



## STEP 2

### Open Up

February 2020 | Tough Times

A doorknob for a Higher Power? Some people just laugh at this, but one member thinks there's a reason it might help someone

I was a lifelong, heavy drinker. I started when I was 12 and continued until I was 52. I saw the light only because my marriage crumbled after 25 years.

It was in a rehab in San Jose, California that I was introduced to my Higher Power. I soon realized that that was exactly what I was missing in my life.

My marriage and my life had been completely unspiritual. My wife at the time was an ex-Jehovah's Witness, and I was a recovering Catholic, so we both refused to practice any religion. There was no Higher Power in my life other than myself, my job, my family and my drinking. Growing up as a Catholic, I didn't even believe in God. It was just what I was told to do.

I clearly remember the day when I entered rehab. I had no idea what to expect. I assumed everyone would be in white coats. I thought I'd be

put into a padded room with the door locked for the 30 days. The intake counselor, a really nice guy, saw that I was still hammered and asked me if I had a Higher Power, if I believed in God.

"No!" I replied, "I don't buy into that religion crap. It's all a scam to take my money." He just laughed at me and said, "That's OK, you will by the time you leave." I took that as an insult. Me? Be forced to believe? I don't think so!

A week later, during one of our daily sessions, I was introduced to "the doorknob" idea. You know, we've all heard it before... If you don't have a Higher Power, use a doorknob. I thought it was funny, but hey, why not? I didn't believe in God, and if I had to have a Higher Power, I could roll with that. The concept stuck with me.

It's now been almost three years, and although I still don't go to church, I am spiritual and do believe in a Higher Power. It's not fully defined for me, but I do have faith that my Higher Power is there.

But the doorknob idea has always been in the back of my mind. While most people just laugh it off, there is a fantastic (well, in my opinion) reason why this idea works, and I believe it's helpful to alcoholics having trouble with the Higher Power thing. Here are my thoughts...

First, what does a doorknob actually represent? When we look at a door, we don't know what's on the other side. We have to open it to find out. To open it, we need to turn the doorknob. This shows

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Please email your article to [Lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto: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 - Friday 9:30 to 5:30, Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 Sunday Closed

## TRADITION 2

February 2026 | Getting Through Tough Times | Our Personal Stories

that the doorknob has power. Without it, we'd have to break the door down and we might get hurt. This is also true for our Higher Power. We don't know what's on the other side, but to find out, we have to pray or meditate. Prayer and meditation are the powers that get us through the door of spirituality.

But it's not that simple. Many times the doorknob needs a key, and not just any key. If we don't have the right one, we can't unlock the door and therefore we either have to pick the lock or break the door down. Again, not ideal. Just as prayer and meditation can open the door, it's good to have honesty, humility and faith. These are the keys to opening up our Higher Power. If we put the right effort into our prayer and meditation, we'll have the right key to unlocking our Higher Power.

Lastly, and this one really opened my mind... look around you right now. How many doorknobs do you see? Now, think about God or your Higher Power. Isn't he/she/it everywhere as well? Wherever we go, we have access to our Higher Power, just as everywhere we go, we see doorknobs.

The next time you hear someone talking about their Higher Power being a doorknob, think about it. It's not just a cute, funny way to bring someone toward their spirituality. It just might open the door to spirituality and a foundation to successful sobriety.

By: Jim P. | Peoria, Ariz.

After his wife and kids left, all he had was the bar. Now the SWAT team was at his door. Had enough?

When I was just 12, alcohol helped me cope with my misery after my father's alcoholism took him away in a drunk driving accident. Once that door to escape into the bottle was opened a crack, I kicked it wide open in my 20s.

My drunk mother forced me into the Air Force before I got drafted and sent to Vietnam. I found serving my country a glorious venture, and the reward of drinking to my heart's content led me further into alcoholism. After receiving an honorable discharge I was turned loose on the world, knowing my drinking was out of control.

During the next five years, I didn't have the money to drink as I wished. I got married, and my wife and I started a family. She was watching closely, but still my drinking got worse. What started as two six-packs on the weekends became a case a day, while during the week it grew to six or eight bottles. After 13 years of this, my wife attended her one and only Al-Anon meeting, where she learned that she wasn't the problem and that she couldn't get me sober. Next came the divorce and I was out.

Now free of parental responsibilities, I turned to my friend, vodka. The two of us had a loving relationship, and like beer it helped me deal with the things I had no control over. This relationship grew, even though I was slow to see the love was only one way.

My final drunk started like all the rest. I spent all day in a VFW, as I had done many Saturdays before. But this time, toward the end of the evening, in and out of a gray out, I found myself in a fight with a big guy. At the time I was carrying a small gun in my pocket everywhere I went. I took it out and threatened him and everyone else at his table. The bouncer quickly disarmed me with one tackle and tossed me out to the parking lot, where I was left unconscious.

I didn't remember anything until I woke up the next morning to the sound of knocking at the door. It was two members of the town's SWAT team. They put me in cuffs and away to jail I went. The sergeant behind the desk explained how I was charged with assault with a deadly weapon and said I was going to jail for a long time.

After bailing out, I contacted a lawyer right away. She made a few inquiries and sat me down for the bad news. She asked me if I was guilty. "Of course" was the only answer I had. She then showed me copies of the 17 statements from witnesses that backed up my answer. There was no doubt I was going to jail. My lawyer then said what would later save my life, "Your only chance of not going away is if I can tell the judge when we go to court that you've been sober for a few months and attending AA meetings." So that's what I did.

I went to meetings, I prayed for help, and God answered my prayer. On court day the judge showed mercy, and I was given a year suspended sentence with a conditional discharge.

Out of pure fear I attended AA meetings every chance I got. Some weeks it was seven meetings and others two or three times that. Once I got on this "yellow brick road," I've not given in to a drink for 33 years, no matter what.

During these sober years, I've had many challenges which could have sent me escaping into the bottle, but God and the power I've found in this program has pulled me through.

I've learned there are three secrets to staying sober. 1) I can choose to be my own best friend or worst enemy; 2) there is a power in the universe who loves me; and 3) I don't drink no matter what.

By: John L. | Hernando, Florida

St. Paul Intergroup Outreach Committee

# Together We Can Help

- Help keep meetings up to date!
- Let people know about Intergroup!

**Volunteer!**

Scan the QR  
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**Truly Make a Difference in  
the Life of an Alcoholic!**

**The Hand of AA Always  
to be There...**

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

**(651) 227-5502**  
outreach@aastpaul.org

# Thoughts From the Board

I recently celebrated my birthday as well as my sober anniversary and they sparked introspection (as they are want to do). As I reflect on the past year of sobriety a few things have become evident.

Letting up on the Spiritual path is not an option for me. (But I will try it from time to time). The results are almost always the same, PAIN.

When I first came to AA I thought it was a program for people who wanted to quit drinking. The fact is I didn't want to quit drinking, I wanted to quit having negative consequences for my actions. The crazy thing in sobriety is I still will have negative consequences for my actions when they are rooted in self. The crux of my problems are not from my drinking, they are from my selfish actions (alcoholism).

So just how does one remove these selfish actions? The only way I have found is by being selfless and that is nearly impossible on my own power. Therefore I MUST rely on One who has all Power. Easier said than done in all areas in my life unless I continue to be willing to have a different experience than the one I think I should have.

With that experience I'm now constantly reminded to look for these blank spots I'm trying to control and ask God to have Their Will be done.

What then do I do with the things I'm still holding onto? How do I become willing to have God remove them? What works for me, is pain. I must be in enough pain to become aware of something that is objectionable. Sometimes the pain is a slight nagging, other

times it's as loud as a church bell directly over my head.

But is pain alone enough for me to want to change? NO. I believe that is where all of these steps and principles come into play. With inventory I see my actions and my thinking, with prayer throughout the day I'm less likely to "run the whole show" and with meditation am challenged to sit alone in contemplation with myself and my Creator. I'm in much less danger of taking my will back completely when I slow down throughout the day for these practices.

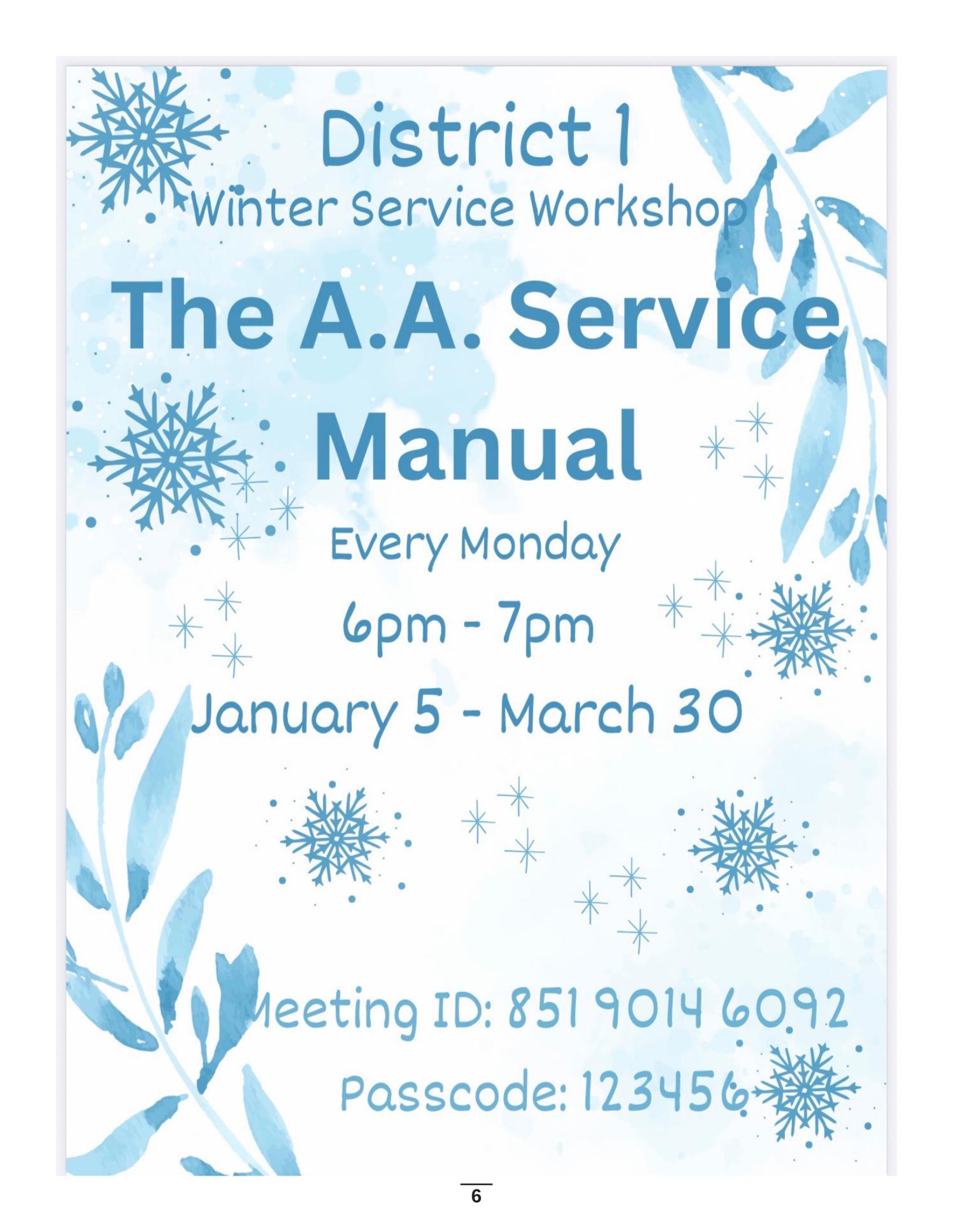
I mentioned selflessness earlier, how does that work into my life as a self centered alcoholic? For me, I find service is a great way for me to be selfless. Whether it's doing the dishes at the house, having a service commitment at my home group, serving on the board of intergroup, and sponsorship. These are great ways I regularly act selflessly, but there are other ways too. These come from my relationship with living amends from the 9th step. I want to uphold my end of the deal so that means being helpful to non-alcoholics too. Picking up the phone and asking friends and family how they are doing, and listening instead of waiting for my turn to talk.

My desire for life in AA is no longer avoiding negative consequences, it is to fit myself to be of maximum service to God and the people in my life. Sure I screw up and make bonehead decisions and I've learned over the years that those experiences are some of my greatest assets.

I learn from my pain, I don't try to cover up and hide from it. Pain is a part of life and that is the greatest gift I've received from AA... to be a part of life!

I owe my life to AA. I'm going to do my best to honor God with my actions, I'll probably screw that up at some point but I won't let that get me down for too long.

With love  
In service  
Brandon H



# District 1

Winter Service Workshop

## The A.A. Service

## Manual

Every Monday

6pm - 7pm

January 5 - March 30

Meeting ID: 851 9014 6092

Passcode: 123456

# 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

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## 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  
PO BOX 41633  
PLYMOUTH MN 55441-0633**

# ST. PAUL INTERGROUP BOARD AND REPS MEETING

EVERY 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

AT 7:30 PM

All are welcome but we especially  
love to see group representatives!  
Meet is located in the same building  
as the Intergroup office.

33 Wentworth Ave E, West St. Paul

MN 55118

2nd Floor conference room

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

[manager@aastpaul.org](mailto:manager@aastpaul.org)

651 - 227 - 5502

# DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

# 2025 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)  
3rd Wed., 7:00 PM  
Email: [dist8@area36.org](mailto: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](mailto:dist15@area36.org) (for Zoom info)

District 19 (Dakota Co.)  
2nd Weds. Of the Month -7pm to 8:30pm  
Eagan Community Center  
1501 Central Pkwy  
Saint Paul, MN, 55121  
Lone Oak Room  
[dist19@area36.org](mailto:dist19@area36.org)

Advisor to the Board: Ricardo G.

Board Chair: Alex S.

Alt. Board Chair: Brandon H.

Treasurer: Don H.

Alt. Treasurer: Marc K

Secretary: Zach B

Members at Large:

Emily M.

Jamie Lynn

Matt

Kristine C.

Office Manager: Jacob F.

Webservant: Jonathan L. & Ethan

## 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

**VENMO @ASLFund-DistrictEight**

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](mailto: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

MNYPAA PRESENTS

# MY BLOODY VALENTINE'S DANCE

6PM | FELLOWSHIP

7PM | MEETING

8PM | DANCE

SUGGESTED \$10 DONATION



FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup>

RECOVERY CHURCH  
253 STATE STREET ST. PAUL

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.

*Thank You So Very Much!*

### Office Volunteers

Bernie, Lynn, Frank, Mike, Matt, Macy, Sue

Thanks to your all and thanks to our many Night Owl volunteers as well.

Hoot Hoot!

If you are interested in being of Service, please Vist our Website or contact the office!!



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

- 25 A.A. Groups contributed - \$6,774.66
- Faithful Fivers contributed - \$2,993.03
- Total Contributions - \$12,011.53

Forest Lake Alano  
 Grovers Thursday Night  
 This Simple Program  
 Saturday Morning Womens Group  
 Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12  
 Midway Club  
 Elements Group  
 Farmington Wednesday Big Book  
 God As We Understood Him  
 Saturday Morning AA - Lindstrom  
 Una Luz en el Camino  
 Rivertown Big Book - Hastings

Main Idea  
 Shivering Denizens  
 Safe Haven Too  
 St. Paul Sun Night  
 Northfield Thurs. Nite BB  
 Primary Purpose Group  
 River Rats  
 Pocketing Our Pride - Mpls  
 Hugo Group  
 Most Important Thing Group--Sunday, Roseville  
 Old Timers

West End Club  
 Stillwater Rivertown BB Group Sun PM  
 Happy Joyous and Free - Mahtomedi  
 Saturday Morning Womens Group  
 Thursday Night AA - Fellowship Club  
 Maplewood Groups

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## 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 *Terrific Tennes* (\$10.00/month), *Fantastic Fifteeners* (\$15.00/month), or *Thoughtful Thirtiers* (\$30.00).

### **1. Contact Information:**

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Frequency: (check one)  
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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  
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