



Embracing The Counter-Cultural: Fasting

Dear St. Paul,

As we embark on the sacred journey of Lent, we find ourselves in a season of reflection, repentance, and renewal. It is a time when we intentionally draw closer to God, seeking a deeper connection through prayer, confession, acts of charity, and yes, possibly even fasting.

Lenten fasting, when approached with sincerity and humility, becomes a transformative practice. It is not about drawing attention to our sacrifice but about redirecting our focus to God. By abstaining from certain comforts or indulgences, we create space for spiritual growth, deepening our awareness of dependence on God and cultivating a spirit of gratitude. Fasting is a may, not a shall. You don't need to fast to be a "good Christian" or for God's love, but fasting can help us become better followers of Jesus. And we certainly don't fast in order to be seen as righteous before others.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reminds us, "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to



The Epistle

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show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:16-18, NIV).

In our culture where the constant pursuit of pleasure and comfort often takes precedence, Lenten fasting challenges us to confront the cultural norms that prioritize self-indulgence. It is a deliberate choice to swim against the current, recognizing that true fulfillment comes not from the accumulation of material comforts but from a relationship with the One who satisfies the deepest longings of our hearts.

As we engage in fasting during Lent, let us be mindful of the Apostle Paul's words: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2, NIV). Lent provides us with a unique opportunity to break free from conformity, renew our minds, and align ourselves with God's transformative plan.

May this Lenten season be a time of profound spiritual growth and renewal for each of us. Together, as a community committed to counter-cultural practices rooted in Christ, let us encourage one another on this journey of faith.

In Christ's sacrificial love,

Pastor Tony

Sunday, Feb. 4th

Annual Meeting of the Congregation



Congregational MEETING

To be held immediately following worship

In order to have voice and vote in the meeting, you must have a contribution of record and have communed within the current or preceding calendar year (2023-2024)

Questions? Ask Pastor Tony or Council President Joanne Seasholtz

From the Piece Makers



February is associated with Valentine's Day and love. Christ showed us the meaning of God's love for humanity and challenge us to show that love to the world. Giving quilts to people is one of the ways the ELCA helps provide Christ's love to people throughout the world. The PieceMakers invite you to join us on Friday's between 10 and 2 in the Fellowship Hall to help make quilts. Our quilts are cooperatively made. If you are not a sewer we can find a job among the processes that you can do.

Should you know of a friend or relative whom you think can use a pretty gift of love to help keep them warm this winter, please tell a quilter or Pastor Tony so that we can provide a lap robe.



Join the crew

There are upcoming opportunities to serve at Scott's Run Settlement House on the 4th Wednesdays of February and March, 2024.

Noon to 1:30

LET US KNOW if you can help—
RSVP to Pastor Tony or the church
office



Ash Wednesday, February 14th

Noon—Service of the Word with Ashes

5:30 PM—Service with Ashes for Families
(for those who prefer not to be out too late at night)

6:00 PM—Pancake supper

7:15 PM—Communion Service with Ashes



Wednesdays in Lent

February 21st, 28th, March 6th, 13th and 20th

Soup and bread supper 6:00 PM in the fellowship hall

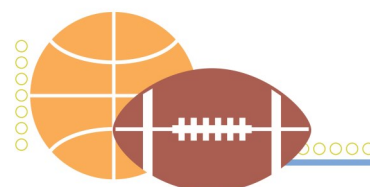
Lenten Worship 7:00 PM in the sanctuary

**Athletic Parking Committee
Approved Donations**

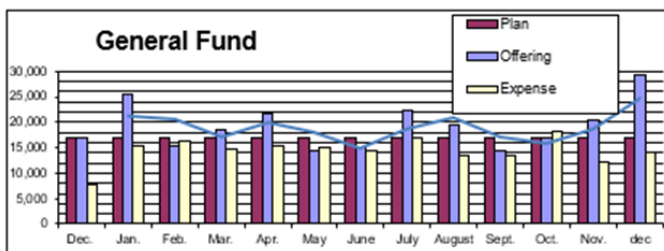
January 14, 2024

- Rock Forge Food Pantry \$1000
- Pantry Plus Monongalia County \$2000
- Morgantown Community Kitchen \$2000
- St Ursula Food Pantry \$2000
- Christian Help \$2000
- Lutheran Campus Chapel \$2500
- Empty Bowls Monongalia County \$500
- Monongalia County Carrie Adoption Center \$250

Total Donation for 2024 \$12,250



**Treasurer's
report for
December
2023**



FEBRUARY



Happy birthday to
 Renate Strakal
 who turns 85
 on February 7th



Empty Bowls Monongalia

The 2024 Soup & Bread Luncheon, the primary fundraiser of Empty Bowls Monongalia, will be held on Saturday, February 24th, at Mylan Park from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Empty Bowls provides support for organizations that combat hunger and promotes awareness about local hunger issues.

At the luncheon, soup is served in handmade bowls. Guests may keep their bowl as a reminder that someone's bowl is always empty. Tickets are \$20; children under 12 are \$10 and do not receive a bowl.

Contact Tamara Riegel to purchase a ticket: email at office@stpaulmorgantown.org, in person, or phone 304-599-0620. Please write checks to Empty Bowls Monongalia. The last Sunday to purchase tickets is February 18th.

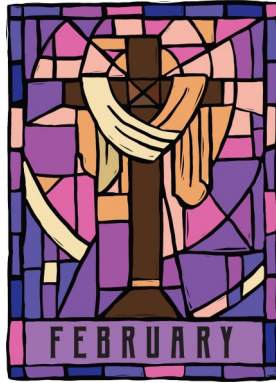
Raffle tickets for a quilt are also available. Sign up sheets to bake cookies or donate bread are posted in the narthex.

LENT *Lent* LENT *Lent*


Serving in



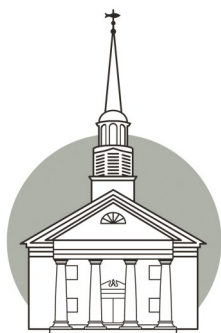
SERVING ST PAUL February 2024	ASSISTING MINISTER	LECTOR	USHER	COUNTERS	BROAD- CAST
4th 10:00 AM Presentation	S. Woodruff	S. McEwuen	W. Graham	C. Henry L. Naumann	Peters
11th 10:00 AM Transfigura- tion	S. Setley	T. Riegel	L. Springer	J. Bouquot M. Peters	C. Wertz
14th 10:00 AM Ash Wednesday	M. Haas	S. Setley	L. Springer	****	C. Wertz
18th 10:00 AM	M. Sampson	S. Setley	D. Custer	K. Shockley J. Sandolini	M. Boroff
25th 10:00 AM	M. Haas	M. Kirkpatrick	W. Graham	S. Kirkpatrick W. Graham	S. Setley



Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers	2 10:00 AM Piecemakers	3
4 Presentation of Our Lord 9:00 AM Sunday School and Choir 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Annual Meeting	5	6 10:00 AM Bible Study 5:00 PM Youth Orchestra	7	8 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers	9 10:00 AM Piecemakers	10
11 Transfiguration Of Our Lord 9:00 AM Sunday School and Choir 10:00 AM Worship Service 5:00 PM Mon Orchestra	12	13 10:00 AM Bible Study 5:00 PM Youth Orchestra	14  Ash Wednesday Noon, 5:30 and 7:15 PM Services 6:00 PM Dinner	15 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers 7:00 PM Council	16 10:00 AM Piecemakers	17
18 9:00 AM Sunday School and Choir 10:00 AM Worship Service 5:00 PM Mon Orchestra	19	20 10:00 AM Bible Study 5:00 PM Youth Orchestra	21 6:00 PM Soup Supper 7:00 PM Lenten Worship	22 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers	23 10:00 AM Piecemakers	24 8:00 AM Lutheran Men in Mission @ Eat'n Park
25 9:00 AM Sunday School and Choir 10:00 AM Worship Service 3:30 PM Circle of Friends 5:00 PM Mon Orchestra	26	27 10:00 AM Bible Study 5:00 PM Youth Orchestra	28 12:00 PM Volunteer at Scott's Run 6:00 PM Soup Supper 7:00 PM Lenten Worship	29 9:00 AM Prayerful Walkers 7:00 PM Suncrest Neighborhood Association		

Reminder: Deadline for March newsletter is February 26th!!!



St. Paul Lutheran Church
MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA
FOUNDED 1897

The **Epistle** is a publication from:
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Officers Of The Congregation
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Vice President: Lindsey Naumann
Secretary: Lillian Stevens
Treasurer: Steve Woodruff
Financial Secretary: Sue Cook

Council Members

Mary Haas	Grethe Myles	Lillian Stevens
Lindsey Naumann	Steve Woodruff	Joanne Seasholtz
Julie Sandolfini	Bill Graham	Mike Peters