

# FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

As we move through this Easter season, I give thanks for the way our church has supported each other and the community around us. We have done our best to follow Jesus' mission in the world. Of course, we know that because of the empty tomb, our work is just getting started. I am excited to travel with St. Paul through the rest of the year as we discern what God is calling us to next.

Every year, the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Elizabeth Eaton, puts out an Easter message for all of us. I am including her 2024 Easter message here in the hope that you all will be inspired by her words as much as I am.

Take it away Bishop Eaton...

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton | Easter 2024

“So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid.” That's where the Gospel of Mark originally ended. And it just seems so odd to me. It's so abrupt. I mean, the women had seen the angel. He'd announced that Jesus was raised from the dead, and then he tells them all this good news and wants them to go on their way. And they just are not going to say a single word.

There are three words in that passage that really stand out for me, especially in the Greek. One is fear — phobos. We get phobia from that. The other one is amazement — ekstasis. We get ecstasy from that. And the other one has to do with being seized. It actually means “being possessed.” So we take a look at these women, and they've had this miraculous appearance by an angel. They've heard the good news that Jesus has raised from the dead, and they're too afraid to do anything about it, and they just are going to be silent. It seems that nothing changed. They came to take care of Jesus' dead body because on the Sabbath they could not work. But on the first day of the week, they were there. They have this announcement, and then it's all the same.

Sometimes I think we feel like nothing's changed. Sometimes I think that the events in our country, in our church, around the world are just so terrifying and so overwhelming that it seems like the resurrection really didn't make a difference. But these three words really say something about the women, and I think about us and, most especially, about Easter. When they said that they were filled with amazement — this is this ecstasy, ekstasis — they were really standing. It means literally standing in a different place. So though they were still in the tomb and they hadn't reacted yet, nevertheless, everything had changed. And because of the resurrection, we, all of us, are standing in a different place. The whole of creation is standing in a different place. And the word for fear, phobos, phobia we get from that. But it's really a sense of trembling in the presence of God, of awe that they were actually filled with awe — not paralyzed by fear but filled with awe. And I hope this Eastertide and all year round, we have a sense of the presence of God that fills us with awe.

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And it also says that they were seized with fear. Well, the word means "possessed." And yes, we believe that in baptism because of the resurrection, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit and we now are all Spirit-possessed.

Spirit-possessed. When things seem to be staying the same, when things seem to be happening and coming at us so quickly, I think it's very important to take time to be a little amazed, to be standing in a different place, to have a sense of this awe and trembling before the Lord, and to allow ourselves to be possessed by the Spirit, who will give us power and courage in these times.

My favorite hymn is "Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song." It's ELW 808. And the last verse goes like this: "I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey; but courage will come with the sound of his steps by my side. And with all of the family Jesus saved by his love, we'll sing to his dawn at the end of our journey."

Be well, dear church. Happy Easter.  
Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

THANK  
YOU

**Thank you to the congregation** for your unwavering support and generous donation to purchase art supplies for our son, Joey Smith, who is currently incarcerated. You have continued to show all of us God's amazing grace and support. Joey will be sending his own thank you and a drawing for the church as soon as he is able. We are so loved and blessed.

-Mark, Leann, and Joey Smith

# FOOD BANK



of Eastern Michigan

**FOOD TRUCK  
ON MAY 16, 2024**

Workers need to **be at the church by at least 10:00 AM**, with distribution starting about 11:00 AM. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. **If you have grocery type bags and cardboard boxes, please bring them.**

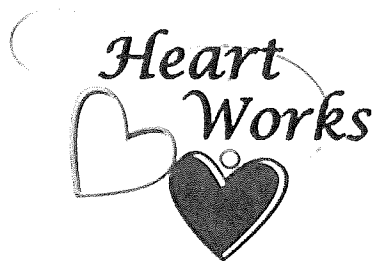
Save the dates for future food trucks:  
**Thursday, July 25, 2024**  
**Wednesday, September 18, 2024**



Community Garden

Good News! It is spring and the garden is almost ready to be planted. **All garden information has been updated on St. Paul's website, [www.stpaullutheranph.com](http://www.stpaullutheranph.com).** You can now download the cover letter, garden application and guidelines for 2024. Copies are also available by contact the church office at (810) 982-9853 or [stpaulww@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulww@comcast.net). If you have any questions, contact Don Strauss at (810) 434-2380.

Please join us at Heart Works on **Tuesday, May 7**, for a couple hours of fellowship as we knit, crochet or loom items to share with those in need. We will be in the **Activity Room from 10:00 AM until noon**. I hope you can join us.



## *St. Paul Choir Rehearsals*

Starting on **Sunday, April 28, at 9:30 AM**, the St. Paul Choir will start rehearsing every Sunday to sing their next anthem. The performance will be on **Sunday, May 26, during the 11 AM service**. Come join us!



The 2024 goals presented by Stewardship are specific.

1. Increase general giving by \$10,000 to cover inflationary costs and salary increases. (\$155,000)
2. Continue giving in the amount of \$12,000 to support community outreach to the homeless and food insecure.
3. Raise funds to replace the electronic sign to be matched by dollars from the Appel estate.

At the end of the first quarter, we gratefully share that donations have been strong: They are measurable.

1. The current giving has provided \$40,382.84 so we have reached  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the total budget approved at the Voters' Meeting last fall.
2. The giving for GWIP (\$4,075) exceeds the goal making it possible to support The Harbor, Harbor Impact, & BWARM. Additional funds provide for BWROC's program in the amount of \$600. To date, 925 hours of service have been logged, including shopping, cooking, and serving dinner for the residents of BWARM. Two crock pots, 19 blankets, & lunch supplies have been delivered to them. BWARM will be open until May 28<sup>th</sup> and needs volunteers to provide breakfast and dinner for 25 residents. Interested in organizing a meal? Contact Diane Merkau for funds.
3. The sign fund is growing. Funds received the first quarter total \$1,684 and with the match amounts to \$5,052. More information is being gathered on the possible sizes and designs. Meanwhile, informational banners have been purchased and hung.

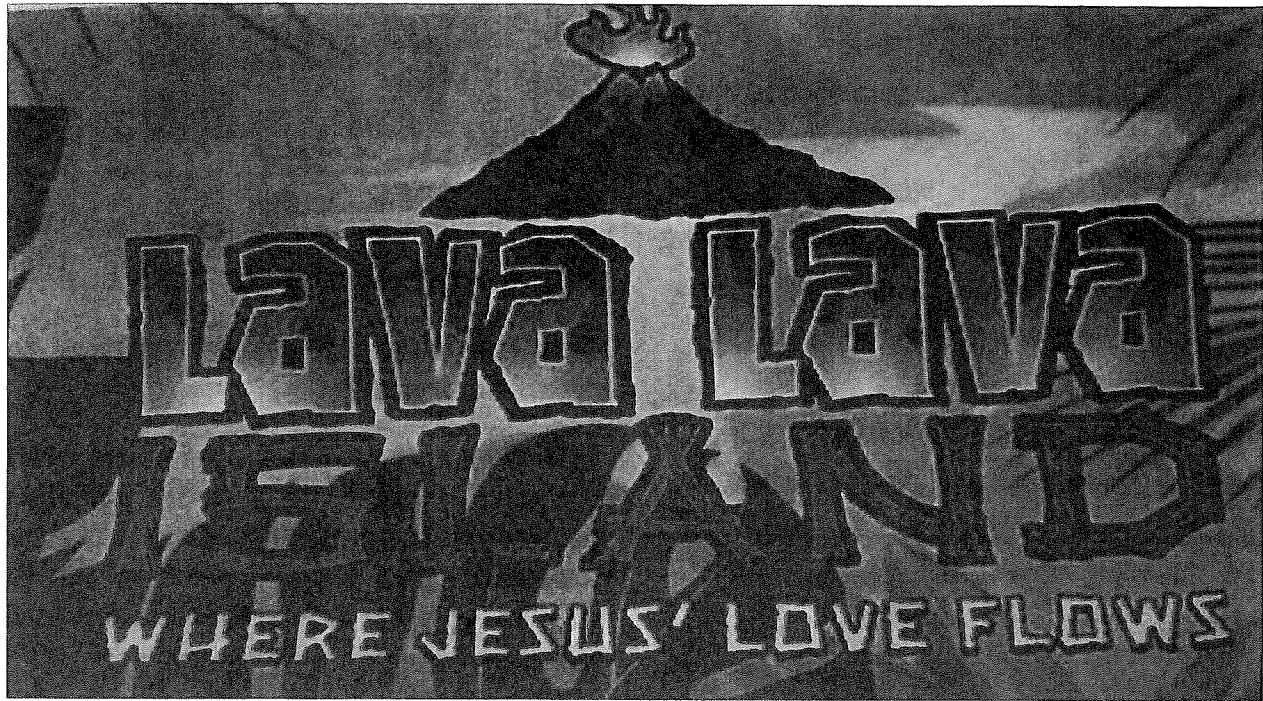
It appears that the goals are attainable and definitely are relevant in both providing for St. Paul's worship and educational studies and also for the outreach into our community. The time limit reaches to December 31, 2024, so please continue to respond generously.



**Our last Sunday School session will be May 19<sup>th</sup> until next fall.** A special thank you to our students and their families: Aiden and Julia Barnes, Eve and Lilly Hunt, Chad Kozloff, Dalton and Devyn Conard, Eleanor and Oliver Weston and to our Sunday School staff: Nancy Herber, Diane Merkau, and Leann Smith. Please continue to keep all of these precious souls in your prayers and thoughts.



Please join us for a **Women's Retreat on Saturday, May 18, 2024**, from 9:30-4:00. Come enjoy fellowship, crafts, lunch, spiritual reflection time and leave being **refreshed and blessed!** The day includes a coffee hour, a movie, worship, prayers, a luncheon, and crafts, spiritual reflections **and a day just for you.** Please **sign up by May 5<sup>th</sup>** on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex, call the church office at (810) 982-9853 or contact Leann Smith at leannsmith121@gmail.com or (810) 488-5829.



## Join us for Vacation Bible School

**August 5-8<sup>th</sup>, 5:00-7:30 for ages 4-adult.**

Come be part of the fun at our Vacation Bible School Lava Lava Island, where Jesus' love flows each day for ages 4-adult. Join us for the light dinner and stay for adult bible study while your children do crafts, snacks, games, and bible stories. Sign up today for this event! You can register your kids and yourself and/or sign up to volunteer. Bring friends, share the news. Sign up sheets will be found in narthex soon, or you may sign up online at [stpaulslutheranph.com](http://stpaulslutheranph.com) or [vbspro.events/p/2c768c](http://vbspro.events/p/2c768c)

Contact Leann Smith at (810) 488-5829 or [leannsmith121@gmail.com](mailto:leannsmith121@gmail.com).

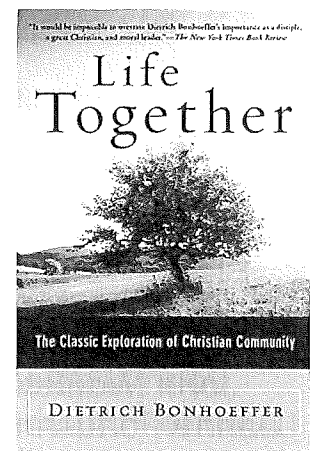
### PORT HURON SCHUBERT MALE CHORUS



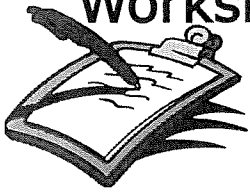
Come unite in voice with a free-will concert by the Port Huron Schubert Male Chorus, **May 19, 3:00 PM** with a reception afterwards at St. Paul. This year's theme for the spring concert is "The Great American Songbook, the Songs of America." All are welcome!

### Beyond the Bible

Beyond the Bible's next meeting will be **Sunday, May 5, at 12:15 PM**. This will be Part 3 of the discussion of "Life Together" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. **Happy Reading!**



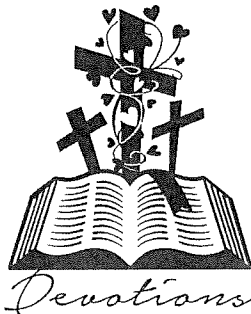
## Congregational Workshop



The congregation of St. Paul will be working on the direction that the church will take

in the years to come. Come join us on **Saturday, May 4, from 9-12 PM**, in setting goals for the next few years. A continental breakfast will be provided.

## Our Daily Bread



The March/April/May edition of "Our Daily Bread Devotion" is available for you to pick up. They are in the church office hallway. Please feel free to stop by and pick up a copy.

# Church COUNCIL

- Jim Fortushniak, Council President
- James White, President-Elect
- Marcia Conard, Council Secretary
- Diane Merkau, Treasurer
- Susan Koglin, Financial Secretary
- Margaret Hanselman, Asst. Financial Secretary
- John Middleton, Financial Rep.
- Leanne Fortushniak, Evangelism Rep.
- Leann Smith, Parish Ed. Rep.
- Jacques Merkau, Properties Rep.
- Diane Welsh, Stewardship Rep.
- Ann Preimesberger, Worship Rep.

## Church Directory

UPDATE



**Did you get rid of your land line?**

**Change your cell phone number or email address?**

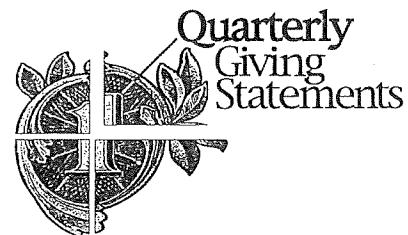
The directory is in the process of being updated. If you have any changes to your address, phone number or email address, please contact the office so we can have the most up-to-date information printed.

## Planning a Fundraiser?

Present the idea to the Council for approval.

Request the fundraiser form and a manila

envelope in which to collect money during the event. Store the money envelope in the safe. At the end of the event, count the donations. Give the financial secretaries the envelope so it can be reported as income. Checks are issued every two weeks. Let the treasurer know the amount of the check, contact person's name and the address for mailing.



The first quarter contribution statements will be emailed/mailed in April. If you do not receive yours or would like a hard copy, please email or call the office and let us know if you would like it mailed or placed in your box.



## Kroger Community Rewards Program

From **November 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024**, St. Paul Lutheran Church received \$59.85 from 28 families' rewards on purchases at Kroger. To use the rewards program, you can register online at [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com). All **current participants** in the Kroger Community Rewards Program **do not** need to re-enroll this year to earn funds for St. Paul. The rewards program runs from May 2023 to May 2024. Our NPO number is RK460. **Registration is online only.**

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**Newsletter:** The newsletter deadline for the June/July Ray is Tuesday, May 21, 2024. Articles may be submitted via e-mail ([stpaulww@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulww@comcast.net)), on a flash drive or in writing.

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While all are not able to be face to face in worship in our Sanctuary, there are still opportunities to gather to hear God's Word, to pray, to sing and to be encouraged. Please join us at 11 AM on our Facebook page for our livestream service.

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## Prayer List



*Prayer requests are welcomed and can be made on our Facebook page, by emailing the church office at [stpaulww@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulww@comcast.net) or with our connection cards. To keep the list current, please make your request each week you wish to have your loved one's name included in the prayers.*

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Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9:30-1:30  
Tuesday & Thursday 9:30- 11:30

OFFICE  
HOURS



## Sunday Services

1<sup>st</sup> service begins at 8 AM

2<sup>nd</sup> service begins at 11 AM



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
3790 WEST WATER ST  
PORT HURON, MI 48060  
(810) 982-9853  
stpaulww@comcast.net  
Sunday Worship 8 and 11 AM  
Livestream at 11 AM on Facebook,  
our YouTube channel  
or watch from the link on our website  
[www.stpaul Lutheranph.com](http://www.stpaul Lutheranph.com)  
Pastor Branden Hunt  
stpaulpastorelca@gmail.com

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PERMIT #660  
PORT HURON, MI 48060

# The Ray

*Gather, Grace, Grow, Go*



# May

# 2024

A small, stylized illustration of a flower branch with a few leaves, positioned to the right of the year '2024'.