



Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness...'

+Genesis 1:26

Greetings, grace, and peace from the St. Paul Giving Campaign Team!

Welcome to this year's campaign, "Grace in Action." Over the next three weeks, we'll reflect together on how God generously puts grace into action, from homemaking to celebrating to bridge-building acts of mercy - and how we, as children of God created in the image of God, can do the same.

Let's start at the beginning. According to the Bible's opening story, God is a creator, organizer, feeder, teacher, gardener, and builder of this world we call home. God is the original "home-maker."

Here at St. Paul, we've been working hard to be "homemakers" in the image of God. Through our support of the Stewart Center and Wellroot Family Services, we've helped to feed our neighbors near and far. Through contributions to the Good Neighbor Fund and our mission partners at the United Methodist Committee on Relief, we've been builders and gardeners. Our children's and youth ministries, our basketball program, our Kids Serve Camp in the summer, and our Confirmation Class have made us teachers and mentors to children and youth in our congregation and community. As you know, we at St. Paul really do strive to be good neighbors.

God graciously made the cosmos, and we're called to act in God's image by making St. Paul a microcosm within God's creation, a place where everyone can feel welcome, supported, and safe to be the person God made them and called them to be. If you've found a home here, or have been moved by one of the ministries just mentioned, we hope you'll help make sure our microcosm stays as graceful and active as possible in 2023 and beyond.

Enclosed with this letter, you'll find a brief testimony from Bill McKinnon, a homemaker in our midst. We hope you'll read his thoughts on God, home, and the microcosm we're building together.

Enclosed you'll also find a pledge card. Put it somewhere you'll see it every day - and whenever you see it, try praying the prayer printed on the back. Then bring it along, still blank, to Giving Sunday on November 20, when we'll joyfully put our God-given grace into action.

Grace and peace,

Bill McKinnon
Jack Warner
Brandan Dainas



Testimony from Bill McKinnon - Finance Chair

Christian Celtic tradition recognizes the concept of “thin places,” places where we feel a particular closeness to God that creates a special feeling of home, peace, and safety. One such thin place is the island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland. Iona is considered the birthplace of Christianity in Scotland. St. Columba and 12 companions sailed across the Irish Sea to Iona in AD 567 to establish the first Christian church in Scotland. Missionaries from Iona then traveled throughout Scotland converting the Celts and Druids they encountered to Christianity. A church built in the 13th Century on the site of St. Columba’s first church is home to a thriving 21st century Christian community there. Pilgrims have traveled to Iona for more than 1500 years to worship God and feel the peace of God’s love there. I am one such pilgrim, and I discovered the overwhelming sense of God’s presence in my life there.

But I don’t have to travel to Iona to find a thin place. For me, St. Paul UMC is such a thin place. I feel God’s presence in my life whenever I am there. For me St. Paul UMC is a place where I feel loved, secure, welcomed, and part of a family; in other words, St. Paul UMC is home. So, I keep coming back to St. Paul UMC, as saints before me have done for more than 150 years, to where I feel at home in God’s world. Because St. Paul is my church home, I will gratefully support its missions and ministries in 2023 by making a pledge of financial support so that St. Paul can continue the work we do and offering it to God on Giving Sunday, November 20.