

The Lifeline



January - 2025

24-Hour Phone 651.227.5502

Volume 61 Issue #1

STEP 1

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable.

Here I am, sitting at a large steel spider table at a California state prison near Bakersfield, California. It would be easy to complain about my living situation. I could say I'm living in a filthy, staph-infected dormitory with close to 200 criminals. I could elaborate on the uncomfortable beds, the lousy food, the extreme noise pollution, being cut off from society, the abhorrent state of the restrooms, power-tripping corrections officers, or even that I have eight more years to spend in prison. But I won't.

Let's try this again ...

Here I am, sitting at a large steel spider table at a correctional facility. I have a roof over my head, a warm bed to sleep in, enough food, people to talk to and running water to drink and bathe in. I am also lucky to be alive and have been a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous for more than two years. This isn't to say that being imprisoned is enjoyable. Far from it. My point is that there's more than one way of looking at any situation. I'm in prison due to alcoholism. Let me rephrase that ... I'm in prison as a result of my actions,

symptoms of alcoholism.

I was born in 1990 into an upper-middle-class family in L.A. I was an only child, the well-loved center of attention. I wasn't spoiled by any means but I had a comfortable childhood. I was a well-behaved kid who attended Jewish private school, visited with grandparents, went to summer camp, spent time with friends and played with Pokémon cards.

I wasn't particularly rebellious. I had a social life. But for the most part I just stayed in school and kept out of trouble. I generally received decent marks and even transformed my weakest academic subject into an asset. I passed the advanced placement calculus exam and received five college credits for it, which was a great way to transition into college.

I didn't begin drinking, much less drinking alcoholically, until I was 21. In college, I started as a moderate drinker, but that didn't last long. Within several months I began drinking more heavily and experienced blackouts more and more often. When I drank, I was not my authentic self. I would sometimes be impatient and more impulsive. The more I drank, the more I wanted to drink. This went on for two more years.

In 2013, I was at California State University, Northridge. I was a psychology major studying cognition and neuroscience. I was

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

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday - Friday 9:30 to 5:30, Tuesday 11:30 to 7:30, Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 Sunday Closed

about three weeks away from earning my bachelor's degree.

One Saturday, I slept in, spent some time with my family, took my chihuahuas for a walk and then went to my job at a local supermarket. My shift ended at midnight. As I had done many times before, I purchased a bottle of tequila and brought it home. I recall popping in a popular action film on TV and beginning to drink, with my parents asleep down the hall. Everything else is lost to me until I woke up handcuffed to a hospital bed in extreme agony.

Many hours before, I had been spotted knocking on a stranger's door a block away from the house. I walked my dogs there almost every day, except this time I was holding my father's .357 magnum instead of a leash. I was never one to run around with guns or to look for trouble. The stranger alerted the police and four officers arrived minutes later. I have zero recollection of any of this.

According to the police report, I was told to drop my weapon. After failing to do so, I took fire from the police officers' handguns. Two officers fired a total of six rounds. Five of those rounds missed, but one shot came at an angle, entering the center of my chest, puncturing my left lung and exiting the back of my right shoulder. The bullet came very close to severing my aorta.

I immediately hit the ground, was taken into custody and transported to a local trauma center. During this chain of events, I allegedly discharged a lone round from the .357 magnum. I say allegedly not to exonerate myself from taking responsibility for my actions, but because I have almost no memory of that night. I only remember beginning to drink and waking up in the hospital. I wish I could remember firing that gun. It would be easier to accept the situation.

When I was released from the hospital, I was transferred to the county jail. I had a squeaky clean record, not even a speeding ticket. Jail was brand new to me.

At my arraignment, I was charged with two counts of attempted murder on a peace officer and two counts of assault with a firearm on a peace officer with a discharge of firearm enhance-

ment. The case had the potential to result in a double life sentence. Other than myself, nobody was injured. However, the law is quite strict, understandably so. I went from being a college student with no record to potential lifer. Tequila's nickname "to kill ya" took on a whole new meaning for me.

After spending 19 days in custody recovering from my injuries, I was granted an enormously high bail, which was posted by my generous and loving family. They were probably more scared than I was. They will always remain on my list of amends, for I have harmed them with my actions.

Immediately upon my release from jail, my family, who recognized my alcoholism, enrolled me in an alcohol treatment program in a quaint area near Pasadena, California. I stayed there for 22 months, the entire time I was out on bond. I was able to get the help I needed. It was through this treatment center that I was introduced to the Fellowship of AA.

I'd like to say that I immediately admitted to being an alcoholic after entering treatment. But it took several weeks of group therapy, counseling and AA meetings before I was able to surrender. I just couldn't admit to myself that I was powerless over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable. Once I got honest with myself, I realized that bingeing on booze, blacking out and having a standoff with the police hardly constitutes drinking like a gentleman.

After I'd been at the treatment center a few months, I graduated to sober-living status. During that time, I fought my case while simultaneously combatting my alcoholism and defects of character. This produced a high level of anxiety that could have resulted in a relapse. Fortunately, I am still sober today with more than two years of sobriety. I got a sponsor, found a Higher Power, took commitments in meetings, worked the Steps and actively embraced a new way of life. I even finished my degree while out on bond.

I am eternally grateful to that treatment center. I learned how to use the tools that help me stay sober today and I also met much of my support network through AA. They are a constant comfort to me while I face the difficulties of being

in prison.

After almost two years, I pled guilty to assaulting a peace officer with a firearm with a use of weapon enhancement. I was sentenced to 10 years with 85 percent of it to be served. I was allowed six weeks to get my affairs in order and to surrender to the court.

During those six weeks, I continued to live the AA way of life. I changed sponsors and re-worked the Steps. I attended meetings and even led some of them. I did whatever I could to live in the moment and to continue my spiritual growth.

As my surrender date approached, I encountered more stress than I had ever felt in my life. I could have given up but I didn't. With the support of my family, friends and AA, I am still sober. I may be in prison with temptation still around me (yes, prisoners make booze) but I do not have to be a prisoner to my disease.

This experience has been a test for me. It is a test of faith in a power greater than myself and a test of action. If I continue to work a program, I can live a meaningful life, even in here. I was told not to quit before the miracle happens. I haven't quit yet and the miracle has, in some ways, already happened.

By: Corey B. I Soledad, California

TRADITION 1

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

I got sober for the first time in San Diego in 1987, when I was 17 years old, which helped me to graduate from high school, but then I relapsed a year later when I moved away for college in Santa Barbara. There was a lot of drinking on campus and, at the time, I wasn't fully convinced that I was really, truly, an alcoholic and not just some teenager with issues. Thankfully, it only took a year of drunken puking, embarrassing sexual encounters, bad grades, and self-loathing for me to become convinced that I was both an alcoholic and a teenager with issues. I was granted the gift of desperation and got sober again in 1989.

I immediately set about doing everything I had heard people suggest the first time I got sober, but never did. First order of business: get a sponsor. There was a campus AA meeting that was filled with other sober students. After my first meeting, I asked some gals who they had for sponsors. They took me to this women's meeting the next night where there happened to be a woman who was wearing a red blouse. People said to get a sponsor who has what you want. I thought that women who wore red were self-confident. It was as good a reason as any, so I asked her to be my sponsor and she said yes. We started working the Steps together out of the Big Book.

That was another thing I hadn't done the first time around. I owned a Big Book but had only ever read the paragraphs that were read in meetings: the beginning of Chapter Three, and the Promises from Chapter Six. I thought those were the most important parts, so why read anything else? Well, this time around I was willing to do anything. I was shocked to read in the very first pages that the Big Book was our textbook to sobriety, providing instructions on how to work the Steps. I never knew that! But I was a student, so I took to studying the Big Book as if my life depended on it, which, of course, it did.

When I got to the discussion of the Ninth Step, my world got blown apart. The Promises that are read in meetings begin, "Before we are halfway through..." I had always thought, I'm a smart person. I can do math. There are 12 steps. 12 divided by 2 equals 6. Therefore, any time before Step Six, these promises should begin to come true. But they never came true for me. Turns out, my math had been lacking some context because I'd never read the Big Book from the beginning. The Promises that are read in meetings are the Promises that accompany the Ninth Step. "Before we are halfway through..." means before we are halfway through with our amends. I had never made any amends. But I also discovered that the Big Book is filled with promises, every step of the way.

Another thing people suggested was to get commitments at meetings. I'd never done that before either. In the early 1990s, a lot of alcoholics smoked cigarettes at meetings in church basements, including me. I went to one big speaker meeting that needed multiple people every month to set out the ashtrays before the meeting and clean them afterwards. It wasn't glamorous, but I was willing to do anything. In addition to the ashtrays, I took my turn making coffee, greeting people when they arrived, cleaning the coffee cups after the meeting, putting away chairs, and whatever else needed doing. Commitments at that meeting kept me coming back, alive and sober, throughout my first year when I struggled to come out of a dark, suicidal depression. With the encouragement of my sponsor, I finally got outside help and found some relief. Then my sobriety could be built on firmer ground.

That meeting was also where I found my second sponsor. My sponsor in red had about one year sober when we first met. I was so desperate to work the steps that I caught up to her when I reached Step Eight. My second sponsor and I started on the Steps from the beginning. The Step work I had done before was the best I could have done at the

time, but now that I had over a year sober, I was capable of being more honest. In this second try at the Fourth and Fifth Steps, I shared my biggest secrets: the things I hated about myself, the things that disgusted me, the ways that I harmed myself. I was so scared. I expected her to hate me, like I did. But the most amazing thing happened. She loved me. She saw me for all that I was and she absolutely loved and accepted me. I had never felt anything like that before, and it changed my life.

My sponsor also taught me to call three sober sisters a day. I didn't have to talk to them if they didn't pick up the phone, but I had to at least make the calls and leave messages (this was in the days before cell phones, texting, and email). I complained that I didn't know what to say. I didn't want to bother them. They wouldn't want to talk with me. Nonsense, my sponsor said. She instructed me to call and say, "Hi, I was just thinking of you and wondered how you were doing." Everyone, she said, likes to hear that someone else is thinking of them. So I made my calls because I was desperate for sobriety. But guess what happened? I began to make friends.

Around that time, there were a good number of sober young people in southern California. We were all kind of crazy and there was a fair amount of drama, but we supported each other through our ups and downs. After meetings, we hung out at coffee shops and compared sponsors. We had parties. After we turned 21, we started going dancing at bars. We graduated from college and got jobs. Through it all, we went to local AA round-ups and conferences. We made a special road trip in 1995 to San Diego for the International Convention, which was incredible. Sober alcoholics from all over the world filled the bleachers at Jack Murphy Stadium (as it was then called) for the Sunday morning speaker meeting. A sense of serenity permeated the space in a way that I'm sure was never felt during any regular season football game.

But the best conference was when we flew to the 1993 ICYPAA in New York City. Thousands of young, wild, sober alcoholics took over that hotel for a non-stop weekend-long celebration. In between the scheduled meetings, we camped out in the lobby and hallways, chain smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee, lounging on couches or sitting on the floor, talking endlessly about the Steps and

how our lives had changed, how amazing it was, how grateful we were to have found sobriety. At night we danced, packed together in the ballroom, jumping up and down to the beat of the music so that the floor bounced beneath us like a trampoline, all of us brimming with an ecstatic joy – we were alive and sober!

I'm middle-aged now. I live on the east coast. I don't smoke anymore, or owe hotels amends after my stay, but the lessons of those early days have been the foundation for a long-lasting sobriety. I still hold commitments at meetings. I still work the Steps with a sponsor, plus now I can sponsor others and give them love and acceptance. The Promises continue to come true in new and surprising ways. I still call people in the program, not just newcomers, but old timers, too – all of us struggle sometimes. I still have adventures with my sober friends. We support each other through our ups and downs. I've had a few more serious bouts of depression, but I've survived them with the support of AA. Sometimes I wear red, though I've discovered I prefer purple. And sometimes, in my kitchen before I drive to work, careful not to pull a muscle, I dance a little jig of thanks.

By: Julie J. I West Hartford, Conn.

THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

ALEX S.

Early in my recovery I saw this word and thought of it as an obligation. I was (in sober time) young. I was terrified. I was still learning about what AA is; its steps, its traditions. So when these obligations would present themselves I would often find my web camera and internet connection faulty. Let's not forget the conveniences as well as the frustrations of online meetings during the start of 2020.

As a little time passed I would raise my hand to maybe do some reading, so long as no one else raised a hand for a solid 30 to 90 seconds. And oddly enough, I came out the other side of those readings unscathed. As a result, I mustered the courage to raise my hand a bit more, and a bit more quickly.

When the phone rang one Saturday morning I heard the trusted servant of my home group on the other end of the line, audaciously asking me to fill in as trusted servant that morning. I was ready to pack up and quit AA right there. But through a little prodding from my Higher Power I reluctantly accepted and served for the first time at the meeting. Again, I came away without injury, and it actually felt pretty good. The fear was starting to lift on service obligations.

The more I learned of AA the more I learned that we are a fellowship which survives on service. No one is paying me to be here. No one is paying members of the group to make coffee, set up chairs, sit on the board at Intergroup. For free and for fun I was told.

So obligation began to morph to opportunity. I have learned that service not only keeps AA carrying the message to alcoholics like myself, but also is integral in my recovery. It brings me closer to AA and closer to alcoholics. I have since taken

many service opportunities on a group level and now at the Intergroup level. The last year as secretary to the board has been an opportunity I will not soon forget.

There is something invigorating and inspiring knowing that the service I am doing is making an impact on AA as a whole. It does not always feel this way, but I remember that I am not alone, I am one among many who give freely of their time, their experience, strength, and hope for the good of AA and the still suffering alcoholic.

When opportunity came knocking again during the elections for 2025 Intergroup Board I had reverted to my service outlook from early sobriety. The silence in the room was deafening, my sponsor across the room giving me a look, a visual nudge to raise my hand at another opportunity. I am not ashamed to admit my reluctance to begin another service opportunity for AA and St. Paul Intergroup. However, I may be a bit delusional as to how busy my life is and how important it is that I have the third Tuesday of every month free.

Through service on multiple levels I have felt my recovery strengthen. It is one of the many pieces that has helped me continue to seek a strong recovery. There have been days that my service commitment to a group was the only reason I went to that meeting. And when I begin to feel as if I have the ability to skip meetings I begin heading down a slippery slope.

I am grateful to have found the courage to raise my hand, to be of service wherever possible in this program. As someone who has struggled with self-worth, service gives me purpose and allows me to get outside of myself. AA has given me life, saved it. I am willing, albeit reluctantly at times, to give whatever it takes to continue to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to those who still suffer.

Office Update

New Office hours have been working out wonderfully.

The office is still working on finding a new location. If anyone knows of an appropriate place, please contact the office.

The LifeLine is always looking for volunteers to write articles. Please feel free to reach out to the office manager for details.

The office still has plain language big books in, please stop by to check them out or pick one up.

Thank you all for being a part of St. Paul Intergroup.

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 contribution webpage :



2. VIA CHECK

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

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

AREA 36 PINK CAN PLAN

THE PINK CAN PLAN COLLECTS FUNDS TO PURCHASE AA LITERATURE FOR ALCOHOLICS IN CORRECTIONS FACILITIES IN SOUTHERN MINNESOTA.

MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

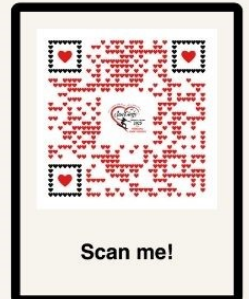
**PINK CAN PLAN
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PLYMOUTH MN 55441-0633**

2025

61st International Women's Conference

ONLINE!

INTERNATIONALWOMENSCONFERENCE.ORG



January 30th- February 2nd 2025

Live from SAN DIEGO, California

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS broadcast to you from SAN DIEGO, California

ENTERTAINMENT and fellowship Friday and Saturday nights

HYBRID PANELS: Attend select panels as they happen live

EXCLUSIVE online panels & workshops for attendees

OPPORTUNITIES to be of service to other sober women

\$15
ONLINE
REGISTRATION

Questions- ONLINEIWC61@GMAIL.COM

DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)
3rd Wed., 7:00 PM
Email: dist8@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 15 (Washington 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.)
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM
dist19@area36.org
Email: dist19@area36.org (for Zoom info)

2025 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Advisor to the Board: Kelly K.

Board Chair: Richardo G

Alt. Board Chair: Alex S.

Treasurer: Brittani G.

Alt. Treasurer: Donald H.

Secretary: Andrew A.

Members at Large:

Emily M.

Brandon H.

Heather R.

Alex L.

Office Manager: Jacob F.

Webservant: Jonathan L.



GREEN CAN PLAN

PLEASE HELP PROVIDE AN ASL INTERPRETER AT AN AA MEETING IN DISTRICT 8



CHECKS CAN BE SENT TO

ASL FUND

PO BOX 131831

ROSEVILLE, MN 55113-0020

OR

CONTRIBUTE ELECTRONICALLY

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Contact District 8 ASL Fund Coordinator



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

4th STEP WORKSHOP

6 Thursdays beginning:

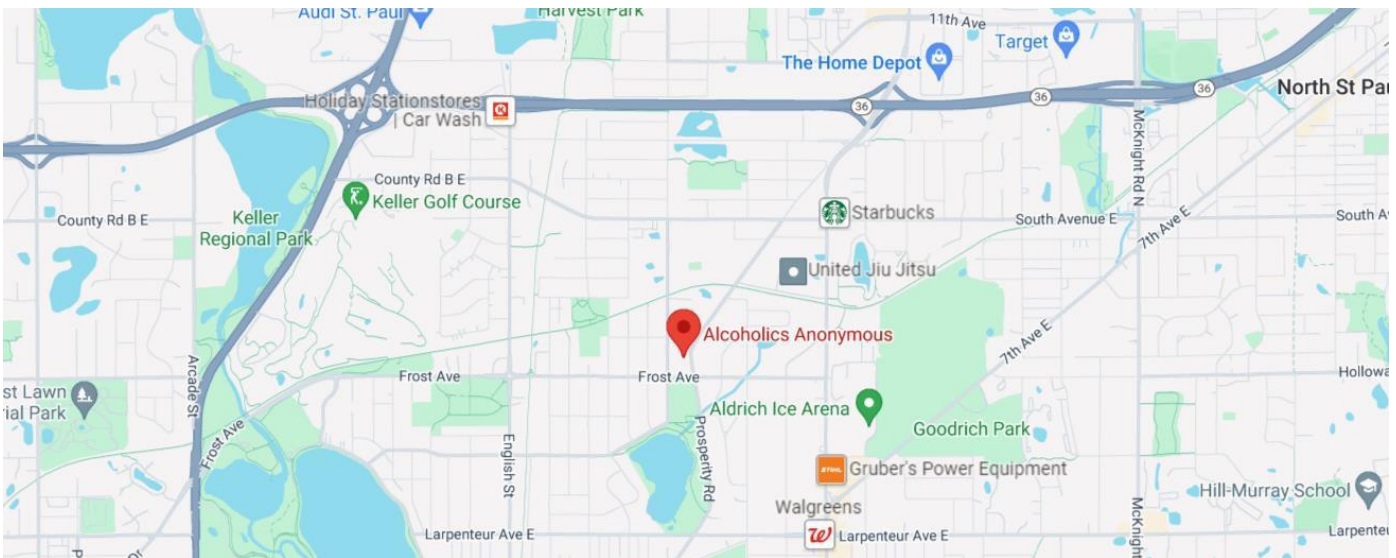
January 16th, 2025

7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Maplewood Alano

1955 Prosperity Road, Maplewood, MN 55109

Space is Limited, Please Register!



To register, please email:

maplewood4thstep@GMAIL.com

Have Questions or Need Help, Just Call

Andy 651-491-1401 or Denise 651-208-0748

If you would like to financially contribute to St. Paul, this QR code will bring you to the St. Paul Intergroup website contribution page.



There are other ways to contribute to St. Paul intergroup as well and you can find those on our website or at the office in person.

Office

Volunteers And Thanks to our many Night Owl volunteers as well.

Bernie Hoot Hoot!

Lynn E.

Frank D. If you are intrested in being of Service, please Vist our Website or Contact the office!!

Gus

Mike

Thanks to your all!

The following groups, members and Faithful Fiver members made the service of intergroup possible last month:

Thank You So Very Much!

- 25 A.A. Groups contributed - \$3,789.58
- Faithful Fivers contributed - \$1,049.00
- Total Contributions - \$6,221.25

Hope Church - Monday AA
 Sunnyside Group
 Happy Hour Men's Meeting
 Steps to Freedom
 Fairmont BB Study Saturday
 Second Sandwich
 It's Seven Somewhere
 Mendota St. Peter's Sat 9AM
 Grupo Una Luz En El Camino
 Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12
 Old Timers
 North Dale Group

Valley Step Group
 Pages of Wisdom
 Saturday Morning Womens Group
 Lake City Group
 Midway Club
 Apple Valley Daily Reflections
 OMD
 Maplewood Groups
 Rivertown Big Book - Hastings
 Grovers Thursday Night



Meeting
Info Calls

47



Speakers
Calls

10



12th Step
Calls

6



Total
Calls
126

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E
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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: ____/____

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**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:

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