

# PROCLAIMING A TIMELESS CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD

SINCE 1794



# THE SPIRE

SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH † CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND

## 2023 CONGREGATION OFFICERS

### President:

Suzanne Umstott

### Vice President:

Debbie Streicher

### Secretary:

Debbie Szymanski

### Treasurer:

Casey Colledge

## CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

### Education

#### (Faith

#### Formation):

Debbie Streicher

### Evangelism

Jane Roderick

### Finance:

Casey Colledge

### Ministry in Daily Life:

Nancy Ayers

### Social Ministry (Fellowship):

Cindy Read

### Worship and Music:

Liz Medcalf

### Youth:

Gary Miller

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February 2023

## Pastor's Ponderings

### PRUNED AND GROWING

While trees are in their dormant period this time of year it is a season for cutting them back or pruning them. Rather than hurting the trees, pruning—when done correctly—can improve the shape, future growth, and fruit-bearing potential of a tree. The holy season of Lent can also be a time for pruning that which is misshapen in our lives. Lent can be a time for us to get rid of those things that may be preventing spiritual growth within ourselves and within our faith community. We trim things back and get closer to the vital trunk and root system that is our source. Lent is a time, then, for getting back to basics, for getting back to those things that truly sustain and nourish us to be whole and well established once more.

We rightly begin this holy season by returning to God's word and to the Lord's holy supper that nourishes and sustains us as no other meal can do. We return in this season for another fundamental source: holy baptism. Many of us will receive an ashen cross upon our foreheads on Ash Wednesday that retraces the spot where we were marked and sealed with Christ's cross on our first day as God's holy child. At baptism we were told that we are dead to sin but alive with and in Christ Jesus.

We are reminded in this most holy season that we are but dust, and that one day we will all return to a place where only God will finally have control over us. So we are dead, but we are also even more alive in Christ. This is the greatest mystery of our faith. This is the greatest news we have to share with the world: that even at our most worst, we are saved and strengthened by God. Even in our most dormant states, God is making us ready to achieve our fullest possible growth with His help.

So, how shall I begin this pruning you ask? We offer a number of opportunities to do this at Saint Paul Church. **PLEASE** look at the weekly announcements in your bulletin and also the bulletin board for sign-up sheets! We are planning a weekly Spiritual Retreat, weekly new members/catechism class, as well as our normal weekly Wednesday Vespers at 6p.m., and our 8:30 Sunday morning class in the Luther Chapel about Spiritual Formation. Mrs. Debbie Streicher will also offer once again P. L. A. C. E. (**P**ersonality Discovery-**L**earning Spiritual Gifts-**A**bilities Awareness-**C**onnecting Passion with Ministry- **E**xperiences of Life.) retreat starting in March. Please plan to participate with/in as many of these opportunities as you are able. These are very worthwhile ministries within our church that are offered for your direct spiritual growth. We are all in need of a little or a lot of pruning of our old selves, to clean our dead limbs away. Will you make this holy season of Lent the opportune time to do so? Now, is the acceptable time.

Christus Pax Vobiscum, Fr Ryan +

THE REVEREND  
RYAN K. VIANDS  
Pastor

DAVID RANKIN  
Director of Music

DEBBIE SZYMANSKI  
Parish Administrator

CASEY COLLEDGE  
Treasurer

RAMON ROCHE CARDONA  
Sexton

**Lent:** *Anglo-Saxon: “Spring”*

The Forty-day (excluding Sundays-Mini Easters) season of penitence and preparation for the Triduum (three holy days, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday) and Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday, Lent is the first season in the Easter Cycle of the church year.

In the church year calendar, Lent is not as ancient as the Triduum or Easter. In the early fourth century, the death and resurrection of the Lord were observed together in a unified three-day celebration known as the Triduum, consisting of three days of fasting followed by The Great Easter Vigil.

By the middle of the fourth century, an additional three-week preparatory period developed. Soon it was expanded to six weeks, or forty days prior to the Triduum. This additional preparatory period was known as Lent. It was the period of final, intense preparation of adult candidates (known as catechumens) who would be baptized at the Easter Vigil. For those who were already baptized, Lent was a period of time to review the meaning of life, the Bible, the Creeds, the Lord’s Prayer, holy Baptism, in preparation for the renewal of their baptismal vows at The Great Easter Vigil.

Lent also soon became a season of penitence in preparation for absolution on Maundy Thursday.

By the close of the fifth century, there was a desire to exclude Sundays from Lent, since Sundays were not fasting days, and thus Lent was extended to the Wednesday before its first Sunday. This Wednesday, originally known as the “Beginning of the Fast,” has been called Ash Wednesday since the late eleventh century.

The forty days of Lent recall our Lord’s forty-day fast in the wilderness after his Baptism (St. Matthew 4: 2; St. Luke 4: 1-2), as well as Moses’ forty-day fast on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34: 28). Throughout most of Christian history, Lent has continued to have two primary purposes: the preparation of catechumens for Baptism at the Easter Vigil, and the baptismal renewal of all the faithful in preparation for Easter Day.

*From the president.....*

As Easter approaches, many of us spend the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Holy Week reflecting on the past year and preparing to honor Jesus's resurrection. In 2023,

Lent begins on February 22, on a day known as Ash Wednesday.

The Thursday before Easter, commemorates when Jesus gathered with his 12 disciples to celebrate Passover before he was crucified, which took place on Good Friday.

Easter Sunday celebrates the day Christians celebrate Jesus rising from the dead, three days later.

The Lenten season is inspired by the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert preparing for his own sacrifice. In that same spirit of sacrifice and reflection,

many people  
will give up something or spend the time thinking and praying about something important to them. Maybe that includes ways they can work toward being better or more prayerful people or ways to make the world a better place. Amen.

Sue Umstott  
Council President

## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00pm

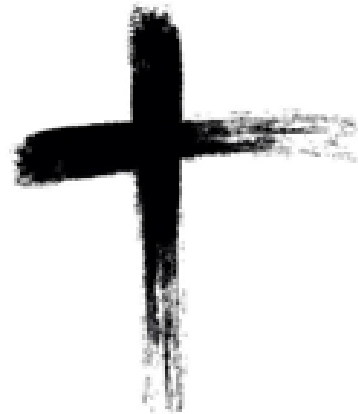


Shrove Tuesday signals the end of Epiphany on the church calendar. It comes the day before Ash Wednesday. This day is also called Fat Tuesday and Pancake Day.

The word shrove is the past tense of the word shrive, meaning to confess and seek forgiveness. Many Christians observe Shrove Tuesday and often host pancake suppers as a way to recognize the day. Eating pancakes on this day is believed to have come about as a way to use up butter, eggs, milk, and fat in preparation for fasting during Lent. We will gather in fellowship hall to eat pancakes and all things fattening on Shrove Tuesday.

*Please bring a pancake topping.  
(example: candy, whipped cream,  
fruit, sprinkles)*

*There is a sign-up list on the  
bulletin board  
in the hallway.*



## Ash Wednesday February 22nd

St. Paul church will be open  
for the  
Distribution of Ashes  
7:00 a.m.-11:30 am  
1:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

St. Paul Church will host an  
Ecumenical Ash Wednesday  
Liturgy  
with Emmanuel Episcopal and  
First Presbyterian-12:00 noon

Ash Wednesday Liturgy  
at St. Paul Church  
7:00 p.m.

## Living Our Faith Together



### Bible Study for Youth and Adults on Sundays Following Worship

LOFT (**L**iving **O**ur **F**aith **T**ogether) takes place following worship every Sunday.  
The LOFT for adults Bible study takes place in Fellowship Hall.

LOFT for youth takes place on the lower level in a classroom where time together includes Bible stories and crafts.

All ages gather in Fellowship Hall prior to LOFT for fellowship and a snack before going to their groups. LOFT finishes at 12:45pm.

If you haven't joined LOFT before, consider joining the group during Lent as a Lenten discipline to gather for prayer and devotions. The first Sunday in Lent is February 26.

## Welcome to Worship for the Young



Christ's Cubby is a designated area behind the pews where the young are welcome to take a bag for use during worship. There are several Bible-story related toys, Bibles, and books chosen especially for the young to interact with during worship. The families in our congregation are familiar with this area.

If you see a new family join us for worship, please introduce them to Christ's Cubby and the many resources they will find. Our congregation welcomes all ages and encourages even the youngest child to worship alongside us.





## *Music Notes*

**A Menu of Opportunities!**  
Come for one, come for all,  
or just some!

If you'd like to sing or play on one or more Sundays, let me know. I'll arrange a schedule for rehearsals that provides enough practice time.

Thanks! David ([drankin47@gmail.com](mailto:drankin47@gmail.com), or just see me after church!)

### **Hand Bell and choir rehearsals:**

Hand bells practice at 5:20 pm  
Vespers is at 6:00 pm, and  
choir rehearsal follows  
(usually about 6:30 pm)

### **Handbells**

**For Sunday, February 19**, a prelude,  
probably based on the hymn  
"Beautiful Savior"

We'll start to learn something  
for Easter, too.

### **Choir**

**19 February 2023: Last after Epiphany  
(Transfiguration) - *Holy Ground***, by  
Liam Lawton; This number could include  
guitar accompaniment, singing in unison or  
parts, in a somewhat more  
'contemporary' style.



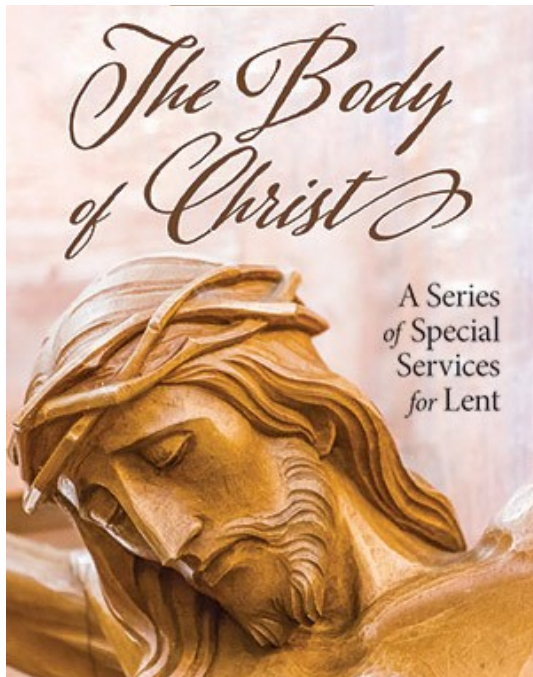
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ELLEN AT (301) 784 9846

Please come and support this effort  
to assist a family from Ukraine.  
The couple and their 9 year old daughter  
were in our community when the war  
broke out, have been unable to  
return and plan to settle in Cumberland.

Members of the community  
have already helped them begin English as  
a second language classes and enroll their  
daughter in school. The YMCA has given  
the family a membership as they  
seek asylum following the expiration of  
their tourist visa last June.

The silent auction and  
variety show will be held in the fellowship  
hall at St. Paul Church on  
Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup> from 2:00-4:30  
with the help of many  
partners and donations  
from our community.

## The Body Of Christ Lenten Worship Series



Lenten Vespers in the lower level chapel  
Wednesdays at 6:00

This series of services takes the time to consider seriously our Lord's humanity, the human body in which he wrought our salvation. Week by week, responsive calls to worship, Scripture readings, hymn stanzas, and prayers invite congregation members to focus their attention on:

- ♦ the feet of Christ • the eyes of Christ
  - the hands of Christ
  - the mouth of Christ
- ♦ the ears of Christ • the heart of Christ.



### Spiritual Gifts Assessment



PLACE helps you to learn who you are and about the gifts God has given you through learning about your personality, abilities, and passions and how they connect in your life. **The next opportunity for PLACE the spiritual gifts assessment will be held on March 10-11.**

Day 1 (Friday, March 10) time together begins at 5:00, includes dinner, and finishes at 9:00pm.

Day 2 (Saturday, March 11) begins at 9:30am, includes lunch, and finishes at 1:30pm. The time together provides a wonderful opportunity to learn not only about yourself, but get to know others as well.

Please email or call Debbie Streicher  
( 703-303-7255 or [dstreicher52@gmail.com](mailto:dstreicher52@gmail.com))  
if you will be participating in March.

## God's Valentine Gift

God's Valentine gift of love to us  
Was not a bunch of flowers;  
It wasn't candy, or a book  
To while away the hours.

His gift was to become a man,  
So He could freely give  
His sacrificial love for us,  
So you and I could live.

He gave us sweet salvation, and  
Instruction, good and true--  
To love our friends and enemies  
And love our Savior, too.

So as we give our Valentines,  
Let's thank our Lord and King;  
The reason we have love to give  
Is that He gave everything.

*By Joanna Fuchs*



Agape Love, the love that God has for us - selfless, sacrificial, unchanging, unconditional. It is the love that He asks us to show to Him and to all of His children.

Special days in February include Groundhog Day, President's Day, Valentine's Day, and this year, the beginning of Lent, on February 22. During the penitential days of Lent in 2023, what "excess" can I "give up" or what can I "take on" in getting my heart ready and right before Easter? How can I show and feel Agape Love for those I know, and also to the stranger?

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." ~ **1 John 4:7-8**

Agape love is a profound concern for the well-being of another, without any desire to control that other, to be thanked by that other, or to enjoy the process. **Madeleine L'Engle**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."  
~ **John 3:16**

"Though our feelings come and go, God's love for us does not." **C.S. Lewis**

"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." **Romans 5:8**

Agape is disinterested love. Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people, or any qualities people possess. It begins by loving others for their sakes. Therefore, agape makes no distinction between friend and enemy; it is directed toward both.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

## Taking Faith Home Message During Lent

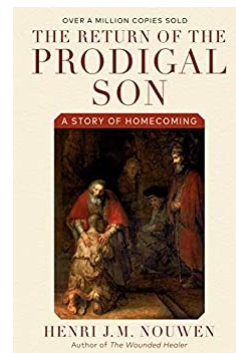


**Lent begins on February 22, Ash Wednesday, and lasts for 40 days.** It is a time to focus on repentance and our relationship with God. It is a time for Christians to add a Lenten spiritual discipline to their daily rituals.

Fasting, daily devotions, daily prayer, and a Lenten calendar are examples of these disciplines.

During Lent, Rosita and Debbie will talk about the Rituals and Tradition section of Taking Faith Home where there will be an emphasis on Almsgiving. Almsgiving is the tradition or practice of giving money or food to those in need. On the first Sunday in Lent, February 26, each household will receive an Almsgiving Box for their home along with other resources to use for daily prayer and devotions.

FEBRUARY 26, 2023  
FIRST SUNDAY  
IN LENT



### LENT SPIRITUAL RETREAT

The Reverend Martha Macgill will lead a series on

#### The Return of the Prodigal Son

by The Reverend Dr. Henri Nouwen. The retreat will be held on Saturdays from 11:00-1:00 at St. Paul Church beginning on March 4<sup>th</sup> and ending on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Lunch will be provided.

Please sign up on the bulletin board outside of fellowship hall by Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup> so books can be ordered.

*This retreat will only be held if we have a minimum of five participants.*

### NEW MEMBERS CLASS

Have you ever wanted to know more about Lutheranism? This 5 week course will satisfy the requirement for those interested in membership at

St. Paul. If you feel the Spirit is moving you towards a fuller fellowship with St. Paul church please join Father Ryan on Mondays from 5:30-7:00 beginning on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

Please sign up on the bulletin board outside of fellowship hall by February 12<sup>th</sup>.





### **SNOW TUBING TRIP**

A congregational trip to WISP for snow tubing is being planned for Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Interested participants, at least 4 years old, please sign up on the bulletin board outside of fellowship hall no later than February 12<sup>th</sup>. Some transportation will be available. Please contact Gary Miller at 301-876-5259 for more information.

## **The Joy Book Club**



**The club is currently  
reading  
The Summer Wives  
by Beatriz Williams.**

## **OFFERING STATEMENTS**

Please see Debbie in the church office if you would like a copy of your 2022 offering statement.



### **ALTAR FLOWERS**

The following dates are available for sponsoring Sunday altar flowers.

Please call or email Debbie in the church office to reserve a date.

301-722-6604

[debbie@stpaulcumberland.org](mailto:debbie@stpaulcumberland.org)

February 19

April 16

May 7 and 14

June 11

July 23 and 30

August 27

October 15 and 22

# Thank You

To the Congregation of St. Paul's,

On behalf of the Potomac Concert Band, I would like to thank you for your warm hospitality in allowing us to perform at your facility. You help us keep music alive and well for the community and enclosed is a token of our appreciation.

Sincerely,

Jakki Rogers

\*\*\*a check for \$100 was enclosed with this note.

Dear St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Thank you for your donation of coats, scarves, gloves and hats to the Safe and Snug Program. Applications came in swiftly in anticipation of cold weather. Your donation helps ensure there are no cold children in our community and it is very much appreciated. We provided 437 coats last year to school children who wouldn't have a coat if it wasn't for generous donations. Thank you again for your ministry and your support of helping the children of Allegany County stay warm this winter.

Sincerely,

Paula Hogg

Allegany County

Department of Social Services

Dear Pastor and Congregation:

The Interfaith Community Pantry, Inc. would like to thank your church and its members for your support. During 2022, your church and/or individual members gave the following donations:

Cash \$430.00

Number of Food and Non-Food items

234

Through your donation, the pantry was able to serve the many individuals and families that were referred to us in need of emergency food.

During 2022 the pantry received 1,165 referrals representing 3,433 people.

Those served received 22,933 items of food and 5,775 miscellaneous items. Our clients received vouchers for perishable food that amounted to \$28,650.00. We also distributed 8.435 bonus food items.

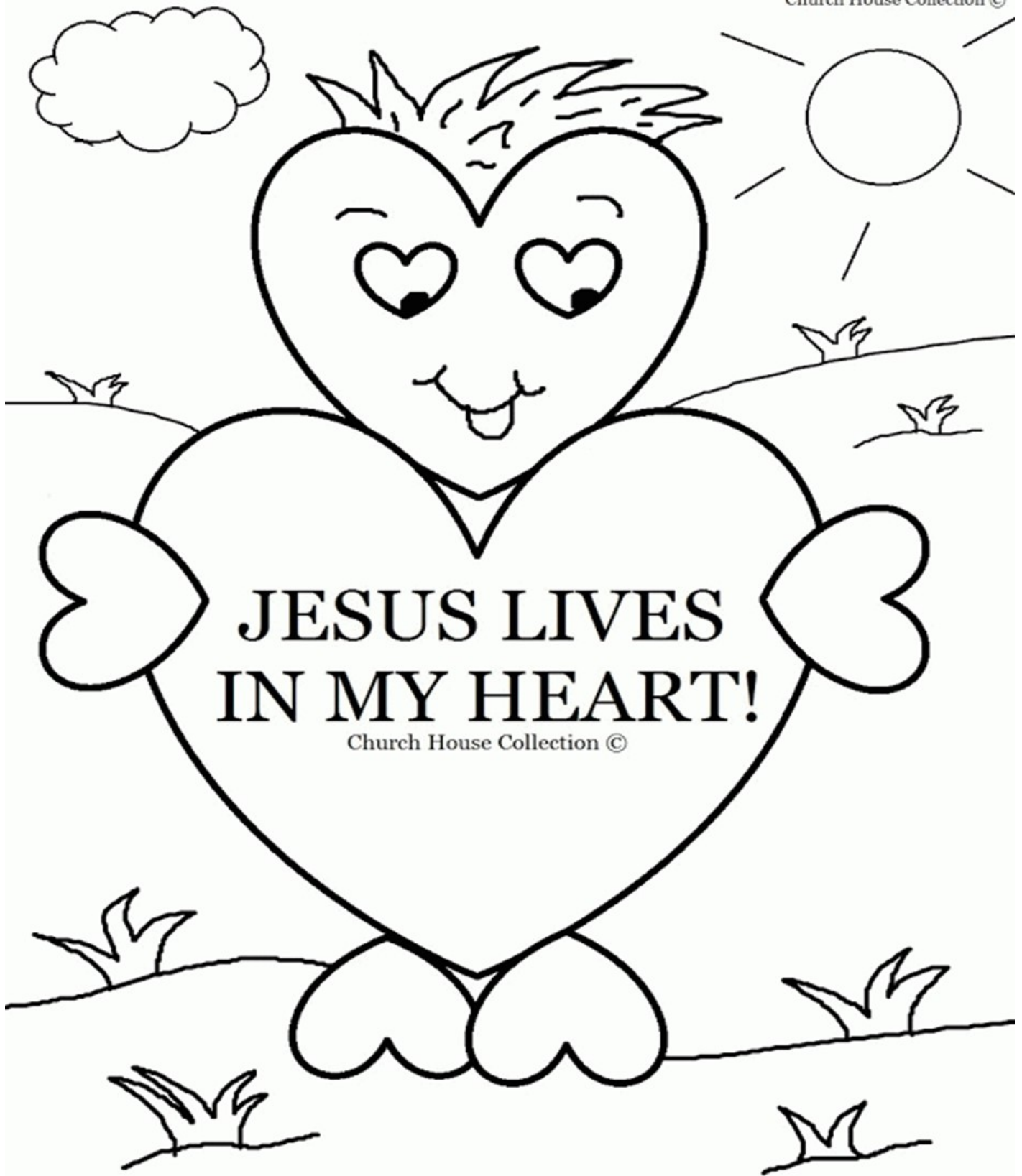
The pantry has been in operation since the early 1960s with help from churches, organizations and individuals. The pantry has no paid employees, yet we operate five days a week from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. with the help of many volunteers.

Again, thank you and your members for their continued support.

The Executive Board of the  
Interfaith Community Pantry

## Coloring Page For Kids of ALL Ages

Church House Collection ©



# FEBRUARY

## Wednesday

5:20 PM

6:00 PM

6:30 PM

## Sunday

8:30 AM

10:00 AM

11:30 AM

## Monday

5:00 PM

## Wednesday

5:20 PM

6:00 PM

6:30 PM

## Thursday

4:00-6:00

6:15 PM

## Friday

6:00-8:00

## Saturday

2:00 PM

## Sunday

8:30 AM

10:00 AM

11:30 AM

## Tuesday

5:30 PM

## February 1

Bell rehearsal

Vespers

Choir rehearsal

## February 5-Candlemas

Book Study

Worship

Adult and Youth LOFT

## February 6

Faith Formation Team

Meeting-fellowship hall

## February 8

Bell rehearsal

Vespers

Choir rehearsal

## February 9

Bountiful Blessings

Worship and Music

Committee Meeting

## February 10

**Beginnings Valentine Dance**

## February 11

Benefit Concert and Silent

Auction for Refugees

## February 12

Book Study

Worship

LOFT and

Chapel Time

## February 14

Council Meeting

## Wednesday

5:20 PM

6:00 PM

6:30 PM

## Sunday

8:30 AM

10:00 AM

11:30 AM

## Monday

Beginnings and Church Office Closed

## Tuesday

6:00 PM

## Wednesday

7:00 AM-11:30 AM 1:30 PM-8:00 PM

Distribution of Ashes-St. Paul

12:00 PM Ecumenical Liturgy-St. Paul

7:00 PM Evening Liturgy -St. Paul

## Thursday

4:00-6:00

## Sunday

8:30 AM

10:00 AM

11:30 AM

## Monday

5:30-7:00

## February 15

Bell rehearsal

Vespers

Choir rehearsal

## February 19

Book Study

Worship

Adult and Youth LOFT

## February 20

**President's Day**

Beginnings and Church Office Closed

## February 21

Shrove Tuesday

pancake supper

## February 22

## ASH WEDNESDAY

7:00 AM-11:30 AM 1:30 PM-8:00 PM

Distribution of Ashes-St. Paul

12:00 PM Ecumenical Liturgy-St. Paul

7:00 PM Evening Liturgy -St. Paul

## February 23

Bountiful Blessings

## February 26

Book Study

Worship

Adult and Youth LOFT

## February 27

New Members Class

**Happy February  
birthdays!!!**

5 – Dennis Read  
10 – Christine Miller  
23 – Claire Rowley