

The Lifeline



July 2023

24-Hour Phone 651.227.5502

Volume 59 Issue 7

TRADITION SEVEN

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

AT LAST, WE CAN PAY OUR OWN WAY

My name is Jamie K. and I am an alcoholic/addict. I have been sober since January 28, 2023. Upon sobriety, I believe working a program that suits my own needs is key to abstaining from drugs and alcohol. I live in a sober living house, which correlates with my intensive outpatient treatment. I have an incredible sponsor, whom I met at detox. Together, we are walking through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, while reading the Big Book. I attend various Alcoholics Anonymous meetings weekly. However, what actually brings me to write this article on the Seventh Tradition is Saint Paul Area Intergroup, where I volunteer.

When I was asked to write on the Seventh Tradition I wondered how I was going to write an article regarding a sentence. After doing research I have found that the history of Alcoholics Anonymous is much more intriguing than I had imagined.

When Dr. Bob and Wall Street stock trader, Bill W. began A.A., the supporting funds were lacking. The office staff consisted of Bill and an administrative secretary. Because Alcoholics Anonymous grew so effortlessly, Bill determined that members at the meetings should donate funds to support their own groups. A.A.'s founders sought this ideal to ensure A.A. was self-supporting and independent, rather than relying upon the handouts we alcoholics had once sought.

In 1939, there were 100 sober alcoholics in groups founded through A.A. We can only imagine how empty the baskets were at this time. In response, the volunteer treasurer at New York's old 24th Street Clubhouse meeting expressed his concern regarding the demand for financial stability and sustain-

ability. Meanwhile, Bill was ever hopeful for the newcomer who attended the meeting because he wanted to demonstrate how money and spirituality intertwine. Yet, when the donation basket reached Bill, he only managed to contribute a ten-cent piece; as an ego-feeding act, he had given his last few dollars to a fellow who had relapsed earlier that morning.

While Alcoholics Anonymous continued to struggle for funds, Bill pondered more ideas; after all the Rockefeller Foundation was not adverse to the idea of supplying money to "drunks." At a certain point, an A.A. group was given an outside contribution of \$5,000. Despite good intentions, what was intended to provide stable pay for group administration, ended up being "a hassle ... that played havoc for years."

Rockefeller was supportive of the A.A. cause in other ways, particularly with the publication of the Big Book of "Alcoholics Anonymous". In 1941, Rockefeller purchased 400 copies and donated them. The publication of A.A. literature was vitally useful in multiple ways. The book helped to expand A.A.'s reach by stating clearly how our disease can be managed if we work the program as directed throughout the Big Book. The growth of groups and readership would in turn be beneficial to raise money through our own contributions and purchase of literature.

Since then and each year following, the numbers within the sober community and A.A. accelerated dramatically. In 2020, there were 129,790 groups with 2,138,201 active members, providing a significant amount of donated funds for A.A. to budget for a prudent reserve. A prudent reserve for a group is approximately two or three months' worth of expenses in case of any shortcoming. An A.A. prudent reserve provides a safety net for us to carry the message for the alcoholic who still suffers.

The way I see it the seventh tradition demonstrates how we can pay our own way to facilitate our own program. As I attend many meetings, I can appreciate the act of love and kindness going into the basket. As a newcomer I feel supported in my recovery. When I can provide a donation, I will feel satisfied that I was able to assist my fellow A.A. members.

The Lifeline is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or St. Paul Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome original cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of A.A. experience.

Please email your article to Lifeline@aastpaul.org or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355. W. St. Paul, MN 55118-3431. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and content that might violate A.A.'s Traditions, etc.

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.

33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355, West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

Website: www.aastpaul.org

e-mail: lifeline@aastpaul.org

Phone: (651) 227-5502

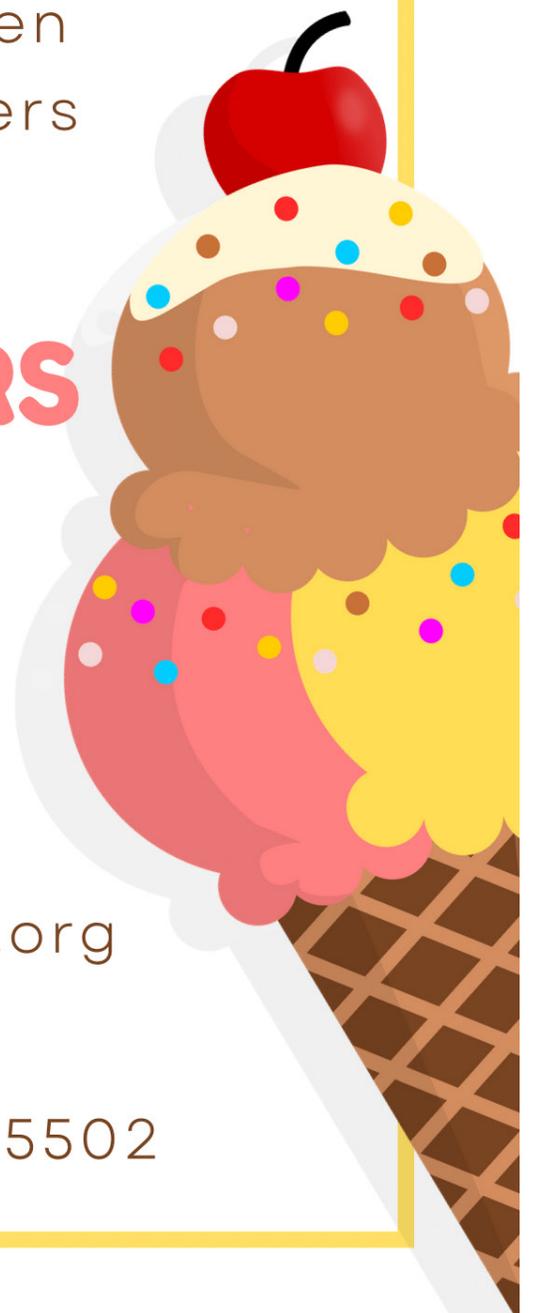
ST PAUL INTERGROUP

Ice cream social, open house, and long timers recognition event

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

Please contact:
chair@aastpaul.org
or
secretary@aastpaul.org

SPI office # 651-227-5502



When we pay forward to the General Service Office, to our Area, to our District, and to Intergroup, they reciprocate. As we all know today and as always, self-supporting begins with me, because with me there is an "us" -- a group effort. In order to achieve success, we need to have a meeting space, which we fund in order to share our experience, strength, and hope with each other. What is a meeting without the A.A. coffee and creamer? How about snacks? Everyone needs A.A. endorsed literature. Also, the pamphlets have sufficient information to answer most of our questions about this program. The reason we reject outside contributions is because we object to outside influence. I believe because we are in this together, we have a clear indication of how to correctly disperse our money. The seventh tradition is a commitment that we have to each other and to our group.

I hope that we are all capable of turning our addictive behaviors and our unmanageable lives over to the care of our Higher Power as we understand Him.

- Jamie K, Saint Paul

WHOEVER PAYS THE PIPER...

The seventh tradition sets twelve step programs apart from just about everything else in our society. In a world where it seems everything is motivated by money, AA is like a breath of fresh air. There are no dues or fees for membership. We decline any kind of funding from any outside entity. We truly care only about helping people.

We can see examples everywhere of how money can corrupt things thought to be trustworthy and tear people apart who once cared for one another. We like to think that we can trust our elected officials. Then we learn that they take campaign contributions and kick-backs from corporate interests who then write the laws we have to live by. We assume that all charities are trustworthy. Then we read news about people lining their pockets under the false pretenses of providing meals to needy children. Reputable, admired businesses are discovered to be running sweat shops with child labor overseas to increase their profits. We all can think of examples in our lives where conflict or tension over money strained or even ruined a relationship. In order for AA groups and the fellowship as a whole to survive we need to be free of this tension and conflict over money.

The groups of AA need money in order to function just like anything else. We have expenses such as rent, utilities, literature and other supplies. After groups pay their expenses surplus money is sent to fund AA's organization levels. It's important to note that AA's organization is an upside-down pyramid. The tiers of organization all exist to serve the groups in accordance with the Ninth Tradition and do not govern (Second Tradition). Down from individual groups on the pyramid are district committees which organize meetings in a local area. Districts are united into Areas. There are 93 Areas in North America. Each area elects a delegate to the General Service Conference, which makes recommendations on matters effecting the fellowship as a whole. The General Service Conference also makes recommendations to Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, the publisher of literature available to the whole fellowship. This

organization exists to achieve what individual groups cannot do on their own and to carry the message to a larger number of alcoholics who still suffer.

We only collect voluntary contributions from our members to meet these needs and support the organization. There's no profit motive anywhere in our fellowship. People always come before money. As page 160 of the 12 and 12 says, "Our fellowship stayed poor because it had to." By being poor we stay humble and our primary purpose remains carrying the message to alcoholics who still suffer (Tradition 5). When I first came to AA, I was amazed that all the strangers around me seemed to genuinely care about me and nobody asked me to buy anything. The seventh tradition helps earn the trust of newcomers to the program.

So what lead the early members of AA to adopt the seventh tradition? Early groups had many squabbles over money, where it should come from and how it should be spent. An example is given in the 12 and 12 of an early AA group that received an outside donation of \$5000, a sum equivalent to roughly \$85,000 in today's money. "The hassle over that chunk of money played havoc for years," says the writer (pg. 161). If a club comes into that amount of money in excess of what it needs to pay its essential expenses, there will no doubt be numerous opinions on what to do with it. This leads to arguments and conflict in the group and distracts us from our mission. There's also the danger that whoever the money came from will want a say in how we operate. If we become dependent on that outside money we would be forced to oblige. As the writer says on page 165, "Whoever pays the piper is apt to call the tune."

Let's take a closer look at exactly what might happen if AA didn't have the seventh tradition and were to start taking money from a large outside organization. An example of such an organization is the Hazelden-Betty Ford Foundation (HBF). HBF's treatment program is completely based on the Twelve Steps and typically recommends that patients leaving treatment attend a meeting every day for at least the first 90 days. Without the seventh tradition HBF may think it appropriate to donate surplus funds to the General Service Board and AA groups, doing so with the best of intentions. The fellowship may then spend that money on things it doesn't need and become dependent on the funding to support it. HBF may start pressuring groups to promote the foundation's literature. They may ask groups to recommend HBF's treatment program to its chronically relapsing members. While HBF is a not-for-profit organization, they do have an interest in expanding and many people benefit financially from HBF's program. There is definitely a need for drug and alcohol treatment centers. For many people in the advanced stages of alcoholism, it's neither safe nor possible for them to achieve sobriety just by attending AA meetings. But order for AA to best serve those in recovery once they leave a treatment facility we need to be independent from such facilities, financially and otherwise.

"When a society composed entirely of alcoholics says it's going to pay its bills, that's really something." (12 and 12 pg. 161). Financial responsibility eluded most of us when we were drinking. Being collectively responsible for paying our basic expenses and supporting the fellowship is part of the spirit of solidarity that holds AA together. The Seventh Tradition helps ensure that this is our fellowship, free of outside expectations, and always will be.

- Shaun L., Saint Paul



THE "ACID TEST"

Scan QR code for easy pre-registration



"Can we stay sober, keep in emotional balance, and live to good purpose under all conditions?"

MNYPAA X

The Acid Test

June 30th - July 2nd, 2023

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest

STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

GIVING IT ALL UP TO A HIGHER POWER

When I think of Step 7, the word “humility” immediately comes to mind.

It’s a word that brings up intense feelings among just about anyone you talk to – most of them not pleasant. I was the same prior to recovery. I equated humility with the idea of humiliation and being humiliated in front of others. To us alcoholics, there is nothing worse.

You see, while I hated myself intensely in active addiction, I also thought I knew everything and was better than everyone else. Overcompensation, I suppose. Stripping away that veneer to expose the person I didn’t want you to see was terrifying.

Now, humility means overcoming self-centeredness. It means putting others before me and being of service. It also means giving up control to a power greater than myself.

By asking our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings, we are admitting we can’t do that ourselves – no matter how many self-help books we read or wellness retreats we attend. Shortly before my last drink, I had this great idea to book a weekend at a cabin up north all by myself. I was going to read and write and hike and meditate and do all the things I thought one does to “get yourself right.” Turns out, I didn’t last a day before driving nearly an hour one way to get a bottle.

I had gone to many therapists over the years, but never told them the truth. I had read tons of books and listened to a lot of self-help podcasts, but never followed through on anything. And really, no amount of self-knowledge was going to “fix” my addiction or remove my many character defects. I needed to admit “I don’t got this” and ask God for help. And that wasn’t easy.

In the weeks following my last drink, I remember being on that pink cloud and thinking how much easier my life was going to be without alcohol. Remove the alcohol, remove the problems, right? (Insert laughter here.)

As those of us in recovery know, alcoholism isn’t so much about the alcohol as the “-ism” – the reason(s) we drank like we did. It’s our thinking, our reaction to life, our character defects. For me, that included things like:

- Depression
- Shame
- Regret
- Envy
- Victim mentality

- Fear of rejection
- Fear of being alone
- Fear of just about everything

Of course, I also drank to excess when good things happened. But that, too, often stemmed from character defects like pride, arrogance and self-centeredness.

Once I prayed the Seventh Step Prayer and completed Step Seven with my first sponsor, I felt a sense of peace come over me like I had not felt in a long time. I felt free. Lighter. Like a long-held burden had been lifted from my shoulders. It was crazy to think I didn’t have to carry all of this. I didn’t have to live like this. And I didn’t have to do it alone. My Higher Power was there to take it on for me.

As Bill W. writes in “12 Steps and 12 Traditions” (Page 75):

“During this process of learning more about humility, the most profound result of all was the change in our attitude toward God. And this was true whether we had been believers or unbelievers. We began to get over the idea that the Higher Power was a sort of bush-league pinch hitter, to be called upon only in an emergency. The notion that we could still live our own lives, God helping a little now and then, began to evaporate.”

My spiritual experience was of the “burning bush” variety you read about in the Big Book. It showed me that the God of my understanding had always been with me and always will be. Even when I turned my back on Him, He had never turned His back on me. He was always there, just waiting, ready for me to turn around again and accept His love and compassion. It was truly humbling.

But, once again, having this knowledge doesn’t mean I always put it into practice – or that my character defects are gone for good.

Even with more than four years of sobriety under my belt, I find that I still take my will back on occasion and think I know best or that I can do it alone – particularly during a time of stress or crisis. It doesn’t take long before those character defects start trickling back in, slowly but surely. A little white lie here to make me look better. Skipping out on things I fear or don’t want to do. Going the easier, softer way.

That’s why the Seventh Step Prayer is a daily mantra for me – one I end most days with.

You see, you can repeat Step Seven as often as you need to. Or any of the steps. That was a revelation to me early in my sobriety. Character defects popping up? Pause, pray and give them up to my Higher Power. Let Him do the rest. All I need to focus on is doing the next right thing and being of maximum service to others. Everything will work out as it should. It always does.

- Sarah C., Saint Paul

HOLE IN THE DOUGHNUT 15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Please join us in celebrating the 15 year anniversary of the
Hole in the Doughnut Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

Tuesday July 11th

Potluck: 6pm

Speaker: 7pm

Roseville Lutheran Church
1215 Roselawn Ave W
Roseville, MN

Directions:

North: Take 35E South to Hwy 36. Take Hwy 36 towards West towards Minneapolis. Exit on Lexington Ave.
Turn Left on Lexington. Take Lexington to Roselawn Ave. Turn Right on Roselawn.

South: Take 35E North to Hwy 36. Take Hwy 36 towards West towards Minneapolis. Exit on Lexington Ave.
Turn Left on Lexington. Take Lexington to Roselawn Ave. Turn Right on Roselawn.

East: Take 94 W to 35E North. Take 35E North to Hwy 36. Take Hwy 36 towards West towards Minneapolis.
Exit on Lexington Ave. Turn Left on Lexington. Take Lexington to Roselawn Ave. Turn Right on Roselawn.

West: Take 94E to Hwy 280 Merge onto 35W North. Take 35W North to Hwy 36 East. Take Hwy 36 towards
East towards Minneapolis. Exit on Lexington Ave. Turn Left on Lexington. Take Lexington to Roselawn Ave.
Turn Right on Roselawn.

SELF-SUPPORT SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUPS

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” The Conference-approved pamphlet: “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

50% St. Paul Intergroup

33 Wentworth Ave E.
Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

30% General Service Office

P.O. Box 2407
James A Farley Station
New York, NY 10116-2407

10% Southern MN Area 36

Southern Minnesota Area Assembly
P.O. Box 2812
Mpls., MN 55402-0812

10% District Committee

Ramsey County:

District 8, P.O. Box 131523
St. Paul, MN 55113

Dakota County:

District 19, P.O. Box 1466
Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County:

District 15, P.O. Box 181
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

WAYS TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT INTERGROUP

1. VIA SQUARE

Use the camera on your phone to scan this QR code to be redirected to the SPI



<https://square.link/u/jlF6dLuj>

2. VIA CASHAPP

Contribute to SPI via CashApp
~ \$spintergroup

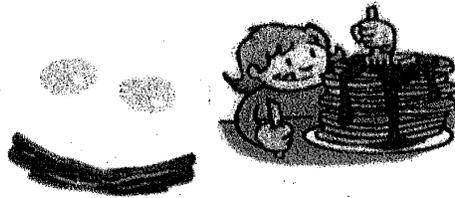
Please add SPI to your favorites and consider making regular contributions

3. VIA CHECK

You are always welcome to stop by during business hours, or mail a personal or AA group check to the

Saint Paul Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E, Ste 355
West St. Paul, MN
55118-3431

July 22nd
Builder's Big Book
4th Anniversary Celebration
Open Speaker Meeting
8am Breakfast



and Fellowship
9am Speaker:
Val L. from
Hole In The Donut



6070 Cahill Ave. Inver Grove Heights
55076

DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

2023 INTERGROUP BOARD

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)
Fairview Community Center
1910 Cty. Rd B West, Rm 108
Roseville
3rd Wed., 7:00 PM
Email: dist8@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 15 (Wash. Co.)

Christ Lutheran Church
11194 N. 36th St.
Lake Elmo
4th Mon., 7:00 PM
Email: dist15@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 19 (Dakota Co.)

Rosemount Community Center
13885 South Robert Trail
Rosemount
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM
dist19@area36.org
Email: dist19@area36.org (for Zoom info)



LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?

Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl

If you are interested - Contact:
Nightowl@aastpaul.org
to schedule training.

St. Paul Intergroup Office
33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431
To RSVP - please call 651-227-5502

Advisor to the Board	Keith I.
Chairperson	Eliot W.
Alternate Chairperson	(Open)
Secretary	Kelly K.
Treasurer	Bill C.
Alternate Treasurer	(Open)
Member-At-Large	Tom W.
Member-At-Large	Angie T.
Member-At-Large	Janice K.
Member-At-Large	Mary U.
Office Manager	Noah L-C

SPECIAL SKILLS NEEDED

THE SAINT PAUL INTERGROUP OFFICE

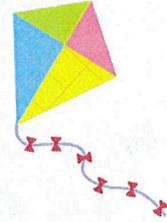
is interested in expanding our volunteer base to include people

- graphic design
- office administration
- retail sales
- human resources/training
- event coordination
- communications

**For more information or to volunteer
your time, please email
altchair@aastpaul.org or call the office
at 651-227-5502**



**District 8
Presents:**



Potluck at the Park!

July 9th

10:00 - 1:00 pm

Games | Food | Fellowship



****Fun for the
whole
family!****

Como Picnic Pavilion | 1199 Midway Pkwy
Saint Paul

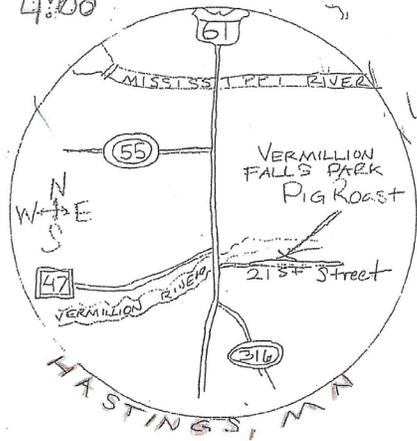
PIG ROAST

VERMILLION FALLS JULY 1 2023

STARTS AT NOON!

SPEAKER AT 4:00

VOLLEYBALL & OTHER GAMES!!!



I'll BE DONE AT NOON!

Hastings Alano Welcomes You!



12th Step

Calls

8



Office Calls

107



Meeting

Info Calls

47



Speakers

Calls

9

THE FOLLOWING GROUPS, MEMBERS AND FAITHFUL FIVER MEMBERS MADE THE ABOVE SERVICES POSSIBLE:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Valley Step Group | Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12 |
| Eagan Tuesday Nighters | Mendota 1030 AA Group |
| Happy Joyous and Free - Mahtomedi | Highland Park Groups |
| Shoreview 12 x 12 | Forest Lake Alano |
| Hastings Club | Hillside Friday Night AA |
| Steps by the Lake | Midway Club |
| SOS Afton Sat Morn | Next Right Thing |
| Saturday Morning Serenity Group | Lake City Group |
| Stillwater Rivertown BB Group Sun PM | North Dale Group |
| Pocketing Our Pride - Mpls | Pocketing Our Pride |
| Saturday Morning Womens Group | |

- 21 A.A. Groups contributed \$ 2,680
- 26 Faithful Fivers contributed \$ 516

Thank You So Very Much!

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E
Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

Change Service Requested

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities MN
Permit 7451

Please let us know a month in advance if your address changes. It saves us the cost of return postage and enables you to get each issue of *The Lifeline*. Our mailing permit does not provide for mail forwarding. **THANK YOU!**



St. Paul Intergroup **Individual Contribution** Enrollment Form

Your Intergroup strives to be self-supporting, and with your personal support we can continue to carry our vital message of Hope and Recovery to all who need and want it. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to the Lifeline. Contributions may be made annually, bi-annually, quarterly, or monthly. Please consider becoming one of our *Faithful Fivers* (\$5.00/month), *Terrific Tennes* (\$10.00/month), or *Fantastic Fifteeners* \$15.00/month).

1. Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

2. Amount & Frequency:

Amount \$ _____

Frequency: (check one)

Monthly Quarterly Bi-Annually Annually

Start on: ____/____/____

Faithful Fiver (\$5.00/month)

Terrific Tenner (\$10.00/month)

Fantastic Fifteener (\$15.00/month)

3. Choose a Payment Method:

Credit Card/Debit

Visa MasterCard AMEX Discover

Card # ____/____/____/____

Expiration Date: ____/____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____
**I authorize St. Paul Intergroup to automatically bill my account as specified (monthly, quarterly, etc). I understand that I am free to cancel this authorization at any time by contacting Intergroup.*

Check - Please make payable to:

Saint Paul Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431