



The Messenger

A monthly publication of
St. Paul Lutheran Church
& Early Childhood Learning Center

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Sustaining Ministry Excellence



We've done it, and we've done it together!
Sustaining Ministry Excellence was the theme of our stewardship campaign for 2019, and thanks to your support, we have met our major goals. We looked for \$30,000 in increased intended giving in 2019, and our current total is **\$30,980**. The projected giving target in the 2019 operating budget was \$230,000, and with your pledges the projection is **\$230,357**.

We were challenged by a special gift from a family in the congregation to increase the number of campaign responses from last year's 65 up to 85 or more. Currently we have **82**

responses earning **\$4,250** of the special gift. **We need three more pledges.** If you have not yet given a pledge card indicating your intent for 2019, \$750 of this gift is still available to us. (Call the office or see Pastor Ashley if you need a pledge card.)

Thank you from your Stewardship team for this wonderful response. In 2019, we will be able to sustain ministry excellence— something we're passionate about— through our giving, through our volunteering, and through our passion and belief of committing back to God a portion of that which He gives to us so freely— love for all.

*On a separate yet complementary note...
The total amount of all coins and bills you gave in all your **Giving Jars** on Christmas Eve and after, totaled about **\$2,950!**
St. Paul Rocks! Thank you for sharing your change for Christ and the ministries of St. Paul.*

Sharing - new Community Meal partners

Beginning the end of January, our neighbors and brothers and sisters in Christ, the First Congregational United Church of Christ, will be sharing the Community Meal ministry with us by taking responsibility for the meal one Tuesday each month. They recently visited our church on a Tuesday to get the lay of the land and see the routine and how the meal is carried out. This particular evening's meal served 60 people and was a delicious, gourmet-style chicken dish with stuffing, green beans, salad and fresh bread.

This sharing grew out of a St. Paul Bible Study where we invited pastors from different churches we were communion partners with to come and discuss how we were different and how we were the same. The Congregational UCC pastor, Rev. Wes Bixby, took the idea back to his congregation, and the rest is history. We are pleased and grateful to have people outside our campus share our vision of ministry in the community.

Church Council Meeting



Council Highlights • January

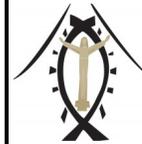
January 17, 2019 meeting of the Congregational Council

- Council members designated if they will be chair or liaison on selected ministries.
- Approved the dates and times for Lent, Holy Week and Easter.
- Congregation Council members will be installed on Sunday, Jan. 27.
- Approved changing the April council meeting from April 18 (Maundy Thursday) to Wednesday, April 17.
- A Congregation Council retreat will be held on March 16.
- Approved Gail Seyfarth as council representative to the ECLC board.
- Approved Dan Mills as council representative to the OMF.
- Approved Sunday, March 17, as Camp Sunday with a representative from the Florida-Bahamas Synod and a special offering.
- Approved a God's Work, Our Hands service project on March 24, to build bags for the homeless for distribution. This is a service project in conjunction with confirmands.
- Approved that a yearly distribution from a grant in the name of Don and Peggy Jo Albertson be designated for the Good Samaritan Fund.
- Approved a negotiation for the use of 30 parking spaces, Monday through Friday beginning in February, by construction workers at Sarasota Memorial Hospital.

The December minutes, pastor's report, and financial information may be found in the binder in the narthex. The January minutes will be available after approval at the February 2019 meeting.



- Jan 27 Council member installation**
- Feb. 17 New Member Sunday & Reception**
- Feb. 23 ECLC Annual Rummage Sale**
- Feb. 24 Congregation Annual Meeting**



The Messenger is the newsletter of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

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St. Paul Lutheran Church is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Florida-Bahamas Synod, ELCA.

Pastor: Rev. Ashley Nicolls

Synod Parish Deacon: Michele Hilton

Executive Committee

George Hutfilz, president
Sandy Tull, vice president
Sharon Wittren, secretary
Marty Hillerich, treasurer

Congregation Council

Marty Hillerich, George Hutfilz, John McAuliffe, Brian McCulley, JD Miller, Daniel Mills, Debi Rado, Colleen Ryan, Gail Seyfarth, Sandy Tull, Sharon Wittren, Carol Zimmerman, Pastor Ashley Nicolls

Ministry Team Leaders

Sharing & Caring – Betty Smowton
Christian Education – **Seeking volunteer leader**
Communications – Debi Rado
Early Childhood Learning Cntr – Marilyn Hutfilz
Evangelism – Marty Hillerich
Fellowship – **Seeking volunteer leader(s)**
Finance – John McAuliffe
Food Pantry – George Hutfilz
Outreach Ministry Fund – Curt Swenson
Property – **Seeking volunteer leader**
Social – Cindy Paxton
Stewardship – George & Marilyn Hutfilz
Worship and Music – Sharon Wittren
Parish Secretary – Dorrie Parsons
Director of Music – John Ferreira

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OUR MISSION AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH As a Holy Spirit-led family of God, we are called through Baptism to proclaim and bear witness to God's reconciling grace in Jesus Christ to all; so that by joyfully sharing God's Word and encouraging each other to service for the sake of others, our lives together make a difference for Christ and His kingdom.



PRASHLEY PAGE

Hello St. Paul Lutheran Church!

The Sunday after Christmas we had a Service of Scripture, Story, and Song. The stories about the songs were from a book series called, "Then Sings My Soul." There are at least three books in this series. Two of them focus on the stories behind traditional songs. There is also one book in which the author, Robert J. Morgan, included more contemporary songs. As I read a few stories, I came to one section of the book titled, "*Old New Praise – Why We Must Embrace Interwoven Worship.*" He starts by telling of the Old New Synagogue in Prague. It was first called the New Synagogue when it opened. As new synagogues were built, people started calling it the "*Old New Synagogue.*" That is the author's definition on how we can worship – a mix of both old songs and new.

As the author writes, "There's a sense in which our worship should not be traditional or contemporary, but timeless. I believe heaven will ring with songs from all the ages, so why shouldn't we begin now? If worship unites the entire family of God – past, present, and future – isn't it appropriate to intertwine the ancient with the modern? When I sing [an old hymn], I'm joining in an exercise of praise known to my grandparents and great-grandparents. When I sing the newest upbeat chorus from a praise-and-worship band, I'm joining voices with my grandkids. There has never been a generation of Christians that sang only its music while discarding all the songs of prior epochs. Younger worshippers need the legacy of the great hymns; and older worshippers need the exuberance of fresh praise." I believe St. Paul Lutheran Church is starting to live out this vision of worship. *This is exciting.*

We are no longer divided between contemporary and traditional worship. We do not, as Robert Morgan writes, cater to each individual want. We do not say, "If you want to sing your own music to the

exclusion of everyone else's that's fine. We'll cater to you. If you want to enjoy your one small slice of musical preference while rejecting all other's, that's fine. We'll cater to you. If you want to ignore two thousand years of heritage – or if you want to neglect a whole new generation of young worshippers– not a problem. We'll cater to you. If you want to be among the most narrow worshippers in the history of Christianity and only sing the constricted little grouping of songs that you happen to like, fine. We'll cater to you."

At St. Paul, we just worship. Not every congregation can say that. This is an asset we have as a congregation. It's not easy putting two styles of worship together successfully, but we have done it. We as St. Paul could go by the term that the author coins as "*Old New Worshippers.*"

We are excited to have our new musician, John Ferreira, at his first worship service on February 3. We look forward to him bringing his talents, passions, and ideas, to help us grow in our worship and music ministry together.

Take care and God bless

~PrAshley

PrAshley reminders..

- New Member Sunday is February 17!
- If you are interested in joining St. Paul, please let Pastor Ashley know.
- We also offer seasonal membership, so if you are a seasonal guest, membership helps us welcome you as a part of our church family while you are in Florida. You are always welcomed and encouraged to participate fully even if you are not a member.

From the St. Paul preschool...

Dear St. Paul Congregation,

The staff at the St. Paul Early Childhood Learning Center want to send out our heart felt appreciation for the Angel Tree this year. As teachers, we put our love of teaching before our financial needs. We are paid in hugs on a daily basis and that is a special gift that many people do not receive. However, it can be difficult to buy gifts for our own families with hugs. That is why your contribution was so deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Christine Merrill—Director
Cindy Meredith—VPK teacher
Kathy Justice—3's teacher
Amy Pearson—2's teacher
Jenn Shaw—Substitute

Lisa McLean—Assistant Director
Jessica Stephens—VPK teacher
Sierra Weaver—3's teacher
Jamie Fowler—1's teacher



*My dear St. Paul family,
I would like to say a huge thank you.
Your cards, your hugs, and your kind and
loving expressions of sympathy on the
passing of my mother, Doris, meant the
world to me and my family members. God's
blessings to you all.*

Lovingly, Debi Rado and family

PRAISE AND PINCH FORM

As a congregation, we are committed to voicing our “*praises*” and “*not sitting on our pinches!*” To be a healthy and faithful community, we need to be open with one another about what we expect in all areas of our life together. If there is anything in our community life that brings you joy (*a praise*) or causes you to be concerned (*a pinch*), please share your feelings and questions here. Thank you for taking the time to communicate about the ways we are doing well in our ministry together at St. Paul, as well as the areas that need attention. Please place this form in the box in the narthex or Fellowship Hall, or mail to the church office.

I have a Praise:

I have a Pinch:

I believe the desired outcome (solution) should be:

Here is a specific question I would like answered:

Write your name below if you would like a direct response to your *Praise* or *Pinch*.

Name _____

We will be sharing Praises and Pinches, along with any solutions, with the congregation. Please indicate your choice below.

- I authorize the use of my name if my *Praise* or *Pinch* is published in The Messenger newsletter.
- I prefer that my name be omitted from publication if my *Praise* or *Pinch* is published in the newsletter.

Thank you for sharing your feedback with us so we can be more effective in the ministry of Jesus Christ that we do together!

Every form will be evaluated by Mutual Ministry on a monthly basis.

Mutual Ministry team members are: Jan Kruse, Mike Scherr, Barry Smith, and Pastor Ashley Nicolls (Jane French, alternate).



By filling out a Praise and Pinch form, we keep our communication healthy. So don't keep those good feelings all to yourself, nor hold those pinches inside. Use this form or pick one up at church (in the narthex or Fellowship Hall). It's good to share!

Christmas Eve memory • 4p service



Thanks for Being a Christmas Angel!

The Social Ministry team would like to send a big **Thank You** to all those who helped make Christmas brighter for our Early Childhood Learning Center students, teachers and their families. Through your generous donations of \$1,040, the families received clothes, toys and gift cards to help make their celebrations special. Many thanks also to Pastor Ashley, her mom Valerie, and Sue Scherr for using their time to shop for this special cause.

ECLC Rummage Sale

The annual Early Childhood Learning Center Rummage Sale will be held on **Saturday, February 23** from 9:00a until Noon. This is an important event raising much needed funds for the children of the preschool.

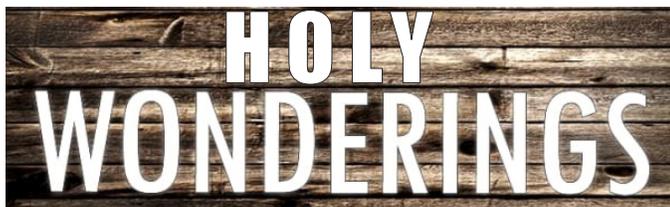
Donations will be accepted in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, February 21 and Friday, February 22 from 9:00a till Noon. Donations can also be brought during Coffee & Social Hour on Sunday, February 17.

Volunteers will be needed on Thursday, the 21st from 9a until noon and the same for Friday, the 22nd. You do not need to be available the entire three hours. In fact, we have more need as we get closer to noon, especially on Friday when we must set up the room for Saturday's sale. We will also need help on the day of the sale; in this case the greater need is at the beginning of the sale. It would be helpful to us to know who can come when.

Volunteers will be needed on all three days.



We ask that no clothes or Christmas decorations be donated. Your generous donations should be in working order and clean. For more information contact Marilyn Hutfilz: mrhutfilz@gmail.com or 941-351-2158. (Marilyn will be out of town 1/28-2/11 so you may not get an immediate reply but many thanks in advance for your volunteering and/or donations!)



Bible study

At our first gathering after the holidays, with a new booklet focus on reading and interpreting the different books and verses, we had an awesome 21 people who attended!

Each one of you is invited to participate in the Word, study questions, and more! Our group is moderated by our Deacon, Michele Hilton.

For more information you may email Michele at michelehilton@aol.com.

FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE		
Report for year-to-date as of December 31, 2018		
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income received:	\$ 264,084.66	\$ 287,120.00
Expenses:	\$ 327,256.95	349,515.00
St. Paul net	\$(63,172.29)	\$(62,395.00)
ECLC net position	\$ 28,087.51	\$ 39,705.53

SUSAN G BURMASTER
Realtor

CELL: (941) 266-3650
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susan.burmaster@floridamoves.com







RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

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From your Worship and Music ministry

Thanks to Rick Barry, the Altar Flowers, Bulletin, and Eternal Candle charts are posted in the narthex. There are empty dates available just waiting for your name to be added. The Sundays between Ash Wednesday and Easter have been blocked off because we do not have altar flowers during the Lenten season. Just a reminder—flowers are \$25 per vase per week (you may choose one or two vases), the eternal candle is \$30 per month, and bulletins are \$15 per week.

The chart for worship participants to sign up has been suspended, therefore, you will receive an email or telephone call to enlist your help. If you would like to volunteer in a particular area, please call:

Acolyte(s) – <i>Barry Smith</i>	Assisting Minister – <i>Carolyn Masters</i>
Greeters – <i>Betty Smowton</i>	Reader – <i>Sharon Wittren</i>
Screen Operator – <i>George Hutfilz</i>	Ushers – <i>Jan Kruse</i>
Altar Guild - <i>Bonnie Zipf</i> (if you're interested in preparing the chancel for worship)	

Their contact information can be found on copies of the Sunday Worship Team sheet in the narthex.

Lent begins March 6 with an Ash Wednesday service. Worship and Music have recommended the dates and times for the services in Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. The Congregation Council has approved the schedule and you can find those dates under *Council Highlights* in this newsletter.

~ *Sharon Wittren, chair*

Closing the back door: it's about relationships

~ an article by *Peggy Hahn, LEAD Executive Director*



A conversation with a young mom was a giant “aha” for me regarding the revolving back door of congregations.

She said, “We’ve been taking our children to worship at the congregation I grew up in forever. My husband and I have been very active leaders in this congregation and even though we have moved across town, we felt like the drive was worth it because it matters to us to be known in our church.” Then she paused and I could feel her emotions rising. “But lately we have been wondering if we are the only ones who feel this way.”

She continued, “My husband and I have considered moving to a nearby congregation. With that in mind, we have said no to new invitations into leadership. We have not been in worship much lately, mostly due to travel and sick kids. Not one single person has seemed to notice. I guess I am wondering if it matters more to us to be known than it does to everyone there to actually know us.”

She paused again before adding, “I guess they will notice when we stop giving because we’ve transferred to another congregation. It really breaks my heart because I love that congregation.”

Closing the back door to the congregation means ramping up relational currency. Just as the flight attendant reminds us that “we know you have choices, thanks for choosing us” at the end of a flight, people who actually want to be in church have choices too. We are quick to think people leave because of programs, but what if the truth is that they leave because of us?

Ouch! I know it hurts to think like this, but what if leaders in the church paid more attention to the people around them? What if instead of talking about people, we talked with them? Just asking each other, “Has anyone seen this person lately?” is not the same as checking in on the person who is not showing up. A great next step after noticing someone is missing is to send an email or make a phone call.

Are we all so maxed out on doing ministry that we miss the deeper need we have to be in relationship with each other? Imagine if every leader (all staff, council, committee, and team leaders) had, as a metric, how many people they actually know at church. Knowing people means recognizing when they don’t show up, when they are in crisis, or when they need the church to celebrate with them. I know the to-do list is long, but, in the end, I am not sure anything on the list matters more than paying attention to relationships. We can close (or almost close) our back door by loving the people who walk through the front door a little more.

Christmas thank you notes from the ECLC teachers

We thought it would be appropriate to share with you the individual thank yous we received:

Dear St. Paul Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your very generous donations to the teachers this Christmas. I really appreciate it! Happy New Year!

Love, Ms. Sierra (3 year old teacher)



Dear St. Paul Members,

Happy New Year to everyone. My family and I want to say thank you for the gift cards to Walmart. They came in very handy. We wish everyone a blessed year to come!

Miss Lisa



Dear St. Paul Church,

Thank you so much for the Walmart gift card. It was such a nice surprise. Your thoughtfulness and generosity are very much appreciated.

Many thanks! Cindy Meredith



St. Paul Congregation,

Thank you all so very much for thoughtfulness during Christmas. Your gifts helped to make our families' Christmas very merry.

Miss Christine



Dear St. Paul's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for the beautiful Christmas card and the generous gift card! It is a joy to work at ECLC!

All the Best, Christy Boyer

St. Paul Church,

Thank you so much for the Walmart gift card. Your thoughtfulness and generosity were much appreciated. I am so blessed to work at a Preschool that has so much support from the church. Looking forward to a great 2019. Happy New Year!!

Miss Kathy (3 and 4 yr. old teacher)

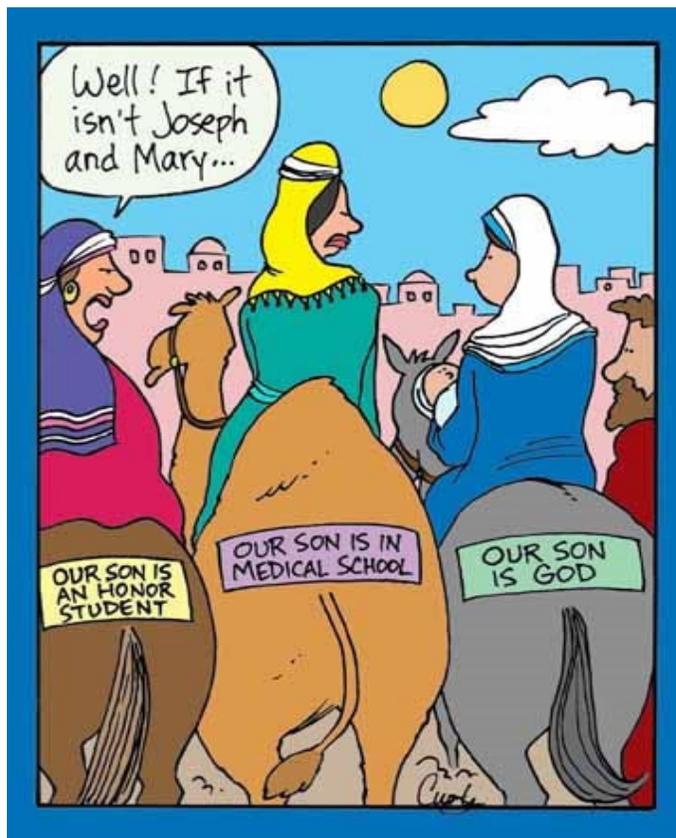


St. Paul Church,

Thank you so much for the gift card! The church is so generous and I'm so thankful to be part of such a beautiful place of learning.

Thank you. Jenn Shaw

Joke of the month



St. Paul Mission Prayer

God of grace and love, you created us as your children and have brought us to St. Paul Lutheran Church. We are not perfect people, but this church is the perfect place for imperfect people. Thank you for your grace through Christ given to us. You call us to proclaim to everyone we meet that your grace is for them too. As a Holy Spirit-led family of God, we ask you to help us joyfully share your word and serve your people, so that together our lives make a difference in your kingdom here on earth. Strengthen us in our mission together; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS • FEBRUARY 2019

FEB 1 FRI

9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
1:00P MAH JONGG
6:30P DOMINOES GAME NIGHT

FEB 2 SAT

9:00A FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION
5:30P SNOWBIRD DINNER

FEB 4 MON

1:00P SHARING AND CARING MEETS

FEB 5 TUES

10:00A PRESCHOOL CHAPEL
5:15P WORSHIP & MUSIC MEETS
5:30P COMMUNITY MEAL
7:00P CHOIR REHEARSES

FEB 6 WED

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS
6:00P BIBLE STUDY

FEB 7 THURS

4:00P COMMUNICATIONS MEETS

FEB 8 FRI

9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
1:00P MAH JONGG

FEB 9 SAT

9:00A FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION

FEB 11 MON

5:00P GIRL SCOUT TROOP MEETS

FEB 12 TUES

MINISTRY REPORTS DUE

10:00A PRESCHOOL CHAPEL
5:30P COMMUNITY MEAL
7:00P CHOIR REHEARSES

FEB 13 WED

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS
4:30P ECLC BOARD MEETS
6:00P BIBLE STUDY ADULT

FEB 14 THURS

VALENTINE'S DAY

3:30P EXECUTIVE TEAM MEETS

FEB 15 FRI

MESSENGER DEADLINE

9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
1:00P MAH JONGG

FEB 16 SAT

9:00A FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION

FEB 17 SUN

9:30A NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED

FEB 18 MON

7:00P GUITAR SARASOTA

FEB 19 TUES

10:00A PRESCHOOL CHAPEL
5:30P COMMUNITY MEAL
7:00P CHOIR REHEARSES

FEB 20 WED

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS
6:00P BIBLE STUDY ADULT

FEB 21 THURS

9A-NOON RUMMAGE SALE PREP
6:30P CHURCH COUNCIL MEETS

FEB 22 FRI

9A-NOON RUMMAGE SALE PREP
9:30A FOOD PANTRY PACKING
1:00P MAH JONGG

FEB 23 SAT

9A-NOON ECLC RUMMAGE SALE
900A FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION

FEB 25 MON

5:00P GIRL SCOUT TROOP MEETS

FEB 26 TUES

10:00A PRESCHOOL CHAPEL
5:30P COMMUNITY MEAL
7:00P CHOIR REHEARSES

FEB 27 WED

8:00A PROPERTY MINISTRY MEETS
6:00P BIBLE STUDY ADULT

**OFFICE HOURS
MON THRU FRI
9:00A TO NOON**



Happy Birthday

- Feb 1 - Virginia Webb
- Feb 4 - Sheri Jesse
- Feb 4 - Gail Seyfarth
- Feb 5 - Robert Fong
- Feb 7 - Lori Fountain-Guillaume
- Feb 9 - Doris Schlotterback
- Feb 14 - Carolyn Masters
- Feb 17 - Ashley Neff
- Feb 18 - Carole Wilson **
- Feb 20 - Deborah Rado
- Feb 22 - David Spittler
- Feb 23 - Robert Strasser
- Feb 26 - Joan Scianni
- Feb 27 - Helen Foster

** Homebound member

Happy Anniversary

- Feb 7 - David & Clara Spittler
- Feb 9 - George & Marilyn Hutfilz

Annual Meeting

Plan to remain after worship on Sunday, February 24 for the Annual Meeting of the congregation. Annual Reports will be available in the narthex.

New member Sunday

We will be officially welcoming our new members to the St. Paul family on Sunday, February 17. A reception will follow during Coffee & Social Hour after the service.

Name tags

One of the best ways we as a congregation can show how welcoming we are to guests and visitors is by wearing a name tag. If there was a manual (actually there are many), this chapter would be named, *Welcoming 101*. If you do not have a name tag (even if you are not a member, but worship with us regularly), please tell Pastor Ashley. If I remember correctly, the cost is about \$7 (give or take a dollar). If you had one but lost it, please tell Pastor Ashley. If you want one but feel you cannot afford one, please tell Pastor Ashley and she will find the money in a special fund for it.

And the winner is!

We would like to give a congratulatory shout out to JD Miller, and his team, the Mounties, for winning the St. Paul Fellowship Fantasy Football League championship for 2018. Way to go Mounties!



Church bus driver needed

We are looking for a volunteer to drive the church bus one or more Sundays a month and pick up a couple of homebound members for worship. If you can spare a small amount of time before and after worship, and can be added to our insurance, please see Rick Barry or call him at 941-735-4668! We presently have only one driver volunteering for every week.



Please prayerfully consider being a part of this ministry.

