

# MONTHLY NEWS OF SAINT PAUL BENSON

## *Inspiration*

February 2020

### PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

February is almost here, and I have been thinking about... succulents. Desert plants. Things that do not grow outdoors here in winter. I find myself considering the life of the cactus, or aloe, or jade tree. Jade trees were introduced to me by my cousin Willa's grandfather. One of his largest jade trees came to live with us, and we have been caring for it for more than a decade. Part of a larger plant family that includes prickly things, the jade tree likes to be watered infrequently. It gathers and stores water in its leaves, which are shiny when healthy. If you are lucky and don't look too hard, your care might be rewarded with tiny clusters of pinkish white flowers in the winter, but only some years. Like other succulents, you can grow more jade tree plants by tucking fallen leaves into a smaller pot of soil; bits we have planted over the years have now grown to the same size as the original gift tree. Generations of jade trees fill our sunroom in the winter, and several are living in my office at Saint Paul, basking in the sunlight from the south.

The plants I am pondering store up their strength from desert rains to help them make it through a long summer; they give me hope for us as we rely on our personal reserves to make it through a long winter. Spring is coming, and we do have what we need not just to make it but to thrive until the earth awakens.

In our faith life, I think there are also times we store up spiritual reserves to help us through other more difficult times. I find that weekend worship at Saint Paul helps me to reset for the week ahead. Hearing Pastor Marta share about her weekly meditation time with our preschoolers gives me hope for all of us. Working with our friends in the African congregation to help them meet United Methodists who share their language helps any day feel more sunny.

As we move into the season of Lent, we will consider stories of people who journeyed in the desert and who found life and refreshment in the midst of harsh conditions. I think our calling as people of faith is to learn from their stories, to draw from our resources and continue to grow in faith as we journey together. I have a forest of jade trees that remind me that from the tiniest leaf can come the healthiest blooming plant. I invite you to join me in drawing from the unexpected richness around us in this coming season.

Rev Stephanie

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.

### February Dates to Remember

**February 1 & 2**  
Chili Delivery

**Wednesday, February 5**  
United Methodist Women  
9:30 a.m.

**February 8 & 9**  
UMW Mini Mart

**February 9**  
Family Sledding & Ice Skating  
3:00-6:00 p.m.

**February 12**  
Valentine Party  
5:30-6:45 p.m.

**February 16**  
Enneagram Class II  
2:00 p.m.

**February 22**  
Dinner Group  
6:15 p.m.

**February 26**  
Ash Wednesday Worship  
7:00 p.m.

**Saint Paul Benson**

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Rev. Marta Wheeler  
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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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## Valentines Dinner and Dance with the CDC

Church members and CDC families are invited to join together for a Valentines Day dinner and dance Wednesday, February 12th from 5:30-6:45 pm. Please bring a side dish to share that you think goes with spaghetti. Church members, please sign up in the church office or at mission central so we have a count.

## Plant Brigade

Do you enjoy plants? Interested in helping create a plan for the green spaces around our church building? Please let the church office know and we will add you to our new Plant Brigade team. We will meet before the last frost to consider past efforts, current successes, and a strategy for the coming growing season so we can best utilize our time and talent to keep our grounds fresh and welcoming.

## Hearing Loop

A hearing loop is now available in the Sanctuary and in Fellowship Hall for hearing-impaired members and friends. If you have hearing aids or cochlear implants, you will probably be able to connect the telecoil in the hearing aids or cochlear implants to the loop. If you do not have hearing aids or cochlear implants, you will be able to use one of the church's headphone receivers, which can be checked out from the ushers.

If you have questions about the hearing loop, feel free to call the church office at 402-556-2433.

## Church Directory Temporarily Offline

Due to technical difficulties, the church directory has been temporarily removed from the Saint Paul Benson website. During the time the directory is offline, you can call the church office and request that an updated pdf copy of the directory be emailed to you.

The program we use to build our church directory has a free app for church members to download on their Apple, Android and Kindle Fire devices. If you are interested, call the church office and we can send you the link for your specific device. Your email address must be in the directory for you to be able to receive the download information.

## Winter Weather Closure Policy

If Omaha Public Schools are closed because of snow, the church office is closed and no church-hosted activities will take place. If Omaha Public Schools are closed because of cold, the church office will be open and all church-hosted activities will take place.

If Omaha Public Schools have a two-hour late start because of snow, the church office will open at 12:00 noon, and all church-hosted activities after 12:00 noon will take place.

If Omaha Public Schools dismisses early because of snow, the church office will close at 2:00 p.m. and no church-hosted activities will take place after 12:00 noon.

## in Worship

The weeks following Christmastide and Epiphany are known as Ordinary Time. "Christmas and Easter highlight the central mysteries of the Paschal Mystery, namely, the incarnation, death on the cross, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Sundays and weeks of Ordinary Time, on the other hand, take us through the life of Christ. This is the time of conversion. This is living the life of Christ. Ordinary Time is a time for growth and maturation, a time in which the mystery of Christ is called to penetrate ever more deeply into history until all things are finally caught up in Christ. The goal, toward which all of history is directed, is represented by the final Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe."

The month proceeds until **Ash Wednesday** when we gather to remember the beginning of Lent, the next of the liturgical events of the Church. From the blasts of the shofar reminding us to heed the warning call, the imposition of the ashes on our hand or head, and the receiving of the bread and cup, our observance of Ash Wednesday, **February 26** at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary is a tradition for St. Paul Church. We gather to hear the words of scripture, sing the songs of faith 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.

## Single Service Celebrations for 2020

We are excited to announce six single Sunday services, a chance for the entire St. Paul faith community to worship at 10:00, during 2020: **May 24** ~ Memorial Day; **July 05** ~ Independence Day; **September 06** ~ Labor Day; **November 01** ~ All Saints Day; **November 29** ~ Welcome Advent; **December 27** ~ Christmastide. As usual, the Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated at all services that coincide with the first Sunday of the month. The Saturday evening service held in Roth Chapel at 5:00 will be offered *every week* regardless of the Sunday morning schedule. Together, we are the body of Christ!

## New Members



Jeremiah McIntyre, Theresa Smith and their son, Rusteen

## Girl Scout Cookie Weekend

Attention friends of girl scouts: We've dedicated the weekend of Feb 15/16 for cookie sales; if your girl scout would like to sell cookies at Saint Paul, this is their weekend. You can help us plan ahead by letting the church office know which service(s) that weekend they plan to be here with cookies/order forms.

## Health Ministry Tips

Here are some common signs and symptoms which may indicate treatable vision problems:

Loss of peripheral vision is a key sign of glaucoma.

Difficulty adjusting to the dark when you enter a dim area can be first hint of macular degeneration.

Distortion or straight lines that look wavy may also signal macular degeneration.

Poor night vision along with sensitivity to glare may be beginning of cataracts.

Please have regular eye exams and mention any vision problems.

Here's to healthy living!  
Health Ministry Team

## in Mission

The Mercy and Justice Team served more than 380 homeless people at the Siena Francis House in January. Have you seen the new building at 17<sup>th</sup> and Nicolas? It is just north of the old building. Each month St. Paul is in need of seven people to help serve. Simply sign up by calling the church office or writing your name on the sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside the library.

Sienna Francis is counting on seven volunteers from our church to help on the first Tuesday of each month. Arrive before 4:45 pm. If you'd like to carpool from the church, please let us know.

Coats! Hats! Mittens! The prayer shawl ministry is also knitting and crocheting hats and mittens for the children at Benson schools. Any donations are appreciated that help keep our neighborhood children safe and warm. As with all donations, bring them to **Mission Central** in the back of the sanctuary.

Keep an eye out for sales so you're ready to bring underwear and socks on Undie Sunday, March 14-15<sup>th</sup>. Children from every culture delight in undies with cartoons and bright colors.

Planning Ahead: the next BART Clothes Closet will be held on Saturday, April 18.

Donations of summer clothing, new underwear and socks will be especially appreciated.



### Souper Bowl Chili Pickup

The Youth have been taking orders for chili to be delivered after worship services on Saturday, February 1, and Sunday, February 2. If you have placed an order, be sure to pick it up.

With the help of the Mercy & Justice team, they have made red chili with beef, white chili with chicken, and vegetarian chili.

Also available will be cornbread muffins and cinnamon rolls.

Proceeds will go toward the Youth's summer mission trip.



January Special Offering for  
Human Relations Day

**\$532.01**



# SINGLE SERVICE SUNDAYS

2020

10AM • SANCTUARY

Memorial Day

**MAY 24**

Independence Day

**JULY 05**

Labor Day

**SEPTEMBER 06**

All Saints Day

**NOVEMBER 01**

Welcome Advent

**NOVEMBER 29**

Christmas

**DECEMBER 27**

# Learning, Serving, Praying, and Playing

We observed Martin Luther King Day of Service by serving a meal to people that are homeless in Council Bluffs. It was especially great because one of our faithful youth set it up!



It was a nice afternoon for January when we met for a fun icebreaker game and then went bowling at Western Bowl with the youth of First UMC. Being in a larger cluster has been enjoyable for our group.

Plans for February activities include:

**Saturday & Sunday, Feb. 1 & 2<sup>nd</sup>**, after all 3 services. **Souper Bowl Chili Take-out** for previously ordered chili, corn muffins, and cinnamon rolls.

**Sunday, Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, 3-6 pm, Sledding and ice skating at Mahoney State Park.** \$6/per person for skate rental and State Park sticker. Bring your sled and be prepared to have a thrilling ride down the big hill! We've invited the youth of the African congregation to join us in the fun!

**Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 4-5:30 pm, Art Day!** Gather near the chapel at 4 pm.

Our experiences are enriched when friends are invited and welcomed. Thank you for your generous support and prayers!

Rev. Marta Wheeler

## Photos from the Youth's MLK Day of Service



*MOHM's Place is part of New Visions Homeless Services in Omaha & Council Bluffs.*



*We were inspired by the leadership of the chief chef!*



*St. Paul Youth are MOHM's (Messengers of Hope Ministry) and following Jesus' command to feed the homeless.*



*Youth serving up lasagna, spaghetti, salad and cookies.*

YOUTH &  
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES  
INVITE YOUR FAMILY  
TO JOIN US FOR

# WINTER FUN

SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 9

3-6 PM

SLEDDING AND  
ICE SKATING

MAHONEY STATE PARK

\$6 ADMISSION

INCLUDES SKATE RENTAL

BRING A FAVORITE SLED  
OR TOBOGGAN

FRIENDS WELCOME



SAINT PAUL

*Benson*

#DoGood

FEBRUARY 2020

# UMW NEWS



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**Box Tops for Education**

Save for Rose Hill  
Elementary School

## UMW General Meeting Wednesday, February 5 9:30 a.m.

Program provided by Tracy Lichti on HUGS. She is the CEO of New Cassel Retirement Center and promises to bring a delightful presentation. She is an experienced health care professional who loves enriching the lives of spunky senior citizens. We encourage all members and guests to attend.

The Ecumenical Legislative Day is February 8, 2020. A good opportunity to meet your state representatives. It is possible to car pool, so please let Lorraine Hahn or Belinda Johnson know if you are interested.

Mini Mart dates: February 8 & 9

Remember the March Meeting of UMW is Saturday March 7, 2020.

St. Paul Methodist Church is hosting the District Meeting on April 4, 2020. Volunteers are needed for various activities so please contact Lorraine Hahn if you have any questions or wish to help.

Volunteers are also needed in various ways for the Spring Luncheon, April 25, 2020.

Please remember to hand in Pledge Cards also.

## Hospitalizations

Bob Lonnecker, Barry Butterfield, Annette Conser, Charlotte Rasmussen, Gary Lyons, Linda Mead

## Honorarium

In honor of my oldest son, Dennis Lawrence, on his 2-2-20 birthday—Rozanne Christensen

## Anne Reim's Project

Anne Reim is volunteering many hours of her time to set up a database of Saint Paul Benson records. When asked about her undertaking, she said:

"Brandy, my co-pilot and critic, and I have been in the process of taking care of two objectives at the same time. The church books that were used to catalog names of people who were married, baptized, or died are beginning to deteriorate. Those names could be entered into a database that would allow people to look for family. The end result will be three books for the church with all names indexed, beginning when St. Paul originated with the integration of three local Methodist churches in the early 1930s. As a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, I will then add the names to the DAR databases that are open to all who are searching for their ancestors."

We appreciate Anne's work. The records are handwritten and some of them are getting faded and hard to read. We also appreciate Brandy's patience as she waits for a chance to get out of the library.



## Memorials

For Shirley Edwards—Carla Crisafulli  
For Lois Randall—Dennis & Marta Wheeler

## Christian Sympathy

To Larry & Jane Baasch in the death of their niece

## Congratulations

To Jeremiah McIntyre and Theresa Smith in the baptism of their son, Rusteen David, on January 12.



## Book Club

*This Tender Land*, by William Kent Krueger, is the book the Book Club will be discussing at its February meeting. The Book Club meets at Immanuel Village on Saturday, February 8, at 8:30 a.m.

For directions, call Dee Maycock at 402-571-5599.

The Dinner Group will meet on Saturday, February 22, at the Garden Cafe. Meet outside the chapel after the 5:00 p.m. worship, or meet the group at the Garden Café, 11040 Oak Street in the Rockbrook Shopping Center at 6:15 p.m. All are welcome.





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## WORSHIP

5:00 PM  
Saturday Casual  
Roth Chapel

9:15 AM  
Sunday Fusion Contemporary  
Fellowship Hall

10:30 AM  
Sunday Traditional  
Sanctuary

12:00 PM  
African & Bhutan Services

## OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Sunday: 8:00 AM - 11:45 AM  
402.556.2433 [stpaulomaha.org](http://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.