



PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

Embrace.

This word began nudging me during Lent. I found myself reading it, hearing it - it was a word of the week that grew into a month, and one that I did not choose. I decided that if this word had chosen me, perhaps my best course would be to . . . **embrace** both the word and what it means on the faith journey from Lent into Easter and beyond.

A quick word study reminded me that a physical embrace is often a warm hug, perhaps from someone who knows us very well - a longtime friend or a relative who has known us since childhood. Embrace can also be used to describe an enthusiastic acceptance or support of something new whether that be a change in tradition, diet, location, or weather.

During Lent, we have embraced the stories of God's love as demonstrated by the loving acts of Jesus' ministry of healing. We have embraced this path of love together - fasting to benefit UMCOR, welcoming Temple Israel and Bishop Wilson to our congregation, and by neighborly sharing of Valentines for Benson High School teachers & staff and undies for school kids.

In the Holy week scriptures, we hear the narrative of the holy embrace of Jesus. He embraces his journey toward Easter. The people who gather during the palm procession embrace him with their Hosannas. Jesus embraces his disciples during the Last Supper with nourishment far beyond what they could comprehend.

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Proud to #BeUMC

A Note from Rev. Steph

For five years, I have volunteered with the Great Plains Conference board of Trustees, the last three as its president. It's been an unprecedented season for many reasons - but none more important than the negotiation of the terms for Kansas and Nebraska UMC churches wishing to leave the denomination through what is called the "**disaffiliation**" process.

Throughout our history, the UMC has been known as a "big tent" denomination with great room for diversity. However, our international denomination has a governance system that can be difficult to navigate even on the best of days. At a 2019 General Conference special session, delegates voted to create a short exit timeframe for U.S. congregations who find it untenable to remain in a diverse denomination - known as "**disaffiliation.**"

In our Great Plains Conference, the opportunity to disaffiliate closes at the end of April. To leave, churches must hold a Church Conference and vote with at least a 2/3 majority. Any Conference debts and two years forward of their mission shares must be paid. Individuals who wish to stay UMC members can transfer to the Conference rolls or to any other UMC until a new church is formed in their area.

While some in our immediate area have chosen to leave, the overwhelming majority of churches in our Conference have chosen to join Saint Paul Benson in proudly **staying United Methodist.**

Saint Paul Benson has no need to vote. We joined the Reconciling Congregation movement in 2019, confirming then to be part of the diverse and welcoming future that is the United Methodist Church.

What do we need to do now? Be on the lookout for visitors (both in person and online) who may need a new church home. Your warm greetings or online comments will make a difference! Saint Paul's history as a haven for seekers will continue to light the path in this critical time in the United Methodist Church.

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RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

With God's love as our foundation, we celebrate friendship with all of God's people, affirming all sexual orientations and gender identities. Together, we will seek justice for all and do good in our community, nation and around the world in the name of Jesus Christ.



Rev. Jerry Brabec

Holy Week Begins

Palm Sunday, April 02: To the faithful Jew, a mecca to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover in the Temple was the epitome of worship. Jesus knew this and went himself to proclaim God's kingdom being at hand. We remember the excitement of the crowd with brass at 10:00 and waving palms at all services.

Maundy Thursday, April 06: Holy Thursday is the Christian reenactment of the Passover feast that Jesus himself celebrated with the Twelve Disciples the eve of his arrest. As part of our Holy Communion celebration, we will observe a ritual of hand washing, following Christ's command to, "do this in remembrance of me." The Joy Bell Ringers will offer special music during this service beginning at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

Good Friday, April 07: For Protestants, the observance of Good Friday is a most somber and solemn occasion. This powerful retelling of Christ's last hours will begin at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Our worship will center round the power of the cross as we hear the words of the Saint Paul Youth ask, "Am I the one?"

Holy Saturday, April 08: We begin our time of worship with a reminder that Christ has not yet risen. The sacrament of Holy Communion offers us the chance to start anew in God's love for us as Christ's resurrection is announced. The service will begin at 5:00 PM in Roth Chapel.

Easter Day, April 09: Easter Sunday is the main reason why Christians keep Sunday, the first day of the week, as the primary day of religious observance. Easter serves as the great feast day and pinnacle of the Christian liturgical year. It is also the first day of the new season of the Great Fifty Days, or Eastertide, which runs from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. Our celebration of the resurrection will include communion observances at 8:00 and 10:00 AM. Bring your family and friends to worship at Saint Paul Benson!



PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE **Embrace.**

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We participate in Good Friday, remembering the times we have failed to reciprocate God's embrace, and return to worship on Easter to celebrate that amid our humanity God continues to embrace us with the ongoing work and celebration of the Resurrection.

As we move from Holy Week to Easter and beyond, I am so very encouraged that God will continue to be present in our lives, offering opportunities to share the embrace that we have already found and find again and again.

I look forward to greeting you from the warm embrace of worship at Saint Paul this Holy Week and Easter season, as we celebrate the warm and supportive love of God that we find in the risen Christ each and every day.

Rev. Stephanie

*in*Concert

MasterSingers Return to Saint Paul!

Under the musical direction of Dr. Laureen Pickle, this ensemble is known for their a cappella (unaccompanied) jazz stylings. They are currently in rehearsal for their next concert featuring music with a 'name' theme.

Sunday, April 02
"What's in a Name?"
Sanctuary 6:00 PM

Ten free tickets are available to the Church but all Saint Paul concert-goers will be given the "family and friends" discount price of \$10 per ticket. Plan to be present for a concert sure to please even casual musical theater fans!

Meet "Jolene" & get to know "Sweet Caroline" as we sing our way through some of time's biggest hits!

SAINT PAUL BENSON
snapshots



*Bishop David Wilson preached on March 19
Jerry, Faith, Bishop, Stephanie & Marta*



*March 26 The Homecoming
Hank, Kylie, Spencer John, Derek & Marc*

UWF President Belinda Johnson organized the Spring Luncheon



*UWF Spring Luncheon March 11
Pastor Faith and Pearl Spicka with friends*



*Dave Marsh
Entertained
with Irish Music*



Temple Israel Choir Exchange March 12 and 17

PRAYERS for God's People

Notes of Thanks

Vance Taylor wishes to acknowledge the many greetings shared with him on the event of his 100th birthday. He appreciates your warm wishes!

Gladys Lantz thanks the cheerful crew responsible for the UMCOR pancake feed February 19.

An honorarium was received from **Miles Remer** to thank our Choir "who enhanced and added joy & reverence to my Bar Mitzvah at Temple Israel."

Recent Hospitalizations

Scott Pockett, Allison Corson

Christian Sympathy

For Kristin & Scott Camp and family in the death of Scott's father, H. Carl Camp.

For the family of Marian Bailey in her death March 26.

Memorials

For Tom Hallstrom: Anonymous

For Marvin Gustafson: Judy Buono

For Nick Stolzer: Janelle & Bob Goding, Claudia & Jack Griger, Carol Johnson, Mary Ann Kirchner, Susan Owens.

For Rozanne Christensen: Mary Ann Kirchner

For Charlotte Baasch: Jane & Larry Baasch

For H. Carl Camp: Jerry Brabec

Our April Calendar

COMMUNAL OFFERING: OTOC

Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) seeks to connect people across lines that tend to divide them: race and ethnicity, economics, religion, geography, and language. Community organizing demands time, talent, discipline and commitment and your gifts.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday 9:00 – 4:00; Friday 9:00 – 1:00

SUNDAYS

8:45 AM	Soul Journeys for Women (off 4/9)	Library
9:30 AM	The Choir Rehearsal	Room 250
10:00 AM	Worship	
	In-Person in the Sanctuary and YouTube Livestream	
11:15 AM	Sunday School (off 4/9)	Room 313
3:00 PM	Prayer Service	Roth Chapel

MONDAYS

9:00 AM	Lectio Divina	Offsite
9:00 AM	Quilters	Offsite
10:30 AM	Mon. Morning Musings (off 4/10)	Library
6:00 PM	Benson Theatre (4/3, 4/10, 4/17)	Wesley Hall
7:00 PM	MasterSingers	Roth Chapel

TUESDAYS

1:30 PM	Prayer Shawl Ministry	Library
7:00 PM	"Learning to Pray" Book Study	Zoom

WEDNESDAYS

4:00 PM	Tai Chi	Room 111
6:00 PM	Benson Theatre (4/5, 4/12, 4/19)	Wesley Hall

THURSDAYS

5:45 PM	Joy Bells Rehearsal (off 4/6)	Balcony
6:00 PM	Benson Theatre (4/6, 4/20)	Wesley Hall
7:00 PM	The Choir Rehearsal (off 4/6)	Room 250

SATURDAYS

5:00 PM	Worship	Roth Chapel
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MONDAYS - THURSDAYS

4:00 PM (Varies)	Omaha Girls Rock	Rooms 254-6
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SATURDAY, APRIL 1

11:00 AM	Omaha Girls Rock Flea Market	Parking Lot/FH
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MONDAY, APRIL 3

8:00 AM	ENOA Foster Grandparents	Fellowship Hall
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TUESDAY, APRIL 4

5:45 PM	Bell Choir Rehearsal	Balcony
7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal	Room 250

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5

9:30 AM	United Women in Faith	Room 111
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THURSDAY, APRIL 6

7:00 PM	Worship	Sanctuary
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FRIDAY, APRIL 7

7:00 PM	Worship	Sanctuary
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SATURDAY, APRIL 8

9:00 AM	Book Club	Immanuel Village
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SATURDAY, APRIL 15

9:00 AM	All-Church Yard Cleanup	Grounds
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SUNDAY, APRIL 23

2:00 PM	Holy Listening Bird Watching	Cunningham Lake
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FRIDAY, APRIL 28

8:00 AM	ENOA Senior Companions	Fellowship Hall
5:00 PM	Wedding Rehearsal	Sanctuary

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

10:00 AM	Piano Recital	Sanctuary
2:00 PM	Wedding	Sanctuary



United Women in Faith

All Women Welcome!

WED., APRIL 5

9:30 AM ROOM 111
COFFEE & PROGRAM

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

In-person at Immanuel Village or via Zoom

"Mad Honey" by Jodi Picoult

Saturday, April 8 at 9 AM

Meet on the 2nd floor "Hub" through the south entrance.

Call Connie Crawford for info 402-660-8211.

Let's Get Growing!

ALL-CHURCH YARD CLEANUP

SATURDAY
APRIL 15
9AM

Bring Your Favorite Hoe, Rake, Gloves, Etc.!



Embrace the Love of Giving.



Celebrate God's loving embrace with an Easter gift to Saint Paul Benson. Special envelopes are located in the pew racks and the church office or make a gift on our website (simply click the "Donate" button for instructions.)



Reclaim. Revive. Renew.

MONDAY MORNING MUSINGS IT'S TIME FOR THE UMC TO HAVE A NEW DISCUSSION

Rev. Jerry Brabec invites you to attend a 3-week study series centering on what it means to be United Methodist. The class will dive into Scripture readings and engage in conversations on the key points of **Reclaim. Revive. Renew.**

**MONDAYS, MAY 1, 8 & 15
10:30 AM | LIBRARY**

The UMC is founded on grace, anchored in Scripture, and based in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Celebrate work being done by local churches and individual United Methodists as they live out their faith as people of God.



YOUTH MISSION TRIP MAY 30 – JUNE 2

Join the fun of our annual Saint Paul youth mission trip! Members and friends who have completed 6th grade are invited to join the team. \$25 registration fee is due April 30th. Contact Rev. Ahlschwede for details!



Let's Get Social!

Follow, Like, Subscribe and Friend us! We're easy to find by searching for "SaintPaulBenson" on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or YouTube.

You got to have Faith

Rev. Faith Kubai

We continue with our Lenten journey as we **Pray, Fast** and **Give**. We are called at this time to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's footsteps. Our Tuesday evening study of Fr. Martin's book, "Learning to Pray," has been so great with people from both services joining in. The book has been a great tool to many of us, and I can't wait to listen to testimonies on how God has spoken to us through this study.

I am very excited for the opportunity I have been given to serve as Saint Paul's next Lead Pastor.

With great humility I have accepted the role, and I can't wait to see what God holds for us all during the coming years. My greatest desire is to build on Saint Paul Benson's recent past to create a safe place of worship for all people.

This news came at a time when my dad is celebrating his 50th year in the ministry and my mum her 37th year as a preacher - both with the Methodist Church in Kenya. My upbringing from staunch Christian parents shaped my faith in God - a faith that was introduced to me at a tender age and one I profess even today. My goal has been, and continues to be, bringing more people to the saving knowledge of our lord Jesus Christ by offering Christian hospitality without manipulation. I keep my ordination vows of being a shepherd to all the flocks that God brings my way.

In the coming weeks, I hope we can get to know each other better over a cup of coffee or tea!



From the Desk of . . .

Rev. Marta Wheeler

Celebrate the coming of Spring and the migration of songbirds at a secret (to me) forest near Lake Cunningham, **Sunday, April 23rd, at 2 PM.**

Consider bringing your binoculars and joining the flock for fellowship and a leisurely bird watching walk.



Holy Listening

Prayer Services to Celebrate the Season of Easter

Thank you for joining in Christian fellowship as we sing, pray, and meditate in the Spirit of Love.

THURSDAY, APRIL 13

10:30 AM Elk Ridge Village Independent Living 19303 Seward St.

1 PM The Heritage Memory Care Unit 1111 Sterling Ridge Drive

APRIL DATE TO BE DETERMINED

3 PM Immanuel Village Independent Living 6803 N. 68th Plaza

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

10:30 AM Brighton Gardens

9220 Western Ave.

SAVE THE DATE:

Heartland Pride Parade July 15



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



SAT/SUN, APRIL 1 & 2*

We remember the crowd's excitement with waving palms Saturday, April 1 at 5:00 PM in Roth Chapel and Sunday, April 2 at 10:00 AM in the Sanctuary with the Solid Brass Quartet.



THURSDAY, APRIL 6*

The Joy Bells will offer special music during this service beginning at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Celebrating Holy Communion.



FRIDAY, APRIL 7*

The retelling of Christ's last hours will begin at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Worship will center on the power of the cross with narrations from the Saint Paul Youth.



SATURDAY, APRIL 8

With the reminder that Christ has not yet risen, the sacrament of Holy Communion offers us the chance to start anew. The service will begin at 5:00 PM in Roth Chapel



SUNDAY APRIL 9 8:00 & 10:00* AM

Celebrate the Great
Feast Day and
Pinnacle of the
Christian Year with
Your Family and
Friends

Holy Communion
Celebrated at Both
Services in the
Sanctuary

*YouTube Livestream
@SaintPaulBenson