship</b>	<b>23</b> 10:30 am Adult Ed Book Group	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	<b>27</b> <i>9:30 am Music Class</i>	<b>28</b>				

*Italicized events are conducted by outside groups renting space at the church.*

**St. Paul's United Methodist Church**

700 Wesley Lane  
Mendota Heights MN 55118

Phone: 651-452-5683  
Email: [info@stpaulsmn.org](mailto:info@stpaulsmn.org)

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*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*  
The People of the United Methodist Church®



**ASH WEDNESDAY  
SERVICE  
FEBRUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>  
12:30—1:00 pm**