

April



CHURCHMOUSE

2024

Legacy

Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!

We are living in the afterglow of our Easter joy. Throughout April and well into May, we will continue to focus on the power of the resurrection, which brings us new life and eternal life. I pray that you are blessed as you bask in the glory of Jesus Christ, knowing that you are made new in Christ!

Reflecting on our new life, we can appreciate our blessings from Jesus. Our salvation is a legacy from His work on the cross and through the empty tomb. We know that this legacy inspires our witness. Our witness of the Gospel becomes our legacy when we seek to respond to Jesus' love and share our new life in Christ.

To leave a spiritual legacy also means living a life that reflects the Gospel of Jesus Christ in such a profound and impactful way that the Spirit uses us as a catalyst for generations to come. Being made new in our baptisms, we respond to others with love, compassion, forgiveness, and service. Our response to God's grace becomes

our legacy, which is built through word and deed as we engage in relationships, share acts of kindness, and proclaim the message of salvation.

Leaving a spiritual legacy invites us then to intentionally invest in the lives of others. Examples abound! Our grandparenting ministry is a great example of investing in the lives of the generations to come. Our youth ministry also provides not only for the spiritual growth of younger members but also for the future of the Church. Advancing the next generation of leaders is paramount for all who lead now. Your desire to create a spiritual legacy at St. Paul, in your families, and with your friends, matters.

In Deuteronomy 6:6-7, the Lord reminds us that "these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." So, for us who seek to impart faith to our families, friends, and fellow sojourners, leaving a spiritual legacy involves living

as examples of Christ's passion and teachings in all aspects of life. As Paul intimates: we should seek to be imitators of Christ to others (1 Cor 11:1). As you spend these next weeks enjoying the Son-shine of Easter, challenge yourself to focus on the legacy you will leave in His name.

Most of all, leaving a legacy is sharing the grace-filled Gospel that gives each of us the legacy as children of God. As you reflect on the power of the resurrection of Jesus to bring you new life, I pray that you will seek to make your new life His means of sharing the Lord's love and grace. Because of the power of His Word, whatever we do in His name, will not just last through our lifetime, or into the next few generations, but through eternity. The life-giving name of our Risen Lord will always be remembered! He is risen, indeed!

Alleluia!

In His service,
Pastor Rick



When It Rains

The skeleton flower, a perennial native to Japan, has delicate petals that change from opaque white to almost transparent when wet. After it rains, only the flower's intricate, skeleton-like veins are visible.

When the rains come (and they will!) in our lives, the same can be said. Amid difficulty and struggle, our true selves often become more transparent. During a parenting challenge, criticism might emerge. Or while we tackle a tough work project, impatience might rear its ugly head.

Hosea 6:3 (NLT) proclaims: "Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know Him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring." The rains will come. Whether you're experiencing light rain or a downpour, ponder what the water reveals. Then ask God how you can be more open to His work in that area.

—Janna Firestone

Our Associate Pastor

Guided to Service

During last month's Lenten and Holy Week series, "Guided to the Cross," our focus for Maundy Thursday was "Guided to Service." I believe that all of God's people at St. Paul have been guided to serve others as God has gifted them. I believe all of God's people have been freed to serve others by the service Jesus gave at the cross and the empty tomb. In the light of the resurrection, we now serve one another in love. Consider some of these areas:

- Some are guided to serve on our Community Team. Through various community events, St. Paul gets to serve others in the community, joining them in what they are doing and saying: "Hi! We're St. Paul. We're here to serve." Thankful for everyone that serves on this team! An upcoming opportunity to serve will be the Trenton Summer Festival at the end of June. Thank you for Ben and Robin Klus for heading this up! Look for more information on how you can serve before and during the festival. Interested in serving on the Community Team? Look for information on a meeting coming up this month!
- Some are guided to serve on our Connections Team. Through our Lasting Impressions Team, delivering gift bags, sending birthday and baptismal birthday cards and our Pastors Luncheon, St. Paul gets to connect with those who connect with St. Paul! Thankful for everyone that serves on this team! Looking to serve on this team? Contact Dale Malzahn or Tom Wiltse.
- Some are guided to serve on our 11 am Praise Service Team. They serve with music, with song, and on our tech deck. Thankful for everyone that serves on this team! If you have a gift from God that can be used on our Praise Team, let Kim Schutt know!
- Some are guided to serve in our Preschool. Our faculty and staff serve the Downriver community by teaching and caring for so many little ones. What an awesome faculty and staff we have! Know of any families with 3- or 4-year-olds that are looking for a quality preschool? Have them contact Penny Bayer or Maria Merolla for an enrollment form. They would love to serve them!
- ALL of us are guided to serve in our vocations. Whatever God has called you to in terms of marriage, family, citizen, worker, and member of the body of Christ, the cross and empty tomb guides you to faithfully serve others through your God-given vocations. Thankful for everyone that serves in this way!

"For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, serve one another" (Galatians 5:13 ESV).

God's peace in Christ,
Pastor Ben



All-Abilities Inclusion Ministry

Autism Acceptance Month

April is *Autism Acceptance Month*. Previously, it had been called *Autism Awareness Month*. But according to a recent article by Claire Delano, in *Autism Parenting Magazine*, “In 2020, the Autism Society of America replaced “Awareness” with “Acceptance” for the first time. What’s behind this shift, and why do the words matter?” The article explains, “Since 2011, the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN) has designated April as “Autism Acceptance Month.” ASAN emphasizes the importance of accepting Autism as a natural part of the human experience to foster meaningful dialogue.” The goal of Autism Acceptance Month is to be more inclusive of the community it seeks to celebrate. “It promotes not just education about the differences of Autistic people but understanding and respecting them.”



Delano explains that there are many ways that Autism Acceptance can benefit Autistic people:

- **Enhanced self-esteem:** Acceptance empowers Autistic people to embrace their uniqueness, which boosts their self-esteem and helps reduce the stigma sometimes associated with being Autistic.
- **Promotes Inclusivity:** Acceptance encourages inclusivity in schools, workplaces, and communities, which creates a more diverse society.
- **Improves mental health:** Feeling accepted improves mental well-being and reduces anxiety and depression.
- **Promotes positive change:** Autism acceptance encourages society to celebrate the diversity of human experiences.

What can you do during *Autism Acceptance Month*? “You can educate yourself, participate in local events, and advocate for Autistic people. Be a positive role model by speaking up about autism and promoting awareness throughout the year.”

Get Involved In AIM

AIM is St. Paul’s ministry for people with disabilities. We have regular meetings to discuss ways that our congregation can better serve and include disabled people both in our congregation, as well as in our community. Everyone is welcome— inclusion is our middle name, after all. We would especially love to have disabled members of our congregation and our community get involved in this ministry, since their voices are the most important ones, when discussing how best to serve disabled people. If you would like to get involved in this amazing ministry, please contact Lorielle Moorhaus: Imoorhau@emich.edu or 734-625-4081, or visit: splonline.com/aim.

Vicar Chris

Downriver Estates Senior Living Center Ministry

Our ministry was blessed on March 11, as we had our first Baptism! We shared a joyful experience as our loving and merciful God called Susan Reynolds, a child of God, into His Kingdom. We pray that her faith may grow in His Word as she abides in Christ’s loving arms.



Benevolence

Benevolent Assistance

If you, a family member, or a friend, are needing some extra assistance, please remember that St. Paul has a benevolence ministry and expert help from Kyle Hudson, who manages the resources of this ministry. You can leave a message for Kyle at the Church Office, 734-676-1565, ext 116, which will remain confidential. Thank you for the generous donations to this ministry which make it possible to assist both members of St. Paul and our community.



Superimposed Love

Maybe you've heard how salvation is like a total solar eclipse: God doesn't see our sins because Jesus' holiness covers them completely. Or maybe you've heard how trials can cause an "eclipse of faith."

At WorldChallenge.org, Pastor Gary Wilkerson explains that in Greek, eclipse means "I am absent" or "I cease to exist," because people once thought the gods temporarily extinguished the sun. "For Christians, a 'spiritual eclipse' is a dark hour when God seems to be absent from our lives," Wilkerson writes.

Wilkerson points to Peter being sifted like wheat, Elijah and Jeremiah facing extreme discouragement, and David collapsing morally. Amid Satan's attacks, "God seems completely absent," writes the pastor. "In that dark moment of eclipse, the devil has created such chaos we can't possibly see a way out." During times of testing, Christians must cry out to God and trust His faithfulness.

Completing the eclipse analogy, Wilkerson shares Titus 3:4, the "love of God our Savior appeared" (NIV). The Greek meaning of appeared here is superimposed, he writes. God looks on our fraught-filled times of eclipse and "superimposes His divine love over us."

Confirmation Update

Confirmation Year 2023-2024 is OVER! Wow! Time Flies Fast!

Our confirmands finished the year well by doing a deep dive into the truth (and practice) of confessing sins and receiving full and free forgiveness for the sake of Jesus Christ. Our last confirmation "experience" was a mixture of fun and "finishing well." We got to play a game focused on some real, strange laws (who knew that one state outlaws sleeping in a cheese factory!) and how we receive G.R.A.C.E. (God's Riches At Christ's Expense) when we break God's Law because of our sin ... and that's the "core" of the Christian faith. We also had a fun time reviewing all the teachings of the year!



For those who will be confirmed this year, next up is the Confirmation "Retreat" on Sunday, April 7, at 7 pm. Confirmands will be preparing for the Rite of Confirmation that will happen during our 5 pm service on Saturday, April 20. Fourteen confirmands will confess their faith before God and St. Paul! Pray for them and celebrate with them!

During these summer months, St. Paul staff and leadership will be working on making St. Paul's Youth Confirmation experience the best it can be for our youth! Looking forward to seeing what the Lord will do!

God's peace in Christ,
Pastor Ben

Youth Ministry

It Has Been a Busy March for the St. Paul Youth

Friday Night Live for the junior high was on March 1. Our youth played St. Patrick's Day themed Minute-To-Win-It games. Fellowship and fun were enjoyed by all. The senior high youth met for Bibles and Brunch on March 10. We began a series entitled "Prayer." This series focuses on the purpose, pursuit, practice, and power of prayer. The plans for late March include sending Easter cards and gift bags to the residents of Downriver Estates, a senior living facility and an Easter Breakfast which will raise money for the 2025 National Youth Gathering.

Youth Fundraiser

All day on Wednesday, April 17, the St. Paul youth will have a fundraiser at Buffalo Wild Wings in Woodhaven. Just tell your server that you are there for the fundraiser. Thanks for supporting the St. Paul Youth.

Friends In Faith

Trip to the Detroit Institute of Arts

When was the last time you went to the Detroit Institute of Arts? We had hoped to visit it back in January, but it was super cold the day we were scheduled so we are going to try again on Wednesday, April 17. There is no cost to attend. The schedule for the day is as follows:



- Bus picks us up in the front parking lot at church at 12:15.
- 1:00-2:00 guided tour
- 2:00-3:00 at your leisure. Wander the museum or enjoy a lunch (on your own) either at Kresge Court or the Café DIA.
 - **Kresge Court** offers signature sandwiches, soup, salad, shareable small plates, and charcuterie, with beverage service featuring all-day coffee, espresso drinks, natural teas, wine, and beer.
 - **Café DIA** is a cafeteria-style restaurant that offers a menu of fresh foods including daily house-made soup or chili, a grab & go bar, traditional grill favorites, and pizza. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are also available.
- 3:00 bus takes us home.

In May we are taking a trip to The Amish Country to see a production of "Ruth." This can be a day trip, or you can stay one or two nights, the choice is yours. Visit with us at the Friends table in the Gathering Space for a brochure or see the details on our Facebook Page "St. Paul Friend in Faith."



Women's Study

New Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Women of the Bible, beginning Wednesday, April 17, thru Wednesday, May 29, from 10-11:30 am. Sign up in the Gathering Space April 6 & 7, 13 & 14. No cost. Babysitting available. Fellowship begins at 9:30 am in Yellow 3 (Godly Play Room). Class begins promptly at 10 am. Space is open to bring a friend, mom, neighbor, etc. Bring your Bible, a drink of water/coffee.



The Joy of Jesus

The joy that Jesus offers His disciples is His own joy, which flows from His intimate communion with the One who sent Him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.

This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression, or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen,
Lifesigns



Christian Grandparenting

New Video Study

The Intentional Christian Grandparenting Ministry is presenting a second video study of “Grace Based Grandparenting—“Discovering the Secrets to a Heart Connection” based on the book, Extreme Grandparenting” by Dr. Tim and Darcy Kimmel.



These are the dates/topics that will be covered.

- April 8 – Putting the Grand in Parenting
- April 22 – Giving a Blessing
- May 6 – Leaving a Legacy
- May 20 – Bearing a Torch
- June 3 – Setting a Standard

Please join us, all dates are Mondays, time is 11 am and location is the Community Room.

Extreme Grandparenting Book, is optional to enhance the study, and a workbook “Discovering the Secrets to a Heart Connection” recommended to follow along with the presentation, are both available @ shop.gracebasedfamilies.com/

Questions, please contact Bill Malnar; williammalnar1@gmail.com, Michele Price, maprice2@comcast.net, Marjean Martz, jeanies49@hotmail.com

Women’s Ministry

Sisters In Heart Salad Luncheon

It’s finally that time to reveal & pick new sisters!

There will be a salad luncheon on Saturday, April 13, from 11:30 am to 2 pm, in the CLC. Please bring your favorite salad. All women, not only our members, are welcome to attend.



Sisters-in-Heart is a ministry where we pray for a sister throughout the year and remember special dates in her life. There is a signup sheet and Personal Information Sheets in the binder in the Gathering Space. Personal Information Sheets are also available on the website.

If you are unable to attend, fill out your sheet and send it to Linda Laura (18100 Streicher, Rockwood, MI 48173) no later than Monday, April 8. Linda will pick a Sister for you and send her information to you.

Any questions, call Linda at 734-497-7508.

Life Groups

Studies & Sprints

Many thanks once again to the 14 Leaders of groups for "The Bridge" Life Group "Sprint" that just wrapped up. There is no specific study for Spring Life Group "Get-Togethers." Leaders and groups are encouraged to lift each other up and build on a study that resonates with you. RightNowMedia, LHM, and CPH offer theme based or books of the Bible based Christian videos from which to choose. The challenge is to work out a plan consistent with "Covenant/Guidelines" that were worked out in "the Bridge" experience and then just do it. Enjoy using God's gifts, talents, and time He has given you to be of service to others and care for them in His Name in response to His love and sacrifice.



Life Groups are about building relationships. Life Groups grow in knowing Him personally and grow His Kingdom by inviting others to join in. Life Groups are a place where we pray for each other and walk the talk of Christian learning and discipleship together with Him.

Leaders are key for Life Groups to thrive. It's not all that hard. It starts with prayer and an invitation to a handful of people (friends, family, church "connections") that could end up being a life-changing experience for all involved. Start a Life Group or join one now. You'll never regret it. Check out the video on "Guidelines for being a Life Group Leader" in the St. Paul Library on RNM. If you are interested in exploring what it means to be a Life Group Leader, contact one of our Life Group coaches (Karen Tarter, Kyle Hudson, Tom Wiltse, Bill Malnar or me) for a recommendation on a study or next steps for getting a group together.

"Better Together"
Deacon Greg Exner

Our Missionaries

A Few Notes from James & Christel

One of our hopes for 2024 was to start a university ministry outreach that would be student led.

Missionary Hannah Lehman who has been serving on Fridays at church with the various activities going on had a desire to help start an outreach to university students as she herself is attending university.

We also had the opportunity to meet another young man who has been very interested in the Lutheran church and is also of university age who had been wanting to attend church and learn more about who we are.

And then our friend of the congregation, Idaliz, who is a psychologist and has an office in the Mercy Center has a love for helping and guiding young adults in their lives through the challenges it brings.

So, the ministry started!

We meet on Wednesday nights. We open with a Vespers service and then either have time for games and conversation or a workshop led by Idaliz. We then finish, of course, with a meal.

We ask for your continued prayers as we see this as a ministry that can serve the young adults in our community ultimately giving them the opportunity to hear God's Word and receive His gifts.

*A big thank you to Heather Ruesch who is the founder and director of The Cure, for her time, ideas, and resources in student ministry and how that can look for us here in PR. [Read more of this newsletter.](#)



Trustworthy Stewards

After making people in His own image, God entrusted them with the rest of His creation. He wants us to manage well our bodies, our minds and our earthly home. Consider these stewardship quotes from Christian thinkers:

“We ourselves are not masters of our own ability and knowledge. They, like our talents and health, are a loan presented for our use. We must live as people who know that such temporary possessions are not true belongings and that we must give account for our management of them.”

—Albert Schweitzer

“Our God is not a God who discards what He has made, who is defeated by sin and evil. Our God is a redeeming God, a God who is determined to reclaim His fallen world, setting it free from its enslavement to corruption and bringing it to a final state of glory.”

—Douglas J. Moo,
Creation Care

Support Groups

St. Paul Divorce Support Group

A new weekly Divorce Adjustment Group at St. Paul will meet May 8 through June 19 from 6:00pm-8:00pm in the Staff Lounge. Discussion topics include:

- Managing depression and sadness related to divorce
- Coping with anxiety and anger
- Developing self-compassion
- Mastering the art of forgiveness
- Finding meaning and happiness in the new me

Sign-up here. Group size is limited to eight people.

Church Council

March Update

During Church Council’s meeting on March 12, members continued to review policies as the Bridge concept is established within our ministries. We were also provided with a quarterly report.



Over the last month, Church Council members also read an article that highlights upcoming church trends. We had a great discussion on several of the concepts as we venture to provide relevant opportunities to Live to Know Christ and Make Christ Known!




Church Council is composed of members of the congregation who strive to demonstrate Christian leadership principles and represent you! We welcome you to please reach out to Mike Binion, Donna Doss, Bruce Knapp, Kelsi Gautz, Ali McLaughlin, Shawn McNamara, Lindsay Moretti, Dori McPherson, Elisabeth Hipke, Jennifer Riley, or Pat Shope at any time, or email ChurchCouncil@splconline.com with any questions or comments.

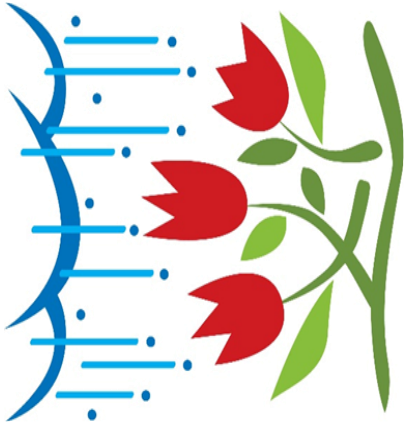

Thank You

Dear St. Paul Friends & Family

I would like to thank everyone in my church family for your cards, thoughts, and prayers during my surgery and recovery. God is good; I am doing well.

Karen Weinschenker

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 <p>8:30 Adult Bible Class 9:30 Worship HC 11:00 Praise Worship 11:00 Prime Time & Story Time 12:00 Senior High Bibles & Brunch 7:00 Confirmation Retreat</p>	<p>6:30a Men's Bible Study 6:00 AIM Open Gym 7:00 Bells of Praise Reh</p> 	<p>1:00 Patchwork Quilters</p>	<p>7:30 Men's B'fest Study @ BB 10:00 Women's Bible Study 11:00 Widows Group Lunch 6:30 Flute Rehearsal 6:45 Yahweh Yoga</p>	<p>2:00 Ladies' Bible Class 6:00 Strong for Life Pickleball 7:00 Alzheimer's Support</p>	<p>8:30a Men's Fellowship 6:00 Men's Euchre Night</p>	<p>9:30 PLACE Seminar 5:00 Worship HC</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>6:30a Men's Bible Study 11:00 Intentional Christian Grandparenting Video 7:00 Bells of Praise Reh 7:00 LWML Event</p>	<p>7:00 Church Council</p>	<p>7:30 Men's B'fest Study @ BB 8:30 MOST Services Project 9:10 Preschool Chapel 11:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry 12:40 Preschool Chapel 6:45 Yahweh Yoga</p>	<p>9:00 MOPSMoms Next 6:00 Strong for Life Pickleball</p>	<p>8:30a Men's Fellowship 6:00 JH Friday Night Live</p>	<p>13</p> <p>9:00 God Connects Class 11:30 Sisters in Heart Salad Luncheon 5:00 Worship</p>
<p>14</p> <p>8:30 Adult Bible Class 9:30 Worship 11:00 Praise Worship HC 11:00 Prime Time & Story Time</p>	<p>15</p> <p>6:30a Men's Bible Study 6:00 AIM Open Gym 7:00 Bells of Praise Reh</p>					

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>8:30 Adult Bible Class</p> <p>9:30 Worship HC</p> <p>11:00 Praise Worship</p> <p>11:00 Prime Time & Story Time</p> <p>3:00 Rejoicing Spirits Worship</p> <p>5:00 AIM Open Gym</p> <p>7:00 Sr. Youth Activity</p>	 <p>6:30a Men's Bible Study</p> <p>11:00 Intentional Christian Grandparenting Video</p> <p>3:00 Men's Golf</p> <p>7:00 Bells of Praise Reh</p>	<p>1:00 Patchwork Quilters</p> <p>7:00 Elders' Meeting</p>	<p>7:30 Men's B'fest Study @ BB</p> <p>9:30 Women's Bible Study</p> <p>12:15 Friends in Faith DIA Visit</p>	<p>2:00 Ladies' Bible Class</p> <p>6:00 Strong for Life Pickleball</p> <p>6:30 Worship Choir</p>	<p>8:30a Men's Fellowship</p>	<p>9:00 God Connects Class</p> <p>10:00 Women's Pickleball</p> <p>5:00 Rite of Confirmation Service with HC</p>
<p>8:30 Adult Bible Class</p> <p>9:30 Worship</p> <p>11:00 Praise Worship HC</p> <p>11:00 Prime Time & Story Time</p>	<p>6:30a Men's Bible Study</p> <p>3:00 Men's Golf</p> <p>7:00 Bells of Praise Reh</p>	<p>12:00 Homebound Team</p>	<p>7:30 Men's B'fest Study @ BB</p> <p>9:30 Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>9:00 MOPSMoms Next</p> <p>6:00 Strong for Life Pickleball</p> <p>7:00 Generosity Team</p>	<p>8:30a Men's Fellowship</p>	<p>5:00 Worship</p>
<p>8:30 Adult Bible Class</p> <p>9:30 Worship</p> <p>11:00 Praise Worship HC</p> <p>11:00 Prime Time & Story Time</p>		<p>30</p>	<p>30</p>		<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>