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THE EPISTLE

The Newsletter of St. Paul Presbyterian Church

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Worship @ 10:15 a.m. Sunday School: Adult @ 9:00am; Sr. High @ 9:40; K-6 @ 10:30



revision™

REVISION SMALL GROUPS STARTING UP...LAST CALL!

So far 63 people have signed up for a ReVision small group! That's a darn good response, but it won't be the same without *you!* The purpose of these groups is to help our church look at itself, the area around us, and the Bible and then formulate plans for the future. Classes begin the week of January 12 and meet weekly for 8 weeks total. Coffee, stimulating conversation, and warm fellowship provided! There are six groups meeting at various times and days of the week. Call the office or go online to <http://abv8.me/3Mo> (case sensitive) to

find the perfect group for you. The small groups will be coordinated with a sermon series laying the "Foundations of Renewal:"

JANUARY 12: "THE POWER OF A VISION" will be the first sermon in our "Foundations of Renewal" series. What's a vision? And what difference does it make? You can read Proverbs 29:18 and Isaiah 61:1-3 in preparation. Harper Reis, daughter of Ben and Krista Reis and granddaughter of Donna Larson will receive the sacrament of baptism.



JANUARY 19: "THE POWER TO SEE, THE WILL TO CHANGE" will be our sermon, based on Romans 8:18-39. Sometimes when we look at the world around us it is easy to get overwhelmed and paralyzed. This sermon will explore how God can help us overcome our inertia. We also hope to be ordaining/installing our new elders and deacons during this service.

JANUARY 26: "THE FIELDS ARE WHITE" is the third sermon that will be coordinated with the ReVision experience. Check out John 4:31-38 if you would like to come prepared. Following worship we will hold our Annual Meeting. Printed reports will be available on Jan 19.



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**STEWARDSHIP ROAD
NEW PATHS, NEW BEGINNINGS
by Dean Nihart**

As the year comes to a close, I want to reflect a bit on where we have been and where we are going. What does the road ahead look like? What does God have in store for us? Where will our new path take us? Isn't it exciting to think about?!!

Yes, 2013 was a time for change. St. Paul has a new Youth Director and a new Pastor! While we enjoyed our interim Pastor and we have many great memories of Pastor John also, there is an air of newness and hope for the future that comes with having a new full-time Pastor. In 2014 Pastor Bill and a 14 person committee will be leading us on a trip (Re-Visioning) designed to determine what trails we, as a congregation, want to blaze. This committee will be teaching us more as the new year unfolds. Where will it take us? What can we do to help?

For starters, it would be great if everyone participated in the upcoming process. Remember, good stewardship calls for us to give of our time, our talents and our treasure. All of us have thoughts and ideas to share, so please be sure to share your thoughts as this process unfolds. Secondly, pray! Pray for our church, our future, and for direction as to what God wants from us and from St. Paul. There can never be too many prayers!!!

Some other matters I want to review include some Thank You's to people I was lucky enough to work closely with this past year.

- * Thank you to Jean Gilbert, the cornerstone of the Stewardship Committee. Your faithful service is such a blessing to all of us at St. Paul.
- * Thank you to Charissa Peters, our treasurer, and so much more. I appreciate all of your efforts to keep our financial data in order! You do great work!
- * Thank you to the PNC Committee members. It was amazing serving with all of you and getting to know each other better. I think as they say in the movies... "we done good!"
- * Thank you to the M&E Committee for putting together the Progressive Dinner. Also, the efforts of the Birt's, the Foley's and the O'Connell's in preparing their homes and such delicious foods, was nothing short of amazing. It was a fantastically tasty and fun evening!
- * Thank you to the Congregation for your giving spirit. It appears we will be close to breaking even monetarily in 2013 and the preliminary budget for 2014, while more expensive, still looks promising. Your giving and your on-going faith have helped make the path down Stewardship Road, a blessed path, indeed!
- * Finally, I'd like to thank my fellow Session members whose terms will end this year. Bret Mills, Amy Nihart, Lisa Stange and Loren Van Essen, it was a pleasure serving with such enthusiastic members. You were all very hard-working, and your dedication to St. Paul has been a real blessing these past years! THANK YOU!

2014 will be a fun and exciting time for St. Paul. As I have often said, I believe this congregation is special and the energy and love will surely shine through in our future. Happy New Year to each and every one of you and keep those prayers coming, as we travel down Stewardship Road together again in the coming year!

Dear St. Paul,

Every once in a while words fail to express the depth of gratitude that one feels. Such was the case when Dean Nihart presented our family with an envelope of cash and checks to assist us with the financial pinch we have been feeling from carrying two house payments. We were deeply moved by your spontaneous act of generosity and feel richly blessed yet again to be here at St. Paul. Your encouragement and support, not only through this gift, but also through countless others, is a great blessing to us. God bless you all for your thoughtfulness!

Yours in the Lord,

Bill and Rebecca O'Connell



'TIS THE SEASON FOR PER CAPITA, BUT WHAT IS IT??

“Per capita is the responsible way of sharing the costs that equitably belong to the whole Presbyterian Church community expressing the essential unity of the church. It has been said that per capita apportionment is like a utility bill. Just as we pay for heat, light, water and telephone in order to remain connected to the utility systems and benefit from the services provided, we also pay per capita so that the Presbyterian system can function on behalf of all of us. It is the necessary linkage in our connectional system.”

This once a year offering for each adult or confirmed youth helps defray the cost of the \$37.00 per member our church pays to support the administration of our higher governing bodies (\$7.02 goes to the National General Assembly, \$5.00 goes to our regional Synod, and \$24.98 goes to our local Presbytery). Blue per capita envelopes will be available in the pews or you may just write “Per Capita” on your check memo.

The M & E Committee organized a Progressive Dinner on December 15th. Appetizers were served at The Birt's, dinner at The Foley's and dessert/coffee at The O'Connell's. We had 28 people attend and fun was had by all. M & E is not planning any activities for the next couple of months due to the ReVision program. Wishing everyone the best in 2014!

**Dr. Roberta Victor
CROSS Ministries**

“No one can go back and start a new beginning but anyone can start today and make a new ending.” – Maria Robinson

“Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.” – Henry Ford

“I wanted a perfect ending. Now I’ve learned, the hard way, that some poems don’t rhyme, and some stories don’t have a clear beginning, middle and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what’s going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity.” – Gilda Radner

Like many of my generation, I truly believe that Gilda Radner was one of the funniest comedians of her time. Gilda’s death, which came much too early, was a loss to all who enjoyed the various characters she portrayed on TV and in the movies. While comedy was her forte, her witticisms on life contained a profound element of truth, such as the quote previously noted.

Life is chock full of beginnings and endings, oftentimes overlapping, and the month of January, when our calendar begins anew, lends itself easily to those types of enumerations. Perhaps that is why when I think about January I tend to think about many of the clients we serve. For obvious reasons, a new beginning is typically the very thing people in crisis are seeking.

For some, it might be new or improved relationships or even winning the lottery, but more often than not it is something simpler, more tangible, like a new job that will help them make ends meet, a car that doesn’t break down, or simply a new apartment without crumbling walls, toilets that leak or pest infestations.

One such person envisioning a new beginning was Nina, a young mother with two small children. Nina urgently needed help from CROSS Ministries to create a better living environment to raise her family. While they had lived in the same apartment for three years, over the last several months the building had grown progressively worse. Maintenance work was not being conducted properly and the final straw happened when Nina found cockroaches crawling on her sleeping child. Although she managed to pay her rent each month, the deposit money that she would need to move into a new apartment complex made her dream seem out of reach. Then one day a friend suggested that she talk with CROSS Ministries when all other help had been denied to her.

In 2013, CROSS Ministries provided the help needed to create a new beginning not just for Nina, but also for thousands of other men, women, and their children.

As you place that 2014 calendar up on the kitchen wall or on top of your desk and the year starts anew, be assured that God is in the beginning, middle, and endings for us all. Nothing we have faced or will face is too big for God. We will indeed wake up on January 1, 2014 with God to guide us. Pray for the families served by CROSS Ministries, pray about the endings and be open to God’s new possibilities and beginnings in all of our lives. Happy New Year!





Dr. Roberta Victor, Executive Director of CROSS Ministries, Honored

On Tuesday, December 10, Dr. Roberta Victor, Executive Director of CROSS Ministries, received the 2013 Service to Mankind award from the Des Moines chapter of the SERTOMA club for her work with low-income and no-income people living in the greater Des Moines area. At a luncheon at the Embassy club atop the Ruan Building, the presenter not only outlined Roberta's work with CROSS Ministries, but her art therapy with both the Sudanese refugees and with the women of the Special Needs Unit of the Iowa Correctional Facility (prison) in Mitchellville, and for her service in the Iowa Crisis Response team at Ground Zero after the 911 attack.

Congratulations Roberta, our St. Paul friend and CROSS Ministries fellow Presbyterian!



BOOK CLUB!!!



C A L E N D A R

January Worship schedule:

Jan 5 th -	1 st Sunday after Christmas
Jan 6 th -	Epiphany
Jan 12 th -	1 st Sunday after Epiphany
Jan 19 th -	2 nd Sunday after Epiphany
Jan 26 th -	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany

Jan Driving Schedule:

5	Doug
12	Brian
19	Mike
26	Rob



Coffee Hosts and Greeters

Jan 5 th -	Rob & Jennifer Morris
Jan 12 th -	Jim & Jean Gilbert
Jan 19 th -	Don & Carrie McLaughlin
Jan 26 th -	John & Gretchen Kraemer

January birthdays

5 Sue Löffler
7 Jacob Darling
7 Jerry Foley
10 Deb McConnell
11 Erin Hansen
12 Kalli Kramer
12 Abbie Kraemer
14 Howard Van Trees
17 Jacob Garland
18 Heidi Wych
19 Kate Allender
19 Jana Foley
19 Kyle Sievers
19 Loren VanEssen
20 Penny Reimer
20 Ben Reis
20 Lois Watson
22 Susan VanEssen
23 Katie Larson
23 Krista Larson Reis
25 Melanie McManigal
25 Richard Reay
26 Arla Darling
26 Mary Letsch
27 Marv Mauk
27 Jordan Moriarty
27 Tyler Moriarty
29 Megan Stange
31 Mildred Peitzman

St. Paul Presbyterian: The Giving Tree 2013

By: Sue VanEssen

What's true generosity? Everyone would have their own answer. I have always felt our St. Paul family gives their all, and we turn around and feel as if it costs us nothing. The giving is unconditional just like our awesome God's love for us!

St. Paul deacons and missions combined their efforts this year and created a Christmas "Giving Tree," combining our gifts for Calvin Manor Retirement village and a military family.

We gave fleece cardigans, warm hoodies, and numerous gift certificates to those in need. How wonderful to think of a family or shut in at Christmas!

We owe thanks to Lois Watson along with Val Nichols for their extra efforts in getting this organized. A special thanks to Sally Hedgepath for finding the military family! Our village just keeps getting better 😊

CE Concern

We are always looking for people to help with our Logos meals. You will find this a fun way to get to know our youth and can even get a nice meal along with some fun! Here are ways you can share your talents!

Treats: Prepare 1 dozen after school snacks and have to church by 2:00 (drop off and leave a note for the servers!)

**Dinner Dean: Start and end the meal with prayer/song
Have a fun way to choose a table server
Keep the dinner flowing - include a table "talk" activity
Lead and teach thank you to kitchen help
Time: 6:00-7:00**

(We have a folder full of songs sheets, table "rolls", etc. with things the kids are familiar with, but always welcome new ideas!)

Dessert: Prepare dessert for 60 and have to church by 6 PM (dessert is listed on the menus)

Head cooks: Purchase supplies for the meal. Head cooks can prepare the meal at home or at church, and the kitchen crew can help finish things off if you leave directions. I have often dropped it off and refrigerated the items on Tuesday night and left notes for warming/baking directions if needed. (the church pays for the groceries for the meal), and a dessert provider (to serve approx. 60).

Cooks will receive an email with some helpful guides for amounts to purchase along with recipes.

The first Wednesday of each month we order in Pizza and celebrate Birthdays.

You will find the sign up in the fellowship hall on the west wall.

THANKS!!

Youth Happenings!!

December, 2013

December was full of caroling children, bell ringing middle schoolers, and brilliant displays of music, comedy, and hope through the Children's Christmas program.



It was truly a time of family and joy as the youth and children of St. Paul came together with their parents to celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ and the promise of salvation for all. December was an enjoyable month thanks to the hard work of the students, parents, and other members of the church. So to everyone involved with the program thank you for all the time and effort you put into it.



As the second half of LOGOS begins this week (Wednesday, January 8th) we are all excited to have students roaming the halls and prowling the gym once more. Please remember that LOGOS is canceled if the Johnston School District declares no school any particular Wednesday this Winter. Also don't forget K-6th grade meets for Sunday School during service on Sundays where we play games, make crafts, and learn about God. Feel free for the students to bring a friend (maybe even two) to any of our youth and children's programs and events this Winter/Spring!

-Aaron

Aaron Sewell
Director of Youth and Children's Ministry

Song of the Month

“The Day After Christmas”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxeYuSGcA04>

(ctrl + left click to follow link)

Here comes the letdown Christmas is over
Here comes the meltdown, there goes the cheer
But before we have a breakdown, let us remember
The light of the world is still here

Happy day after Christmas
And merry rest of the year
Even when Christmas is over
The light of the world is still here
The light of the world

Come January I'm ready for summer
The Super Bowl's over and I'll settle for spring
Sometimes we all need a change in the weather
But it won't change the reason we sing

Happy day after Christmas
And merry rest of the year
Even when Christmas is over
The light of the world is still here
The light of the world
The light of the world
The light of the world

So take down the stockings, take back the sweaters
Take down the lights and the star and the tree
But don't let this world take your joy after Christmas
Take joy to the world and just sing

Happy day after Christmas
And merry rest of the year
Even when Christmas is over
The light of the world is still here
[X2]

The light of the world [x7]

The Back Page

Happy New Year!

**Tw'as the day after Christmas, and all through the house
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.**

**The cookies I'd nibbled, the eggnog I'd taste
At the holiday parties had gone to my waist.
When I got on the scales there arose such a number!
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber).**

**I'd remember the marvelous meals I'd prepared;
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,
The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese
And the way I'd never said, "No thank you, please."**

**As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt--
I said to myself, as I only can
"You can't spend a winter disguised as a man!"**

**So -- away with the last of the sour cream dip,
Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip
Every last bit of food that I like must be banished
"Till all the additional ounces have vanished.**

**I won't have a cookie -- not even a lick.
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.
I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie,
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.**

**I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore--
But isn't that what January is for?
Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.
Happy New Year to all, and to all a good diet!**