

# MONTHLY NEWS OF SAINT PAUL BENSON

## *Inspiration*

February 2021

### PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

Perhaps this is unfair, but something I love about February is that we are drawing close to March and the season of Spring! Until we get to the robins and crocus and pollen, we get to enjoy the secular sentiment of Valentines Day. I like to claim this holiday, not so much as one for romance, but for the goofy full-bore appreciation of every possible thing a person could enjoy - and love. There is a theological basis for this kind of appreciation; we hear time and again that God is pleased with creation, has called us just as we are, and rejoices with us when we share God's love with one another.

On my list of celebrations and rejoicings: the people of Saint Paul continue to figure out how to care for each other and the ongoing work of this church in the world, even while enduring a pandemic that seems to have lasted decades. On my list of things to love this month: we once again were able to pay our mission shares in full! Our online children's pageant was so astounding that people are still watching it! It appears some weekends our three worship services reach as many as 700 people! Sermon by phone really works! The Saint Paul Youth group and Children's Ministries' **DynoKids** are hanging in there and meeting more frequently now than a year ago! Our choirs continue to sound amazing! The Child Development Center was able to handle all those remote learners for over a semester! I realize that's a lot of exclamation points, but as I made the list, I felt more and more love and encouragement about what God has been able to do in the midst of difficult times.

We continue as a church to find our resilience and creativity; this year Ash Wednesday worship will be live streamed; if you would like to pick up ashes and a prayer card for in-home use, stop by the Chapel door on Corby Street on Sunday, February 14th between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. You can share your love for the community by dropping off donations for "Undie Sunday" while preparing for Lent's season of love. Perhaps not what you usually do on Valentines Day, but certainly ways to continue to share and receive God's love.

With love,  
Rev Stephanie Ahlschwede

### Special offering for February

This month's Communal Offering will be sent to **Together**, the homeless prevention organization that works through strategic partnerships and collaborations. By participating in this offering we also participate in the vision of a community of prosperity where everyone experiences safe, affordable housing, food security, health and wellness. Emergency services related to housing and utilities have been especially vital for those affected by the pandemic. When people call for help at Saint Paul they are referred to Together and their Crisis Engagement Team is prepared to provide assistance. When we give generously we extend the Christian values of Hope, Dignity, Compassion, Excellence, and Diversity to tens of thousands of individuals and families served by Together. Thank you for giving.

Your Mercy & Justice Team

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The Inspiration is published monthly. Information is due to the editor by the 19th of the month to be included in the next issue.

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# February Church Calendar

## Special Communal Offering for Human Relations Day

### Sundays

- 8:00 am PianoSide Worship Available on YouTube
- 10:00 am LiveStream Worship on Facebook
- 11:00 am Dyno Kids on Zoom
- 12:15 pm Kirundi/Kiswahili Worship Livestream

### Sunday, February 7

4:00 pm-5:00 pm Youth prepare Valentines in Youth Room

### Sunday, February 14

11:00 am-1:00 pm Drop off time for Undie Sunday items and pick up time for Ash Wednesday ashes and prayer card, Corby Street side of the church

4:00 pm-5:00 pm Youth Valentine Party

### Sunday, February 21

4:00 pm-5:00 pm Youth meeting on Zoom

### Sunday, February 28 (Scout Sunday)

4:00 pm-5:00 pm Youth host congregational Bible Jeopardy Game

### Mondays through Fridays

7:00 am-5:30 pm Child Development Center open

9:00 am-5:00 pm Church Office Open (sometimes closes at 3:00 pm, please call ahead)

### Mondays

10:00 am Clergy Meeting

### Monday, February 15

7:00 pm Church Council

### Tuesdays

9:00 am Lectio Divina Prayer Group

3:00 pm PianoSide Taping

### Tuesday, February 2

4:15 pm Serving Dinner at Siena/Francis House;  
call the church office if you are interested in serving

### Wednesdays

11:00 am. Staff Check-in

### Wednesday, February 3

6:00 pm *Grateful* Book Study on Zoom

### Wednesday, February 17 (Ash Wednesday)

7:00 pm Service Livestream on Facebook, available later on YouTube

### Thursdays

6:00 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal

7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

### Saturday, February 13

8:30 am Book Club Meeting on Zoom

## Girl Scout Cookies

If your scout is selling cookies or you would like to purchase cookies, contact the church office and we will do our best to make a match to support our church family Girl Scouts during this UMC scouting month.

The Christian Year calendar is our guide for worship and Christian faith formation. The beginning of the Christian year is the season of Advent, approximately four weeks before Christmas Day, and continues with special days and seasons following the life of Christ and the mission of the church. There are two major cycles in the Christian Year. One is the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle (February 14 is the final Sunday of Epiphany, also known as Transfiguration Day) that is focused upon Christmas and the mission of the church. The other is the Lent-Easter-Pentecost cycle that has Easter, celebrated this year on April 04, as its focus. In the three year process of reading Scripture, we are in the second year. Year B focuses on the Gospel accountings of Mark and John more than any other year. We remember the beginning of Lent is Ash Wednesday, the next of the liturgical events in the life of the Church. From the blasts of the shofar reminding us to heed the warning call and turn our lives around (repent), the imposition of the ashes on our hand or head, our observance of Ash Wednesday, February 17 is a tradition for St. Paul Church. Due to the pandemic our gathering will be virtual this year, with worship being streamed at 7:00 p.m. from the Sanctuary. We will hear words of scripture, songs of faith sung, and hear the message that, although we have failed, there is forgiveness and another chance for living the life to which God has called each of us. Elsewhere in this issue are words of instruction on how you may receive ashes to be used as part of worship that night, or whenever you choose to observe the ritual. We pay tribute to the practice of scouting on February 28, with Scouting Ministries Sunday. We invite any in the congregation who are Scouts to contact the office so that your name might be lifted up as part of our service. February is also Black History month and a wide variety of culturally appropriate music will be offered in worship at both *PianoSide* (released on YouTube each week at 8:00 a.m.) and *LiveStream* (live on FaceBook each week at 10:00 a.m. and later on YouTube) as has been our tradition for over 25 years. We are appreciative of the ministry *through* music of the many volunteers and friends that continue to bring meaning and encouragement to each service. We all long for the day that we might worship together in person.

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## Undie Sunday, Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 11 am-1pm

Donations will be accepted by the Mercy and Justice Team. Drive up to the Roth Chapel doors on Corby Street with your donations of underwear, warm socks, and thermal underwear will be accepted. Even though we take these things for granted, humans living on poverty-level incomes do not spend money on the essentials they so desperately need. Donations of cash or checks are also gratefully accepted. If the specific time does not work for you, please call the church office before dropping off items. This year the donations will be given to the Stephen Center.

### *Learning, Serving, Praying, Playing*

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 4-5 pm—Preparing appreciation Valentines for Benson West Elementary School Teachers (Youth Room)

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 4-5 pm—Valentine Party

February 21<sup>st</sup>, 4-5 pm—Zooming

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 4-5 pm—All Congregational Bible Jeopardy Game

Last month the youth learned more about their spiritual gifts by participating in a spiritual assessment. By their scores, it shows that they grew up at Saint Paul! Mercy and Justice and demonstrating God's love to others were high on their lists. In the coming weeks, we will continue to discuss ways of living out gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When collecting the Reverse Advent Calendar donations, we were blessed with a sun-shiny, calm day. Everyone dressed warm and we stood outside the chapel doors for two hours.

Plans were also made to go sledding at Mahoney State Park towards the end of January.

*Thank you so much for supporting our youth. Your prayers are appreciated!*

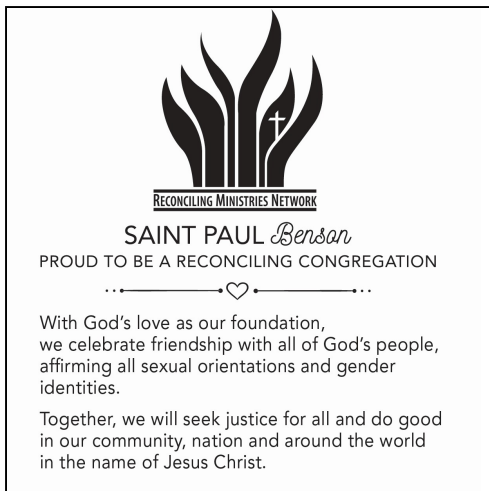


# SAINT PAUL *Benson*

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**February 14th, 11 am-1 pm, Corby Street Side of the Building**  
Share God's love by picking up your Ash Wednesday kit at the east door  
and proceeding to the Chapel door to drop off items for Undie Sunday.

## *inTouch*

### Hospitalizations

Shirley DeLong, Ellis Roussell, Kathy Rice

### Congratulations

To Gage Christensen and Monica Lahs, in the birth of twin daughters, Briar Rose and Parker Rayne, on January 4. Briar and Parker's great-grandmother is Rozanne Christensen.

### Christian Sympathy

To the family of Ruby Meck, in her death.  
To the family of Bonnie Sibert, in her death.  
To Margaret Sutton and family in the death of her husband, Dennis.

### Memorials

For George Larsen—Paula Johnson  
For Ethelyn (Lynn) Larsen—Paula Johnson  
For Sheila Larsen—Paula Johnson  
For Lawrence Engelhardt—Doris Engelhardt & Family  
For Collin Kroll—Doris Engelhardt & Family

### Honorarium

In honor of Nick & Mary Stolzer's 60th Wedding Anniversary—John & Betty Pestal