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# The Good News

*FEBRUARY 2025*

**PASTOR KC**



Now that we are well into 2025, while many people strive to achieve their New Year's Resolutions, I invite you to change gears and consider the *striving* itself. Is it worth it? *Is the striving worth the resolution?* Sometimes it's worth it! Yet, sometimes the striving gets in the way of experiencing joy in the achievement.

This can happen in our faith too!

As we enter into February, I am already considering the Lenten Season which begins Ash Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> and will assemble a Worship Committee to enhance our experience of church. Many factors go into worship each Sunday and this is an optimal time to share the needs and wants of our Congregation as Lent is right around the corner. Let's make sure our worship elevates our joy in the Lord, our love for one another, and engages all in attendance.

Just as I have grown and changed since I've been away from St. Paul UCC, surely this Congregation has grown and changed as well. If you've found yourself less engaged in worship and consequently not coming to church as often, please share what you need. As the children have grown into tweens and teens, I'll adapt the Children's Message to their developing minds and hearts. With this in mind, Confirmation Classes will be on the 2025 schedule!

We have so much vitality in our Congregation! However, we have no parishioners who can read minds. Please share your ideas with Consistory, participate in various committees, and let the Holy Spirit guide you. With revival in our hearts, a willingness to serve, and a commitment to the Lord, we are destined to deepen our faith, grow outward in love, and experience true joy and spiritual fulfillment. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus calls us to "go and do likewise" (10:37). He's not calling us to *strive* for an achievement – *Jesus calls us into action today.* Amen and amen.

We are celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday for Dick Schuster on Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup> in the Fireside Room, here at church. The birthday/open house will be from 1:00-3:00pm. Please come and celebrate with us!!! Hope to see all of you there. No gifts needed, just your presence to celebrate with Dad!



*Beth*



- 7 Dick Schuster
- 11 Ellen Fox
- 14 Rose Schroeder
- 16 Beth DeVlaminck
- 22 Lorri Berry
- 24 Steve Popyk



#### Consistory

- Pastor — Rev Dr KC Lazzara
- President — Shirene Cece-Clements
- Vice President — Beth DeVlaminck
- Secretary — Gary Miller
- Co-Treasurers — Steve Popyk/Mike Gebert

#### ERICH

St. Paul held its monthly meeting on January 14, 2025. This was the first meeting with Pastor KC back. We had a really nice visit from the Conference Minister of Michigan UCC, Rev. Lillian Daniel. The Christmas decorations have been taken down, thanks to everyone that stayed and helped. The Annual Meeting will be held on Jan 26<sup>th</sup>. Lunch will be provided. We had some boiler work done with a pump replaced. We are going to look at what it would take to fix the lobby fan. For years, it has been very loud. It works, but we want to see if it can be quieter. The year is coming to an end and as a reminder, we are always looking for members to consider joining Consistory. It is only one day a month at 7pm and the meeting only lasts about an hour and a half. People also can join through Zoom, so if getting to the meeting is a challenge, Zoom is always an option. I will be stepping down as President and on Consistory, but will still help with building and grounds. Please remember if you see anything in and around that church that needs attention, please let a member of Consistory know.



#### **Consistory**

Even though it has the least number of days, sometimes it seems to me as if February is the longest month of the year. The weather is almost uniformly gray and dreary, with snow and ice storms. Its holidays are, at best, uninspiring. Most of us don't get seriously enthused about Valentine's Day or President's Day. The "real" holidays are long over and spring is not on the horizon. All in all, not most people's favorite month. So how do we get through it? The surprising answer is that we can do so by acting as if we are happy during it. Before you say that doesn't make sense, hear me out.



Sociology is not one of the "hard" sciences, that is, sociologists don't conduct experiments with people to develop their theories of social behavior; they observe social behavior to develop their theories, then measure those theories against other instances of behavior to see if they're valid. One such theory is very interesting and is counterintuitive: attitude follows action, not vice versa. While we think we act out what we feel (and that does happen), often our actions shape our attitudes. If you want to be happy in February, act happy. It sounds crazy, but there is scientific evidence to back it up, based on real world situations. One such situation was demonstrated on a massive scale shortly after World War II.

President Harry Truman wanted to desegregate the armed forces. He was widely warned not to, that prevailing racial prejudices were so strong that the initiative was doomed to failure. He did it anyway, because it was the right thing to do because of the bravery that minorities had shown in battle during the war. Against all predictions, the change went well. The troops were integrated without major incident and surveys afterward showed that there was a much higher level of acceptance of each other among the various racial groups than anyone had anticipated, and a higher level of acceptance than was found in most of the general population. Familiarity hadn't bred contempt; it had bred tolerance. Prejudice certainly still existed, but the troops could still function efficiently with the new, less intense, level. Sociologists concluded that the act of integration itself had changed the various racial groups' attitudes toward each other. Rather than waiting for tolerance to come on its own and then integrating, the act of integration had caused the tolerance to come. Today our armed forces are still one of the most integrated institutions in our society, by race and by gender.

We should take the psychology of this example to heart. While our actions may not change deep seated emotions, they can change our moods or our thought patterns. Having a down day? Act as if you're having a good one and turn it around. Unsettled? Engage in a calm activity and restore your equilibrium. You can control your own mood to a great extent by conscious choice. February need not be so bleak if you act "sunny."

This has implications for our emotional and spiritual lives. While I don't think our actions can change deeply held convictions, I do think they can affect our outlook on things, and our day-to-day activities. Say there is a person with whom you have to interact that you find unpleasant, perhaps at work, or a neighbor. You could be disagreeable to them, for that is how you feel. This will probably cause problems and make the situation worse. If you act as if you find them agreeable, you may accomplish three things. You avoid problems that could arise in a relationship that you have to maintain. You "heap coals upon their head," in the words of scripture. And finally, you may find that your own attitude changes toward them to be more in line with your actions. Aside from the extra effort it takes to do this, you have nothing to lose by trying.

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Similarly, you may be reluctant to read scripture regularly. You are too busy. It's boring and incomprehensible. So much of it seems pointless - why care who "begat" whom? Why bother? The answer to the last question is: To come closer to God. The answer to the questions about meaning and significance is that there are devotionals that can help you. And as for time, you can almost certainly find just 15 minutes a day for something important. To see if this practice is something you do want to establish, set yourself a challenge. For three weeks, the interval psychologists say it takes to establish a habit, sit down for just 15 minutes each day, or every other day, and read scripture. You can start with Matthew or Genesis, or randomly open the Bible, or pick a book you're curious about. It doesn't matter, as long as you read. That's it, just 15 minutes. At the end of the three weeks, see if your attitude toward reading scripture has changed. If it hasn't, you stop the practice. If it has, you've developed a wonderful new spiritual practice.

Remember, attitude follows action, so choose your actions carefully. Happy February!



SUE



During the last Rummage Sale, a contact was made with a church that is doing amazing work in their local community (not our immediate community of Warren, but a very needy area). Kim and some of our favorite church members have visited them and helped at their Christmas event for children. Kim has made the Women's Fellowship aware of one of their programs that benefits everyone (not just kids).

They have a Clothes Closet where people can get needed clothes FREE!! Now, I am challenging all of you to find one (yes just 1) item of clothing that is in very good condition that you have no use for (maybe it is just too tight, too loose, wrong color or you just don't want it anymore). Now remember, I said in GOOD CONDITION (not worn out, faded, missing buttons, ripped, stained, or broken zipper). I mean something you would wear but choose not to. These items will not go to our Rummage Sale, but as a special offering to our new church friends. Yes, I said everyone - not just the ladies - I mean all of you men too. Even the kids can get in on this as they are all growing so fast. We are all asked to open our hearts to those less fortunate and we do, but here is a chance to open our CLOSET too! The generosity of St. Paul folks has always been one of our greatest assets. *Let's do this!!!*