



STEP FOUR: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

The Chairman Takes Inventory: A suggestion for a closed meeting. . .

(Reprinted from the A.A. *Grapevine*, September 1950, with permission.)

"Do you know, I caught myself taking another guy's inventory this morning," laughed the Chairman as he opened the regular weekly closed meeting. "And that of course is not the purpose of the Fourth Step. . . We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of *ourselves*. Period! Not the other guy." He paused to light a cigarette. "Perhaps we'd better take an inventory of this Step tonight and see what factors enter into the making of an honest inventory."

"I never thought taking an inventory was too important," said Johnny, "until last week while on my vacation I went to a meeting and heard a speaker give out with this thought: 'A man can accept the First Step, believe the Second Step and acknowledge the Third, and build a pretty good foundation for sobriety. But without the Fourth Step his success on the Program is doubtful. He can't lie to himself about this one.' That kind of made me think, and after two years I took time out to line up a list of *my* character defects. And brother, I still got a hell of a lot left."

"That's a swell start, Johnny," said the Chairman, "But the fact that it's taken you two years to get around to facing yourself, honestly might account for some of the dry drunks you've had to suffer." Very few AAs are ready to surrender *all* of their character defects. But this method of taking the inventory results in only partial rehabilitation. The Step as explained in the Big Book suggests a *complete inventory*, honest, sincere and thorough. Let's start around the room and check into a few of the most common inventory items."

"Speaking of the Big Book," said Charlie, "it says that *resentment* is the number one offender. More alcoholics are affected by this defect, than any other, I believe. When we first set our resentments down on paper, we believed that in the majority of cases we had suffered loss of jobs, self-respect, family and other relationships, through no fault of ours! That of course, is alcoholic thinking, and can lead only to unhappiness. For my money, resentment is a luxury alcoholics can not afford to indulge in. It's dynamite."

"Thanks, Johnny. Some night we'll expand on this major inventory item. . . Ruth, have you got an item for our inventory list?"

"Yes; I feel that many persons who do not recover through the help offered by the AA Program have not been absolutely honest with themselves. *Dishonesty* has no place on our Program, because being honest with your God, yourself and your fellow man is the main link between alcoholism and happy sobriety. The AA Program to me, would be a very boring affair if I permitted dishonesty to become one of my character defects again."

"OK, Ruth. Joe, what you got on your mind?"

"*Fear!* Mister Chairman, knocked me for a loop when I was drinking. And when I took the First Step--with reservations, I admit, it was fear of living without a drink that made me take it that way. After I learned that the AA Program was not founded on fear, but rather on a spiritual way of life in which we learned through faith that

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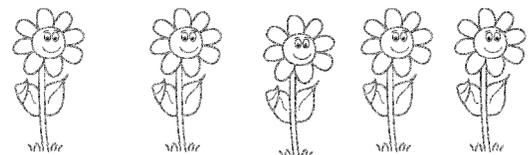
T.G.I.S. (Thank God It's Spring! — Thank God I'm Sober!)

Saturday, April 17th, 5:30pm to Midnight.

Spaghetti Dinner—Speaker Meeting—Dance

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 285 Dale St., Just South of I-94.

St. Paul AA Intergroup's Annual Spring Celebration !!



St. Paul Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous®

Web Site: www.aastpaul.org

E-mail: lifeline@aastpaul.org

Fax: 651-290-0209

Office Hours: Monday through Friday — 9 AM to 6 PM; Saturday 9 AM to 1 PM

1600 University Avenue W. Suite 407 St. Paul MN 55104

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a Power Greater than Ourselves would help us overcome our fears, then I began thinking positively and my fears disappeared. In other words, I replaced my fears with faith."

"That's a swell thought, Joe, on a vital inventory item. Fear actually has an important part in the lives of human beings. It prompts us to take precautionary measures necessary to every day living. But in the case of us alcoholics, we've always utilized fear as a negative quality, always apprehensive of the worst, and forever fearing tomorrow."

"Tommy, have you a contribution to our inventory list?"

"I think most alcoholics have indulged in *self-pity* as a form of rebellion against circumstances. I can recall that it hit me the hardest when I was in the throes of a hangover. However, I think it is very closely allied to resentment, and until we realize that its a false attitude toward life, it can hinder our rehabilitation, and stunt our growth in AA. When I feel self-pity sneaking up on me I find that the best remedy, is to look around for someone else to help whose troubles are greater than mine. Invariably my own difficulties disappear as I gain strength in helping the other guy solve his problem."

"Patsie, I don't imagine a mild mannered gal like you had too much trouble with the inventory. . . or did you?"

"Haven't you ever heard me tell how I nearly killed my husband by bashing him on the head with an electric toaster?. . .Well, my contribution to your list is *Anger*. And I experienced the entire gamut from indignation to blind rage. But the AA philosophy showed me that there is no room for this emotion if I am to make any progress or growth. I think you will find a line in the Big Book that says 'If we were to live we had to be free from anger. . .its a dubious luxury for normal men, but for alcoholics anger is poison!' "

"Wonderful, Patsie. I'd like to continue, but time is short. Many, many more items can be included in our Fourth Step Inventory. You might continue thinking about them, and remember that Step Ten suggests continual taking of our inventory, because a perpetual inventory is daily insurance against the instability of our nature. . . But please remember -- take your own -- not the other guy's!"

The Twelve Concepts

Concept Four: Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

"...Just as there are no second-class A.A.'s, neither should there be any second-class world service workers, either.

The 'Right of Participation' is therefore a corrective of ultimate authority because it mitigates its harshness or misuse. It also encourages us who serve A.A. to accept the necessary disciplines that our several tasks require. We can do this when we are sure that we belong, when the fact of our 'participation' assures us that we are truly the 'trusted servants' described in A.A.'s Tradition Two."

Reprinted from, *Twelve Concepts for World Service* by Bill W., p. 21, with permission from A.A. World Services, Inc.

2010 Steering Board

<u>Chair:</u>	Julie M.
<u>Alt. Chair:</u>	John D.
<u>Secretary:</u>	Don N.
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Michael K.
<u>Members at Large 2010:</u>	Katie R. & Julie K.
<u>Members at Large 2011:</u>	Jess N. & Charlie S.
<u>Advisor to the Board:</u>	Tom S.
<u>Office Manager:</u>	Tom N.

Office Calls in February

Meeting information	182
Inventory/hours	38
12th Step calls	15
Temporary sponsor	25
Speaker request	37
Special events	4
Outside issues	19
Info for professionals	3
Administrative	142
Other	67
Total Calls	532
Daily average	24.2
Visitors	187

Call tally is for calls taken during office hours only and does not include calls taken during Night Owl shifts.

The Twelve Traditions

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

How Autonomous Can You Be?

(From *The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA*, pp 96-100, reprinted with permission from the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.)

A POPULAR cartoon by William Steig shows a dour little man huddled inside a box. The caption reads: "People are no damn good."

I was reminded of this cartoon as some delegates to the Tenth General Service Conference of AA last April mentioned groups in their areas which decline to participate in the world-wide services of Alcoholics Anonymous because--so the report went--they prefer to be *autonomous*. Obvious though the answer may be to many, still the question arises:

"Does group autonomy mean group isolation?" Or, does group autonomy mean non-participation in any but local AA activities?

Everybody agrees that self-government of the local group is an essential AA principle. One of the most common daily activities of staff members at the General Service Office is the reminding of groups that a particular question raised in correspondence can only be settled by the group itself. The GSO does offer advice as requested; it does prepare literature in which group experience with certain problems is made available to all; GSO speakers when invited to area meetings regularly present not their own opinions but the varied experiences throughout the AA world as reported to GSO.

Self-government is so deeply imbedded in the AA Traditions after twenty-five years that it is far from needing defense. On the contrary, here--as through all AA and indeed all human affairs--*easy does it* applies. Autonomy, like all other good things, can be carried to excess.

Autonomy can become isolation; the self-respecting individual — independent, self-supporting, deciding for himself what is right and good — can (as he carries his independence to an extreme) become the dour, sour little man in the box, cherishing the thought that "people are no damn good," a thought which, carried to its logical conclusion, includes himself.

In this respect the group is like the individual. It must be responsible for the management of its own affairs; elect its officers and representatives; raise its own finances; provide its own meeting place; conduct its meetings as it sees fit; develop its own program of Twelfth Step work and sponsorship; work out its own arrangements with other groups and individuals in the community.

But it should not try to operate in a vacuum. No one "got AA" in isolation. Each member of the group is sober today because some other individual "carried the message." And no individual stays sober in AA by himself but as a member of a group. Whether it be a local group, his own "correspondence group," or the larger group of AA as a whole.

No group developed of itself and by itself. No single group is responsible for the development of the principles we live by — the three legacies of recovery, unity and service; no group can handle the thousands of inquiries which flow in each month, assign AA members to call on new prospects, provide for the translation of the AA message into other languages, keep in touch with hospital and prison groups, advise press, radio, and TV on AA ideas and procedures, keep in touch with the loners and internationalists--no group is wise enough, big enough, wealthy enough to do the total AA job today.

Paul Tillich, recognized as one of the great philosophers and theologians of our times, says that every individual must have the "courage to be" — courage to be himself and courage to be part of something else. The man who does not have the courage to be himself, to stand for something, to preserve his identity and to refuse to become a slave to either tradition or custom ceases to be a man and flees from life's realities into some larger group where he may be supported; the man who does not have the courage to be part of something else isolates himself from the stream of life and deprives the society of which he is a part of his interest, support, and ideas.

Both types of participation are needed, Tillich says, for the full life. This idea can be applied equally to the groups in AA. They must have the courage to be themselves, to stand on their own feet, to meet the problems of relations with other groups and with outside agencies without fear and without arrogance. Many of the problems forwarded to GSO will disappear as local groups become truly autonomous--in actuality as well as in tradition. (*cont' on following page*)

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But just as individuals in AA need each other's support, so the groups need a sense of fellowship with others in the AA way of life.

Just what damage is done when a group chooses to withdraw from participation in the whole AA movement, to function only in its own community, for the benefit of its own members? AA as a whole loses because it is deprived of the knowledge of local thinking, local solutions to local problems. Virtually all AA problems exist at the local level; there are a few national or state situations, but most of our difficulties arise out of local developments. The group which refuses to share its experiences with others makes it just so much harder for the group in the neighboring town or nearby state--or across the world--to handle similar situations when they arise.

A secondary--but just as damaging--loss is to the group itself. Just as individual thinking on the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions can become warped if the individual does not occasionally check his thinking against that of his brother in AA, so group thinking can get "off the beam" on strange and even weird tangents, sometimes producing interpretations which most other AAs would question. Contacts with other groups and with the movement as a whole can contribute much toward the overall unity of the larger group conscience of AA as a whole.

Thus are we bound up together in a fellowship which depends for its strength and performance on the loving attachment of all its groups and individual members, one with another. And thus do we see that autonomy, if carried to an extreme, can make of AA a fragmented affair, limited to the strength of each local group, unable to speak with a united voice to the millions who still desperately need to hear the message we have to carry.

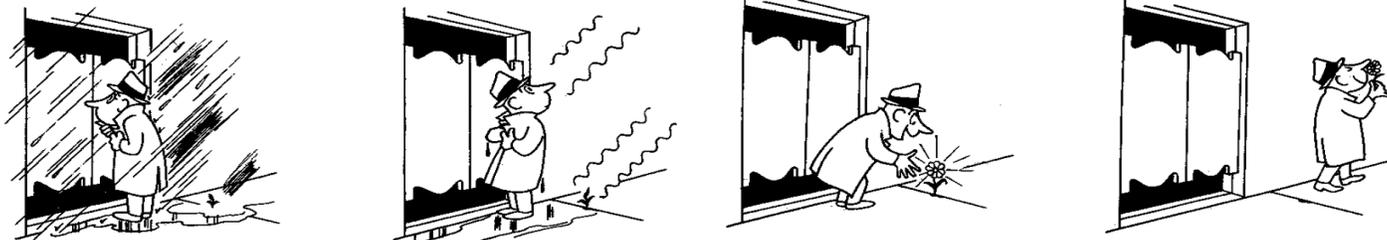
The local group which withdraws into outer space punishes itself and its members as well. It becomes inbred. By its very act of isolation from others in AA it tends likewise to isolate itself from society and often stops carrying the message, being content to remain a tiny self-admiration society of recovered drunks. It deprives its members of satisfaction in the achievements of AA at home and abroad. Is a new group helped to get started somewhere? The isolated group has had no hand in it. If the very exciting news of the translation of "Alcoholics Anonymous" in still another foreign tongue is reported the isolated group can feel no sense of shared responsibility. If a sailor, struggling against heavy odds to keep sober on the beach in Yokohama, finds help through a Japanese AA group. . . or a loner in a prospector's cabin miles from civilization keeps clear of the bottle because of a stream of friendly letters from GSO. . . if alcoholics in a state prison or mental hospital are helped to prepare for sobriety in the outside world by GSO's encouraging support to the institutional groups. . . if these and thousands of other efforts in the world struggle against alcoholism succeed inch by painful inch. . . if all these things in which AA members rejoice come to pass — the isolated group can take no joy in them if, in truth, it thinks about them or even hears about them.

The strength of AA sobriety rests on the shared experience. AA members and groups have differed in the past, differ today, and will differ tomorrow. Through argument we grow in wisdom and strength. But we shall fall apart if every individual or every group pulls out over each disagreement with some action or viewpoint — whether of another individual, another group, or AA as a whole through its General Service Conference.

The Traditions stress this thought in many ways: ". . . there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. . . each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole. . . every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting. . ."

Just as one of the horrors of our drinking days was loneliness, so one of the greatest joys of our recovery has been the love and support we have found from others in AA. As free individuals and members of AA's autonomous groups, we ought always to remember that our recovery depended on the support of others, as does the continuance of our sobriety. Simple gratitude compels us all to be mindful of the needs of others and to work in the ways and through the means developed by the AA movement to try to reach some of the millions of our fellow alcoholics who are still suffering in the hell from which we have escaped.

J. P. L., Paterson, New Jersey



Victor E., reprinted by permission from the A.A. *Grapevine*, April 1965.

St. Paul A.A. Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes, February 16, 2010

- I. Opened with Serenity Prayer and Introductions.
- II. Mike H. read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.
- III. Last month's Minutes approved.
- IV. Treasurer's Report – Michael K. submitted the January report and indicated contributions are up significantly from December. Please report questions/concerns at Treasurer@aastpaul.org or call.
- V. Office Report – Tom N. – Area 36 delegate asks Reps to circulate a copy of the agenda for the 2010 General Service Conference as well as the printout of his own notes on the issues he expects to be most discussed. He also reported new and on-going service opportunities at Lino Lakes Adolescent Treatment, Tapestry Treatment and New Connections. These are explained fully in his Office Report to the Group Representatives. Anyone interested should contact Tom at the Office (651-22-5502).
- VI. Website Report – Jonathan – Reported improvements to the website, that traffic has doubled from last year. Anyone with questions or suggestions, email at webservant@aastaul.org or call the Office.
- VII. Outreach Program – Julie M. advised interested folks to contact Tim (Chairman) or Tom at the Office.
- VIII. Night Owl Report – Patti M. – Reported three openings: first Wednesday of each month (10PM-6AM), second Friday (10PM-9AM) and the fourth Monday (10PM-6AM).
- IX. Intergroup Events:
 - Spring Traditions Workshop (Tradition 5) – March 13 @ 2PM
 - TGIS dinner/meeting/dance – April 17
 - Intergroup Open House – June 19 (tentative)
 - Ice Cream Social/Old Timers – August 21
 - Fall Step Workshop (Step 8) – October 9
 - Gratitude Night (Clancy I, speaker) – November 20
 - Founders Day Hospitality Suite – November 26 and 27
 - New Years Eve – December 31
- X. Old Business – More than 9 groups committed to host a hospitality suite at Gopher State, therefore a room reservation will be made.
- XI. New Business – Tom N. brought up the issue of providing ASL interpreters for Intergroup meetings and in general. AA Literature says meetings should be accessible to all, but doesn't mention the issue of funding. The St. Paul Sunday Night Speaker meeting is the only St. Paul meeting that provides ASL and their fund is now in the red. The costs of ASL are \$75-\$135 per hour. District 8 has a separate ASL fund (Timothy, coordinator) and many groups distribute the Green Can for contributions. Richard from the Midway Club has requested an ASL interpreter for Intergroup Meetings. The group unanimously voted to provide an ASL interpreter at next month's meeting so Richard and others needing an ASL interpreter can be part of this discussion.
- XII. Group AA Announcements – The Fireside Women's Group has moved to the new Recovery Church.
- XIII. Concept Review (II): Matt Volunteer for Concept III next month: Mike H.
Mock Rep Report: Rhonda Volunteer for next month: Dan from Firing Line
- XIV. Closed with the Responsibility Statement.

Attendance:

Laura, Summit Women's	Ryan, Students of Life	Matt H, OMD	Katie R, Board at Large	Don N, Secretary
Donald B, Main Idea	Grayson, Como BB	Tom N, Office mgr	Libby, P.O.P.	Rhonda, Basic Text
Charlie S, Board at large	Julie M, Chair	Bruce P, Uptown	Steve K, Rosemount	Tom S, Advisor
Michael K, Treasurer	Chris S, West End	Colleen, Great Tidings	Jes N, Board At-Large	Angela, Midway
Jonathan, web servant	Tina, Mon Night Women's 12 & 12	Judy, No Time Like the Present	Pattie, New Brighton BB	Dan, The Firing Line
Doug M, Hole in the Donut	Terry O (alt), Back to Basics Brnsvill	Mike H, St. Joe's Monday Night	Mark S, Thurs AM Meditation	Tim C, Defogged Men's
Julie K, Board At-large	Craig B, Happy Hour 12 & 12	Trisha, Fireside Women's	Adrienne, Duane, Maplewood	Jill J, Mendota Sat 10:30AM

**7th Tradition
Suggestions for Groups**
 “Every 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
 Spruce Tree Center
 1600 University Ave. #407
 St. Paul, MN 55104

30% General Service Office
 P.O. Box 459
 Grand Central Station
 New York, NY 10163

10% Southern MN Area 36
 Area Assembly
 P.O. Box 2812
 Mpls., MN 55402

10% District Committee
 Ramsey County:
 District 8, P.O. Box 2267
 St. Paul, MN 55102
 Dakota County:
 District 19, P.O. Box 1466
 Burnsville, MN 55337
 Washington County:
 District 15, P.O. Box 181
 Lake Elmo, MN 55042
 SE Ramsey County:
 District 26, P.O. Box 75980
 St. Paul, MN 55175

BE A NIGHT OWL !!
 Night Owls are often the first A.A. contact for the newcomer! A Night Owl shift is a once-a-month commitment to answer Intergroup phones after hours. Some shifts can be done in the office; all can be done from home. The commitment can be filled by an individual or a group. **If you can help, call the office or go to our website: www.aastpaul.org**

District Meetings
District 8 (Ramsey Co.)
 Fairview Community Center
 1910 Co. Rd B, Rm 203, Roseville
 3rd Wed., 7:30 PM
District 15 (Wash. Co.)
 Christ Lutheran Church
 11194 N. 36th St., Lake Elmo
 4th Mon., 7:00 PM
District 19 (Dakota Co.)
 Rosemount Community Center
 13885 South Robert Trail
 2nd Wed., 7:00 PM
District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)
 1099 Payne Ave. St. Paul
 2nd Fri., 6:00 PM
www.district26-area36.org

Thanks to all the terrific volunteers who helped in the Office during February!
 Adam N, Alex M, Alex P, Analisa, Andy, Anita, Bob, Brian, Bruce, Cindy, Dan M, Dan W, Erik, Harry, Jack, James, Jan, Joe, Johnny, Jon, Julia I, Julia M, Justin, Keelan, Kevin, Louann, Mary, Maureen, Megan, Mike, Nancy, Nick, Ratta, Ray, Richard, Rick B, Rob, Roneka, Scott, Simmons, Steve, Tierney, Tim, and Tom.
Thanks to all the Night Owl volunteers and groups as well!

FEBRUARY CONTRIBUTIONS
 Number of Group Contributors: 29
 Total Group Contributions: \$6446
 Number of Faithful Fivers: 15
 Total from Faithful Fivers: \$230

“Thanks!” to the groups that contributed in February!
 Basic Text
 Basic Text Women's Group
 Day by Day - Coon Rapids
 Dakota Alano Fri. 8PM
 Dakota Alano Mon. 8PM
 Defiant Brats East
 Downtown Alano Club
 Forest Lake Alano
 Friday 12X12 By the Book
 Happy Joyous and Free
 Highland Park Groups
 Inver Grove Heights Club 84
 Mendota St. Peter's Sat. 9AM
 Midway Club
 North Branch Community Groups
 North Dale Groups
 OMD
 Pocketing Our Pride
 Rosemount Groups
 St. Thomas Becket Group
 Stillwater Sunday PM
 Summit Hill
 The Firing Line
 Third Tradition Northfield
 Uptown Club
 Valley Creek Monday
 West End Club
 White Bear Lake
 White Bear Sat. AM Women's Group

The Lifeline: Purpose Statement
 The Lifeline is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup Association office of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is about, by, and for 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 Intergroup. (Exception: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets are reprinted with permission from A.A. World Services, Inc.) We welcome articles of opinion or descriptions of personal experience, which should be sent to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 1600 University Avenue #407, St. Paul MN 55104. Materials or articles 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. The deadline is the 13th of the preceding month (i.e., submit a Tenth Step essay by the ninth month, September).



UPCOMING A.A. EVENTS!!

Sunlight of the Spirit Weekend

April 16th to 18th
Holiday Inn
Fairmont, Minnesota

St. Paul Area Intergroup T.G.I.S. Celebration!

Saturday, April 17, 5:30pm
Spaghetti Dinner * Speaker * Dance
Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
285 N. Dale St., just South of I-94

40th Annual Iron Range Get-Together

April 20th to May 2nd
Wendigo Lodge, Grand Rapids, MN

Second City Round-Up

May 7th — 9th
Hyatt McCormack Place, Chicago
Reservations: 1-800-233-1234

Gopher State Roundup

March 28 — 30
Sheraton, Bloomington
www.gopherstateroundup.org

Alcoholics Anonymous 2010 International Convention

July 1 — 4, San Antonio, Texas
www.aa.org



"Now I wonder if you could give us a little more detail on this item: 'Downtown Package Store, Medicines, \$2503.98'?"

(Reprinted from the A.A. Grapevine, April, 1963, with permission.)

Dear Bill W,

A guy I'm trying to sponsor keeps slipping. He comes back to me in a world of pain, with a long list of problems, but then he won't follow my suggestions. I only hear from him when he's in trouble, and then some how I end up try to convince him he ought to help himself. How do I handle this?

— An Anonymous Drunk

"It does not seem to pay to argue with 'slippers' about the proper method of getting dry. After all, why should people who are drinking tell people who are dry how it should be done?"

"Just kid the boys along — ask them if they are having fun. If they are too noisy or troublesome, amiably keep out of their way."

From *As Bill Sees It: The A.A. Way of Life*, p. 154,
reprinted by permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Is your meeting represented at Intergroup?

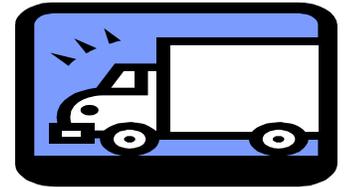
The April Representatives' meeting will be held Tuesday the 20th at 7:30 pm, at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 285 N. Dale St., St. Paul, 55103. The church is located just south of I-94. For parking, turn west on Iglehart from Dale.

St. Paul Intergroup
Spruce Tree Center
1600 University Ave. W. Ste. 407
St. Paul, MN 55104

Change Service Requested

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Please let us know if your address changes one month ahead of time. 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 Faithful Fiver Form

Faithful Fivers contribute \$5.00 to St. Paul Intergroup each month to enable us to continue to carry our life-saving message. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to *The Lifeline*. You may also contribute annually, quarterly, etc.

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please send this form and a check to:

St. Paul Intergroup, 1600 University Avenue W., Ste. 407, St. Paul, MN 55104

I would like to receive *The Lifeline* every month by email, not postal mail. My email address is:

(please print clearly) _____