

Epistle March

2023

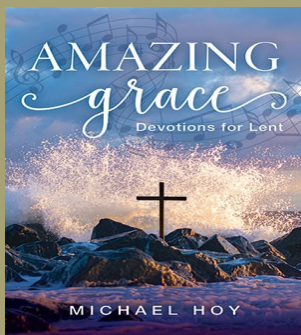
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church

Walkersville, Maryland
301-845-4600
Saintpaulslutheranchurch.org



St. Paul's Lenten Journey 2023

This year's Lenten series is has us explore "*Amazing Grace*". "In honor of the 250th anniversary of the writing of "Amazing Grace," this worship series for Lent by theologian Michael Hoy ties the words of the beloved song to our lives today as Christ's disciples. Those in the Bible who experienced the amazing grace of God help us each week to realize that though we once were lost in sin, we now have been found by Jesus, and though we once were blind to God's mercy, we now can see his love at work in us through our Savior's death and resurrection."



WEEKLY LENTEN SERVICES

Every Wednesday, from March 1st to April 5th at 7pm in the church.

Livestreaming of the service will be available through the church Facebook page.

The Soup & Sandwich tradition returns on March 1st at 6pm and all are invited to partake in the meal. We will hold this meal in the overflow area of the church and then move to the pews for service at 7pm. If you would like to provide soup or sandwich for one of the nights, please contact Marcia Gupta through the church office to claim a Wednesday.

*"The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me."
— Martin Luther*

March Birthdays

- Mar 3rd Jaiden Fellows
Jenna Fellows
- Mar 6th Rodney Kahler
- Mar 7th Jake Lutz
- Mar 10th Joey Valcarcel
- Mar 11th Robert Schell Jr.
- Mar 12th Liam McCloskey
- Mar 15th Scott Sube
Betty Walker
Bill Cartwright
- Mar 16th Michaela Zeller
- Mar 18th Abigail Johnson
Joey Lutz
- Mar 19th Lori King
- Mar 24th Ronald Alexander
- Mar 25th Daniel Mildenstein
- Mar 26th Ellen Gupta
- Mar 28th Lauren Barrett

Pastor's *Peace*

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
2 Corinthians 9:7

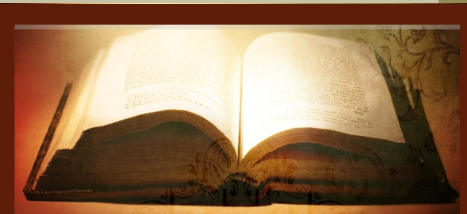
One Sunday a member came to me and said she had a problem that another member mentioned to her and she would like to share with me. The member stated that some found it difficult to be in worship and consistently hear the church asking for money. I get it, talking about money in our society is often a taboo subject and one we steer

clear of in public forums. I don't like getting up in front of the church and asking for money either but the whole of it is, we as our church, are dependent on the gifts we receive to continue to do the work we are committed to in our community. In a recent ministry meeting, I was asked to be less "namby-pamby" about highlighting the need and thankfulness of receiving an offering, noting that we are indeed thankful, yet also reliant upon each of you in sustaining our activities. We ended 2022 in a deficit of about \$3500.00 and because we have been diligent with the gifts you share, we were able to cover the underage and

were able to move forward with planning for 2023. Even though the deficit was only about \$3500.00, our debt could have been substantially deeper had we not realized the gifts left to the church from a variety of faithful past members. The good news is that the property renovation fund ended the year in a surplus which the Council voted to apply towards the principal balance of our loan. And while we enjoy that cushion, we are reminded that our loan is due to renew this June which will most likely result in a new interest rate at current levels.

God's Work

The pandemic has led to some of this deficit because we have realized the fact some members have not returned to worship which has resulted in a diminished amount of giving to the church. We currently have a number of families on our roles who have not made a contribution to the church in over a year. Some of that is understood as times are tight and money is needed to sustain basic family living. At St. Paul's, the cost of fuel has increased dramatically which has had us realize significantly higher bills, yet we have been fortunate this has been a mild winter and our fuel bill has similarly lessened. Having a full time pastor also is a significant expense on the church and one I am extremely mindful of in how I utilize the gifts given to me by the church. The proposed partnership we are entertaining in sharing ministry with Bethel



Lutheran Church will reduce the financial strain of the pastor's salary and open up new opportunities for each church, as well as the members who are served. Our Generosity Ministry led by Sheila Kahler and her team, are working diligently to offer opportunities to each of you to search your hearts and find where you may be able to give a bit more of yourself, your time, your talents, and your financial resources to sustain the life of our church. Our January report from the Treasurer was not one of promise as we are already in a significant deficit. As I mentioned in beginning, I am not always comfortable talking about money, especially in church, yet in order for us to continue the outreach and other programs we enjoy, it is necessary for us to have the conversation about financial support of our church.

Our Hands

I am excited about the labors we share here at St. Paul's and am looking forward to the greatness we can achieve in doing God's work with our hands. Please search your heart and discern whether there might be more we can all do to sustain our ministries and take St. Paul's to the next level.

"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

Luke 6:38

Should you have any questions or concerns, I am glad to speak with you at any time.

Peace Pastor Phil
Email: pastor@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org
Cell phone: 202-497-0584

our community



Lent 2023 - ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving

*We invite you to **study, pray, reflect and give** with us during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving — for our families, our neighbors and communities around the world.*

These 40 days are a season to reflect and remember, to look forward and ahead. These are not easy times for many of us.

We know the challenges our world faces. Yet the season of Lent reminds us that God is not yet through with us or our world. Amid our own dependence on God, we know by faith that God is even now at work, drawing us toward the resurrection and restoration of the world. ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving invites us to be part of that work and to bear witness to it with partners, companions, friends and neighbors.

Will you join us?

Resources:

40 Days of Giving Lent Calendar - Find inspirational ideas for daily reflection and action, as well as prayers, relevant Bible passages, hymn ideas and more, [download here](#).

Lenten Study Guide - Deepen your engagement throughout this season of Lent with the **weekly study guide**, where you can find impactful, motivational stories and information about how your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are at work in the world, [download here](#).

Hard copies of these 2 resources have been ordered and are available. If you would like a hard copy, please contact officeadministrator@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org

March

Faith Formation, every Sunday, Ministry Sunday - March 5th, Midweek Service every Wednesday

April

Faith Formation, every Sunday, April 5th Ministry Sunday -, April 9th- Easter Sunday

May

Faith Formation, every Sunday, May 7th Ministry Sunday, May 20th Strawberry Festival.

Mar-lu-ridge

Greetings from Mar-Lu-Ridge! We invite you to join us for our first Community meal of 2023, Sunday March 12. We will gather in Agape Hall 4-7 p.m. to celebrate the ministry, update folks on future plans, and enjoy a delicious meal and warm fellowship. This is a free event, and all are welcome – bring a friend that may be new to MLR!

Please RSVP: <https://form.jotform.com/220454931637053>





Council Corner

The new 2023 council had our first full meeting, so we would like to share some upcoming events and information from the council and the Synod. February 25 th will be our annual leadership retreat where we work on a program as a group. This year we are going to go through spiritual gifts assessment and the enneagram. Our hope is that by understanding our own personal spirit given gifts, we will collectively feel more empowered to accomplish the goals and continue to work towards God's plan for us at St. Paul's.

We are also beginning to work on some strategic planning events this year. Leadership will be looking at the next five years and gathering input from the congregation on where it sees St. Paul's going. In addition, we will be focusing on how to best use our Parsonage and other buildings to control costs and get the most out of our assets.

On the Synod side, there will be an in person lay leaders networking event on Saturday March 11 th at the Synod Office. The main focus will be on discussing how to reach out into our communities and get people more involved in church now that the pandemic has slowed. This also gives us a chance to interact with other leaders throughout our Synod in person instead of with zoom. See the link below.

The annual Synod assembly will be in June this year in Westminster. Those of you not familiar with Synod assembly, this is where all the congregations throughout the Delaware Maryland synod join and vote on various items affecting the Synod and also items to send to the Church wide assembly for discussion. We will send Pastor Beck and two other voting members as representatives for St. Paul's. If you are interested in going, reach out to any council member and let them know.

Lastly the Synod has a resource library for anyone looking for information on various topics. It includes recordings from meetings we had in the past on different subjects as well as hard copies of items such as an employee handbook. It's a good place to start if you have questions, I will leave the link below.

Synod resource library

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rLbesGTmF9pCkvRWds0m2NS40k97nfpb?usp=sharing>

Lay Leader's Networking Event - Saturday, March 11

Our Lay Leader's Networking Event will be held on Saturday, March 11 at our Synod Office (5699 Meridale Road, Baltimore, MD 21228). Registration will begin at 9 with the event starting at 10:00. We will wrap up by 3:00. Lunch and snacks will be provided. There is no charge for this event. Our Synod's Leadership Team in conjunction with CLAIM is sponsoring this event. We ask that you register at: claimbaltimore@gmail.com so that we can get a count for lunch.

Prepared by Russell Mildenstein