

# St. Paul's Epistle

## March 2025

St Paul's United Methodist Church 11631 SE Linwood Avenue Milwaukie OR 97222 (503) 654-1705



### *Pastor's Corner*

It's Wednesday morning. Ash Wednesday, to be precise. As I sit in my office at the church, I'm beginning to hear the cheerful greetings and laughter of those arriving to help prepare for St. Paul's Second Annual Shrove Pancake Breakfast and Ash Wednesday service. Soon, we will break bread together, more specifically stacks of delicious pancakes, and then we'll turn our attention to the fragility of our human nature in a worship service designed to remind us of our sinful tendencies, our deep need for one another, and our constant need for God.

This season feels particularly weighty to me, and my hope for it is that, while reflection and repentance are necessary and important, we must not lose sight of the hope we have in God. God loves us. God's faithfulness and grace will sustain us. I believe that with all my heart.

Lent is a time for us to pause and reflect on our lives. Traditionally, it's a season of self-examination and repentance, a time to honestly confront our sins, our imperfections, and the many ways we fall short of God's glory. Yet, even as we reflect on our humanness, our flaws, and our struggles, we must remember we have hope. As followers of Christ, we are resurrection people, and our hope lies in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our Savior. It is during these moments of reflection and contemplation that we can learn to lean more fully into the love and grace God offers us in Jesus Christ.



Throughout this Lenten season, my sermons will focus on the life and ministry of Jesus—the one who walked among us, fully God and fully human; the one who faced the same temptations we do, shared in our suffering, and ultimately, triumphed over death. Jesus is the source of our hope and our strength. When we place our faith in him, the resurrection becomes real to us—not only as a promise for the future but as a transformative reality in our lives today and in the world around us.

I am excited that Rev. Karen Hernandez, Columbia District Superintendent, will be leading a group book study via Zoom for SPUMC during this season. She will guide us through Rev. David Weekley's book *In from the Wilderness*. More details can be found in Karen's letter, included in this Epistle. I'm truly thrilled about this study and about Karen's leadership. In these times, the need for greater understanding and empathy toward transgender and nonbinary individuals has never been more pressing.

As we journey through these next few weeks together, let us hold fast to the hope we have in Christ. Let us remember that we are never alone—God is with us. I invite you to lean into that hope, trusting the One who offers us resurrection, renewal, love, and grace, even in our brokenness.

In Christ,  
Pastor Kamron

Dear Friends at St. Paul's UMC,



Several months ago, I read a compelling memoir. I love reading a good book and sharing a good book! I learned about the author's personal challenges, how their relationship with God deepened and sustained them, and how fiercely committed the author is to his call to ministry. I stopped a few times to re-read, scratch my head, and try to comprehend things that are far beyond my own experiences as a straight, cisgender woman. At other points, the author's story was very similar to my own. Perhaps what I loved most about the book is that I get to count the author as a colleague and friend.

Now I want to share this book with you, wrestle with the ideas in the book and all that they stir up, and then introduce you to the author, too. Will you join me?

You're invited to log into a zoom book study with me for four consecutive Thursdays @ 6:30 p.m. PT (3/20, 3/27, 4/03, and 4/10) to discuss Rev. David Weekley's first book, *In from the Wilderness*. Rev. Weekley is the first openly transgender United Methodist clergy person in the country, and he is the pastor of Rose City Park UMC in Portland. With this gifted, courageous leader so nearby, we'll also have the opportunity to talk with Rev. Weekley directly. When our book study ends, we'll have an in-person panel discussion with him and other invited guests at your church on Thursday, April 24 @ 6:30 p.m. PT.

I've known and worked alongside transgender folks for about a decade now, but Weekley's book taught me some important lessons. His story can help all of us to understand more about how far our society has come and the work that still needs to be done as we continually seek to be an inclusive church (in worldwide denomination, in our local churches, and everywhere in between). Note that this invitation is specifically for your congregation, and I am very much looking forward to getting to know you through this book study. Please join me!

Peace of Christ,  
Rev. Karen Hernandez,  
Columbia and Sage District Superintendent

**The Nitty Gritty:**

Here is the link to the sign-up sheet.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054DA9A92BA3FECE9-55538755-infrom>.

Happy Birthday



3/2	Betty Light
3/08	Curt Degner
3/13.	Kamron Furlow
3/14	Melanie Tipton
3/21	Sue Sayers
3/30	Becky Schmidt



## ***Housing Team Education***

Your Housing Team met on February 12 for what could be labeled an educational event. Our teacher was the very entertaining and information filled Jules Nielsen from the Leaven Land and Housing Coalition.

The two hour meeting was divided into two areas that your team was happy to get much needed information about. One was a technique for gathering information and establishing good relations. That technique is called a 'research meeting'. These meetings could be with individuals or entities from which your Housing Team needs information or clarification on a certain subject. The end result of such a meeting would obviously be to garner the information, but is also designed to establish open communication and a good relationship with the individual or entity. As you know, this is your team's first experience in the area of affordable housing and we will have many needs for more information and/or clarification which we will gladly pass on to you.

The other half of the meeting was spent discussing the concept of 'community engagement'. Obviously this implies discussions with our neighbors and the surrounding area. As with all endeavors, there are successful and unsuccessful ways of doing things. Our advantage is working with the Leaven Land and Housing Coalition. This coalition has participated in many community outreach endeavors and has developed a technique for successfully interacting with and establishing a cooperative atmosphere in the surrounding community for other housing projects. We look forward to that same success here at St. Paul's.

Our next step, beginning in our March meeting, will be implementing this new knowledge by investigating how these two areas can be implemented in our potential housing project. We are sure that our learning will produce positive results!

# Your Lenten Gift

*On Wednesday, March 5, Churches around the world began to observe the Season of Lent or forty (40) days before Easter. The 40 days represents the time when Jesus was sent into the wilderness by the Spirit where he fasted and prayed for 40 days. Like Christ, Lent is a season of the Christian Year where followers of Christ focus on simple living, prayer, and fasting to grow closer to God. On Wednesday, March 5, members and friends of St. Paul's observed the beginning of our Lenten Season with a Pancake Luncheon followed by a Lenten worship service.*

*While we were participating in our Lenten service this past Wednesday in the comfort of our John Wesley Fellowship Hall other churches were not as fortunate. As you know in January of this year, wildfires swept through southern CA and destroyed thousands of acres, communities, businesses, churches and homes. Via our United Methodist Connectional system we have learned that two (2) UM Churches were destroyed. The first one is Community UMC in Pacific Palisades and the second is Altadena UMC near Pasadena. Recently I received an email from a member of St. Paul's suggesting a special offering/gift be received during the Lenten season which would be given to a church or churches that were destroyed by the fires. Your Governance Board approved this special Lenten offering/gift during our February meeting. During our 40 days of Lent, I will share additional information regarding Community UMC and Altadena UMC. Please watch for more details in St. Paul's Weekly that contains the Sunday bulletin.*

*You are invited to give your Lenten gift at any time during Lent or if you wish on Easter Sunday, April 20. Please indicate on your gift CA UMC.*

*Barbara Maxwell, Finance Chair*



# What about Federal Funding?

Last week I sent a note to Steve McMurray, one of our developers. I felt that with the current federal administration instability, it would be good to have an idea of what Steve's thoughts were on its impact on our housing project. My note read:

*With our pending housing project and the freewheeling cuts by the president I was wondering if you have any insights, from your connections, as to the future funding of housing from the feds? Have any of the current cuts related to federal housing grants?...*

Here is Steve's response.

*"Keeping all the "feels" out of it, when it comes to Federal resources and housing, only time will tell. In the last couple of weeks, as things have continued to be revealed, I have been encouraged by the commitment to most housing resources, including the low income housing tax credit. Also, so far, there's been no indication that there would be a slow down in voucher assistance payments to the Section 8 program. Could these be on the chopping block, yes, but so could Medicare and Social Security.*

*I guess we can only control what we can control. I can say that for St. Paul's development we are exploring options that utilize existing zoning and would maximize state resources first. It's not that we couldn't or wouldn't need to pursue Federal resources but it's not the first source we'd pursue. If we can avoid any Federal entanglements we will."*



## *Lunch Bunch*

It 's pizza time for the Lunch Bunch! We will meet Tuesday March 11th at 11:30 at Milwaukie Pietro's Pizza, 10300 SE Main Street in Milwaukie. Please let Marilyn Weaver know if you are able to attend (503) 654-8334.



## *Wichita Center*

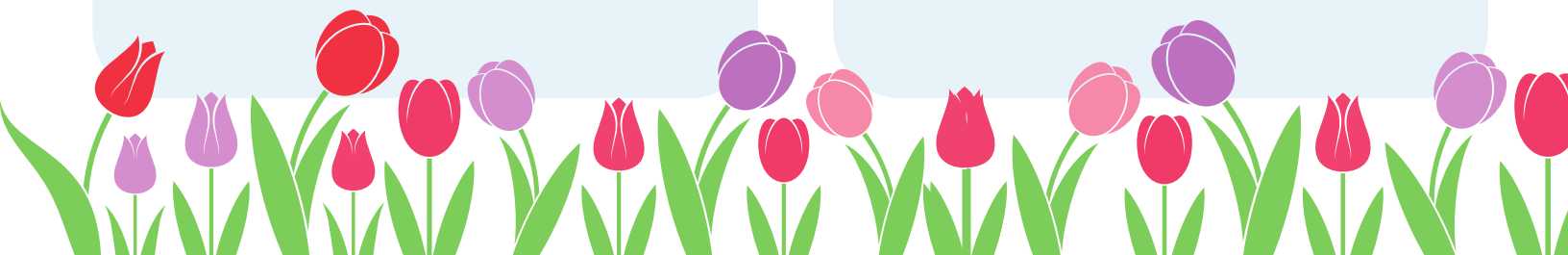
St. Paul's, you are so generous with your donations to the Wichita Center!

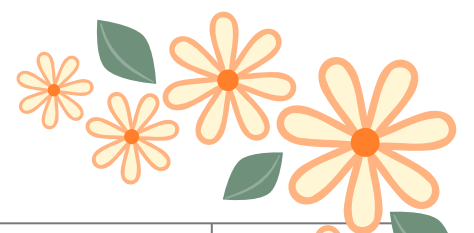
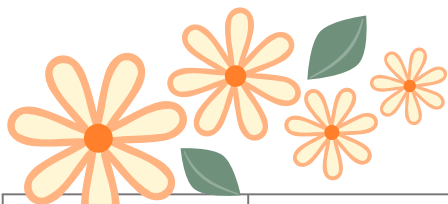
Thank you!

In celebration of Valentine's Day,



February's

collection is "Heart Healthy" foods, like low sodium, low fat, low sugar items. For March, we can use our imaginations and gather food and other items that are green, for St. Patrick's Day.





# March, 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Ed Class @9:30 am</li> <li>• Worship @ 10:30 am</li> <li>• AA @ 7:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Small Group @ 7:00 pm</li> </ul>	<b>4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• AA @ 12:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Choir @ 7:00</li> </ul> <b>ASH Wednesday</b>	<b>6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> </ul>	<b>7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Group @12:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>8</b> <b>Berta Lou Couch Memorial Service @ 1:00</b>
<b>9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Ed Class @9:30 am</li> <li>• Worship @ 10:30 am</li> <li>• AA @ 7:30 pm</li> </ul> <b>Daylight Savings</b> 	<b>10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Small Group @ 7:00 pm</li> </ul>	<b>11</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Lunch Bunch @ 11:30</li> <li>• AA @ 12:30 pm</li> <li>• Finance/ Governance @ 4:00</li> </ul>	<b>12</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Choir @ 7:00</li> </ul>	<b>13</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Linwood NHA @ 7:00 pm</li> </ul>	<b>14</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Group @12:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Ed Class @9:30 am</li> <li>• Worship @ 10:30 am</li> <li>• AA @ 7:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>17</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Small Group @ 7:00 pm</li> </ul> 	<b>18</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• AA @ 12:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Choir @ 7:00</li> </ul>	<b>20</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> </ul>	<b>21</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Group @12:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Ed Class @9:30 am</li> <li>• Worship @ 10:30 am</li> <li>• AA @ 7:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>24</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Small Group @ 7:00 pm</li> </ul>	<b>25</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• AA @ 12:30 pm</li> <li>• Trustee's Meeting @ 6:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Choir @ 7:00</li> </ul>	<b>27</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 11</li> </ul>	<b>28</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Group @12:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Ed Class @9:30 am</li> <li>• Worship @ 10:30 am</li> <li>• AA @ 7:30 pm</li> </ul>	<b>31</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Hours 10 - 12</li> <li>• Small Group @ 7:00 pm</li> </ul>	