

MONTHLY NEWS OF SAINT PAUL BENSON

Inspiration

December 2019

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

It is easy to conjure up the aural memories of Roger Arnold, an organist at Saint Paul in the late 80's and 90's. Roger was a passionate player, particular about every note that he played and every sound that the instrument could muster. Roger was also a model train enthusiast and he piloted his S gauge American Flyer kingdom the same way he controlled the organ...every action meticulously planned and with great passion. But Roger was the first to admit that his finest musical moments were achieved when he let himself be taken over by the Holy Spirit, an almost out of body experience as he described it. Many were the Sundays when lead pastor, the Rev. Dr. Ed Bonneau, and this music minister would lock eyes, and be so heart-warmed by the spirit of what we were hearing that tears would be our overwhelming and unstoppable reaction. The privilege of serving with you in the life cycle times of heart-warming worship causes the same effect...communion, imposing ashes, washing hands, baptizing children or grands, celebrating a marriage feast or, at life's close, the celebration of entry into the church triumphant...an overwhelming gratitude for what you bring and for the touch of the divine, the ever passionate Holy Spirit in our midst.

Bishop Robert Schnase says, "*Worship describes those times we gather deliberately seeking to encounter God in Christ. God uses worship to transform lives, heal wounded souls, renew hope, shape decisions, provoke change, inspire compassion, and bind people to one another. The word passionate expresses an intense desire, an ardent spirit, strong feelings, and the sense of heightened importance. Congregations who practice **Passionate Worship** offer their utmost and highest; they expect worship to be the most important hour of the week.*" During the month of December we reflect on "passionate worship" and how we might be able to experience it each time we gather. It matters not which service we attend; what matters is how we approach each service we attend! Do you intentionally open yourself to the desire to be the Christ to those you encounter when you arrive at church? At work or on the street? As a congregation we recently heard the lay witness of Dr. Raymond Carpenter and the possibilities we might achieve by being a "WOW, NOW, HOW" church in our community and world. On your next approach to worship, before you enter the door, take a moment to open yourself to the Holy Spirit using you to connect with others to be strangely warmed, as John Wesley put it. Expect worship to be the most important hour of the week for you and those with whom you come into contact because you have made the conscience decision to make it so. Be passionate about Saint Paul Benson and the ministries of our church and be engaged with, and by, God's eternal spirit.

"God of mercy..."

Jerry

We are God's people, working together to accomplish something bigger than ourselves, effecting change in our community, in our nation, and around the world—all in the name of Jesus Christ.

December Dates to Remember

Sunday, December 1

One Worship Service at 10:00

Ten Thousand Villages
Pop-up Sale

Wednesday, December 4

United Methodist Women's
General Meeting

Friday, December 6

Benson First Friday Event
At Barchen in Benson

Sunday, December 8

Advent Fair

Saturday/Sunday,

December 14/15

Cookie Walk

Sunday, December 15

Children's Christmas Pageant

Wednesday, December 18

Blue Christmas Worship Service

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Worship Services at
3:00, 5:00, 10:30 p.m.

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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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Clergy Corner—Rev. Marta Wheeler

A Hearing Loop is Coming

We are excited to announce the installation of a hearing loop that will enable those with a hearing impairment the ability to receive the transmission straight from the sound system! Imagine the enhancement of hearing with clarity the sermon and prayers in our beautiful Sanctuary without background noise! This sound enhancement is made possible through a generous ministry grant from the Nebraska United Methodist Foundation and donations from members of this church. The tentative installation date is December 5th.

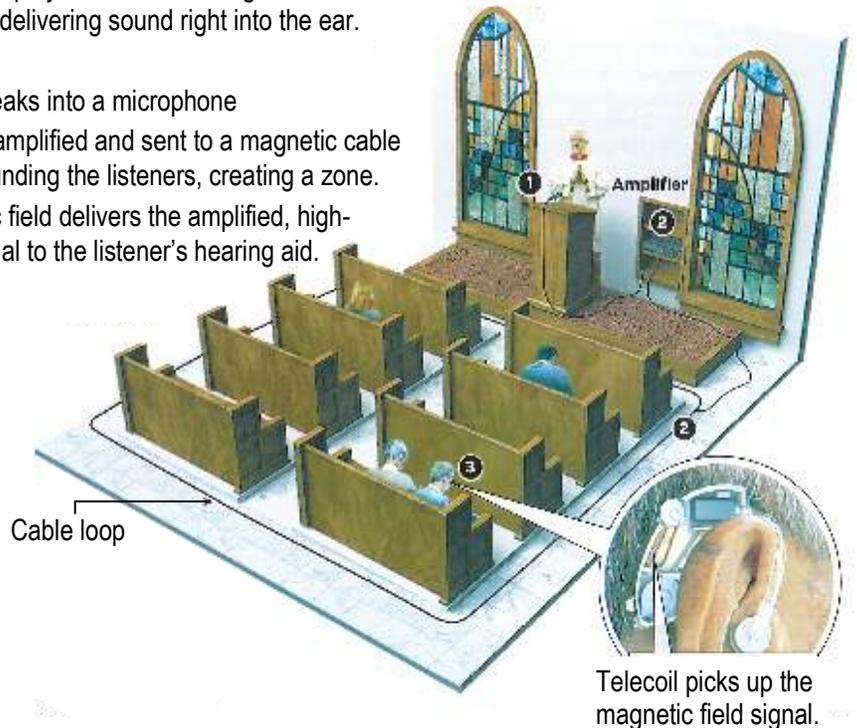
Watch for training dates to learn how to connect the telecoil (T-coil) in your hearing aid or cochlear implant to the loop. Initially, two extra individual receivers will be available for check out from the ushers for those who do not use hearing aids. At the training, you will also learn where to sit in order to take advantage of the strongest signal. We won't know the level of coverage until installation is complete, but have been told that the Fellowship Hall will also be covered.

We celebrate all of our members and friends. We envision the hearing loop as being invitational in helping hearing impaired people participate more fully in passionate worship at St. Paul!

Direct connection for the hearing impaired

An induction loop system turns hearing aids into loudspeakers, delivering sound right into the ear. How it works

1. Person speaks into a microphone
2. Current is amplified and sent to a magnetic cable loop surrounding the listeners, creating a zone.
3. A magnetic field delivers the amplified, high-quality signal to the listener's hearing aid.



**Reminder: Please return your pledge card.
Extra pledge cards are available in the
church office.**

in Worship

From the UMC Discipleship Ministries webpage: "The season of Advent has been with us since the fourth century, although it has not been a part of the liturgical observance of all denominations and churches. With the mixing of Christmas and Advent during the weeks leading up to Christmas Day, there is often confusion of the two. Here are the basics of Advent:

When: Advent marks the beginning of the church year. It begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day and ends Christmas Eve. If Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, Advent will last four full weeks. If Christmas Day falls on any other day of the week, Advent will last less than four weeks. If Christmas falls on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, all of Advent will be in December. If Christmas falls on any other day of the week, Advent will begin in November.

What: Advent comes from the Latin word, *adventus*, meaning "coming." It is a season to prepare for the coming of Christ in various meanings: the promised coming of the Messiah to the Jews, the coming of Jesus being born in Bethlehem, the promised return of the risen Christ in final victory, and the continual coming of Christ into the lives and hearts of believers.

Liturgical Context: Advent, which marks the beginning of the liturgical year, is part of the cycle of seasons that includes Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, all related in some fashion to the coming of Jesus. That cycle is followed by Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and the long Pentecost season.

History: Advent began in France in the fourth century. In various times and locations of the church, Advent has been observed for three, four, and six weeks leading to Christmas. Some churches today are experimenting with incorporating Advent themes and symbols in worship during the weeks prior to the actual start of Advent in the hope that they can avoid the conflict of Advent versus Christmas observance during the immediate weeks prior to Christmas.

Color: The color for Advent has traditionally been purple. Some churches have adopted blue for Advent," including Saint Paul Church!

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated the first weekend of Advent as we "deck the halls" for the Advent season. Saturday, **November 30**, will feature special music by saxophonist, Jordan Relford. **December 01** is the last of our single Sunday services at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary, where the Solid Brass Quartet leads us in a caroling medley while decorations are placed to adorn the room. The second weekend of Advent, **December 07/08**, Sue Dimmitt will offer piano music of the season prior to the 10:30 service. **December 14/15**, the third Advent weekend, will be graced by music of our faithful Joy Bells ensemble at all services and by the Children's Ministries re-enactment of the Luke passage telling of Christ's birth as part of 10:30 worship. Any who find themselves suffering in body, mind or spirit are invited to join as we observe a service of Blue Christmas during M&M worship Wednesday evening, **December 18** at 6:00 p.m. in the Roth Chapel. The 4th weekend of Advent, as part of **December 21** Chapel worship at 5:00 p.m. and our Sunday service at 10:30 a.m. **December 22**, we will join in celebrating the traditional setting of Advent Lessons and Carols. Our faithful Fusion musicians give leadership each Advent 2nd -4th week at the 9:15 service in Fellowship Hall.

First Friday

This December, Saint Paul will travel to Barchen, located in the heart of downtown Benson, for Benson First Friday (BFF). Join Rev. Stephanie and friends for a free Christmas-themed craft from 5-7 pm on December 6 as we make friends and promote our annual Advent craft fair and Christmas Eve services.



Do you use Facebook? Help spread the word by clicking "interested" on our facebook event even if you cannot attend, and using the "invite" function to let others know about this early evening activity.

Poinsettias with a Mission

We have begun taking orders for poinsettias for the Christmas holiday. You may secure your holiday plant for \$10, dedicating it in memory or honor of loved ones, occasions or just to grace our worship spaces. As in past years, 25 total plants will be displayed in the Sanctuary, Chapel and Fellowship Hall. Monies collected above the necessary amount will be used in support of St. Paul's mission giving. To place an order, look for the green gift boxes with order forms nearby, returning your check and form appropriately or come to the church office.



Serving Dinner at Siena/Francis House

Tuesday, December 3, is Saint Paul's evening to serve dinner to homeless men, women and children at Siena/Francis House, 1702 Nicholas Street. Serving time is from 5:00 to approximately 7:00 p.m. Siena/Francis House would like for us to have seven volunteers each time.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board just outside Pastor Stephanie's office, or you can call the church office at 402-556-2433 and we will add your name to the list. Please consider helping some of Omaha's homeless citizens during this Christmas season.

Hat and Mitten Tree

Charlene Wilcox, co-chair of the Mercy & Justice Team, delivered the first batch of items from the hat and mitten tree to the elementary schools in Saint Paul's neighborhood. She took a total of 91 hats, 24 pairs of mittens, 4 scarves and 7 coats.

Thank you to everyone who contributed these warm clothing items, many of them handmade. The "trees" will be up the rest of the winter, and deliveries will be made to the schools as needed.

Secret Angels

The Secret Angel drive began after the Thanksgiving Eve worship service on Wednesday, November 27, and will continue through December 1. If you take the name of a child or teen, the unwrapped gifts will need to be brought to the church office no later than Sunday, December 15.

Habitat for Humanity House

Saint Paul belongs to a coalition of faith-based organizations that built a Habitat for Humanity house at 3167 Evans Street. There was a dedication of this house, plus six other houses on the same block, on Tuesday, November 26.

The proud new owner of the house is a refugee from Rwanda, who will share the house with her mother and her daughter.



**November Special Offering for
Ministerial Education Fund
\$442.00**

Join us for Benson's Best
Christmas Tradition

SAINT PAUL *Benson*

**ADVENT
FAIR**

Sunday, December 8
3 - 6 PM
Saint Paul's Lower Level



Purchase Tickets to Create a Variety of Crafts
Popcorn Sculptures
Cookie Decorating
Cocoa Bar
Soup and Sandwiches
Much More!



Help Make the
Advent Fair a
Success—
Volunteer to
Help

Two Shifts—
Each 90
Minutes
Long

Help with the
Crafts or with
the Food—
Your Choice

Call the
Church Office
(402-556-2433)
to volunteer

inConcert

Special music from the piano studio of Omaha Music Teacher's Association president, Lisa Batten, will fill the Sanctuary on Saturday, **December 14** at 7:00 p.m. One of the prime opportunities in showcasing the Yamaha C6 concert grand is the occasion to hear students representing a wide variety of skill levels. Such will be the opportunity provided by these young players ranging in age from 8 to 18. Each student will be featured in one classical song and one holiday favorite of their choosing. There will be a meet and greet reception following the recital in the Gathering Area.

BART Clothes Closet Update

The Benson Area Refugee Task Force sponsored a "clothes closet" at Saint Paul on Saturday, November 16. Refugees could come and pick out clothing and household items for their families at no cost. The emphasis for this clothes closet was on coats and other warm clothing.

Approximately 175 refugees were served at this event. One of the people who helped with it said it was like a United Nations because there were so many different languages being spoken.



Learning, Serving, Praying, and Playing

The month of December will be fun once more, when spending it with our St. Paul family.

Dec. 1st -4pm-6:30 pm—Sardines and snacks-Youth from 1st UMC will join us for Sardines and Snacks at St. Paul (not sardines for snacks!).

Next we will carpool to First UMC for more sardines and snacks!!

Bring a buddy and make new friends while having a blast!

Dec. 8th -Assist with the Advent Fair.

Dec. 14th-15th —Youth will bake cookies on Saturday morning from 9am-noon. The annual Cookie Walk will occur after worship on Saturday eve and on Sunday morning from 9-noon.

We appreciate the help of church members that bake delicious cookies to share and everyone who makes a purchase!

Sunday, Dec. 15th, 4-5:30 pm—participate in the annual Country Club Luminary Event!

We will assemble and light luminaries that line the sidewalks of the church. The luminaries highlight the walkways, and people from all over are drawn to this area. After setting them up, we might ride a neighborhood trolley and experience the evening with other neighbors. We hope you will join us!

Thank you for supporting the youth through your prayers, gentle greetings, and buying Christmas cookies!!

May the Spirit of Advent bring you peace, hope, and love.

Rev. Marta Wheeler
402-902-8545



Caring Ministry

The Health Ministry Team members and other concerned folks have begun visiting people as part of the *Caring Ministry*. As representatives of Saint Paul we have offered to keep in contact with people that are no longer able to attend worship. We appreciate God's love and care that each person will bring to longtime faithful members.

If you are a good listener with a positive attitude and would like to participate as a volunteer in this ministry, please call the church office or email Pastor Marta at mwheeler@stpaulomaha.org. If you'd like to request a visit, please leave a message at 402-556-2433 and we will plan to pay a visit in the coming months.



Children's Ministry News

Advent Fair—December 8, 3:00-6:00

Crafts, Cookie Decorating, Santa, Popcorn Sculptures, Photo Booth, Concessions & More



**Children's
Christmas
Pageant**

All children ages preschool through sixth grade are invited to be a part of the retelling of the birth of Christ according to Luke on Sunday, December 15, during the 10:30 worship service. Come to Room 302 between 9:00 and 10:00 to pick out your costume.

Sunday School Schedule

No Sunday School December 1, 8, 22, 29

Staff Update

We want to thank everyone who joined us for Sue Bobek's retirement party—it was a fitting tribute to see so many friends come to thank Sue for her years of service on staff at Saint Paul. Our office staff will be growing this month, as we welcome Jayne Meisinger on a part time basis. She will join Sue Bacon in our office "hub," with responsibilities for membership records and other administrative work related to record-keeping and details. Together with Sue Bacon and Steve Dohe, we will have a team of three people ready to greet visitors, answer the phone and care for the activities that take place in our office hub. Thank you to everyone who has helped us during this transition period, and please join me in welcoming Jayne to the team.



Jayne Meisinger

Rev. Stephanie Ahlschwede

Council Connection

These are the highlights of the most recent Church Council gathering, held November 18:

Child Development Center Tuition for 2020

Director is asking for a 5% tuition increase for 2020. The increase would allow flexibility and ability to offer staff members a minimum 2% raise in pay. Salaries have been static for several years, and are not currently competitive. Motion passed.

Grants

Saint Paul has been awarded:

1. \$3,500 from the Nebraska United Methodist Foundation to be used for a hearing loop. This new system will be installed above the ceiling in Fellowship Hall to enhance the quality of sound for users of hearing aids and cochlear implants in both the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.
2. \$1,400 from UM Communications for Advent/Christmas promotional materials including themed outdoor banners, yard signs and worship flyers.
3. \$1,000 "Call to Ministry" grant from the KS/NE Conference Clergy Excellence Team to work with the African congregation to help incorporate their youth with the Saint Paul youth group.
4. The Health Ministries Team, represented by Mary Cave, Marcia Waszak and Louann Nenemann, has successfully worked to have Saint Paul become a "Certified Healthy Congregation." As such, Saint Paul will have the opportunity to apply for grants from the Kansas Health Foundation for a variety of efforts.

Member Visitation Program

The Health Ministries Team has stepped up to help clergy with visitations of homebound Saint Paul members. Eight people have volunteered to make regular visits, and designed a special prayer card as a leave-behind.

Complete minutes are available by request from the church office. The next meeting of the Church Council has been scheduled for Monday, January 13, 2020 at 7:00 PM. All are welcome.



Holiday Pop-Up Sale
@ St. Paul UMC Benson
Sunday, Dec 1st with

ten thousand villages.

PEOPLE & PLANET FIRST
100% FAIR TRADE
SINCE 1986

Get your holiday shopping done while helping support fairly paid artisans around the world!

Shop from 9:00 - 11:30am
in the Gathering Place

DECEMBER 2019

UMW NEWS



EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

Vice President
Mary Stolzer

Secretary
Connie Crawford

Treasurer
Lorraine Hahn

Advisor
Kathy Rice

Box Tops for Education

Save for Rose Hill Elementary School

Meeting on Wednesday, December 4

Children from the CDC will perform Christmas carols under the direction of Katy Smith and her staff.

Thank you to all who contributed to the Mini-Mart on November 16 & 17.

The January meeting will be Wednesday, January 8, 2020. (This is one week later than normal due to New Year's Day being the first Wednesday of the month.)

Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!



Cookie Walk
Sponsored by the Youth

December 14 & 15

Buy a container and walk around the tables, choosing the cookies to fill your container. Cookies will be available after the 5:00 p.m. worship service on December 14 and during the morning on December 15 in the Parlor. Proceeds will go toward the youth's mission trip.

Hospitalizations

Pearl Spicka, Annette Conser, Ramona Repair, Melvin Ammon (Shawn Ammon's father)

Honorariums

For Sue Bobek—Bob & Joanna Lonnecker, John Bobek, Mary Rich, Jennifer Cera, Susie Robinson

Christian Sympathy

To Ray Carpenter in the death of his wife, Penne.

To Chris and Gail Carpenter Johnson, Hayden & Rigley in the death of Gail's mother.

To Shawn Ammon in the death of his uncle, Don Ammon

Memorials

For Penne Carpenter—Chris & Gail Carpenter Johnson

Thank You from Sue Bobek

A huge thank you to all members and friends who attended my retirement reception. It was fun to see all of you and hear stories of how and when you joined Saint Paul. Thank you for all the cards, well wishes and remembrances.

I came to Saint Paul as a member of a junior high youth group and then joined the high school choir, which sang at the early service, and never left. This is certainly a good testament to a loving and caring church.

Rod Wilmoth hired me 37 years ago to help keep track of the membership of Saint Paul.

Thank you again for a lovely time seeing all of you and learning your stories.

Sue Bobek



Rev. Stephanie presents a plaque to Sue Bobek at Sue's retirement reception on November 3.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry began at St. Paul in the fall of 2013. Since then seven members of our congregation have been through the 50 hours of training required of Stephen Caregivers. One person has moved from this area so six remain. The commitment expected of one who enters the caregiver program is for two years. In the time of serving as a caregiver there is also the expectation of meeting twice a month for the purpose of additional training, support of one another, and to keep our skills up to par.

In the six years of the Stephen Ministry our caregivers have companioned with about 8 to 10 people. Two of the most important aspects of caregiving are confidentiality and pairing men with men and women with women.

Another aspect of the Stephen Ministry is providing grief support. There is a series of four books that is sent to individuals and/or families after the death of a loved one. The books are sent out a month after the death, 3 months after, then another six months later, and the last at 11 months after the death.

Book Club

Moment of Lift, by Melinda Gates, is the book the Book Club will be discussing at its December meeting. The Book Club meets at Immanuel Village on Saturday, December 14, at 8:30 a.m. For directions, call Dee Maycock at 402-571-5599.



The Dinner Group will not meet in December. It will resume in January, 2020.



5410 CORBY STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68104

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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OMAHA, NE 68108

WORSHIP

5:00 PM

Saturday Casual
Roth Chapel

10:00 AM—December 1

Sunday Combined Service
Sanctuary

9:15 AM—December 8, 15, 22, 29

Sunday Contemporary Fusion
Fellowship Hall

10:30 AM—December 8, 15, 22, 29

Sunday Traditional
Sanctuary

12:00 PM

African & Bhutan Services

Christmas Eve—December 24

3:00, 5:00, 10:30 PM

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Sunday: 8:00 AM - 11:45 AM

402.556.2433 stpaulomaha.org @stpaulbenson



RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

SAINT PAUL *Benson*

PROUD TO BE A
RECONCILING CONGREGATION



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.