

February
2020
Volume
LVIII

THE EPISTLE

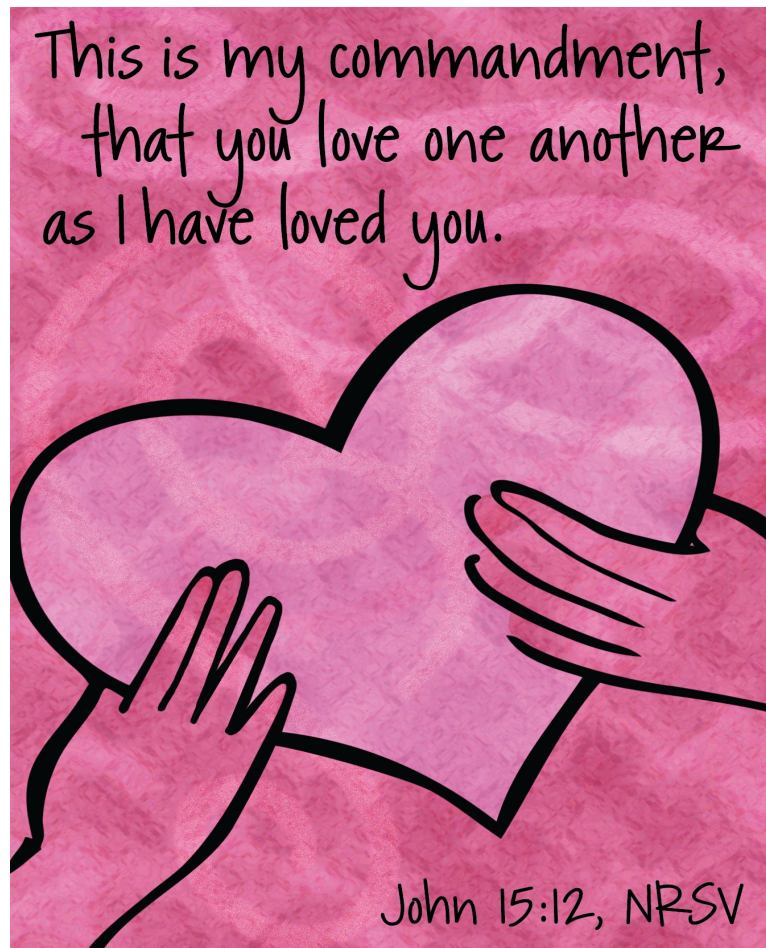
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Rectors Corner

God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. - Genesis 1:5

The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. - Exodus 20:21

*Even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.
- Psalm 139:12*

Friends,

We are in a season of growing light. The word Epiphany means reveal. We automatically associate Epiphany with light as Christ's identity is revealed throughout our hearing about His life and ministry. Throughout scripture we use light and dark to mean Good and Evil or God and the Devil. But this binary language neglects the fact that it was God who created the darkness, God who named the darkness and God who dwells in darkness as well as the light.

Our eagerness to classify things and people as good and bad negates the reality that both coexist in each of us and in the world around us. There is nowhere that God cannot be found and no place that Christ will not be with us. Especially in our direst struggles and darkest nights of the soul Christ is with us, holding us. God rules the darkness as much as the light.

We fear the darkness because of what we try to hide there and because of the unknown that dwells there. We would rather try to hide ourselves from each other and God (as if we could!) and keep ourselves ignorant of the darkness of our world to somehow insulate ourselves. This endeavor never works except to isolate us from God and our neighbor and, frankly, our true selves. To never know or wrestle with our own darkness and our own struggles is to live a sort of half-life, bound to our fears instead of living in our realities.

This Lent we will have a chance to study a powerful book written about the brokenness in our own justice system. We will hear of suffering and strength of hopelessness and of triumph. We will marvel at the faith of those who wait for justice and those struggling to gain it in an unjust system. Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson has recently been made into a movie and I suggest you see it. Even if you can't attend a book study session please read this book. Appropriate for Epiphany, it will reveal much to you about our justice system. Appropriate for Lent, it will help us bear the wound of knowledge together and be inspired to work for justice in our own community.

God made us and knows us better than we ever will. My hope is that as we prepare for the season of Lent and see the light increase around us that we'll gain the courage to look into the void inside of us and enter it with Christ. What frustrates you about yourself? What disappoints you about your relationships? What keeps you from being kind to yourself and others? Are the words you use for yourself loving? Do you find yourself being more critical than uplifting? Do you long to be really and truly known and loved for who you are? Put all these things before the God who made you and knows you and loves you. You are beloved and in knowing that, you will be able to love others.

My prayer for you is that God gives you the courage to love and I ask you to pray the same for me.

Faithfully,

Sarah+

“Everyday Minister”

With

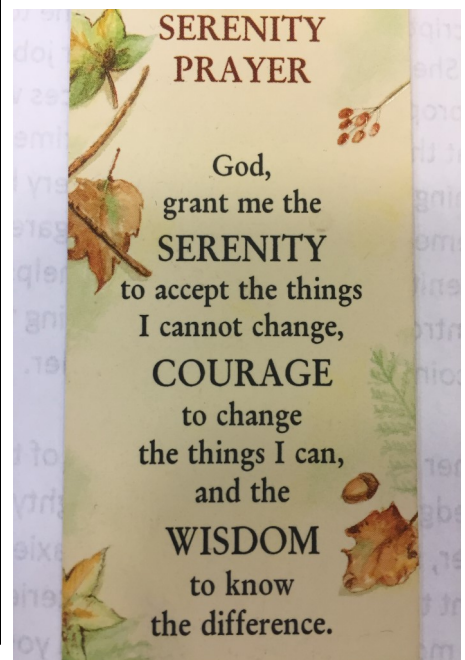
Melissa our Seminarian

Building on my January article about being an *Everyday Minister*-the thought that everyone has the potential to be a minister in their daily life and work-I decided to highlight **Margaret O’Connor** as an everyday minister for February.

In talking with Margaret about her story, I learned that she is the Principle Environmental Planner at Consumers Energy. She explained that she works in the environmental department at Consumers Energy. Her main duties include ensuring that wildlife, most often birds and bats, are considered as energy lines, wind farms, and power demands increase.

When I asked her what her go to scripture verse or prayer was, she told me she often turns to, “With God all things are possible.” She further explained that her job includes making sure the wind farms are constructed in the proper places. This means places where there is less impact to bats and birds. And I learned that the wind turbines kill eight times as many bats as birds! Margaret said that “With God all things are possible” comes in very handy when there are competing interests as to the placement of the wind farms. Margaret also shared that another prayer she turns to often is the Serenity Prayer, which she says helps her to remember to be patient. This prayer emphasizes controlling what we can and giving the rest to God. She sometimes keeps this prayer on a coin in her pocket as a reminder.

When I think about Margaret and her Everyday Ministry, I think of this prayer from the Book of Common Prayer (827). “For Knowledge of God’s Creation: Almighty God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”



Coffee Hour Hospitality

Hospitality is alive and well at St. Paul's. Many new people have come through our doors in past Sundays and coffee hour is an excellent time to sit and talk and welcome them to our church. It is also a great time to catch up with friends you haven't seen all week or to check on activities and opportunities for fellowship you want to become involved in.



With the help of Jeremiah, our new Kitchen Manager, hosting at coffee hour has become so much easier. The host/hostess will be responsible for making the coffee, setting out the juice and water, and the food trays as well as a sweet item which they will bring. Sweet items can be cookies, muffins, cake, brownies, pastries or whatever you choose. This new method should reduce some of the stress previously felt by people who didn't feel comfortable participating.

Other ways you can become involved are to donate to the Hospitality fund to help purchase items, pair up with someone else and co-host, or just bake goods even if you don't feel comfortable making the coffee.

We also have monthly team leaders who work with our host/hostesses to make the experience as comfortable as possible. We are also seeking individuals who would serve as Monthly Team Leaders to help with the organization of the coffee hosting schedule and work with the other team leaders on projects as needed to provide our parish family and guests with wonderful fellowship opportunities. We are always looking for more team leaders if you are interested in helping with the hospitality ministry for our church.



The Kitchen Cabinet will be meets monthly on the first Tuesday of each month, so please feel free to share your concerns or questions in time for the group to address them.

If you have any questions, please contact Rhonda Rudolph at rlrudolph61@gmail.com or (517) 474-4368.

St. Paul's Annual
Meeting
1/19/20





From Building & Grounds..

This year's month of January has been mostly quiet considering last year. Expenses were minimal largely because of very little snow removal. Repairs to heating systems were kind until yesterday, when the computer running the heating system in the church fondly called the sequencer failed. Our heating system is running in the interim until a comparable unit is found.

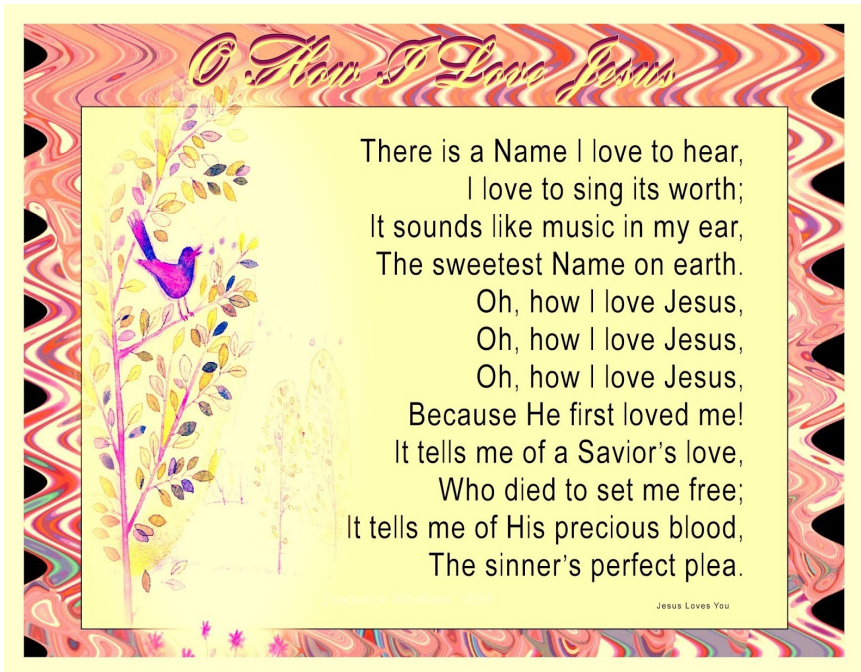
Lighting upgrades are continued with the office/administrative area. Several light bulbs not working, need replacing. Bulbs are on order to replace bulbs with LED unit's lasting longer, using less energy used. Work in progress is a coordination of thermostats throughout the facility, more to follow.

Jackson city has begun a conversation with property owners about future increases in utility bills. I attended a 6th Ward meeting Thursday hosted by current counsel person Will Forgrave. The subjects were water bill increases & the leaf pick up program. It sounds like significant increases in the cost to use city water. Details to be determined by the city.

Submitted by,
Kyle King
Chair person
Buildings & Grounds



Many thanks to our Interfaith Shelter Dinner crew for serving dinner last Tuesday! A shout out also goes to our cooks- Barb & Bob Duke, Michelle Gibson and Sandra Kilian. Great job all!



?? ? Bible Quiz ? ??

The precise number varies depending on the Bible version, but roughly how many times does the word "love" occur in the Old and New Testaments combined?

A. 200-300
B. 400-500
C. 600-700
D. 800-900

Love

Answer: C

Cassandra Lagow	February 3
Nathan Randall	February 8
Loren Swanson	February 15
Mishele Wilkins	February 17
Harry Strait	February 18
Evelyn McCann	February 19
Valerie Rowley	February 20
Marianne Kincaid	February 21
Donna Kurcz	February 23
Diane Worthing	February 24
Chris Scheele	February 24



Melissa Congleton &
Tammy Rees -February 2
Rev. Sarah & Dee Hurlbert
February 18
Elaine & Benjamin Themm

The older I get the faster the sand goes through the hourglass. And so January is at a close and February is looming fast before us! That didn't take long did it? Wasn't the Christmas season just last week?? Time now for another ECW update.

At our January meeting Dot Tetreault, LMSW, gave us a compelling presentation on the effects of social media and "screen time" on young children. The information she presented was truly eye-opening and concerning for parents and grandparents alike. MRI scans show specific areas of the brain lighting up as children use these devices. Young brains are shrinking and areas vital to communication and decision making are not developing as they used to. Children are losing the ability to converse with their peers and adults in a normal social setting as they abandon the previously accepted "in-person" social activities for Face Book, Instagram and texting. With Google at their fingertips this world of instant answers is causing these young brains to lose the ability to retain information as well as previous generations. Also discussed was computer games which are leading to obsessive compulsive and addictive behaviors. These devices also feeds the need for instant gratification leading to behavioral problems in all aspects of their lives. Scary stuff when we consider these children are our future workers, leaders and professionals. Scarier still is how many of them take their lead from the example of their parents and other adults in their lives. Our biggest lesson? Put your own device away when in family or social settings especially when children are present.

Its official! The nut sale is not only over but sold out! Thanks go out to everyone who helped make this sale such a success. From those who helped in all aspects of the nut project to those who purchased nuts right up to the last minute of the sale. The profit so far \$1,172 with the final day yet to be added. It is a larger profit than last year and we are very happy with that. It has been decided to keep the profit in our account in order to build up the treasury for future outreach and in-reach opportunities. Possible recipients and amounts will be decided at a future meeting. A special thank you goes out to Romelle Frey who spearheaded the project.

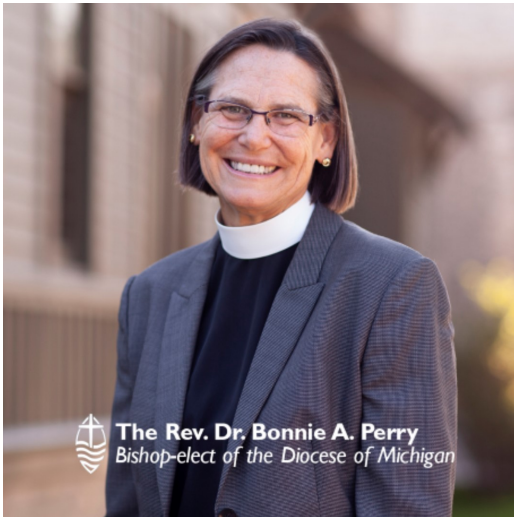
While we have some interesting things coming up soon we especially want to mention the April 18 meeting. This is our "fun" project that was decided on by the group. It will be a painting project lead by Elizabeth Wray. Elizabeth has a Face Book presence under Creative Juices but not a web site. Photos can be viewed on Face Book and the final project will be voted on at our next meeting. The total cost for this event is \$25. This includes all the materials needed, the cost of the artist and also the food. We do not want cost to be prohibitive so any woman who might find the amount problematic should contact Rev. Sarah. We want everyone to enjoy this event and not have anxiety over the cost and greatly encourage contacting Sarah.

At the February 8 meeting we will have Kimberly Pickett and Nacoya Weatherspoon from Get Real who will tell us about their program. A sign-up sheet will be available in the glass narthex as the date approaches. March 14 is our Lenten retreat led by Lori Tate. More details as to content will be in the next Epistle article. We encourage you to mark these important dates on your calendars so that you get the most out of your ECW experience.

Never forget that all women are welcome at ECW and we look forward to increasing our numbers as our circle is always open.

Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Rowley, Vice-President, ECW





The Consecration of the Rev. Dr. Bonnie A Perry as the 11th Bishop of our Diocese will be on Saturday, February 8, 2020 at 10:30 am at:

The Ford Performing Arts Center, Dearborn

9:30am – Theatre opens for seating

10:30am – First procession begins

11 am – Ordination & consecration, followed by reception

For more info and details go to: <https://www.edomi.org/event/consecration/>

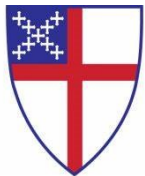
Can't Make It In Person?

Tune in At 10am on Saturday, February 8 to watch the livestream on the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan Facebook page or on the EDOMI website: <https://www.edomi.org/consecration/>

Lenten Book Study

During each week of Lent Pastor Sarah will host a book study on "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson. We'll meet each Wed. evening at 5:15 pm for study. Choir members will have time to get to practice. There will be no meal served at this study so we can prayerfully focus together. Our Adult Forum leaders will be leading the same study on Sunday mornings. A sign up sheet and info on books will be announced soon. Come join us!

Episcopal 101



Each Sunday of March and April Pastor Sarah will lead a coffee hour session of Episcopal 101. This is a class designed for newcomers who want to know more about the Episcopal Church and St. Paul's. This is also a class for Adults who are seeking Baptism or Confirmation in the Episcopal Church. We will meet in the Small Dining Room after the 10:30 service so bring your coffee, snacks and questions! Please note this class is not for our more seasoned Episcopalians but focuses on newcomers. Thank you!

Mission & Outreach

The next M&O meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb 4 at 5:30 pm in the church library. We will be planning the 2020 calendar of Events and invite anyone who has an interest in this ministry to attend! New and fresh ideas are ALWAYS welcomed!

Also, the second annual "Handbags of Love" planning committee needs to begin our work for the SOAR Cafe and Farms fundraiser. It will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2020! Last year we raised over \$12,000, a very high bar which we intend to beat this year. If you are interested in joining the team, we will meet on Saturday, February 8 at 9:00 am in the church library, as well.

We can get the ball rolling and still be able to attend the ECW meeting at 10:30. I hope to see last year's team then, as well as anyone else who wants to join us! MORE IS MORE!!!

We are looking forward to laying out the plans for another phenomenal year with Mission and Outreach at St. Paul's!

We all look forward to seeing YOU!!

Yours in Christ,

Barb Markowski
(517) 206-0064

Barney Rudolph
(517) 474-4367



Sunday Feb. 23rd we will suspend our normal parish Christian Ed hour and ask folks to gather in Holy Spirit Hall at 9:15 where we will do an all parish service project of tying fleece blankets for the residents of our local shelters. No prior experience is necessary just bring your prayers, hands and sense of fun!



Announcements

SAVE THE DATE!

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will be February 25th with a Hymn Sing at 5:30 pm and pancakes served after.

Ash Wednesday will be on February 26th with "Ashes to go" at 8 am; and Holy Eucharist and the imposition of ashes at 12:15 pm and 7:00 pm.



Sunday March 1st the 10:30 am service will be an "Instructed Eucharist" where Pastor Sarah will explain our liturgy in lieu of her sermon. This is a great opportunity to invite your curious friends and bring your questions with you! All are welcome.



ANNUAL REPORT

Copies of the 2020 Annual Report are available to pick up on the table outside of the office, or you may request one via email.

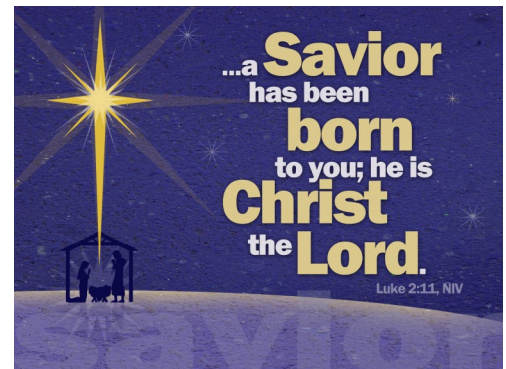
You may also view it via the homepage of the St. Paul's website: <http://stpauljxmi.org/>

All agenda items passed and the Vestry slate was elected. Thanks to all who attended and made the meeting a success.




St. Paul's Epiphany Pageant

January 5, 2020



FEBRUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						
2 BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES	3	4	5	6	7	8
8am Holy Eucharist 9:15 am Adult Forum 9:15 am Church School 10:30 am Holy Eucharist/ Coffee Hour		10:30 am Bereavement Group 5:15 pm Cardio Drumming Class 6 pm Toastmasters 6:30 pm Kitchen Cabinet	11 am Bible Study 12:15 pm Holy Eucharist 6:30 pm Choir Practice	11:30 am Staff Mtg 5:15 pm Cardio Drumming Class 6 pm Handbells		9 am SOAR Fundraising Committee 10:30 am ECW 10:30 am Consecration of Bishop Perry
9 NOISY SUNDAY	10	11	12	13	14	15
8am Holy Eucharist 9:15 am Adult Forum 9:15 am Church School 10:30 am Holy Eucharist/ Coffee Hour	5:30 pm Mission & Outreach	10:30 am Bereavement Group 5:15 pm Cardio Drumming Class 6 pm Toastmasters	11 am Bible Study 12:15 pm Holy Eucharist 6:30 pm Choir Practice	11:30 am Staff Mtg 5:15 pm Cardio Drumming Class 5:30 pm Building & Grounds 6 pm Handbells		8:45 am Safe Church Training
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
8am Holy Eucharist 9:15 am Adult Forum 9:15 am Church School 10:30 am Holy Eucharist/ Coffee Hour/ Vestry Meeting		10:30 am Bereavement Group 5:15 pm Cardio Drumming Class 6 pm Toastmasters	11 am Bible Study 12:15 pm Holy Eucharist 1 pm Brownell Lunch 6:30 pm Choir	5:15 pm Cardio Drumming Class 6 pm Handbells		9:00 am Girl Scout Event 1:30 pm Blanket Tying set-up
23	24	25 Shrove Tuesday	26 Ash Wednesday	27	28	29
8am Holy Eucharist 9:15 am Blanket tying Project 10:30 am Holy Eucharist/ Coffee Hour		10:30 am Bereavement Group 5:30 pm Hymn Sing/ Pancake Supper 6 pm Toastmasters	8 am Ashes to Go 11 am Bible Study 12:15 pm Holy Eucharist 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7 pm Holy Eucharist	11:30 am Staff Mtg 5 pm BB/BS 5:15 pm Cardio Drumming Class 6 pm Handbells		