



THE PROCLAIMER

February 2023

The mission of St. Paul Lutheran Church is to hear, share, and proclaim the Word of God.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK:

“How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.”

Psalm 133 (NRSV)

Dear friends in Christ,

Psalm 133 above is the fourth shortest of the psalms, yet it says a lot in a few words about how wonderful it is when God's people of faith work together. In a recent sermon, I quipped that a lot of women might not much appreciate oil dripping from the long beard of their men like the psalm says the oil dripped from the beard of Aaron. Yet this image of dripping oil had great meaning for God's people in Old Testament times. Oil was used for special ceremonies like ordination or anointing a person to be a leader. God commanded Moses to anoint his brother Aaron and Aaron's sons to be priests and leaders of the people as they journeyed toward the Promised Land.

We can interpret this psalm to mean that as God's people of faith, the church, we are all anointed in our various callings to live, love, and serve together in community. We are richly blest with the generous outpouring of God's oil of grace and goodness. As we live by faith in the renewing love of God each day, through Jesus our Lord, we are empowered by God's Holy Spirit to do our Lord's work in the world. When we are open to doing so, how very good and pleasant it is both for us and for our Lord!

Furthermore, the psalmist likens this unity to the very hot summers of the Mediterranean coastlands. Humidity from the ocean stacks up in heavy mists at the summit of Mount Hermon where the coolness of the altitude condenses the humidity into a very thick dew which brings moisture and rains into the hills and valleys of Zion (Israel) east of the Mount Hermon range. There crops can grow and flourish, all because of that nourishing moisture.

In the Texas Hill Country we fully understand the importance of dew, moisture, irrigation, and precipitation to bring abundant growth to the land. Likewise in our hearts and souls and minds we need the spiritually nurturing grace of God in our lives through our Messiah and Lord Jesus Christ. In the waters of holy baptism God initially brings us into the body of Christ. Then regular worship and prayer, study of God's word, and receiving the holy sacrament of his body and blood through the bread and wine continue to nourish and strengthen us so we may bear good fruits throughout our lives.

Lent is a time to deepen our faith. It is a time to journey with our Lord toward his sacrificial death on the cross for us. Our Lenten theme this year is *The Hills of Lent*. What more appropriate theme could we possibly have here in the Texas Hill Country? We will journey to Mount Moriah, Mount Sinai, Mount Carmel, Mount Zion, Mount Olive, and Mount Calvary. We will learn the stories of faith which happened on each of these mounts and how they spiritually pointed toward the eventual need for our Lord's sacrificial and lifegiving death on the cross for us.

Lent 2023 begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22, at 6:30 PM, with worship and imposition of ashes. On the five following Wednesdays of Lent (after Ash Wednesday), confirmation class will meet in the office house at 5:30 rather than in the fellowship hall. At 6 PM, dinners will be served by our standing committees in the fellowship hall for all members, including confirmands. At 6:30, we ask that adults and youth enter the church for a brief 30 minute Lenten service.

Please come and gather with us for fellowship on both Wednesdays and Sundays, beginning with Ash Wednesday. Our faith will be strengthened and deepened as we walk together in unity -- up the mountains, down into the valleys, and out into the world to live, love and serve our God and neighbors.

Grace & Peace in Christ,

Pastor Fred Krebs

(Also see noon Lent schedule on other page.)

40 DAYS OF LENT

BEGIN ASH WEDNESDAY, February 22

2023 LENTEN THEME: "The Hills of Lent"

(All midweek Lenten Offerings will go to ELCA Peru & Mason County Senior Center.)

Schedule: (All services begin at 6:30 PM)

- Ash Wednesday, February 22
- Wednesday, March 1
- Wednesday, March 8
- Wednesday, March 15
- Wednesday, March 22
- Wednesday, March 29

Holy Week:

Palm/Passion Sunday: April 2 at 10:45AM

Maundy Thursday: April 6 at 7:00 PM

Good Friday: April 7 at 7:00 PM

Resurrection Worship: April 9 at 10:45 AM

Lenten luncheons for 2023:

February 22 (Ash Wednesday)	Hilda UMC (at St. Paul Lutheran)
March 1	St. Paul Lutheran
March 8	First UMC
March 15	River of Life
March 22	St. Martin's Episcopal (at St. Joseph Catholic)
March 29	St. Joseph Catholic
April 6 Maundy Thursday, April 7 Good Friday, April 9 Easter	No Lenten lunch service during Holy Week

LENTEN SUPPER SCHEDULE - FELLOWSHIP HALL AT 6:00 PM

With the start of the Lenten Season just around the corner, preparations for the Lenten suppers have begun. Each of the church committees will host a light supper for those attending the Lenten worship services. The meal will be served in the Fellowship Hall beginning Wednesday, March 1 at 6:00 p.m. with the worship service following at 6:30 p.m. (A meal will not be served on Ash Wednesday.) The schedule for serving meals for Lent is:

Mar. 1 - Worship & Music Committee

Mar. 8 - Parish History & Evangelism Committees

Mar. 15 - Parish Life & Stewardship Committees

Mar. 22 - Property Committee

Mar. 29 - Parish Education & Children's Church Committees

MASON MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE CYCLE OF PRAYER

The Mason Ministerial Alliance is asking congregations and faith-based organizations to pray for each other during the year, on a rotating basis monthly. For February 2023, we are all asked to pray focused prayers for our St. Paul Lutheran Church.

VALENTINE LUNCHEON



Parish Life Committee is sponsoring a Valentine Lunch February 12 following the worship service. You are invited to enjoy a salad, pork tenderloin-wood grilled, new potatoes, green beans wrapped in bacon, and dessert. Door prizes will be awarded. Cost is \$15 per person. Reservations should be made by February 5.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING REPORT

The congregation of St. Paul Lutheran met for its Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 29, 2023. At that meeting the following actions were taken. The 2023 Ministry Plan was adopted. The following were elected to the 2023 Congregation Council: Cathy Grace, Janet Schmidt, Walt Reichenau, and Cindy Bowden (2 year term). The 2023 Nominating Committee was elected and they are: Jerry Bearden, LeEster Burch, Merlina Gamel, Kassi Reichenau, & Rex Smith. The congregation gave their approval for the council to appoint delegates to the 2023 Synod Assembly.

After the Annual Meeting, the newly elected council met in the Office Building to elect officers. The following were elected: Jeff Owen, President; Mark Lehmborg, Vice-President; Cindy Bowden, Secretary; and Bob Vacek, Treasurer.

We extend our gratitude to those going off the council. They are Lisa Atchison, LeEster Burch, and Rex Smith.

STANDING COMMITTEES GROUP MEETING

The date set for the Standing Committees Group Meeting is Sunday, February 26th. At this time each year, standing committees meet, organize and set goals for the coming year. This is also a time to encourage members who are not involved in one of the standing committees to join. Our present standing committees are Worship & Music, Evangelism and Social Concerns, Property, Parish Life, Parish History, Parish Education, Children's Church and Stewardship.

A covered dish luncheon will be held immediately following Worship on February 26th and the group meeting will begin after the luncheon.

FOOD BANK SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY



St Paul's month for volunteers to assist in food distribution is February. Current distribution schedule is February 13 and February 27.

If you want to volunteer contact Mark Lehmborg at 347-2400. Packing food boxes takes place in the morning and actual distribution occurs in the afternoon from 4pm to 5:30 pm to drive through food recipients.

GOD’S LOVE IS MY COMFORT AND JOY

Round and round, months and seasons go...February comes, and I pray God’s love will flourish and grow! Sadly, each day we see evidence that we live in a broken world. I often ask....”How will things ever get better?” February brings the image of hearts and I am drawn to the love notes that are left for us in the Bible. 1 Corinthians 13:13 is often read at weddings, a time of two people professing their love for one another, but it is a POWERFUL love note to be opened and studied by ALL of us! “And now these three remain; faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” We also learn that love never fails. Wow! What more can we ask for. I love to study God’s love notes in the Bible.

Think about Hannah in 1 Samuel. Even in her darkest days, this childless woman felt hope was alive in her heart. More than anything else, she wanted a son. Hannah kept praying for one, and even promised God that if He answered her prayer, she would give her son back to Him. God whispered comfort and joy into Hannah’s heart when Samuel was born as she felt the love of a mother for her baby instead of just witnessing it in others. We move from this Old Testament story and read the New Testament love note in John 3:16 and experience life-giving love and hope, given by a loving Father to His sinful children.

God’s son, Jesus, died on the cross for OUR SALVATION! There is NO GREATER comfort and joy! This year, in 2023, to help me experience God’s love, I have made a list of love notes for myself.

They go like this: Bible, Prayer, Sharing, Church, and God’s Work, My Hands.

1. Daily read my BIBLE to know Christ better.
2. Talk to God in PRAYER every day.
3. SHARE the GOOD NEWS, telling others about Christ.
4. Worship, fellowship, and serve at ST. PAUL, MY CHURCH.
5. Do GOD’S WORK with my hands, showing love and concern for others.

May God give me the strength to be steadfast in doing these things so I may see love bloom and grow as springtime approaches.

Here are 3 love notes in February that I leave for you to consider:

- A. Younger Children: Be present on February 26th, at Children’s Church to worship and take part in the beautiful tale, “The Legend of 3 Trees.”
- B. Confirmation and High School Students: Come to a Mardi Gras event on February 19th at 5 at the Fellowship Hall and enter the season of Lent with love for God’s Son who gave His life for us.

- C. Adults and Families: Attend the Valentine Lunch on February 12th, experiencing the comfort of “No cooking” and the joy of fellowship with your church family.

In closing, here is my love note for each of you:
 If I could write a note and put it in God’s hand
 I know God would read it and truly understand
 Everything I’m feeling and every word I say.
 We’re all His precious children.
 Let’s live for HIM today!

In Christ’s Love,
 Ann Mahnken

WOMEN’S MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Rescheduled to meet on Wednesday, Feb. 8 at 10:00am at the home of Helen Habecker. Car pool from church at 9:45, Leader is Alberta Birk.

JANUARY COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- Council expressed appreciation to outgoing council members: Lisa Atchison, LeEster Burch, and Rex Smith.
- Valentine Day Luncheon will be held on February 12 following the worship service.
- Standing Committees Group Meeting and Covered Dish Luncheon will be held on Sunday, Feb. 26th.

ST. PAUL CELEBRATES FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----|--|
| 3 | Tommy Durst |
| 4 | Reubin Ake |
| 8 | John Gillespie |
| 10 | Stephanie Sparks Simonton |
| 11 | Patsy Zesch |
| 12 | Tom Gafford
Cannon Jacoby
Mary Thorn |
| 14 | Cathy Grace |
| 15 | Jack Gillespie |
| 17 | Linda Doyal
Mark Lehmborg |
| 26 | Margarine Beaman |
| 29 | LeEster Burch |

If your birthday or a family member’s birthday is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please let Deb Probst know @ 325-597-2832 or dcprobst@hotmail.com. Thank you for helping us with this project.

GIFT OF FAITH GALA

You are invited to the Eleventh Annual Cross Trails Ministry *Gift of Faith Gala* on March 4, 2023. Join us for an evening of dining, entertainment, fundraising, and fellowship at The Courtyard Marriott in New Braunfels from 5-9 PM. Cocktail Attire Requested. Gala information and tickets can be found at GiftOfFaith23.givesmart.com. Make sure no one misses out on camp because of the cost! For more information, visit crosstrails.org, email jessica@crosstrails.org or call 830-257-6340.

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTORY FOR FEBRUARY

Lay Reader: Carolyn Loeffler

Communion Assistants: Carolyn Loeffler & Deb Probst

Council Rep. on Duty: Jeff Owen

Bell Ringers: Mark Lehmborg and Mike Goff

Speaker System: Bob Vacek and Mark Lehmborg

Ushers: Glenn Ruthven, Glenn Nebgen, Debbie Nebgen, & Bridget Langdale

Property Person on Duty: Nancy Brown

Acolytes

(2/5) Hudson Terrell

(2/12) Kinley Wenzel

(2/19) Rodee Brooks

(2/22-Ash Wed.) Camille Schmidt

(2/26) Reece Evans

Altar Guild:

Flower Chairman: Paulette Keller

Parament Chairman: Kassi Reichenau

Communion Chairman: Helen Habecker

Women's Bible Study:

Morning Bible Study (Second Wed. at 10am)

Bible Study Leader: Alberta Birk

Hostess: Helen Habecker,

carpool from church at 9:45AM

Evening Bible Study (5 PM – Third Tues. of Month)

Memorials: Church Office 347-5582

We wish to thank those who have so graciously contributed their time and talents toward the ministry of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Rev. Fred Krebs

Pastor

Mrs. Heather McFarland

Church Administrator

Mrs. Ann Mahnken

Youth Coordinator

Church Office Hours:

Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

(325)347-5582 (Office) (325)347-8420 (Fax)

Email: stpaulmason@gmail.com

Website: www.stpaulmason.com

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR DECEMBER

Congregational Giving: \$30,397.40

Expenditures: \$22,218.21

ASH WEDNESDAY'S WAKE-UP CALL

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

With these words from Genesis 3:19 and the swipe of a dirty thumb across our foreheads, Ash Wednesday propels us into Lent with the proper context to understand our lives as stewards of all that God entrusts to us.

Ash Wednesday, which falls on Feb. 22, teaches us that we are mortals, after all. It crushes our ego, dispels our pretensions and drives us deep into God's mysteries: Why are we here? What are our lives all about? What's *really* important? Pray over these questions and profound insights emerge.

We are dust. Yes, but we are *God's* dust. Our body consists of trillions of atoms, each a speck of “dust” created by God billions of years ago. God put us together from the stuff of the universe.

- Therefore, we are quite literally “earthy” beings, made of the same material as air, water, soil and stone. As part of creation, we work to preserve, protect and sustain creation.
- Therefore, we have reverence for our bodies, expressed through healthy living.

We are breath. We are “dust” into which God has “breathed the Holy breath of life” (Genesis 2:7).

- Therefore, every breath we take is holy, reminding us of God's life force in us.
- Therefore, we look to God to align our lives with God's holy realities of peace, love, joy, justice and truth.

Our time is brief. Our “dust” will return to the earth someday. We are mortal.

- Therefore, every hour, every second is sacred. We spend our time wisely, carefully, prayerfully.
- Therefore, we do not cling to possessions, knowing that we hold onto them only for a little while.
- Therefore, we fill our lives with treasures of lasting value – friendships, trust, love, joy, service, generosity and harmony.

This Lent, spend time in prayer, with openness and honesty. See how God will turn your heart and mind, transforming you into the person you were created to be. Reflect each day on Ash Wednesday. “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

--Rob Blezard

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