



# Messenger

**February 2023**

Newsletter of St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, La Grange TX

A Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

On February 22, Ash Wednesday begins the Season of Lent, the ancient season of austerity that is based on Jesus' forty-day fast in preparation for his public ministry. The early church used the forty days prior to the Easter celebration to prepare candidates for baptism and to call the faithful to commitment and renewal. The traditional practices of Lent – study, prayer, self-discipline, and charity – are calls to repentance that will make way for a new life. The season of Lent offers a chance to change.

Let's gather during the Season of Lent to encourage each other to live lives dedicated to discipleship. God offers to accompany us in our Lenten journey. Our paraments will be purple, we will omit "alleluia" from our liturgy, and we will hear stories from the Gospel of John about the woman at the well, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus.

We will have special services on Wednesday evenings throughout the season. Ash Wednesday will feature the Imposition of Ashes as you hear the ancient words of God, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." Ash Wednesday and subsequent Wednesday services will be at 6:00 p.m.

I will be gone for part of Lent for health reasons. Also, we will participate with other area churches in a pulpit exchange as pastors come to our congregation to share sermons on the topic of prayer. Because of this schedule, we will not have morning services this year during Lent.

God bless you during this holy season and may you live a life that blesses our community.

*Pastor Sappenfield*



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you to everyone who participated in our recent congregational meeting, especially the cooks who were again sharing their talents with us all through a delicious fried chicken meal. A budget was passed, new officers were elected, joys and concerns were shared, future projects were dreamed and the entire council was installed. Your council looks forward to another successful year working together to do God's business through our ministry at Saint Paul.

For the remainder of this letter, I want to share news from the office of the Gulf Coast Synod and ask that you read all of it and provide feedback. At this year's synod meeting a vote will be held to determine if our synod would become known as a Reconciled in Christ synod. What does that mean? If the 2023 Gulf Coast Synod Assembly votes to become Reconciling in Christ it would mean that a Welcome Statement would be approved that explicitly states that the synod, as a separate but interdependent expression of the ELCA, welcomes, seeks to include, and desires to celebrate LGBTQIA persons and their families. This Welcome Statement would also commit our synod to its ongoing work of anti-racism in all its forms. The Gulf Coast Synod's website would continue to develop and expand resources for education and support for LGBTQIA issues, as well as the work of anti-racism. The Mission Table would also include in its priorities for new missions and redevelopments those projects committed to expanding ministry with and among LGBTQIA communities and communities of color. The Synod would create a fund in its budget to provide resources and support to congregations, as well as to ReconcilingWorks. Parts of this paragraph were taken verbatim from a paper published by the Synod, others were paraphrased. For more information visit [www.reconcilingworks.org](http://www.reconcilingworks.org).

During the 2022 Synod Assembly it was decided that within the year prior to this May's vote three informational meetings would be held throughout the synod and as your president I felt it my responsibility to attend the one at Lutherhill on January 14<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting information was shared about the LGBTQIA community. Leaders of the meeting explained that, should assembly members vote to become a Reconciled in Christ Synod (there are 65 synods in the US and 29 are RIC), it will have no bearing on individual congregations. Congregations may or may not vote individually to become Reconciled in Christ. The Synod is not requiring any action on the parts of congregations and no Welcome Statement must be created at the congregation level should the Gulf Coast Synod become Reconciled in Christ.

After returning home and following much prayer I visited with Pastor Bill and then the council about my concern that an issue like this could divide our congregation as it has others. However, I can't imagine anyone at Saint Paul refusing the opportunity to worship

with us. On the other hand, as council members, we are bound to set policy for Saint Paul. When the council looked at the issue from a policy standpoint one question stood out. If a couple from the LGBTQIA community who were aware of the ELCA and possible Gulf Coast Synod's support walked in the office next week or a month from now and asked if they could be married in our congregation what would be the answer? What would be the answer if they had previously become members or had been a member in the past? This is not a decision for the pastor, current or future. It is not a decision for the council. It is a decision to be made by the members of Saint Paul. What we do not want to happen is to wait until a couple asks the question and the issue appears to be about the specific couple instead of the issue itself.

The most important part of the entire process is that it is conducted with love and respect so that our church family remains a body of Christ that continues His mission in our community, country, and world.

The council wants to hear from you. You may call, text or email any of us. I will provide my information at the end of this letter. What we want to know is if this congregation wants to proceed with a vote to determine if LGBTQIA couples can be married at Saint Paul or not. You can share your feelings but that is not necessary at this point. We are just wanting to know about holding a vote and possibly a forum prior to the vote. Depending on the results of your feedback the issue will be dropped or a congregational meeting will be called and a vote will be taken. I have already had people respectfully share their thoughts with me on both sides of this matter and I along with all council members will hold every communication with the utmost confidentiality. Thank you for your participation in this information gathering effort.

Shalom,

Karen B. Bellue, president

[karen.b.bellue@gmail.com](mailto:karen.b.bellue@gmail.com)

979-966-2889

**Has your address or phone number changed? Do you no longer have your "land line"? Do you need to add an email address? We like to keep your information current and up to date. Please call the Church Office if you need to update your information.**

**Office hours are Monday – Friday 8:00 – 5:00.**

**You can email to: [stpaul@cvctx.com](mailto:stpaul@cvctx.com) or you can call the office at: 979-968-5657.**

**Office Manager Ruth Poncik will be happy to help you.**



Pray for our Shut-Ins and  
those in nursing homes and assisted  
living.



Kay Dippel

Juanita Frels

Myrtle Friemel

Annie and Wilburn Hackebeil

JoAn Heintschel

Eugene and Carolyn Hunger

Dogie Keith

Hertha Kruse

Joy Skelton

Edwin Votaw

Gladys Weber

Bea Rost

Jenelle Oeltjendiers

JC Spacek

Elroy Zimmermann

Florence Otto Monument Hill

Aleyn Voss Monument Hill

Fay Braun The Continental Austin TX

Grace Robilio Jefferson Place

Verlene Hobratschk Jefferson Place

Betty Schmidt Jefferson Place

Velrie Prause Jefferson Place

Barbara Gest Regency Nursing Schulenburg

Ruby Tielsch Regency Nursing Schulenburg

Mel Cameron Concordia Nursing & Rehab

Bella Vista AR

Special Thank You to all those who provided the delicious desserts for the Annual Meeting. I would also like to thank all of those who helped with the set up of the fellowship hall before the meeting and to those who stayed and helped us clean up and wash dishes after the meeting. Your desserts and help were VERY much appreciated.

Linda Anders

## ***What's Happening at St. Paul!***

**QUILTING MONDAY**—Quilters (Hand Quilting) meet every Monday at 9:00 am in the Quilting Room in the Educational Building.

**TACKY TUESDAY** (tying quilts for Lutheran World Relief) will meet on February 21, 2023 at 8:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. A pot luck lunch is shared by all with fellowship around 11:45 am, with a main dish provided.

**FRIENDS IN FAITH, our women's group**, will meet Monday, February 6 at 7 pm at the home of Kathy Toensing; 115 Rolling Hill Drive, La Grange.

**FISHERS OF MEN, our men's group**, will meet on Monday, February 13 at 6:30 pm at the home of Weldon and Lee Ann Hartmann; 5324 Sand Rock Rd., La Grange. Hosts are Weldon and Kyle Hartmann, Caleb Parks and Carlos Guevera.

**HANDBELL CHOIR** - meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm. Beginning on Ash Wednesday they will meet at 5:10 pm before Worship Services.

**CHOIR**—meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm.

**PRAISE BAND** - meets on Wednesdays at 8:00 pm.

**LYO, our high school youth group**, meets on Wednesday at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Beginning Ash Wednesday, the group is invited to attend Wednesday services and then will meet after the services in the LYO room upstairs.

**CHURCH COUNCIL**— will meet on Tuesday, February 21, at 6:00 pm in the Friendship Room.



The Church Profile has been submitted to the Synod and will be available for potential candidates after review. Next the Call Committee will develop a list of interview questions and perform a mock interview to help the Call Committee with their interview skills. Then wait for notification to start interviewing potential candidates. Please continue to pray for Pastor Bill's interim ministry, the call process and our future Pastor and their family.

### **The Call Committee**

**Sylvia Jewell, Chair**  
**Ashleigh Parks, Secretary**  
**Gary Anders**

**Sandra Tekyl**  
**Hannah Bellue**  
**Tim Knesek**

**St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**2023 Second Chance Work Schedule**

**February 14-20 March 28–April 3 May 9 –15**

**June 20-26 August 1-7 September 12-18 October 24-30 December 12-18**

*Second Chance hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.*

*& Mondays, 8 a.m.*

*Tuesday-Thursday are spent receiving, pricing and putting items out to sell; Fridays and Saturdays are the days the store is open to the public; and Monday mornings are for straightening up the store for the next volunteers.*

***Thank you to all volunteers and  
we always welcome new volunteers!***

St. Paul Coordinators: Carolyn Buchanek, Patty Ehler, JoLene Hughes, Linda Morrison,  
Ginger Muesse and Gloria Raschke

**2023 AMEN volunteer schedule**

**8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Mondays**

**February 6**

**is St. Paul day to work at AMEN**

(Also Thursday **February 9** to accept food donations ONLY) 10:00 am—12:00 pm

St. Paul's AMEN Coordinator is Rebecca Dittrich. Please contact her at 512-762-1276 if you would like to volunteer. Or you can email Rebecca at: [rebecca.dittrich11@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.dittrich11@gmail.com).

**REMINDER—** The second Sunday of the month is designated for collections for the AMEN food pantry. Green baskets are at portico entrance and porch of the church office. And a grocery basket is located in the Narthex for your donations.

**2023 AMEN Volunteer Schedule**

**March 20 May 22 July 17 August 28 November 6**

The 2023 Contribution Envelopes that were not picked up from the church Narthex have been moved to the office. If you did not get a box of envelopes, please call the office and office manager Ruth Poncik will be happy to help you get a box. She has met parishioners at the street curb that have problems getting into the office. Just call ahead to the office (979-968-5657) and Ruth will help you find a solution. As stated in the December newsletter, using an envelope assists the volunteer counters to credit your account correctly and to count the total of the offering correctly each week.

# ***40 Days of Lenten Giving***

During the season of Lent, many people make the choice to “give up” something for the time from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday. This year how about the idea of LENTEN GIVING to the AMEN Food Pantry? The need for food never goes away and, if anything, as reported by AMEN, the need has increased. The number of families served has grown.

St. Paul recently received an email from the ELCA World Hunger organization that reminds us that the 40 days of Lent are a ‘season to reflect and remember, to look forward and ahead’. These are hard times for many of us locally and worldwide. But the season of Lent is a reminder that God is not through with us or our world. While you feel that you can’t make a big change to the WORLD, you can certainly a change to your community in this way.

The reverse side of this page is a list of food items – one per day - for the 40 Days of Lenten Giving. Some items are specific – a can of green beans, while others are a little more flexible – a package of cookies or a boxed meal. This allows you to choose more of what YOU feel in your ‘season to reflect’ that YOU want to give to AMEN.

And while food items are needed monetary donations are always welcome to the AMEN food pantry. Please make sure to designate on your monetary donation “AMEN”. If you choose to participate in the 40 Days of Lenten Giving, you are welcome to drop the items at the church in the grocery basket or the green basket in the driveway or the green basket at the church office. The food will be delivered to AMEN and weighed weekly. Your monetary donations may be made using a plain envelope or the designated giving envelope in your box of envelopes. Ruth will keep a running total of the amounts of donated.

THANK YOU for your generosity during this time of reflection and preparation.

With great joy, we wish to share the success of the Reverse Advent Calendar and the 2022 giving to AMEN. We are incredibly grateful for all of those who contributed their time and donations to this wonderful organization!

The 2022 Reverse Advent Calendar brought in 1445 pounds of food and \$3060.00 in monetary donations. Our total giving in 2022 was 2666 pounds of food and \$7920.00 in monetary donations. We give our thanks to Ruth Poncik who brought forth the Reverse Advent Calendar idea and helped make it a reality. Look for another great opportunity during Lent to make a big difference at AMEN!

We could always use more helpful hands on our days of service at AMEN. The next one is Monday, February 6th. If you are interested in joining us or have any questions, please reach out by emailing [rebecca.dittrich11@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.dittrich11@gmail.com) or calling/texting at 512-762-1276.

Hope to see you there!  
Rebecca Dittrich  
AMEN Coordinator

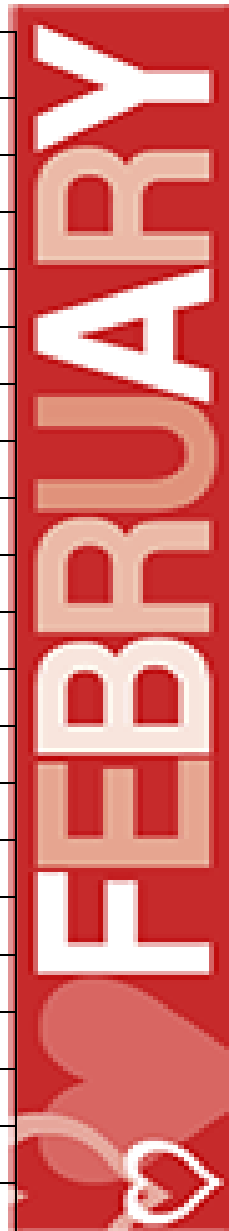


## 40 Days of Lenten Giving

1	peanut butter		21	can green beans	
2	jelly		22	can corn	
3	pancake syrup/honey		23	can carrots	
4	pancake mix		24	can peas	
5	cornbread mix		25	can mixed vegetables	
6	biscuit mix		26	canned beans	
7	package of oatmeal		27	canned tomatoes	
8	box of cereal		28	snack crackers	
9	box of breakfast bars		29	graham crackers	
10	canned tuna		30	box of crackers	
11	canned chicken		31	canned fruit	
12	canned meat		32	jar of applesauce	
13	package of pasta		33	fruit juice	
14	pasta sauce		34	boxed potatoes	
15	macaroni & cheese		35	dessert mix	
16	vegetable soup		36	flour	
17	noodle soup		37	sugar	
18	can stew		38	rice	
19	package of cookies		39	cornmeal	
20	boxed meal		40	snack food	



1	Jessica Gross
2	Kaci Paden
3	Fay Braun, Hanna Oehlke
4	Todd Wolff
5	Harvey Busch, Lisa Mollenberndt
6	Chloe Coufal, Ann Rigden
10	Linda Diers, Sara Koehl, Dalton Staal
11	Richard Schmidt
12	John Blaschke, Owen Dockery, Royce Keilers, Ginger Muesse
13	Jeanenne Klesel
14	J. David Marburger, Cheryl Rohde
15	Crew Schielack
16	Halle Davis, Carmen Gross
18	Robyn Boehm, Laura Wolff
20	Dogie Keith, Hayden Mach
21	Theodore Dittrich, Wes Hengst
22	Marva Lester, Faye Rau, Dennis Zbranek
23	Janice Homeyer
24	James Brewer
25	Gunner Jurek
26	Samuel Blaschke, Brett Wolff



# Birthdays



NAME	DATE	YEARS
<b>Marc and Stephanie Fitzpatrick</b>	<b>2/8</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Gary and Connie Prause</b>	<b>2/14</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Hayley and Cameron Saunders</b>	<b>2/14</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Dennis and Nancy Zbranek</b>	<b>2/17</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>David and Kaci Paden</b>	<b>2/20</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Brooke and Benjamn Sustr</b>	<b>2/20</b>	<b>7</b>

St. Paul is grateful for the new pew cushions paid for from contributions made in memory of E.H. Baumbach, Shirley Ehler, Ore Nell Frerichs, Rose Hunger, Lorene Kirkpatrick, Allyne Lincke, Mark Lincke, Estella Lueders, Everett Maas, Gary Piwetz, Eva Roitsch, Milton Schmidt, June Sellers, Otto Stolle, Sherman Toensing, Lillian Von Minden, Louise Von Minden, and Dorothy Zunker.

# February Worship Assistants

	5:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m.
<b>Feb 4 &amp; 5</b>		
Ushers	Billy & Christy Nietzsche	Ken & Linda Diers
Lectors	Annette Citzler	Praise Band
Altar Guild	Faye Bresan	Faye Bresan
Fellowship Refreshments		Annette Citzler
Flowers	Open	
<b>Feb 11 &amp; 12</b>		
Ushers	Don Koether/Jackie Skelton	Lloyd & Sylvia Jewell
Lectors	Jackie Skelton	Lloyd Jewell
Altar Guild	JoLene & Gerald Hughes	JoLene & Gerald Hughes
Fellowship Refreshments		OPEN
Flowers	Russ & Debbie Friemel/Ardie &	Jerry Holsinger
<b>Feb 18 &amp; 19</b>		
Ushers	John D. & Kay Marburger	Rhonda Koether/Bonnie Sladek
Lectors	John D. Marburger	Praise Band
Altar Guild	Jackie Skelton	Ashleigh Parks
Fellowship Refreshments		OPEN
Flowers	Open	
<b>Feb-23</b>	<b><i>Ash Wednesday</i></b>	<b><i>Evening @ 6:00 pm</i></b>
Altar Guild		Gloria Raschke/Ginger Muesse
<b>Feb 25 &amp; 26</b>		
Ushers	Richard & Danette Coufal	Gerald & JoLene Hughes
Lectors	Chloe Coufal	Frank Tekyl
Fellowship Refreshments		OPEN
Altar Guild	Faye Bresan	Janet Coronado
Flowers	Open	

The 2023 Flower Chart is posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex, outside the Friendship Room. There are quite a few open dates for the opportunity to beautify the sanctuary for the weekend. Please consider this ministry whether in honor or memory of a family member or just because you enjoy beauty in your church. Both local florists have access to deliver flowers so there is no concern of having to place the flowers in the sanctuary. If you choose another option for flowers, please call the church office and we will be glad to assist you with entrance to bring your flowers. A call to the church office (979-968-5657) can make sure your gift is noted in the bulletin. And if you choose to remain anonymous, a simple statement of "A Gift to St. Paul" can be placed in the bulletin.



## St. Paul 2023 Congregation Council

**Karen Bellue**, President (979)966-2889 call or text

**Paul Mikula**, Vice-President

**Donnie Dippel**, Treasurer

**Russell Dittrich**, Mission/Peru

**Atlan Citzler, Jr.**, Stewardship/Finance/Endowment

**David Ehler**, Property

**Michael Mach**, Worship/Technology

**Dianne Lude**, Youth/Parish Education

**Bamba Scott**

**Todd Oehlke**

### Parish Office Hours:

**Monday—Friday**

**8:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m.**

**Office Phone: 979-968-5657**

**Pastor Cell Phone: 512-825-0842**

**Fellowship Hall Phone: 979-968-9603**

**[www.stpaullg.org](http://www.stpaullg.org)**

**[stpaul@cvctx.com](mailto:stpaul@cvctx.com)**



## St. Paul Lutheran Church

share • care • grow  
La Grange, Texas

**The Rev. William J. Sappenfield**, *Interim Pastor*

*[wsappenfield@att.net](mailto:wsappenfield@att.net)*

[Pastor is in the office Mon-Wed 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.]

(512) 825-0842

**Ruth Poncik**, *Office Manager*

**Sherise Davis**, *Organist*

**Jean McHenry**, *Organist*

**Kathy Toensing**, *Adult Choir/Praise Band Choir*

**Carolyn Bennetsen, Mannie Fritsch-Schmid,  
and Paul Mikula**, *Stephen Ministers*

## MESSENGER

**February 2023** *Monthly Newsletter of St Paul Church*

**St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church**

*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**P O Box 567/427 S Washington Street**

**La Grange, Texas 78945**

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